

The Delray Democrat

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July 2022

The Gigante Defense

Michael K. Cantwell

If you lived in New York during the latter decades of the last century, you'll remember Vincent "the Chin" Gigante, the Mafia don who avoided prosecution for years by parading around Greenwich Village in a bathrobe and slippers, mumbling incoherently to himself. He was eventually indicted along with other mob bosses and the defense unraveled when they testified Gigante was lucid at top-level Mafia meetings and had admitted to them that his apparent dementia was an act.

The January 6 committee hearings show Trump as the opposite of Vincent Gigante, for they portray him as the madman Gigante was pretending to be. His claims of election fraud were rebutted by a parade of Republican officials. Strikingly, Bill Barr told the January 6 committee that if Trump actually believed the election had been stolen, he'd become "detached from reality."

Most of the witnesses also testified that they would vote for Trump again if he ran in 2024, so it is clear that they did not "hate Trump," a charge that our former president levelled at Barr, referring to himself in the third person, as crazy people are wont to do.

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Upcoming Meetings

July 14, Aramis Ayala, candidate for Florida Attorney General

August 11, Dr. Marc Lafalaise, president United Haitian-American Caucus

September 8, State Attorney Dave Aronberg

The Passing of Pat O'Hearne

Terrie Rizzo, DEC Chair

It is with heavy hearts that the Palm Beach County Democratic Party mourns the loss of Pat O'Hearne, lifelong Democratic activist, PBC Precinct Committeewoman, Zone Leader Emerita for Zone 8 in East Delray Beach, and Democratic Party stalwart par excellence, who passed away on June 19 at age 84.

Pat and her beloved husband of 61 years, David B. O'Hearne, lived in Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, Colorado, and New Hampshire before retiring to Florida, and she was an always positive, roll-up-the-sleeves and get-it-done, joyful force in every community in which she arrived.

The Democratic Party was in Pat's DNA, as she used to joke, and she volunteered extensively to work to get Democrats elected on every level.

She once served as the Clerk in the Connecticut State Senate, and she volunteered extensively on campaigns in Connecticut, Colorado and Florida. She sent red, white and blue flowers to her grandchildren

on their 18th birthdays to remind them to register to vote.

In PBC, Pat and Dave were deeply involved in countless campaigns and party operations, including heading up the PBC Rides to the Polls organization for the Kerry, both Obama, and Hillary Campaigns. In addition to working her own precinct, Pat led the charge for the DEC as Zone Leader for Zone 8, and she was instrumental in office operations at the Delray Office.

Whatever needed doing, whether it was cleaning the office kitchen or running a Get-Out-The-Vote operation, Pat was there leading the way. Her cheerful personality, and positive, take-charge leadership made her a joy to work with, and she will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her. Please join us in extending our deepest condolences to her husband Dave, their children, Brian, Mary, and Jennifer, and all her extended family, and let's redouble our work to get out the vote in her memory.

*You don't need to live in Delray Beach to read or write for The Delray Democrat.

(The Gigante Defense, continued from page 1)

Barr’s characterization of Trump as being detached from reality might well have been his parting gift to a president he previously saved from prosecution when he delayed release of the Mueller report, instead giving the press a bowdlerized summary that absolved Trump of any potential criminality.

It might not even be necessary for Trump to wander around the upscale streets of Palm Beach in a bathrobe, blathering and waving his hands wildly, in order to establish he is too barking mad to stand trial.

Cassidy Hutchinson’s testimony could complicate that defense because it showed Trump was not wholly detached from reality. In both senses of the word, he appreciated the threat posed by the heavily

armed mob he’d summoned and was poised to release on Congress.

Yet her testimony might provide Trump with an alternative defense. When he heard that Barr publicly stated there was insufficient evidence of fraud for DOJ to investigate, Trump threw his lunch against the wall, like a child in his highchair having a tantrum. He similarly seemed incapable of controlling his rage and his violence when the Secret Service refused to drive him to the Capitol.

Taken together, Hutchinson painted a picture of a man unable to control himself. As such, he might think about adopting the “Irresistible Impulse” defense available to persons who are “incapable of self-control because of a mental disease or defect.”

Based Upon Real Events

Jeffrey Kash

A mother and her infant child were at the father’s home when he threatened to kill her. The mother was 18 and the father 20 and he had been violent throughout their relationship. He punched her and then got his gun and beat her with it.

He then drove the mother to her family’s home where he threatened to kill her family and pointed a gun at the mother’s grandmother’s face. Ultimately, the 20-year-old father shot the 18-year-old mother and shot at her grandmother before driving away. He was arrested, the mother needed surgery, and the child was placed in foster care.

Democrats Hear This and Think	Republicans Hear This and Think
Something has to be done to restrict gun ownership Something has to be done about poverty Something has to be done to give women access to daycare, better paying jobs, and other resources so they are not reliant on abusive partners	Thank God they’re not gay Thank God the mother didn’t get an abortion If only mother and great grandmother also had guns...

Who would you prefer run this state and this country?

What We’re Reading

Why Did Republicans Become So Extreme? Paul Krugman, *New York Times*: And because G.O.P. extremism is fed by resentment against the very things that, as I see it, truly make America great — our diversity, our tolerance for difference — it cannot be appeased or compromised with. It can only be defeated.

Can Ron DeSantis Displace Donald Trump as the G.O.P.’s Combatant-in-Chief? Dexter Filkins, *The New Yorker*: “The G.O.P. has become a white-grievance party,” Stevens said. DeSantis, he believes, is following the Trump playbook. “To me, Ron DeSantis is a fairly run-of-the-mill politician who will do anything to get elected,” he said. “The problem is what the Party has become. It’s a race to the bottom.”

Political Lessons for Democrats in a Post-Roe America, John Cassidy, *The New Yorker*: “The third lesson from the past few days is that brazenness and ruthlessness pay off, or, as Mitch McConnell might put it, “There are no absolute rules of conduct, either in peace or war. Everything depends on circumstances.” Actually, this quotation comes from Leon Trotsky’s autobiography, but he and McConnell aren’t so far apart.”

Brandon Is Isis

Rob Resnick

Travel almost anywhere in the country and you will see occasional “Let’s Go Brandon” signs, flags, or bumper stickers. Some may write this off as an example of our vitriolic, polarized political climate.

In reality it is far more nefarious. “Let’s Go Brandon” is code for support of terrorism. People should react to seeing these signs no differently than if someone had a “Go ISIS” or “Go Al Qaeda” sign. They stand for the same thing – the violent overthrow of democracy, opposition to freedom, and cruel, inhuman treatment, including murder, of those with a different ethnicity or religious belief. Brandon equals ISIS.

A true indication of wrongdoing is when those involved feel the need to conceal their identities. Many “Brandon” supporters, including extremist groups such as the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, etc., as well as individual actors, wear masks covering their heads.

Cameras, law enforcement, victims, and innocent witnesses have no means of identifying these actors after they commit criminal, violent acts. Unless they are apprehended at the moment, they escape and revert to their everyday lives and identities. Thus, unless captured, they commit crimes with seeming impunity. Saying “Let’s Go Brandon” is simply another form of concealment. Rather than openly

express their desire to overthrow our democracy or oppress minorities, they display this code. We know what it means and we need to act.

Based on multiple prior incidents, these individuals may work in many walks of life. Their support for terrorism, specifically their participation in extremist events, properly should, and often does, lead to termination by employers. Members of the military and law enforcement should especially be disqualified if they actively support extremism, as the danger is profound. So should teachers or anyone who interacts with the public, has influence, or enjoys any position of trust. In fact, support of terrorism is a crime. However, many state criminal codes, along with the federal criminal code, does not adequately address “domestic” terrorism. Terrorism is terrorism. Whether foreign influenced or home grown, it is equally evil and devastating.

“Let’s Go Brandon” is not a display of free speech or an expression of political ideology. It espouses and encourages criminal, often violent acts. If you would not welcome “Let’s Go ISIS” signs in your neighborhood or place of work, then neither should you accept this. Brandon and ISIS are the same thing – a commitment to use death and violence to subvert freedom and democracy, taking away basic rights from those with different beliefs and backgrounds. They should suffer the same fate.

2022 Membership

Char Lane

If you’re not a member of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach, please consider joining. If you’re already a member of the Club and haven’t yet renewed, please renew for 2022.

Membership is on a calendar year basis and your dues help provide funding for operational projects, such as *The Delray Democrat*, our meetings, other working supplies and signage for our sign waving events. Meetings are the second Thursday of each month, currently via zoom but we hope to resume live meetings as soon as it’s safe to do so.

Our goal is to educate people as to why they should vote Democratic and use Vote-by-Mail as a critical tool in support of this goal. We need your help with our sign-waving, phone calling, postcard writing,

canvassing and participating in other projects. We’ll have to work hard to help keep our democracy intact and protect it from the manifesting lunacy.

We plan to help turn Florida BLUE by electing a Democratic governor (*to replace DeSantis*) and a Democratic U.S. Senator (*to replace Rubio*) in 2022.

Please visit our website at www.demclubofdelray.org, read current and previous issues of our newsletter *The Delray Democrat* at www.thedelraydemocrat.com and join our Facebook Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/992741928168620>

Lizzy and That Wizard Of Ours — A Modern Fairytale

Steve West

Once upon a time there was a shining white city on a hill. It was ruled over by a humbug Wizard whom, without any evidence, proclaimed himself the wisest, smartest, least prejudiced, overall greatest individual who ever lived.

Meanwhile, in distant Wyoming, an unpredicted tornado lifted and twirled our heroine, Lizzy, from her bucolic home and deposited her, clinging to her dog, Harley, onto the far off land of Florida, the home of the Wizard.

Little Lizzy was immediately homesick and wanted to return to Wyoming, but she would need the help of the all-powerful Wizard whom, she was told, held the exclusive power to send her back home to her beloved farm.



Harley the Dog—Courtesy Steve West

The girl alighted on the estate of Mar-a-Lago barely missing a direct hit on a local witch who didn't care about the whole thing.

There, Lizzie met a jolly band of Munchies who were very short with her. However, they gave her a lollypop and a pair of ruby red slippers and informed her that the Wizard could be found in the faraway land of Washington. She would need to follow the I-95 road to find him.

Lizzy embarked on a perilous journey fraught with dangerous adventures. On the way she befriended a

brainless scarecrow named Gohmert, a lion with no courage named Graham, and a rusty old tin man with squeaky joints named Grassley. They each wanted something from the great man in Washington and thus became fellow travelers.

The four traveling companions, plus Harley, encountered many hair-raising escapades on their trek. These were reported in the Washington Post and New York Times. At long last the motley crew arrived at the fabled shining white city.

It wasn't easy to get an audience with the Wizard but he finally agreed to see each of them separately. Through smoke and mirrors the ruler presented himself in different aspects to each supplicant.

Finally it was Lizzy's turn to be bullied and debased by the Great One. Appearing as a ball of fire, he frightened poor Harley so badly the dog tore down the screen that the Wizard hid his real self behind. When the screen fell all who had eyes could see that the "Greatest Ever" was exposed as nothing but a 76-year-old corpulent windbag who terrorized and manipulated people to be afraid of his trumped-up power.

Standing naked before the world, he doubled down and threatened and punished Lizzy out of his frantic desperation. But the Wyoming Girl stood firm and exposed him as the "Wizard Who Had No Clothes" – but that's another story.

Beyond remorse or shame the naked Wizard blustered and boasted his loudest. Many in the kingdom still had their vision obscured by his FOXy acolytes who told them not to believe their own lying eyes.

When one of his biggest supporters literally melted away, the former Wizard left the Shining White City in disgrace. He flew his self-fueled hot air balloon back to Mar-a-Lago leaving Lizzy and Harley seemingly helplessly stranded.

But Lizzy had truth, integrity, and courage on her side. She discovered that she alone had the power to return to Wyoming.

After saving the Munchies and squaring things up in Washington she simply clicked her ruby heels and wished herself home to face her future with self-respect.

Letters

Writing to local papers is a way to influence NPAs and independents while giving aid, comfort and information to Democrats.

If it were not already apparent just how close Trump came to stealing the 2020 election, or how close Mike Pence, Nancy Pelosi, and other elected officials came to being executed by a bloodthirsty mob, the January 6 congressional hearings are dispelling all doubts.

Perhaps the most frightening takeaway from the hearings is that Trump and his army of crypto-fascists, neo-Nazis, racist thugs, and credulous fools have lost only a battle and not the war to overthrow our democracy. This time they were thwarted by Republicans who put country over party, the Constitution over ambition, Truth over Big Lies. Next time, things will be different.

When votes in the swing states are being counted in 2024, the offices with power over the tallying and certification of votes will be held by proponents of the Big Lie. Given the opportunity, they will not hesitate to use false claims of "voter fraud" to steal an election.

Convicting and jailing Trump and his minions may not be sufficient to prevent that, but failing to do so ensures that, given the opportunity, those traitors will steal the next presidential election.

Michael K. Cantwell, June 19, 2022, Miami Herald

Re "Vaccine stand infringes on parental right": I agree that having the dubious distinction of being the only state to miss the federal deadline to preorder vaccines for young children is hypocritical and unfair to parents who want to inoculate their children. This is just one instance of big government meddling in our personal lives, a conservative 180 that you noted in your editorial. Another example concerns a proposal that would deny parents gender-affirming care for their minor children. One would think that a child's mother and/or father would know best, particularly in this case. Clearly, the Governor is using the term "parental rights" selectively to advance an agenda that has no core values.

Nancy Chanin, June 26, 2022, Palm Beach Post

I remember watching some of the Benghazi and other hearings over the years, where representatives were using their time to make political statements and verbally attacking the witnesses.

Fast forward to the Jan. 6 Committee Hearings that offer a primer in good and focused behavior. There aren't self-promotional statements, but rather questions and explanations in level tones of voice showing respect and politeness to the witnesses and geared at getting to the truth. Reps. Bennie Thompson and Liz Cheney have done stellar jobs guiding the proceedings.

Thank goodness there has been no pit-bullish behavior distracting from the purpose of detailing exactly what occurred leading up to and on that fateful day.

No matter our political affiliations, it's important to flush out the facts and put safeguards in place to save the country from a repeat performance.

Char Lane, July 2, 2022, Palm Beach Post

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Editorial Board: Michael K. Cantwell (Editor), Sandra Elaisen-Cantwell, David Kulick, Char Lane, June Neal, and Rob Resnick.

This Is Only the Beginning

Rob Long

Two weeks ago, I was stripped of the office I've held for the last six years—the office I was reelected to in 2020 by over 326,000 Palm Beach County voters. And I wasn't alone. Many of the 280 elected volunteers serving on Florida's Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) may have suffered the same fate.

SWCDs have existed in all 50 states since the 1930s Dust Bowl. Florida has 56 of them. SWCDs exist to educate the public on water resource protection and execute programs that conserve hundreds of millions of gallons of water per year. They don't levy taxes or pay their five elected Supervisors.

Yet dozens if not hundreds of SWCD Supervisors were ousted from office practically overnight. It's hard to say how many whistled past the graveyard for now. None of us were removed from office for malfeasance, neglect of duty, habitual drunkenness, or for any legally defined cause in the Florida Statutes. This brazen subversion of Floridians' votes is the result of the ceaseless culture wars that have overtaken Tallahassee. Amid attacks on school districts, LGBTQ+ children, and voting rights—not many were paying attention when Florida Senate Bill 1078 crept through the legislature.

SB 1078 newly requires SWCD Supervisors to be engaged in or have ten years' experience in agriculture or to own agricultural land. Governor DeSantis waited three full months to sign SB 1078 on the night of June 15th, less than 48-hours before the qualifying deadline for candidates. Those of us who weren't even up for election suddenly became candidates. The updated qualifying paperwork wasn't available to supervisor of elections offices until noon Thursday, June 16th, giving us less than 24 hours to respond.

It's unclear right now exactly how many Supervisors couldn't qualify for the seats they already won through a fair and legal electoral process. It is clear that this purge will accomplish two things: It will create a staggering number of vacancies on SWCD boards across the state. Additionally, board seats that have traditionally been filled with scientists, teachers, engineers, landscape architects, accountants, and other professionals will be replaced by a far less demographically and ideologically diverse group.

Maitland Rep. Joy Goff-Marcil (D) stated, "Under this bill, a person without a high school diploma

that's been picking strawberries for the last 10 years would be able to serve on the board as opposed to a scientist from the University of Florida IFAS."

Florida Senator, Jeff Brandes (R) pointed out that candidates who run for sheriff don't have to have a law enforcement background. "No work requirements for legislators either. No other job, other than judge and attorney general, requires any relevant experience or degree."

Earlier this year, I received a National Environmental Achievement Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. My career and education are in Civil Engineering, but besides the six years I spent serving on Palm Beach County's SWCD (the largest agricultural county east of the Mississippi), I don't have the required experience in agriculture. Over a period of 48 hours, I became unqualified for my position. In January of next year, I must step down from the SWCD, the District I currently chair, 2-years before the end of my elected term.

This all happened for a few reasons—the petty vendetta of a Florida Senator fed up with environmental activists, animosity towards local government—but mostly just to control access to elected office. What this isn't about is government waste or inefficiency. For example, over the last three years Palm Beach's SWCD has facilitated \$615,000 in free agriculture services and over \$206,000 in free environmental education programs for public school students. We've also saved nearly 474 million gallons of water at no cost to taxpayers.

Sabotaging these boards was likely the plan all along. Next legislative session a bill to abolish all of Florida's SWCDs will probably pass, citing their drop in productivity as a justification. Abolishment was the original intent of SB 1078 before it was amended. In eight decades, no other state has abolished its conservation districts.

A water scarcity crisis in Florida looms near, expedited by saltwater intrusion and 1,000 people moving to our state per day. Capriciously destroying a network of institutions that conserve billions of gallons of water every year is dangerous. Scarier still, is the precedent this sets for democratically elected office. Who will be purged next under Florida's autocratic regime? Judges? Our City or County Commissioners? Maybe our Sheriff? This is only the beginning.

Short Cuts

Michael K. Cantwell

The Republican Party and “Jewish Ideals”

Did you see that Mike Pence claims that the “Republican Party has stood for the ideals that have been characteristic in the Jewish community”? For a moment, I thought I was reading *The Onion* or *The Borowitz Report*.

It is oxymoronic to use the word “ideal” in the same sentence as the modern “Republican Party.” For the last half-century, the Republican electoral strategy has been to sow fear, division, hatred, racism, and ignorance, from Richard Nixon’s “Southern Strategy” through Ronald Reagan’s “Welfare Queens” and Donald Trump’s vulgar vilifications.

Among Jews, there is no dearer ideal than *Tikkun olam*, the belief that we bear responsibility not only for our own moral, spiritual, and material welfare,

but also for the welfare of society at large. Our Haggadah – our tradition to tell and retell the story of our ancestors’ liberation from slavery – reminds us that we can never be truly free while others suffer slavery or deprivation, that our holiday cannot be complete while others lack food or liberty.

Jews remember a time when our children were ripped from the arms of their parents, a time when we were strangers in a strange land, a time when we were slaves of Pharaoh. The majority of us simply cannot support a political organization that demonizes immigrants, enacts laws to prevent minorities from voting, sows and celebrates race hatred, and outlaws the teaching of history.

The Shrieking Minority

Kudos to Rabbi Barry Silver for pushing back against the extremists and fundamentalists who enacted and support Florida’s 15-week abortion law, which prohibits abortions after 15 weeks, has no exceptions for rape or incest, and is brazenly unconstitutional under *Roe v. Wade*.

The Torquemadas who are imposing their religious beliefs on the rest of Florida are the Shrieking Minority. They may have captured the ears of our l’etat, c’est moi governor and his minions in the legislature, but polls demonstrate broad public support for *Roe* both in the country and in Florida.

Unfortunately, we cannot expect the rightwing justices on the Florida Supreme Court or the religious fanatics on the U.S. Supreme Court to be troubled about seizing control of women’s bodies or giving them the Hobson’s choice of breaking either Florida’s law or Jewish law. They too are part of the Shrieking Minority.

There is an answer, and that is for us to be just as noisy as the Shrieking Minority. Register. Vote Blue, No Matter Who. When we vote, we win, but when we sit home the extremists win. It’s as simple as that.

The Shackling of Andrew Gillum

Prior to being released on his own recognizance, Andrew Gillum was led into court with “his hands and legs shackled to a chain around his waist.”

Mr. Gillum stood accused of white-collar crimes. He wasn’t a flight risk. He didn’t pose a threat. How can the shackling of Mr. Gillum be defended? Were the authorities oblivious to the optics of manacled a Black man accused of white-collar crimes like some

slave being led to market? Or was that the point of the exercise?

And looking ahead to a consummation devoutly to be wished, does anyone think Donald Trump will be manacled when he is led into court to be indicted for actions that qualitatively, quantitatively, and exponentially exceed those for which Gillum stands accused?

Democratic Club of Delray Beach Officers and Directors

Michael Cantwell, President; Char Lane, Vice-President; Cheryl Perry, Secretary; David Kulick, Treasurer; Robert Averack, Parliamentarian; Peter Camacho, Mary Fader, Charlie Holbrook, June Neal, and Robert Resnick, Directors; Sandra Elaissen-Cantwell and John Ramos, Directors Emeritus.

Amen

“Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind.” Henry James, quoted in Leon Edel, *The Master*.

“Where was Pence in November when Trump started lying about the election the moment their defeat became clear? Where was he when the president enlisted the likes of Sidney Powell and John Eastman to peddle insane conspiracy theories about voting machines and preposterous interpretations of the Electoral Count Act? Where was he on invoking the 25th Amendment after the assault on the Capitol, or at least on supporting impeachment? Pence was a worm who, for a few hours on Jan. 6, turned into a glowworm.” Bret Stephens, *The New York Times*

“For a young people to be able to relish sound principles of political theory and follow the fundamental rules of statecraft, the effect would have to become the cause; the social spirit, which should be created by these institutions, would have to preside over their very foundation; and men would have to be before law what they should become by means of law.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract* (1762).

“Ron is the most selfish person I have ever interacted with,” another teammate told me. “He has always loved embarrassing and humiliating people. I’m speaking for others—he was the biggest dick we knew.” Former Yale baseball teammate of Ron DeRacist, quoted in *The New Yorker*

“One major difference between GOP and Dems is that GOP leverage their right flank to gain policy concessions and generate enthusiasm, while Dems lock their left flank in the basement [because] they think that will make Republicans be nicer to them.” *Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez*

“Public relief is a sacred debt. Society owes maintenance to unfortunate citizens.” Paragraph 21 of the 1793 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen—the ultimate statement of the ideals of the French Revolution.

“The three things that made America a beacon to the world were immigration, education, and democracy. Republicans are hellbent on destroying all three.” *Michael K. Cantwell*

Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2022 Membership Application and Renewal



Date _____ New _____ Renewal _____

Name/names of household members _____

Address _____

Community/Condo Name _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone number _____

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Send newsletter by: E-mail _____ Hand delivery _____ U.S. Mail _____

I/we are in South Florida from _____ to _____ each year or are a permanent resident _____.

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