

The Delray Democrat

February 2017

Let's Get Started by Michael Cantwell

Democrats are accustomed to cleaning up Republican disasters. We should be, we've been doing it since the Great Depression. But now we are facing the gravest threat to the Republic since . . .

Well, there really is no "since," is there? Next to Donald Trump, George W. Bush appears thoughtful and compassionate, Ronald Reagan appears coherent and focused, and Richard Nixon appears honest and forgiving.

When Barack Obama took office, 800,000 jobs were being lost every month, 45 million Americans lacked health insurance, the auto industry was on its knees, we were on the way to making the planet uninhabitable, and Republicans had us mired in a \$3 trillion war against a country that posed no threat to America.

When President Obama left office, nearly 11 million private sector jobs had been added, over 20 million previously uninsured Americans had gained health insurance, and the auto industry was back on its feet. We also made gains in the struggle against climate change, we withdrew from Iraq, and we entered a multinational agreement with Iran that prevented yet another manufactured war in the Middle East.

Now, every one of those gains is threatened. How did this happen? The principal villain is James Comey, with his unprofessional if not illegal suggestion, right before the election, that Hillary might be indicted (while remaining mum about an FBI investigation into Trump's contacts with and exposure to Russia). A close second was the corporate media, which largely ignored the issues, viewing the election as entertainment rather than as a battle for the Republic if not the planet, and now is trying to make amends.

Yet a candidate as palpably unfit as Donald Trump should not have gotten close enough for that to have mattered. If we are honest, we must admit that some of the blame for "President Trump" lies with us.

Santayana's adage "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" is generally applied to the failure to learn from past *mistakes* but it is equally applicable to the failure to learn from past *successes*. We need to learn not only what went wrong in the run-up to 2016 but also what went right in the run-up to 2008. And to some extent, this can be reduced to three words: "Fifty-State Strategy."

During Howard Dean's tenure as DNC Chair, paid organizers were placed around the country, in red states as well as blue states. And that paved the way for Democrats to recapture both Houses of Congress in 2006 and, two years later, to the historic election of Barack Obama, an election in which Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, and even Indiana went blue. Not only did those states flip back in 2016, but Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania also turned red. The situation is even more dire at the state level, with 33 states now led by Republican governors and 32 state legislatures under full Republican control (versus full Democratic control in 13 legislatures).

If we are to take back Congress in the 2018 mid-terms, if we are to reverse the precipitous declines at the state level, we will need people on the ground *in every state* to let all voters know that Democrats stand with them on the issues that matter to them. We need to be more than simply "not Trump." We need to convince voters that Democrats stand with the people, not the plutocrats.

It should not be that difficult. Polls have consistently shown that the American people (including many Trump voters), support the Democratic platform – providing affordable health care, protecting Social Security, Medicare, and the environment, raising the minimum wage, and restoring fairness to a system in which billionaires are taxed at a lower rate than their secretaries and the top 0.1% possesses almost as much wealth as the bottom 90%.

We need to get started now.

Why The Electoral College Isn't Going Anywhere Soon

By Alan Milner

In the aftermath of November's upsetting election results, which have put a different kind of minority president into the White House, many people have been talking about doing away with the Electoral College system. That is never going to happen. Here's why:

There are four reasons that the Electoral College system will never be removed from the process through which we elect presidents.

1. It would require a Constitutional Amendment to remove the Electoral College from the Constitution and replace it with the direct election of the president because the Electoral College system is hard wired into the Constitution.
2. In order to propose a Constitutional Amendment, 67 votes are required in the Senate and 290 votes are required in the House. Neither party has enough votes in Congress to pass a partisan Constitutional Amendment proposal that favored one party over the other.

3. In order to ratify an amendment, the legislatures of 38 states would have to approve the amendment. Neither party controls 38 states. The Republican party controls 33.

4. Whenever Americans start talking about doing away with the Electoral College, the people always find out that the party in power NEVER wants to do away with the Electoral College since that party is always in power BECAUSE of the Electoral College. This is especially true when the party in control of the White House did not win the popular vote, which is the case right now.

Americans have had a love-hate relationship with the Electoral College since 1804, when the Twelfth Amendment was passed, allowing for separate ballots for the president and vice president during Electoral College voting. Since then, there have been four presidential campaigns in which the more popular candidate with the most votes did not win the White House because of the Electoral College.

So, whenever you hear someone talking about how we really should do away with the Electoral College, just ask them how they propose to do that.

Too Young to Worry?

Mariane Kulick

Maybe you're in your forties with two children and a decent job. Your daughter is just entering college. Your son is a high school junior. The last thing you're thinking of is Medicare. After all, it may not even be there when you're sixty-five. Right now you're concerned about college bills, the mortgage and the dentist. Medicare is

somewhere down the road.

But consider – you get a call from Mom – Dad is in the hospital and needs surgery. So you go to Florida to give emotional support. But that's all you have to give. If Mom and Dad didn't have Medicare, you'd be giving a lot more. You'd be making a choice between the college tuition and surgery. Now you don't have to worry about medical bills. Medicare will take care of Dad.

The Delray Democrat Editorial Board:

Michael Cantwell (editor), Sandra Cantwell, David Kulick, Mariane Kulick, Alan Milner, and Linda Rubenstein

Wealth Distribution In America

by David Kulick

Few words in America are more feared than “wealth distribution,” other than perhaps “wealth redistribution.” Mention either topic and the specter of Stalin is sure to be raised, but how wealth is allocated is a significant measure of a society’s success, and it is a measure that we are failing badly. There are many studies and articles on the subject, and one good one is here: <http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/wealth.html>.

Rather than rehash the numbers, I’m just going to point out that the bottom 80% own only 11% of the country’s wealth while the top 1% owns 35% and the top 5% owns 53% - that last figure means that 5% of the population possesses more wealth than the other 95%.

Perhaps such skewed figures might be acceptable if wealth really did trickle down, so that the poorest among us could have a decent life, able to work 40 hours a week, raise a family, and retire with healthcare and without fear of starving. Maybe it wouldn’t matter how wealthy the top is if the bottom lives comfortably, but of course that isn’t the case. Oh yes, the poorest generally do live better than the poorest lived 500 years ago, but is that really a measure of success or something to be proud of?

Simply put, there’s too much wealth concentrated at the top, and not enough reaching the bottom or even the middle of the wealth spectrum. Over the last forty years, since Reagan started destroying unions and slashing taxes on the wealthy, inequality has exploded. The endless attention paid to the bottom line, usually at the expense of workers, means that anyone who doesn’t own stock falls behind. There is no law that requires corporations to enhance stockholder value at the expense of everything else. In fact, Robert Johnson (a co-founder of Johnson & Johnson) wrote that corporations are responsible first to the customer, then to the workers, then the managers, then the community, and finally to the stockholder. We seem to have forgotten that.

The Democratic Party platform didn’t specifically mention wealth distribution, but it spends page after page explaining how to achieve it, and it is really quite a remarkable document (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/papers_pdf/117717.pdf).

I don’t agree with all of it, but it’s all in there, raising wages, protecting rights, sharing profits, protecting Social Security, fair trade, fair taxes, creating jobs, sustaining our infrastructure, and lots more. Frankly, it’s an awfully good document. It’s the core statement of the Democratic Party’s values, and one that we should all read and be able to discuss.

Municipal Elections

Local elective positions are often seen as less important than federal and statewide elections. However, they are sometimes stepping stones to higher offices, for example, the Florida State Legislature. It is therefore critical that we all participate in our local elections.

Delray Beach will hold an election on March 14 to fill two seats on the **Delray Beach City Commission**.

These positions are officially non-partisan, meaning that candidates are not identified as Democrat or Republican. However, for the two open seats, the following candidates are the Democrats:

Seat 2: Kelly Barrette and James Chard

Seat 4: Shirley Johnson and Josh Smith, Jr.

By law, the Club is not permitted to endorse one Democrat against another, but we urge you to be sure to vote for a Democrat for each of the open seats.

The President's Picks

by Mariane Kulick

During the 2012 presidential campaign, **Rick Perry** was the one who said that he would eliminate three departments of government, all unnecessary. He remembered the first two but couldn't remember the name of the Department of Energy as one he would delete, and guess what? That's the one he has been given.

It was daring and almost charming of him to aspire to "Dancing With the Stars." He wasn't a great dancer and won no prize but he wanted to learn to dance only for his daughter's wedding. That's kind of a sweet thing. It doesn't much matter if he's not a Baryshnikov. He had fun and he learned something about dancing. Nothing wrong with that.

First he thought the Department of Energy was all about fossil fuels – oil and gas – and he was cozy with those and knew they could do without so much regulation. But then he found that he would be responsible not only for the old stuff he knew about but that he would also be in charge of our nuclear arsenal.

The men in whose footsteps he will be following had résumés somewhat more suited to this task. Ernest Jeffrey Moniz (Perry's immediate predecessor), is a nuclear physicist who previously served at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a Professor of Physics and Engineering Systems, as the Director of the Energy Initiative and as the Director of the Laboratory for energy and the environment. Before Moniz, the Secretary of the Department of Energy was Dr. Steven Chu, a Nobel laureate in physics.

These are tough acts to follow and Perry's daring in dancing is not quite the same as daring in nuclear matters. I doubt he can tango his way around this.

* * * *

Throughout the campaign against Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump railed about Clinton's closeness to Wall Street. He raised again and again the question

of her speeches before the big Wall Street firms. That's fair enough, except that the man he chose to head the Department of Treasury, **Steven Mnuchin**, was formerly a partner at Goldman Sachs, the epitome of Wall Street.

Here's someone who is not making money from speeches but is the very stuff of which Wall Street is made. After Goldman Sachs he ran his own hedge fund and led investors in the buyout of a failing mortgage lender during the financial crisis. The renamed company, OneWest, was notorious for its ruthless foreclosing on thousands of homes, but turned out to be very profitable for Mnuchin himself. He definitely knows how to make money for the well-connected but is hardly an advocate for the people who voted for Trump believing he would look out for working people.

* * * *

Then we have billionaire **Betsy DeVos**, a heavy donor to the Republican Party. Nominated as Secretary of Education, DeVos is no believer in *public* education. She believes in privately run, for-profit charter schools. She is also a strong advocate for school vouchers, which can be used to subsidize the cost of private, for-profit, online, and religious schools. Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, called DeVos "the most ideological, anti-public education nominee" since the position became a cabinet position.

Despite having displayed such ignorance of major provisions of education law that two Republican senators (Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine) voted against her confirmation, she was approved by a 51-50 margin, the first cabinet appointment ever to have needed a Vice President to break a deadlocked Senate.

So here we have three of the Trump's cabinet appointments, one of whom knows nothing about the Department of Energy he will be heading, one who disagrees with the Department of Education she is heading, and one heading the Department of the Treasury, coming from that very Wall Street that Trump ranted on about.

GOP “Death Panels” Prepare an Unaffordable Care Act

by Michael Cantwell

During his confirmation hearings, Rep. Tom Price, subsequently confirmed as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, bragged that the Republican replacement for the Affordable Care Act (the “ACA,” also and more widely known as “Obamacare”) would give everyone “access to health care.”

Bernie Sanders immediately burst that sound bite bubble by noting that “having access” to health insurance doesn’t mean it is affordable: “I have access to buying a \$10 million home. I don’t have the money to do that.”

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, individual premiums will skyrocket and some 18 million Americans could lose their insurance if the ACA is repealed. As a recent leaked audiotape made clear, this is making Republicans nervous.

And with good reason. Whether Republicans know it or not, the vast majority of Americans are satisfied with their ACA plans, according to a poll conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation. <http://kff.org/health-reform/poll-finding/survey-of-non-group-health-insurance-enrollees-wave-2/>. Moreover, there is solid evidence that lack of health insurance is implicated in thousands of preventable deaths every year.

Peer-reviewed studies have reported that the “uninsured” face a 25%-40% increased risk of dying prematurely than the insured, according to the Factcheck.Org article “Dying from Lack of Insurance.” <http://www.factcheck.org/2009/09/dying-from-lack-of-insurance/>.

One study (conducted just prior to passage of the ACA, a time when some 45 million Americans lacked insurance) concluded that 45,000 people were dying annually because they lacked insurance. Applying that 1:1000 ratio to the estimated 18 million who will lose their insurance if the ACA is repealed, it is reasonable to project that Republicans will be responsible for some 18,000 preventable deaths *every year*.

Even if we fail to stop what might be termed Congressionally sanctioned manslaughter, we must ensure that Republicans pay a political price for the deaths that will result from their dismantling of the ACA. Here’s how:

- Urge your Democratic representatives and senators not to cooperate with Republican efforts to “replace” the ACA. Republicans must have sole ownership of the chaos and carnage that will result from their dismantling of the ACA.
- Advise your Republican representatives and senators that you strongly oppose the dismantling of the ACA and that they will be hearing from you in November of 2018 if they fail to heed your warning.
- Immediately begin referring to the Republican committees that are working to repeal the ACA as “**death panels**.” Unlike the death panels that were all the rage in 2010, these death panels are real and will actually kill people,
- And don’t wait for Republicans to actually propose a plan to “replace” the ACA (we’ve been waiting for that for years). Christen it the **Unaffordable Care Act** to remind people of the benefits they will be losing in the transition from Obamacare. And let’s make sure that it’s dead on arrival.

Where Do You Get Your News?

Last February, CBS CEO Les Moonves said of Trump's campaign: "It may not be good for America, but it's damn good for CBS." He continued, "The money's rolling in, this is fun." He later claimed it was a joke, but that was as convincing as Donald Trump claiming that he was "joking" when he said that climate change was a Chinese hoax.

Here are some of my personal favorite alternatives among the non-"mainstream" media, if you're not already getting them:

- *The Nation*: founded by abolitionists in 1865 and continuously published since, this is perhaps the most respected progressive publication in America today
- *Democracy Now*, live streamed at <https://www.democracynow.org/>, for 20 years reporting on important stories ignored by the "mainstream" press
- *Mother Jones*, winner of the "Magazine of the Year" Award and a long-term source of solid investigative reporting. www.motherjones.com
- *The Hightower Lowdown*, the four-page newsletter published by the craggy Texan James Hightower, who believes that "the only thing that belongs in the center of the road are yellow stripes and dead armadillos." Amen to that.
- *The Intercept* available at <https://theintercept.com/>, co-founded by (among others) Glenn Greenwald and Jeremy Scahill, two of America's finest investigative reporters.

BY THE NUMBERS

16 million – number of private sector jobs created since bottom of the Great Recession

10.9 million – net number of private sector jobs created under Obama

~3 million – Hillary Clinton's popular vote margin (2,864,974)

50,000 – number of lives saved to date by the Affordable Care Act

Tens of thousands – number of Americans earmarked for preventable, premature deaths if Republicans repeal the ACA

WORTH REMEMBERING

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

Albert Einstein

"Dissent is the highest form of patriotism"

Thomas Jefferson

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

"Money doesn't talk, it swears"

Bob Dylan

Q&A

What's the name of the Republican replacement for the ACA?

The Unaffordable Care Act

How will it work?

DON'T get sick. And if you do get sick, DIE QUICKLY!

Which Congressional Committees will be responsible for drafting the Plan?

The Death Panels.

Why Third Parties Never Work in America

By Alan Milner

No third party movement has ever bumped one of the two major parties out of the running in a presidential election...but third parties can wreak havoc under the Electoral College system.

Under the "winner take all" system used by 48 of the 50 states, the winner does just that, winning ALL of the electoral votes from that state even though they might not have received even 50 percent of the vote. This means that, in order to win any electoral votes, a third party would have to out-poll both of the major parties in that state.

Neither the far-right Libertarian Party, founded in 1971, nor the far-left Green Party, founded in 2001, currently the largest "third parties" in the United States, have ever EARNED a single Electoral College vote. (The Libertarians did get ONE electoral vote in 1972 from a faithless elector but that wasn't an earned vote.) In fact, neither of these third parties has ever won a congressional seat, nor have they ever won a gubernatorial race. The Libertarians currently have three representatives in state legislatures. The Greens have none.

Since the end of Reconstruction in 1877, a total of 30 Senators, 111 Congressmen, and 28 governors have not belonged to either major party...so it is possible for a third party candidate to win an election, but it doesn't happen often.

It is virtually impossible for a third party candidate to gain enough momentum to unseat a major party candidate, but third parties can affect the outcome of an election. In 2000, Green Party candidate Ralph Nader picked up enough votes from the Democratic Party in Florida to knock Al Gore out

of the running, allowing George Bush to become the 43rd president. In 2016, Jill Stein pulled enough votes from Hillary Clinton to turn the tide in Wisconsin and Michigan. In both cases, Gary Johnson pulled enough votes from Donald Trump to put Clinton within striking distance, only to be thwarted by Stein voters.

Look, no lesser a radical luminary than Noam Chomsky has asserted that, if you live in a swing state, the radical vote is to vote for the lesser of the two evils, so the people who voted for Stein in Michigan have the right to point to Chomsky because they believed that Michigan was a safe state.

The problem is that Chomsky was only half-right because whether a state is safe is always based on the LAST election and therefore you never really know if you are in a safe state...unless you live in New York or California.

The most important reason that third parties cannot win in America is that they don't have enough voters in their parties. The second most important reason is money. Together, the two major party candidates raised \$2.32 billion in 2016. Jill Stein raised \$3.5 million in 2016, got 1,457,222 votes and spent \$2.40 per vote. Gary Johnson raised \$11.95 million, received 4,489,233 votes and spent \$2.66 per vote. Hillary Clinton spent around \$21.26 per vote while Donald Trump spent just \$14.80 per vote, but with combined spending of \$2.32 billion, it is pretty obvious why third parties fail. Money.

The takeaway for political activists: if someone wants you to vote for a third party, ask where that party is going to come up with the \$1.2 billion needed to fund a credible 50 state campaign. If they hem and haw about it, gently guide them to the nearest exit, and lock the door behind them

Trump Takes Care of the Veterans

By Mariane Kulick

According to VoteVets.org, "7% of Americans have served in the military and 31% of those are federal workers."

This is probably because the federal government gives job priority to those who have served.

Donald Trump has announced a federal pay freeze, which will hit veterans harder than any other group.

That's loving care.

NEED HELP?
by Linda Rubinstein

Are you having a problem with:

- Affordable Health Insurance
- Medicare
- Social Security
- Disability
- Veteran’s Benefits
- IRS
- Mortgage Issues
- Immigration

Congressional representatives help those in their districts as part of their constituent services. They generally handle problems involving a federal agency (e.g., Social Security) but also give referrals to State and Local offices and other organizations that can help you.

In Delray Beach and Boynton Beach, your Congresswoman is Lois Frankel (21st District).

In Boca Raton, your Congressman is Ted Deutch (22nd District).

They maintain websites with detailed information on their constituent services and how to request them. They also maintain local offices that can be contacted by phone. Below is their contact information.

Lois Frankel

website: www.frankel.house.gov
phone: 561-998-9045
toll-free: 866-264-0957

Ted Deutch

website: www.teddeutch.house.gov
phone: 561-470-5440

Next Month - Contact information for your senate and local officials.

We at the Delray Democrat would like to know how your request for help was handled. Please call us at 561-433-1112

**Democratic Club of Delray Beach
2017 Membership Application**

Date _____ New _____ Renewal _____

Name/names of household members _____

Address _____

Community/Condo Name _____ Precinct _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone number _____

(E-mail addresses are shared with the Palm Beach County Democratic Party so our members will be kept abreast of the latest County Democratic Activity. If you do not wish to receive this information, please initial here _____ and we will not share your E-mail address.).

Preferred method of contact: E-mail _____ Mail _____ Phone _____

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

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

Payment: Individual \$15 _____ Household \$25 _____ Donation _____

Please make checks payable to Democratic Club of Delray Beach and mail to 15127 Jog Road, Suite 101, Delray Beach, FL 33446-1251. Thank you and Welcome to our Club.