

The Delray Democrat*

November 2019

Heroes

Michael K. Cantwell

One year following the passage of Amendment 4, the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (“FRRRC”) statewide bus tour stopped in Palm Beach County and announced a partnership with local leaders that will permit returning citizens to register to vote even if they owe financial obligations.

No right is more precious to the citizen than the right to vote, and none is more fundamental to the state. A democracy derives its legitimacy from the consent of the governed, and a government that denies citizens the right to vote has no claim to be a functioning democracy.

Few acts are more despicable in a democracy than voter suppression, and few acts more heroic than combatting such offenses to democracy. Those who have fought tirelessly to restore voting rights to some 1.4 million disenfranchised Floridians are special people and true heroes.

It all began with FRRRC’s seemingly quixotic attempt to amend the Jim Crow–Era provision in the Florida

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Upcoming Meetings

November 14: Amendment 4 Update

December 12: Floridians for National Popular Vote & Holiday Party

January 9: City Commission Candidate Forum



*Democrat: 1. An advocate of democracy. 2. a person who believes in the political or social equality of all people.

Death of Baghdadi - Trump Turns Victory into Loss

Rob Resnick

President Trump authorized a successful raid that resulted in ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi exploding himself rather than be captured. Baghdadi was among the world's most dangerous and evil individuals and his death makes us all a little safer. Trump could have basked in a rare success and a real moment of unity. Instead, he took victory and created defeat. As a veteran who strongly supports the targeting of such insidious terrorists, I was appalled by the President's 50 minute extremely unprofessional presser in which he revealed classified information, denigrated our allies, and offered gratuitous, false partisan drivel.

According to Pentagon officials, the mission succeeded in spite of, not because of, President Trump. Because of Trump's ill-advised, hasty withdrawal from Syria, they had to scramble and accelerate the timetable for the mission, greatly increasing the risk of failure and more importantly the risk to our forces. More importantly, Trump inappropriately released an extensive amount of sensitive, classified information in his continuing pattern of national security violations. He reprehensibly placed our people in significant jeopardy and greatly threatened their ability to perform essential functions in the future. He also engaged in unprofessional bravado, speaking about Baghdadi crying, which he apparently made up. No sympathy for Baghdadi, but Presidential words and behavior have consequences and we should expect better.

While heaping praise on Russia, Iraq, and Turkey, Trump again denigrated our allies. All Russia, Iraq, and Turkey did was allow short flights over their territory – in other words nothing. He downplayed the role of the Kurds, whose intelligence and ground support on both ends made this mission possible. He gratuitously attacked our NATO allies for not doing enough when they have provided meaningful support for us between Iraq, Afghanistan, and ISIS. They have also suffered from many heinous ISIS attacks in their countries. Whatever the circumstances, that was absolutely not the time or place to disparage our closest friends and allies.

Former Presidents, including Bush and Obama, addressed the nation under similar circumstances, providing brief, solemn, and professional remarks. They reminded people what we were fighting for, the importance of the mission, and most importantly thanked and credited the courage and ability of the military. They represented the dignity of the office. Trump characteristically turned what could and should have been a 9-minute address into a 50-minute dishonorable circus. He sacrificed dignity, honor, and professionalism for his all too common bombast, self-aggrandizement, foolish attacks, and of course dishonesty. Trump also willfully and unjustifiably violated the law requiring that he notify Congressional leaders (Gang of 8). He turned a victory into a loss, threatened national security, and cost us trust among friends. He again demonstrated his complete unfitness for office.

***The Delray Democrat* is the official publication of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach.**

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Democrats Can Do (Much) More Than Chew Gum and Walk at the Same Time

Michael K. Cantwell

It did not take long after the Democrats assumed the majority in the House of Representatives this January for Republicans to begin accusing them of wasting government resources attacking the President instead of governing. This is a classic illustration of what psychologists call “projection,” for it is exactly what House Republicans did during the six years after they regained the majority in 2010.

When Republicans repeated this bit of hypocritical idiocy during Michael Cohen’s testimony before the House Oversight Committee last February, Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett offered the perfect rejoinder: “the Democratic majority can walk and chew gum at the same time.”

That said, they did manage to hobble the economy, transferring wealth from ordinary Americans to billionaires and multinational corporations and adding nearly two trillion to the federal debt with their Orwellian-titled Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Of course, exploding deficits and exploiting ordinary Americans is what Republicans do best. In fact, and to return to the metaphor of chewing gum and walking, it is the only thing Republicans know how to do.

Again, by contrast, the following is only a partial listing of the bills Democrats have passed while holding hearings that have pried the lid off and will continue to expose Mr. Trump’s blatant corruption, high crimes and misdemeanors:

“the last time Democrats held both Houses of Congress and the White House they saved the country from a second Great Depression, enacted a healthcare bill that made insurance affordable for 20 million previously uninsured Americans, and rescued the auto industry, for starters, all within two years.”

Actually, Democrats can do a lot more than chew gum and walk at the same time – the last time they held both Houses of Congress and the White House they saved the country from a second Great Depression, enacted a healthcare bill that made insurance affordable for 20 million previously uninsured Americans, and rescued the auto industry, for starters, all within two years.

Only twice in the last 120 years have the Republicans held both Houses of Congress and the White House for more than two years. The first time they plunged the country into the Great Depression and the second time they gave us the Great Recession. Only two things thwarted Republican efforts to three-peat after Donald Trump’s election: (1) the strong economy they inherited from Obama could not be destroyed that easily and (2) they lost their stranglehold on government with the 2018 midterms.

H.R. 1: For the People Act
H.R. 5: The Equality Act
H.R. 6: The American Dream and Promise Act
H.R. 7: The Paycheck Fairness Act
H.R. 8: The Bipartisan Background Checks Act
H.R. 9: The Climate Action Now Act
H.R. 987: The Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act
H.R. 1585: The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act
H.R. 1644: The Save the Internet Act

Unfortunately, all of these have ended up in the Senate graveyard over which Moscow Mitch presides. More dishonors for the scrapbook of shame that he can savor after he is retired next November.

Strange Bedfellows

David Kulick

It's difficult to select just one oddity out of the insanity that is the Trump presidency. The appointments of unqualified and just plain evil people to critical departments, the day to day impulsive position changes, and the complete refusal to understand anything, all scream out for selection. But for me, one of the oddest oddities is the role reversal I find myself facing.

Sort of like Game of Thrones, where the writers reveled in having characters that you hate one season becoming more human the next, I find myself stunned at defending the press, the CIA, the FBI.

Growing up in the early sixties, I was on picket lines at Woolworths, because even my ten year old self knew that it made no sense that people who cooked your food couldn't sit down and eat it. And after the Vietnam War began to dominate the headlines, we were off on more marches and demonstrations.

Inevitably, the FBI was the enemy. Instead of investigating the criminal actions of our government, they were infiltrating us, and undoubtedly carrying out various schemes to discredit the war opponents. We know what they did to the Civil Rights movement and Dr. King.

Meanwhile, the CIA was overthrowing legitimately elected governments and installing dictators, all while the US talked about Democracy. The press

wasn't too awful all the time, but they represented the view of their owners, who were increasingly large corporations. The press was neither left wing nor right, as much as they were just corporate.

I remember reading an issue of *Newsday* just before the Iraq war started. While the front page was exposing the lies being used to justify the imminent war, the editorials couldn't wait to start bombing.

So now, I'm forced to back the FBI and CIA against right wing attacks, and contend that the press is not the enemy.

Then we have John Bolton and Jeff Sessions. What am I to make of this? Bolton, a founder of the Project for A New American Century, a man who I believe is a war criminal, is too moral for Trump? And Jeff Sessions? I have to defend the indefensible racist Jeff Sessions? At least Jeff Sessions is such a wuss that he still wants to lick Trump's boots even after the way he was treated. Wow, talk about having low self esteem.

This President is so loony, so evil, and so corrupt, that apparently even the FBI, CIA, and a horde of horrors have had enough. Strange bedfellows indeed.

Desmond Meade: "If creating a more inclusive democracy is not something to be excited about, I don't know what is. The more people that we include the more vibrant our democracy becomes."

Dave Aronberg: "helping returning citizens to register will make our community safer . . . when citizens return to their communities and become eligible to vote they are far less likely to commit new crimes."

Heroes, continued from p. 1

Constitution that permanently disenfranchised anyone convicted of a felony by guaranteeing that voter rights would be restored upon completion of “all terms of sentence, including probation and parole.”

That required first collecting 766,200 signatures to place the proposed amendment on the ballot and then convincing 60% of voters to support it. That was done, and with a comfortable margin, as nearly 65% of voters (Republicans as well as Democrats) approved Amendment 4 last November!

The victory for democracy was short-lived, however, as Republicans responded by passing SB 7066 (on a straight party-line vote). Purporting to “interpret” and “implement” Amendment 4, the bill required returning citizens to collectively pay hundreds of millions of dollars in fines and fees before their voting rights would be restored, certainly not the way this voter interpreted the wording of Amendment 4.

Lawsuits, still pending, followed, but FRRC kept on trucking, and last Friday its statewide bus tour stopped in Palm Beach County.

As FRRC president Desmond Meade told an enthusiastic audience on a bright, clear morning, “where others see obstacles, we see opportunity.” Rather than an impediment, SB 7066 “provides a clear and unambiguous pathway to remove financial obligations, to remove those obstacles and allow an individual to register to vote.”

To cries of “amen,” he concluded, “If creating a more inclusive democracy is not something to be excited about, I don’t know what is. The more people that we include the more vibrant our democracy becomes.”

Mr. Meade was followed by the local leaders who had worked tirelessly to help remove the apparent barriers

to restoration of voting rights. If you are reading this online, you can click [here](#) and watch this happen.

State Attorney Dave Aronberg then stressed the importance of helping returning citizens, not only for citizens themselves but for the community whose safety is the principal mission of his office.

He cited studies showing that “when citizens return to their communities and become eligible to vote they are far less likely to commit new crimes.” Registering to vote reduces recidivism because it “makes returning citizens feel more involved in their communities.” In contrast, “our community is not safer when we create a permanent underclass of the disenfranchised.”

Accordingly, his office is updating court records to provide that if returning citizens cannot afford to pay fees and fines, they will not be deprived of their right to vote, adding that this will apply to old as well as old court orders. He stressed that returning citizens would remain responsible for their fees and fines, but that would not be a stumbling block to the right to vote.

He was followed by our Public Defender, Carey Haughwout, who emphasized the importance of letting people know that there’s now a process in place to help returning citizens register to vote and urged everyone to spread the word in their communities.

People seeking help registering in Palm Beach county should call **561-355-7500**. The Public Defender’s office will start the process, reviewing court records and determining what needs to be done: “we are there to support them, and help them, and get them registered to vote,” she promised. “We’ve got the process, we’ve got the people, and we are ready to go.”

Let’s spread the word and let’s get to work.

Carey Haughwout: “we are there to support them, and help them, and get them registered to vote . . . We’ve got the process, we’ve got the people, and we are ready to go.”

The Anatomy of Trump Voters

June Sandra Neal

My neighbor, a Chinese immigrant, came at me on our walkway. She overheard me discussing my anguish over Trump's prisoners, the migrant children in detention camps, and the fact that I have been unable to do anything to help them. Lawsuits filed by immigrant advocacy groups, letters to Congress, all have yielded nothing.

In her heavily-accented English, my neighbor shot, "You are a communist. The Democrats are all communists. Bring everybody in, give them everything for nothing. Trump will stop it." The rant was lengthier, but that sums up its theme. She saw no correlation between her opportunity to start a new life in this country and others, of different nationalities, who wish to do the same.

Then I went inside and got a phone call from an old friend in Connecticut; I was surprised, since she had chosen to sever the friendship because of my stand against Trump. She sends her daughter to a private religious school. She will vote for Trump again because his Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, who couldn't answer a single question at her confirmation hearing, promised public money for private religious schools. When I asked how she could support someone who is taking from the 95% of American students who attend public schools to help the 5% in private and religious education, this friend, who had always demonstrated a concern for others, could not answer. Perhaps her old self was muted by the re-conditioned one that Trumpism has spawned.

Some call it single-issue politics. It is also irrational. Many Orthodox Jews believe Trump is Israel's only true friend and Netanyahu turns Trump sycophant every opportunity he gets. Yet Obama supported every loan guarantee that Israel requested during his administration. Against all evidence, others cite the economy (which arced from near-disaster to a dramatic upswing under Obama) or the exclusion of immigrants (by the very descendants of immigrants) or the sense of racial and national superiority he has legitimized.

Evangelicals have shown unyielding support for Trump's pretend pro-life and pro-Israel rhetoric, despite the fact that his every action is antithetical to their values. Why? In his new book, *The Immoral*

Majority, Why Evangelicals Chose Political Power Over Christian Values, Ben Howe traces the evangelicals' feelings of rejection when President Obama was inaugurated (why I cannot say) to the promise of a savior in Trump who nominated two anti-abortion Supreme Court justices. Yet, Howe argues, this is from a man of "untold chasms of depravity." They know it. And the result, Howe says, is that the evangelicals live in "a vortex of moral ambiguity and relativism."

Then I spotted a recent op-ed in the *New York Times* by conservative writer Brett Stephens discussing his dilemma about filling his home bookshelves with titles he considers superior, while disagreeing with the immoral views of their authors. He chose to keep the books.

I wrote back and argued that Stephens resolved his literary moral predicament by severing the books from their provenance. It is logical. One thing is not the other. Or is it?

I once asked my literature students a long-lived question, "Can art be immoral?" Consider the well-crafted novel that glorifies rape and misogyny written by one who leads a blameless life. Hitler hoped to get into the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. What honest analysis can blot out the DNA shared between the author and the art?

But politics is irrational. Many American voters support Donald Trump because of specific issues (abortion) or amorphous ones (racial superiority). Logic goes in the dustbin.

History warns us of the catastrophic consequences of such intellectual butchering, of rationalizing the depravity of a dictator who inflames the racial, national or religious enmity that says, "We Are Better Than the Others." This is the enemy before us, not GDP figures or trade regulations. And this is what we need to recognize if we are to win the next election.

Supporting a depraved president for his promises of prosperity and racial supremacy is like taking candy from a pedophile.

As Yeats asked, "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" We cannot.

Greta Thunberg Challenges Us All. Will We Rise to the Challenge?

Below are excerpts from the comments of the remarkable 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg speaking to the United Nations. She is the conscience of a world that has no conscience:

My message is that we'll be watching you.

This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you!

You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!

For more than 30 years, the science has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away and come here saying that you're doing enough, when the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight.

You say you hear us and that you understand the urgency. But no matter how sad and angry I am, I do not want to believe that. Because if you really understood the situation and still kept on failing to act, then you would be evil. And that I refuse to believe.

The popular idea of cutting our emissions in half in 10 years only gives us a 50% chance of staying below 1.5 degrees [Celsius], and the risk of setting off irreversible chain reactions beyond human control.

Fifty percent may be acceptable to you. But those numbers do not include tipping points, most feedback loops, additional warming hidden by toxic air pollution or the aspects of equity and climate justice. They also rely on my generation sucking hundreds of billions of tons of your CO2 out of the air with technologies that barely exist.

So a 50% risk is simply not acceptable to us — we who have to live with the consequences.

To have a 67% chance of staying below a 1.5 degrees global temperature rise — the best odds given by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] — the world had 420 gigatons of CO2 left to emit back on Jan. 1st, 2018. Today that figure is already down to less than 350 gigatons.

How dare you pretend that this can be solved with just 'business as usual' and some technical solutions? With today's emissions levels, that remaining CO2 budget will be entirely gone within less than 8 1/2 years.

There will not be any solutions or plans presented in line with these figures here today, because these numbers are too uncomfortable. And you are still not mature enough to tell it like it is.

You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you.

We will not let you get away with this. Right here, right now is where we draw the line. The world is waking up. And change is coming, whether you like it or not.

Thank you."

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Take the (Indivisible) Pledge

THE 2020 CANDIDATE PLEDGE.

We must defeat Donald Trump. The first step is a primary contest that produces a strong Democratic nominee. The second step is winning the general election. We will not accept anything less. To ensure this outcome, I pledge to:

Make the primary constructive. I'll respect the other candidates and make the primary election about inspiring voters with my vision for the future.

Rally behind the winner. I'll support the ultimate Democratic nominee, whoever it is – period. No Monday morning quarterbacking. No third-party threats. Immediately after there's a nominee, I'll endorse.

Do the work to beat Trump. I will do everything in my power to make the Democratic Nominee the next President of the United States. As soon as there is a nominee, I will put myself at the disposal of the campaign.

Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2020 Membership Application

Date _____ New _____ Renewal _____

Name/names of household members _____

Address _____

Community/Condo Name _____

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 ___ Text ___

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 \$20 _____ Household \$30 _____ 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.