

The Delray Democrat*

January 2020

An Existential Election

Michael K. Cantwell

It's a cliché to warn that an election is the most important in our lifetime. That doesn't make it less true. Moreover, every time we ignore the true threat to our community, the consequences of our failure to act are worse.

It was true in 1980 when a genial snake-oil salesman replaced FDR's New Deal with a Raw Deal, launching four decades during which inequality has risen to the highest level since the Gilded Age in which Robber Barons ruled.

It was true in 2000 when the corporate media decided the most important qualification for the presidency was which candidate would be the most fun to have a beer with, and when too many people failed to learn the lesson of 1980, namely, that the perfect is the enemy of the good.

It was true in 2016 when we elected a man who is morally, temperamentally, psychologically, and intellectually unfit for any public office, much less our highest, a man beside whom George W. Bush appears thoughtful and compassionate, Ronald Reagan appears coherent and focused, and Richard Nixon appears honest and forgiving.

What is different about 2020 is that the threat is to our very existence. Now there may be 140 discrete reasons Trump is in the White House, as a friend recently suggested, but chief among them is that far too many people failed to vote . . . or voted for a third party candidate with no chance to win.

Have we learned nothing? I hear constant complaints about our candidates – Too old! Too young! Too progressive! Not progressive enough! What would they prefer? Children in cages? A planet past the tipping point? Endless war? A theocracy? Well, that's what's coming folks, unless we get together behind whoever is our nominee. See our back cover and "take the pledge."

And remember, there's reason for hope. The corporate media that is so fond of pointing out the weaknesses of each of the Democratic candidates is the same corporate media that was so certain Donald Trump could never win in 2016. They were wrong then, and they'll be wrong again, so long as we stick together. Solidarity Forever!

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"IF YOU DON'T VOTE, YOU DON'T COUNT"

"If you don't vote, you don't count" was both the creed and the epitaph of Vernon Ferdinand Dahmer, Sr., president of the Hattiesburg, Mississippi, NAACP, who was murdered by the Ku Klux Klan on January 10, 1966.

Democrats outnumber Republicans locally and nationally, but we lose elections we should win because Republicans turn out in greater numbers.

Low turnout from Democrats in 2016 gave Republicans the White House, and high turnout in 2018 gave Democrats the House and many state Legislatures and Governors' Mansions.

If you don't vote, you dishonor the graves of the thousands who have died fighting for the franchise. Get registered if you're not already, make sure your friends are registered, and get out and get them out to vote.

MKC

The Devil's Enterprise at Christmas

Sandra Elaiszen-Cantwell

The United States media are always at pains to tell us that Christmas is the time of year to think about the beauty of giving, of peace and good will, the joy of being with family, and our great good fortune to live in a land where decency and blessings prevail.

Now, however, the truth is that we find ourselves called upon to accept the outrageous depravity tenanted by the White House and spewing animosity and violence on a daily basis. Racial virulence is one aspect of the president's demeanor as we heard when he described the "shithole" nations of Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean where dark-skinned populations reside.

Yet, race is not the only card he is playing in his plans to reduce the number of immigrants seeking entry to the US. The [Los Angeles Times](#) notes that Trump and his immigration advisers (such as Stephen Miller) have designed his policy to limit admissions to only those wealthy enough to buy their own health insurance within 30 days of arrival.

The fact is that lawful permanent residents cannot receive Medicaid [for their first five years](#) in the United States. And the Affordable Care Act makes its subsidies available only to [noncitizens lawfully present](#). "But the new policy would make someone ineligible to immigrate if they need such help, setting an unduly high financial hurdle."

This edict was effectively intercepted by an Oregon District Court Judge, Michael Simon, who issued an injunction that is awaiting a legal challenge. Judge Simon therefore concluded that Trump's policy would have "significantly altered the nature of immigration by effectively barring poor people." He added that the President's rule was surely in conflict with the Immigration and Naturalization Act. Moreover, the President offers no national security or foreign relations at all as justification for this sweeping change in immigration law."

The legal immigration system is further under attack by the White House, aiming at family unification – its desire being to hugely expand enforcement efforts and reduce protections for asylum seekers and unaccompanied child migrants. Such major changes are an unbalanced arrangement to enact hardline and wrongful regenerate schemes. It has been shocking and sadly observed that child migrants have been illegally removed from their parents, thus creating an "unaccompanied" status, and confined in detention centers that are little more than prisons.

So, here we are my fellow citizens – in a new year and facing another continuing blow to democracy and – to use a term in rare use these days, civic virtue. We need to remember that except for Native Americans, every one of us is/was an immigrant.

Many would have us believe that our human civilization is uniquely predetermined and invariant – that is, we have now achieved a state of grace; that where we are and how we live at this moment (particularly true of Americans), can be attributed to only two components – those who are natives and those who are migrants, with migrants being the outliers. But this is not true. As an article in the National Geographic explains, however, the reality is that all "Humans are a migratory species." If we are fixed at this moment, be assured that the change in climate alone will bring about alien and distressing migrations.

Biased, narrow opinions are retrograde in their social postures and those who hold them look longingly at eras of white supremacy when accessibility to privilege and homogeneity ruled. These opinions are far more destructive and inapposite. "The idea that we can return to a simpler, better, and non-contentious past is an imaginary construct and an impossibility." The future will prove this belief impermissible.

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Editorial Board: Michael K. Cantwell (Editor), Sandra Elaiszen, David Kulick, June Neal, and Rob Resnick.

Address for submissions and letters: editor@thedelraydemocrat.com; letters@thedelraydemocrat.com or by snail mail to *The Delray Democrat*, 15127 Jog Road, Suite 101, Delray Beach, FL -1251.

Lying Liars and the Lying Liars Lying for the Lying Liars

Rob Resnick

In 2 weeks of public, transparent, professional hearings, the House Intelligence Committee heard from almost 20 witnesses consisting of career public servants (who had earned impeccable records and reputations for integrity) and Trump's political appointees, all of whom were his supporters, not "never-Trumpers." None of the witnesses was pursuing a personal crusade against Trump or his policies. Each answered a subpoena that compelled him or her to appear and tell the truth under oath. The result was an unequivocal, uncontroverted factual predicate supporting the serious allegations against Trump as well as his incredible dishonesty.

The hearings were thorough and painted an incredibly clear picture. Gordon Sondland, who donated \$1,000,000 to Trump, effectively purchasing his ambassadorship to the EU, testified that Trump orchestrated a quid pro quo, essentially bribing Ukraine to announce an improper and baseless investigation to get the \$400 million military aid package they desperately needed. Every witness wholly corroborated the facts of Trump's abuse of power. Collectively, they painted an irrefutable picture.

With nowhere to go, Trump and Republicans chose to dishonor themselves by furthering their unprecedented campaign of dishonesty and deceit. Their strategy was to deny, distract, and distort at any cost. They persisted no matter how ridiculous, how contrary to proven facts, or how dangerous their tactics were to the country. Trump banks on the notion that the American people, especially his base, are ignorant and uninformed. They will not watch the hearings or read about them and thus are extremely susceptible to whatever farfetched machinations Trump spins. The fact that the polls did not move after the hearings and the country remains evenly split on impeachment ratifies this despicable approach.

They asserted that Trump was merely focused on anti-corruption efforts. The evidence is much to the contrary. The State Department, Intelligence Community, and Department of Defense had all reviewed the Ukrainian arms sale and officially certified that Ukraine had taken the proper steps against corruption. Trump removed a highly effective and respected ambassador, Marie Yovanovitch, who was a committed anti-corruption champion, solely because she would

not support HIS corruption. In almost 3 years in office, Trump has not shown any interest whatsoever in corruption anywhere in the world, including his own administration, yet he wants people to believe that in this once instance that was his only concern.

Republicans baselessly accuse Democrats of an unfair process, but the reality is that the process was established and enacted by the Republican majority led by then-Speaker John Boehner. Republicans falsely claim the White House did not have the opportunity to participate or to challenge the evidence. They most certainly did. However, the administration has chosen to obstruct and distort, intimidate witnesses, issue false statements, refuse to comply with subpoenas, and prevent witnesses from testifying or turning over documents. President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, Chief of Staff Mulvaney, and other leaders all refused to testify. Republicans claimed the case was all hearsay with no primary witnesses. They cannot properly make that claim when they are withholding evidence and preventing the primary witnesses from participating. Republicans put on a fallacious display to gain access to the depositions, falsely claiming they were not allowed into the hearing. The truth is that the committees that conducted the depositions were the standing committees on which they had full membership, all members had the ability to attend, and most Republicans fully participated.

The truth is clear and the facts incontrovertible. Anyone paying attention knows what Trump did and believe it to be wrong. The focus is on what should happen. Now that the House has impeached Trump, the Senate must determine what sanction to impose. Republicans want the country to acquiesce around the reality that we have a corrupt president and this is just how Trump does things. "Get over it..." They want us to simply accept that Trump uses personal and private means to conduct official business, all in secret from Congress and the American people. This is what they do in Russia and authoritarian regimes. It is not what we do in the U.S. and in free democracies. The rule of law and the Constitution must always reign supreme. It is highly unlikely the Senate will do its duty. The duty will be with the American people in November to ensure Trump leaves office and we return to our democratic traditions.

Leave Behind

David Kulick

I had my annual physical exam a little while ago, and part of that involves filling out a form about my mental health. Am I depressed? Do I worry, am I losing sleep? Do I feel helpless? I'm fine, I'm not depressed, and I'm not worried. Then I start thinking a little more about it. From my personal viewpoint, I'm ok. I'm retired, my 401k is doing fine, and no hurricane hit my house yet.

Then I start thinking a little more about it because, unlike the sociopath in the White House, I actually care about other people. I'm worried because our planet is in deadly danger, and it's the only planet we have. Our President wants more oil pipelines and more drilling offshore and in pristine areas, while the Arctic melts and the rainforest shrinks, and while it's getting hotter and hotter. While my 401k goes up, workers who have no money to invest get none of that benefit, and in fact most of our people aren't going to be able to retire. And my 401k is only going up because of a huge tax cut for the wealthy that gutted our treasury and mortgaged our children's future.

While every other industrialized country manages to have healthcare for all their people, we can't seem to do it and the Republicans are stripping away the protections of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and replacing it with nothing.

Our President lies every time he opens his mouth. He'll release his tax returns, and then fights every attempt to get them. He has a Great Perfect healthcare plan, but he doesn't. He has to flush his toilet 15 times because the awful EPA makes toilets water-efficient. Do you flush more than once? Maybe he has to flush more because he's full of crap.

They've decided that the best way to beat impeachment is to generate a crisis with Iran and very possibly start another war. That's a tried and true method to get your popularity up; start a war and start waving the flag around.

So yes, I'm worried, and I'm scared, and I'm depressed. But that doesn't make me ill; I'd be ill if I weren't worried and scared and depressed. I'm worried that I'm not doing enough. I'm scared that I'm not doing enough. I'm depressed because I don't know if I can do enough.

That's where you come in. No, I can't beat Trump by myself but we can do it together. I care who the Democratic nominee is, I have my preference, but, as one bumper sticker said, "Any responsible adult in 2020." Once the nomination goes to one of the candidates, we must unite behind him or her and work our butts off to win. Our very future depends on it.

I'm sorry I missed you today when we came calling, because we really need to talk. Republicans win because they suppress the vote in dozens of ways, often just by making it difficult or convincing people that it doesn't matter. In fact, voting is the ONLY thing that matters. I've taken to voting by mail because it's easy and makes sure that it gets done, but if you can vote early, do that. Try not to wait until Election Day because too many things can go wrong and you miss voting. Don't let that happen.

We need you. We need you to come to our meetings, talk to your neighbors, and make sure we get the vote out. This is no joke, this is deadly serious.

Plus ca Change

From the "Plus ca Change" Department, this timely stanza from George Herbert's poem "Miserie" (1633)

*Man is a foolish thing, a foolish thing,
Folly and Sinne play all his game.
His house still burns, and yet he still doth sing,*

*Man is but grasse,
He knows it, fill the glasse.*

MKC

A Primer for People Who Can't Tell the Difference Between Democrats and Republicans

Michael K. Cantwell

Democrats Fight for Ordinary Americans

For over a century, Democrats have fought for ordinary Americans. With little or no help from Republicans, we've developed programs on which Americans now depend:

- Medicare, Medicaid, and President Obama's Affordable Care Act ("ACA")
- Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Minimum Wage and 40-hour workweek

In addition, the Democratic House [passed hundreds more bills](#) in 2019, including laws that would protect Americans with pre-existing conditions, lower the cost of prescription drugs, expand background checks, and address the existential threat of climate change. All of these bills have been blocked in the Senate by Majority Leader "Moscow Mitch" McConnell.

Republicans Fight for Billionaires Against Ordinary Americans

The Republican ["tax cut"](#) rewards plutocrats and punishes ordinary Americans:

- The top 0.1% (people with income over \$1.5 million) receive 60% of the benefits. The top 1% of taxpayers receive over 80% of the benefits.
- If your income is under \$75,000, you'll get a tax INCREASE over the ten-year life of the bill.

Republicans will raid Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid to pay for the "tax cut":

- The "tax cut" will [increase the deficit](#) by \$1.9 trillion over ten years.
- Trump calls for [\\$1.9 trillion in cuts](#) to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Republican attacks on affordable health insurance cause premature, unnecessary deaths:

- Republicans eliminated the ACA's "individual mandate," [causing insurance costs to jump](#).
- More than [three million Americans lost health insurance](#) in Trump's first year in office, jumping to [four million](#) in 2018 and projected to reach [13 million by 2027](#).
- Ron DeSantis refuses federal funds that would insure 840,000 Floridians through the ACA.
- The "uninsured" face a [25%-40% increased risk](#) of dying prematurely. One pre-ACA study estimated that lack of insurance was responsible for [45,000 deaths every year](#). Do the math; people are dying from Republican greed.

Republicans are poisoning Americans and destroying the environment:

- Former EPA Chief and climate denier Scott Pruitt suppressed a study that found an alarming level of chemicals in America's drinking water that can cause [birth defects, kidney cancer, and thyroid diseases](#).
- Trump rolled back or announced plans to [roll back 83 environmental regulations](#) involving air and water pollution, drilling and extraction, toxic substances, and animal protection.
- After lobbying by the chemical industry, [the EPA will not look at](#) air, water or ground contaminants when determining the health and safety risks of potentially toxic chemicals.

Pensacola was Preventable

Rob Resnick

There should never be occasion to question whether the enemy has infiltrated our ranks, yet this was exactly the horrific failure that led to the tragic shooting at the Pensacola Naval Air Station. It was absolutely terrorism, despite President Trump's deflections. I will not repeat the social media commentary that accompanied this horrific and spineless act of mass murder. That gives life to the illegitimate. Suffice it to say the message and intent of those involved was clear. Ironically, it appears that these Saudi Arabian officers were upset in part by the U.S. support of their own nation's defense. The takeaway is that there is just no logic or sincerity in anything they posit, just an insidious quest for senseless violence by evil cowards.

When Saudi Arabia, or any country, sends military officers to train here, they must certify the individuals and guarantee they are not terror threats. If we and the sending nation cannot properly vet certain candidates, they should not be admitted. The Saudi leadership has much better fidelity over their personnel than we would. Are we to believe that they vetted all of these officers and all satisfied the process? How could they have gotten it so wrong with a group of officers attending this program. We have strong candidates from many nations vying for slots so why did Saudi Arabia get so many into one program to the exclusion of so many other friendly nations? It all relates back to a flawed relationship between the U.S. and Saudis.

The Saudi leadership is wholly complicit and shame on our senior leaders who continue to see them as reliable friends and partners. Remember, the Saudis never accounted for how all but one of the 9/11 terrorists were Saudi Arabian and our government

has unfathomably protected them ever since. More recently, the Saudis have not accounted for their torture-murder of journalist Jamaal Khashoggi. Saudi Arabia produces or supports some of the worst extremists in the region and exports their hatred and violence around the world. We should work with the Saudis where we have common interests and seek good relations. However, we have no basis to trust them or partner with them. They should not be allowed into our military schools until such time as they demonstrate true commitment against terrorism, extremism, and violence. Our military readiness and safety must come first.

We understandably look for blame in the face of such atrocity. Plainly stated, the blame lies with those who committed the act. They did this and they should suffer the eternal consequences. That said, there is also moral responsibility. As discussed, the Saudi leadership bears significant responsibility. President Trump bears some responsibility. His close ties with the Saudi royal family led to misplaced trust in them and increased involvement. The NRA bears some responsibility. The shooter legally purchased his weapon in Florida. The NRA opposes restricting even those on the terror watch list from purchasing weapons. Maybe a reasonable background check could have red-flagged this purchase, but the NRA opposes those as well.

The amazing, dedicated professionals at Pensacola will continue their great work. They should never again have to fear an enemy in their ranks. If any good comes from this tragedy, it is the hope that we improve the selection, vetting, and admittance process for foreign military members.

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Is the Economy That Good?

Steve Fradkin

The Trumpies are fond of telling us that the economy is booming. But is it really? Not according to *Fortune Magazine's* December cover story, "Why Trump is Bad for Business." Here are some **talking points** to share with your friends and neighbors. (*Quotes from the Fortune article*)

"Despite several seemingly pro-business policies . . . the first career-businessman President has become bad for business."

"The fear among many businesspeople is that...he's doing more harm than good."

"Today, shares of all America's major steelmakers are trading below where they were before Trump's election," despite his promises to bring the steel industry back.

Trickle down? "The Congressional Research Service found no indication of a surge in wages in 2018 either compared to history or relative to GDP growth." Instead, corporations have spent much of their increased spending power to buy back stock, to the tune of over a trillion dollars.

"The stock market boom has evaporated...adjusted for inflation [since January 2018], the gain is less than 2%."

Anticipated GDP growth for next year is just 2% -- "in line with growth since 2000, which has averaged 2.1%."

"Trump's highest-profile policy prescriptions, reducing trade and immigration, have long been opposed by economists across the political spectrum."

Immigration reform? Deportations are down (276,000/yr.) compared to Obama's 383,000/yr. But legal immigration is down sharply (200,000 last year vs. over a million in 2014), which "is bad news for American business and industry...America's technology sector is unimaginable without immigrants... 71% of tech employees in Silicon Valley are foreign-born."

"The Congressional Budget Office forecasts...trillion-dollar annual deficits for at least the next decade... [assuming] no recession," thanks to the **don't-tax-but-spend-anyway** Republicans.

So when your friends and neighbors rave about how good Trump has made our economy, you can set them straight. More than the buffoon we may think he is, Donald Trump is bad for America, plain and simple. Spread the word. ***Help make the blue sun shine on the Sunshine State.***

Imagine

Imagine if every evening news program opened with one of the following:

Climate change is occurring earlier and more rapidly than expected. Failure to act now, and act decisively, will lead to irreversible and catastrophic changes to the planet. And now, in relatively insignificant news . . .

After declining for a decade, the number of Americans who lack health insurance increased last year and is now approaching 28 million. Lack of healthcare is associated with a significantly higher incidence of premature, preventable death. Here now, some relatively insignificant news . . .

Fortune 500 CEOs continue to be taxed at a lower rate than their secretaries, and the 400 richest Americans are now being be taxed at a lower rate than any other income group. And now, in relatively insignificant news . . .

MKC

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 _____

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