

Let's Stay Friends; Don't Mention Trump

I must grudgingly admit that regarding performing his duties as President of the United States, Donald Trump has significantly exceeded my expectations.

Of course, my expectations were within six months of taking office he would have involved us in a nuclear war with one or more of our adversaries, or possibly even one of our allies. Measured by that yardstick he's doing a fantastic job.

In 2016 I was as surprised as anyone when Trump won the presidency. At the time, I found myself saying "It was an anti-Hillary vote more than pro-Trump. I get that. And it's not all bad – I was tired of the same old governmental disfunction. I welcome fresh, new disfunction." Well I was wrong.

I have close friends, Trump supporters, who will remain my friends as long as his name is never mentioned. How is this possible? Until Trump I've been able to find common ground and joke around with staunch conservatives, but not anymore. That's how divisive and polarized politics has become.

In fairness to Trump, and speaking strictly as the owner of a 401K, I couldn't be happier. Neither can the richest 1% of Americans, who own over 50% of all stocks, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research.

But it's not just about "the economy, stupid," as James Carville might say. Income inequality is my hot button, and the United States is the world leader in this category. One fun fact is that (according to Forbes magazine) in 2018 just three men - Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett — held combined fortunes worth more than the total wealth of the poorest 50% of all Americans.

This issue must be addressed, and soon. Consequently, if Daffy Duck turned out to be the Democratic nominee, I'd at least read his position papers. My feeling, and the feeling of many others, is "anyone but Trump." For me, that includes every member Congress regardless of affiliation.

Donald Trump does not clear my first hurdle of minimum requirements for any presidential nominee, and that's character. Among other crippling deficiencies, the man has an astounding ability to deny objective reality, otherwise known as lying. Few employers would hire applicants to a position of responsibility who

were afflicted with this flaw, or retain said people after they repeatedly demonstrated it.

I really fear what may happen if Trump is reelected and no longer restrained by the necessity of staying re-electable. He'd probably feel validated in all the crazy things he's done and said. He probably wouldn't be able to resist appointing a couple of right-wing Supreme Court justices under the age of 40 to ensure his legacy survives another generation or two.

It's easy to argue that what's needed nationally is a total political housecleaning. If the Democrats end up with a nominee who proposes aggressive and revolutionary programs to address all the very real ills that afflict our society, our reward will be...four more years of Donald Trump. I really don't think the swing voters who will decide this election will go for it.

I caucused for Buttigieg, the spelling of which I had to crib from the woman sitting next to me so I could fill out the ballot properly. (Close your eyes right now and give it a try). Even he may be too progressive for swing voters, but I voted my conscience for no practical reason. I suppose the best choice to beat Trump is the steady but uninspiring Joe Biden, whose qualifications have Daffy Duck beat all to hell.

A friend recently mentioned she's glad to be done with the endless campaign commercials, to which I replied, "Yes, I was really missing the endless prescription medication commercials." By the way, if the Iowa Caucus survives its latest black eye I'll be surprised. I still love the principle involved, but we probably shouldn't have subbed out the vote counting technology to the Marx Brothers.

Writers Group member Dave Parsons longs for a return to the days when the President of the United States was arguably the smartest person in the room.