

To the Editor December 3, 2020

Things I have learned

Having survived yet another Thanksgiving, only this time in a global pandemic and economic depression, I have had some time to reflect on what I am thankful for and what have learned in the past four years. I am thankful that our democracy is strong enough to survive the orange battering ram who cheated his way into the people's house. I am thankful for the 80 plus million people who believe in the continuation of Democratically elected Leaders; although some 70 plus million believe that trying out an Authoritarian Ruler is not a bad idea. They believe this despite this system working out so well for the Italians and Germans in the thirties and forties, and is not working out so well for Central, South American and African countries now.

I have also learned and relearned some things in these last 1400 or so days.

- There are not Pros and Cons to all issues, but there are two sides. No, they are not Liberal or Conservative, red or blue, or right, or left. They are Right and Wrong, with Right typically being the hardest choice. There are no pros and cons to racism, sexism, or taking children from their mothers at the border, nor allowing machine guns to kill masses of people including children. These are moral choices. I have also learned that the so-called Evangelical Christians appear to be the least moral among us.
- It is a bad idea to allow businesses to make money from the pain and suffering of other people. The *invisible hand of the Market*, does not work when people are sick and dying. (See PPE and testing shortages) Lack of investment in our health care systems have not served us well. Short of more socialism, a democratic government is our only hedge against unbridled vulture capitalism.
- People are often corrupted in an attempt to obtain money. People are definitely made morally bankrupt and become disconnected from conscience in an attempt to obtain and retain power.
- People are susceptible to thought cults. We already knew this based on Scientology and Televangelists, but they do not correlate being told to ignore inputs from science, traditional media, and respected authorities to raise any red flags that they are being duped.
- The lack of investment in our schools, and failure to innovate from a 20th century factory school model has not served us well. All our schoolchildren should have an IEP. (Individualized Education Plan) Income inequality has left our children without the tools for a virtual education, and our teachers without the skills and remuneration they deserve. Corporate monopolies have left our children as well as the rest of us without the necessary digital connectivity.
- While Social media has some value in connecting people, it also brings out our worse instincts and as such, is predatory on individuals and parasitic on our society. Those who choose to make up lies and spread them everywhere would do well to heed this warning.
- When we are wrong about something, it is usually because we do not know enough about it, or are not willing to put in the effort to learn.

I know that we no longer listen to or value our elders as we have in generations past, exemplified by the 100,000 dead and many more suffering from the virus in senior care facilities, but:

If we cannot agree on facts, we will have no democracy.

If we cannot agree on truth, we will have no civilization.

If both of these things happen, we will revert to a brutal animal kingdom very quickly.

Now you know, and you may have heard your last warning.