

THE HANCOCK COUNTY DEMOCRAT



HANCOCK COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

THE WORLD HAS LOVED, HATED AND ENVIED THE U.S. NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE PITY IT

by Fintan O'Toole, "Irish Times" April 25, 2020



Over more than two centuries, the United States has stirred a very wide range of feelings in the rest of the world: love and hatred, fear and hope, envy and contempt,

awe and anger. But there is one emotion that has never been directed towards the US until now: pity.

However bad things are for most other rich democracies, it is hard not to feel sorry for Americans. Most of them did not vote for Donald Trump in 2016. Yet they are locked down with a malignant narcissist who, instead of protecting his people from Covid-19, has amplified its lethality. The country Trump promised to make great again has never in its history seemed so pitiful.

Will American prestige ever recover from this shameful episode? The US went into the coronavirus crisis with immense advantages: precious weeks of warning about what was coming, the world's best concentration of medical

and scientific expertise, effectively limitless financial resources, a military complex with stunning logistical capacity, and most of the world's leading technology corporations. Yet it managed to make itself the global epicentre of the pandemic.

As the American writer George Packer puts it in the current edition of the Atlantic, "The United States reacted ... like Pakistan or Belarus – like a country with shoddy infrastructure and a dysfunctional government whose leaders were too corrupt or stupid to head off mass suffering." It is one thing to be powerless in the face of a natural disaster, quite another to watch vast power being squandered in real time – willfully, malevolently, vindictively. It is one thing for governments to fail (as, in one degree or another, most governments did), quite another to watch a ruler and his supporters actively spread a deadly virus. Trump, his party, and Rupert Murdoch's Fox News became vectors
(Continued on page 2 "World")

THE FORTUNATE MISTER OMAN

By Bruce Workman

During most of the 20th and 21st centuries in Hancock County, elections were decided by the Republican Primary Election. In March of 1996, Steve Oman won the nomination for Hancock County Commissioner for a term to begin in January 1997. His positions over two terms reflected a philosophy of fiscal conservatism. Oman voiced opposition to nearly every proposal for flood con-

trol. Despite a history of flooding dating back to the 19th century, the flood mitigation proposals of 1962 and 1992, and the four floods of 1997, he maintained a preference for rudimentary river clearing and preserving farmland.

Deteriorating popularity marred Steve's second term. Citizens expressed opposition to his record of rigid austerity even in times of relative prosperity.
(continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

The World continued	2
Oman continued	3
Make America Great	3
Protesting Health	3
Landfill Expansion	5
The World continued	4
Oman continued	4



“World” continued from page 1

of the pestilence.

The grotesque spectacle of the president openly inciting people (some of them armed) to take to the streets to oppose the restrictions that save lives is the manifestation of a political death wish. What are supposed to be daily briefings on the crisis, demonstrative of national unity in the face of a shared challenge, have been used by Trump merely to sow con-

fusion and division. They provide a recurring horror show in which all the neuroses that haunt the American subconscious dance naked on live TV..

If the plague is a test, its ruling political nexus ensured that the US would fail it at a terrible cost in human lives. In the process, the idea of the US as the world's leading nation – an idea that has shaped the past century – has all but evapo-

rated.

Other than the Trump impersonator Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, who is now looking to the US as the exemplar of anything other than what not to do? How many people in Düsseldorf or Dublin are wishing they lived in Detroit or Dallas?

It is hard to remember now but, even in 2017, when Trump took office, the conventional wisdom in the US

THE HANCOCK COUNTY DEMOCRAT

was that the Republican Party and the broader framework of US political institutions would prevent him from doing too much damage. This was always a delusion, but the pandemic has exposed it in the most savage ways, Abject surrender

What used to be called mainstream conservatism has not absorbed Trump –

he has absorbed it. Almost the entire right-wing half of American politics has surrendered abjectly to him. It has sacrificed on the altar of wanton stupidity the most basic ideas of responsibility, care, and even safety.

Thus, even at the very end of March, 15 Republican governors had failed to order people to stay at home or to close non-

essential businesses. In Alabama, for example, it was not until April 3rd that governor Kay Ivey finally issued a stay-at-home order.

In Florida, the state with the highest concentration of elderly people with underlying conditions, governor Ron DeSantis, a Trump mini-me, kept the beach resorts open to students travelling

from all over the US for spring break parties. Even on April 1st, when he issued restrictions, DeSantis exempted religious services and "recreational activities".

Georgia governor Brian Kemp, when he finally issued a stay-at-home order on April 1st, explained: "We didn't know that [the virus can be spread by

people without symptoms] until the last 24 hours."

This is not mere ignorance – it is deliberate and homicidal stupidity. There is, as the demonstrations this week in US cities have shown, plenty of political mileage in denying the reality of the pandemic. It is fuelled by Fox News and far-right internet sites, and it

reaps for these politicians millions of dollars in donations, mostly (in an ugly irony) from older people who are most vulnerable to the coronavirus.

It draws on a concoction of conspiracy theories, hatred of science, paranoia about the "deep state" and religious providentialism (God will protect the good folks) (continued on page 4)

The Fortunate Mr. Oman continued

Shortly after his defeat in the primary election in March 2004. Mr. Oman added 80 acres, straddling Eagle Creek next to US 68, to his already sizeable farmland. Although this was still before the “century flood” of 2007, there were still numerous floods and proposed flood plans during his two terms.

The latest flood mitigation proposal includes building an 800-acre flood basin along Eagle Creek.

Maumee Watershed Conservancy District and the Stephen F. Oman family filed a warranty deed for 264 acres in January 2020. The unconfirmed price was \$27,000/acre, which would put the total sale price at \$7,128,000. This would not be unreasonable for farmland sold for commercial development. The proposal calls for building a recreation area, but it is far from certain how that would work. What would one

build in an area designed for periodic flooding?

Attempts, by both the local media and me, to confirm the details of the sale have been frustrating. Upon contacting the auditor’s office, I was directed to the recorder’s office. The recorder’s office, after first directing me back to the auditor’s office, directed me to the watershed conservancy who directed me to the engineer overseeing (continued on page 4)

Make America Great Again by Juliette Lawson

Our founding generation won and cemented our independence by creating strong domestic markets. They understood only through self-sustaining markets, were we to be taken seriously as a country and to keep the independence we fought so hard for. I ask, how have we strayed so far from this understanding?

The ongoing trade war with China and our constant preoccupation with the unrest in the Middle East show how our over-reliance on other countries’ imports/exports cause stress within our own country. Our farming community relies too greatly on China for exports and our retail and medical supply chains are dominated by Chinese im-

ports. When these products are in high demand what stops China from halting export to the U.S.? Our energy market is completely reliant on the Middle East, Saudi Arabia’s recent price war is a great example of this. Why don’t we lessen the dominance other countries have on our markets by looking within our borders and start (continued on page 5)

Protesting Health by Cathy Weygandt

As I read about the protestors, dressed in their MAGA gear, in Michigan and at our state’s capital, I can only shake my head in wonder. Why do these protestors fight so dearly for unborn fetuses’ rights, but dying people do not concern them when they can’t reopen their businesses?

The major differences be-

tween the numbers of dying between Michigan and Ohio clearly can be attributed to Governor DeWine’s quick actions of closing our state down and initiating scientific-guided principles in reigning in this unprecedented pandemic.

We simply cannot reopen businesses until we estab-

lish better testing for everyone, and have a vaccine and or a cure for this terrible disease process. In the meantime, social-distancing, masks, hand-sanitizing, staying-at-home... is working. Thank you for all who adhere to this and understand that business are not what America great again!



Who is Trmup?

“World” (continued from page 2)

that is now very deeply infused in the mindset of the American right.

Trump embodies and enacts this mindset, but he did not invent it. The US response to the coronavirus crisis has been paralysed by a contradiction that the Republicans have inserted into the heart of US democracy. On the one hand, they want to control all the levers of governmental power. On the other they have created a popular base by playing on the notion

"freedom" is literally more important than life. My freedom to own assault weapons trumps your right not to get shot at school. Now, my freedom to go to the barber ("I Need a Haircut" read one banner this week in St Paul, Minnesota) trumps your need to avoid infection.

Usually when this kind of outlandish idiocy is displaying itself, there is the comforting thought that, if things were really serious, it would all stop. People would sober up. Instead, a large part of

that government is innately evil and must not be trusted.

The contradiction was made manifest in two of Trump's statements on the pandemic: on the one hand that he has "total authority", and on the other that "I don't take responsibility at all".

Caught between authoritarian and anarchic impulses, he is incapable of coherence. Fertile ground.

the US has hit the bottle even harder.

And the president, his party and their media allies keep supplying the drinks. There has been no moment of truth, no shock of realisation that the antics have to end. No one of any substance on the US right has stepped in to say: get a grip, people are dying here.

That is the mark of how deep the trouble is for the US – it is

But this is not just Donald Trump. The crisis has shown definitively that Trump's presidency is not an aberration. It has grown on soil long prepared to receive it. The monstrous blossoming of misrule has structure and purpose and strategy behind it.

There are very powerful interests who demand "freedom" in order to do as they like with the environment, society and the economy. They have infused a very large part of American culture with the belief that

not just that Trump has treated the crisis merely as a way to feed tribal hatreds but that this behaviour has become normalised.

When the freak show is live on TV every evening, and the star is boasting about his ratings, it is not really a freak show anymore. For a very large and solid bloc of Americans, it is reality.

And this will get worse before it gets better. Trump has at least eight more months in power. In (continued on page 6 "World")

The Fortunate Mr. Oman continued

overseeing the project. The engineer did not respond, probably wondering why he was asked for financial information. Inquiries by the Courier met a reply similar to "we're not telling because we don't have to."

This may all be a coincidental series of fortunate events and could be undone by today's hearing in the Conservancy Court. The whole acquisition process was anything but normal. Mr. Oman could be an extremely fortunate man who has profited due to a process he once opposed, but one question remains. What is the reason for all the secrecy?

Make America Great Again continued

filling the spaces with our own products? Let's make America great again by dominating the manufacturing and energy sectors as we once did. We can begin investing in a stronger future by taking a hard left into green energies.

As a country, if we decide to become energy independent tomorrow we could easily throw the markets into overdrive and increase high wage jobs across the country. Imagine

how much we invested in the evolution of the automobile in the last century; we built the plants for the manufacturing, we built the roads and bridges for the cars to drive, and the gas stations and refining plants to fuel the cars. Jobs, jobs, jobs. Farms can begin growing higher energy yielding crops, lease small plots of land to renewable energy companies and new, more efficient machinery can be developed. Coal

mines and oil refineries can be replaced with turbine and battery manufacturing plants. Even our energy grid can be massively updated by maximizing regional, renewable energy sources. Jobs, jobs, jobs. If the U.S. takes on the green revolution as wholeheartedly as the auto revolution our state of dependence to others will lessen and we can begin working towards our independence.



The Real MAGA

Landfill Expansion by Cathy Weygandt

Reading about the commissioner's decision on the \$2 million expansion of the county landfill, one can only imagine all that goes into these kinds of decisions. I think back when we first moved here, the new expansion at that time was touted to last for 99 years (I believe early 90s). What in the world happened since then?

revenues will pay for it continuously? We recently read that Mike Recker, a county commissioner candidate, is opposed to Litter Landing, as it no longer generates revenue as in the past. I was glad incumbent Tim Bectol spoke up for the residents in support of recycling.

Also, our president recently rolled back federal protections for our nation's

When the commissioners stopped taking in glass at Litter Landing for recycling a few years back, there was huge public outcry. We were told it was not financially feasible to recycle and that there was no revenue in it. Newcomers to our nationally recognized "Top Micropolitan City" quickly found out that there wasn't even city-provided

waterways, ripping apart the half-century old Clean Water Act. The Courier article stated that these rollbacks will not help local farmers as the president promised, but it will benefit real estate developers and other non-farmer sectors instead. How will that affect our waterways? How will that affect our flooding issues in Hancock County?

Waste reduction and clean water issues are not parti-

curbside recycling, unlike most communities nationally!

As China stopped taking in American's waste to be recycled, communities are now in a quandary on what to do with all that we consume. It is far cheaper to incinerate, releasing toxins into the air... So, do we just keep on adding to our landfills and thinking that

san issues. The continued degradation of our environment will be the legacies that we leave to our children if we do not wake up. The next time we consume yet another single use water bottle at an hour long meeting, please consider this. Keep abreast of local, state and national elections. Who has our best interests for a better future? Who is telling the truth?

Newcomers to our nationally recognized "Top Micropolitan City" quickly found out that there wasn't even city-provided curbside recycling, unlike most communities nationally!

Serving all residents of Hancock County

Primary Business Address
2615 Goldenrod Lane
Findlay, OH 45840

Phone: (419) 348-2599
Phone: (567) 250-8342
Email:

contact@hancockcountydems.org

Our mission is to support, promote, build and perpetuate the Democratic Party in Hancock County, Ohio, by recruiting, screening, and training qualified Candidates, raising funds, registering voters, distributing literature, advertising, and doing other such appropriate activities.



WE'RE ON THE WEB

<https://hancockcountydems.org>

World Continued

his inaugural address in 2017, he evoked "American carnage" and promised to make it stop. But now that the real carnage has arrived, he is revelling in it. He is in his element.

As things get worse, he will pump more hatred and falsehood, more death-wish defiance of reason and decency, into the groundwa-

ter. If a new administration succeeds him in 2021, it will have to clean up the toxic dump he leaves behind. If he is re-elected, toxicity will have become the lifeblood of American politics.

Either way, it will be a long time before the rest of the world can imagine America being great again.

We need your contributions

Do you have a story that needs to be told? Do you have letters to the editor that our Republican controlled newspapers refuse to print?

Send your work to: contact@hancockcountydems.org

Some submissions may be edited.