

## International Creeps In The National Boudoir

by Julian Sereno

If politics makes for strange bedfellows, what to make of the tyrants, large and small, that President Trump plays footsie with. And what to make of the ones he kicks in the rear end.

First he blows off the Prime Minister of Australia, one of our staunchest allies, over a “bad deal” over refugees. Later, the U.S. meets its commitment; Trump caves.

Next, he defends Vladdy Putin, the right wing Russian tyrant who ordered the murders of critics and political opponents by the dozen, bullied and strong armed others by the thousand. On “60 Minutes” Trump said Putin did no worse than unnamed U.S. officials.

Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, is next up. He publicly refuses to shake hands, then accuses Germany of stiffing NATO and demands that it pay up. The Germans hotly

dispute it all and blow off Trump. Ach du lieber.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey’s prime minister, an Islamist, over time has destroyed the secular institutions that have sustained Turkey’s democracy including an independent civil service and a free press. Criticizing him is a crime punishable by four years in prison.

After surviving a bloody coup attempt last summer, he shut down all the opposition press, then systematically purged the police, the military, the civil service, teachers and university professors. Erodgan accused them of belonging to a sect led by a former ally, Fethullah Gulen, who lives in exile in Pennsylvania. More than 100,000 Turks have lost their livelihoods and their place in society based on the rumor of ties to Gulen, who has yet to face extradition charges due to lack of evidence. Last month Erdogan pushed through a controversial

constitutional amendment giving him even more power. It passed, barely, with the vote count in dispute.

President Trump called to congratulate him.

Rodrigo Duterte, the blood-thirsty goon who is President of the Philippines, has ordered the murder of drug dealers and users alike, and pays a bounty for their cadavers. Thousands have been murdered with no charges, no trial, and no evidence. That has included those who oppose and challenge Duterte whether or not they were involved with drugs.

President Trump invited Duterte to the White House, and reportedly said to him, “You’re doing a great job.” Duterte passed on the invitation. It’s probably a good idea to stay close to home if you might face Crimes Against Humanity charges while abroad.

Saving the best, and the most recent, for last, Trump said he would be “honored” to meet Kim Jong Un “under the right circumstances”. This is the same Kim Jong Un with whom he has been engaged in World War III brinkmanship. The same Kim Jong Un who rules the most repressive country on earth, who operates gulags for opponents, real or imagined, by the tens of thousands, who murders relatives, most recently using a nerve agent on a step brother at an airport in Malaysia. The same Kim Jong Un who keeps testing nukes and missiles and making videos of the nuclear annihilation of Washington and of U.S. warships.

Kim Jung Un, Rodrigo Duterte, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Vladimir Putin. Why? Maybe because water seeks its own level.

*Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.*

## Ultracrepidarianism

by Don Lein

This term is only two centuries old, coined by William Hazlitt, although it derives from a phrase that is a couple of millennia old, the Latin phrase as recorded by Pliny, “Sutor, ne ultra crepidam.” This phrase roughly translated means that a shoemaker ought not to judge beyond his soles. The German phrase which was passed down to me was “Shoemaker, stick to your last.”, which meant that we should only opine/pass judgment on those issues in which we have some expertise.

This concept came into play when the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was attempting to blackmail the State of North Carolina into changing House Bill 2 (HB2, which regulated public restrooms, locker rooms and shower facilities on the basis of biological sex. Subsequent to the enactment of the law last year, the NCAA pulled seven championship games out of North Carolina. Certainly, the financial impact of that decision was an election issue last year and this year the legislature repealed HB2 and replaced it with HB142, which has placed a three year moratorium on local ordinances regulating public accommodations. The NCAA stated that North Carolina was back in the mix for championship sites. Unfortunately, the LGBTQ community feels this bill still discriminates against them and blames the NCAA for “...backtracking on their vow to protect LGBTQ players, employees and fans.”

Who then is this entity who bullied North Carolina into changing its laws? It is an association of approximately 1100 Colleges and Universities, granted tax free status which makes “a ton of money” staging sporting events. NC State Legislators have introduced a bill to ask the IRS to look into NCAA’s tax exempt status, particularly considering their political position on this issue as well as previous stances on Indian mascots and

the Confederate flag. Typically tax free entities are required to be non-political. On March 30, President Mark Emmert of the NCAA indicated that the NCAA “does not consider itself an entity that has any business telling the state what their laws should be.” In 2011, the NCAA released some recommendations on transgender inclusion, but a 2015 analysis by USA Today indicated only 10 out of 50 Division 1 schools had enacted any formal transgender policies. They do not hold their members accountable, but the State of North Carolina is another story.

Obviously, the NCAA as a political institution is a gross failure. If we tell them “stick to your last”, what could we expect? Firstly, we should expect compliance with NCAA regulations by the member institutions and serious consequences to those institutions who do not comply. We would expect them to be as persistent as Inspector Javert, but alas we are presented with an Inspector Clouseau. UNC, Chapel Hill has had some very serious charges leveled against it regarding inflated grades/classes that never meet/grading being done by unauthorized personnel/special handling of athletes, etc., etc. over the last two decades and the NCAA seems powerless to do anything about it. Wallace Loh, President of the University of Maryland, recently opined that an NCAA investigation would lead to the “Death Penalty”. Howls of protest were heard on Franklin Street, but Loh’s background has placed him positions of authority in large NCAA Division 1 schools, so he certainly has a level of expertise that would warrant listening to.

Clearly there must be areas where the NCAA is, in fact, competent. As was alluded to earlier, they do make a lot of money. Certainly, the March Madness/ NCAA Basketball Championship is one of those efforts. One would expect that they would leave no stone unturned to make the event as professional and fan pleasing as possible. However, this year they

apparently felt they could get by with very amateur referees and the event was an artistic calamity with the strippers getting an inordinate amount of air time as compared to the athletes. One headline after the event summed it up well. UNC didn’t win the championships, the referees did. NCAA, please stick to your last and do a better job of controlling the quality of your product. Was Calipari right when he called into question the refereeing at his UNC v Kentucky game? Normally, we would attribute that to sour grapes. However, when too many people say the same thing about other games in the tournament, the integrity of the sport/NCAA is hurt and ultimately people begin spending their money elsewhere.

What can we expect next from this gang that can’t shoot straight, as well as its acolytes, such as the ACC (also known as Franklin Street North), next? Alas, when the only gender identity that matters is what the athlete feels about themselves, we automatically do away with separate gender leagues/scholarships/records, etc. Is Title IX relevant/in jeopardy/obsolete?? Who will rescue the NCAA from itself? Where is its Judge Kennesaw Mountain Landis? Emmert has taken the first step by publicly recognizing that university administrators have no business dictating to states what their laws should be. Next should come the admission that they, as presently constituted, are not capable of being a credible investigative agency of their peers. Thirdly, they are in the entertainment business – where are the entertainment business people, who understand that a poorly officiated tournament will affect the NCAA’s bottom line, now and in the future.

Shoemaker, please stick to your last.

*Don Lein is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A Chatham resident, he is involved in a variety of civic organizations.*

## To the Editor: Legacy of a Peace Activist

Members of the North Carolina peace activist community continue to mourn the loss of John Heuer, a dedicated peace activist. Over the years several of John’s Op Ed pieces appeared in the Chatham County Line. He was a strong leader of the Eisenhower Chapter of the Veterans For Peace and a member of the national VFP Board of Directors. He was also an active member of Peace Action, an organization that has been working for peace since 1957.

Our current president believes that a large increase in military spending will help America begin to “win wars again.” We need leaders in Washington who are willing to develop greater awareness of the poor thinking and dishonesty that has accompanied three long, senseless wars. The U.S. invasion of Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan resulted in immense loss of military and civilian lives. The combined length of these three wars has been nearly 50 years. How long will it be before the United States blunders into another costly war? We seem to always have enough money for war, but never enough to properly care for our veterans.

John worked tirelessly to support the peace movement. We can honor him by serving the cause of world peace.

— Barry L. Reece, Pittsboro

## Devastation on Multiple Fronts

by Jeff Davidson

“The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it,” observed author Flannery O’Connor. The black family in America has been devastated, rising from 25 percent out-of-wedlock births or one parent households in 1964, to above 70 percent one-parent households by the end of President Obama’s second term.

Black unemployment and black youth unemployment, as of mid-2016, was far worse than when Obama took office, and the misery incalculable. The national home ownership rate has now dropped to 63.4 percent, the lowest in 48 years. Other negative economic and social indicators, too numerous to mention, plague our society

### MARGINALIZED BY POLICY

The civil unrest of 2014, 2015, and 2016 goes far beyond protest of police use of deadly force. In large part, it is a result of the decades long simmering of groups who have been marginalized in society directly as a result of progressive economic policy that can be traced back to Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt’s close friend, lunch companion, confidant, and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., in 1939 stated:

“We have tried spending money. We are spending more than we have ever spent before and it does not work. And I have just

one interest, and if I am wrong somebody else can have my job. I want to see this country prosperous. I want to see people get a job. I want to see people get enough to eat. We have never made good on our promises. I say after eight years of this administration — we have just as much unemployment as when we started. And an enormous debt to boot!”

This is a stunning admission, by the top U.S. financial officer coming nearly a decade following the stock market crash of 1929, which reverberates to this day: Morgenthau learned that deficit spending does not create long-term, meaningful jobs, and guess which groups are hurt the worst?

### THE ALL-PURPOSE RATIONALE

Would the GOP do any better? Perhaps not, but if you examine their records closely, Eisenhower, Nixon, and W. Bush did more of substance for blacks. Progressives do not want to take responsibility for policies that have quashed the black family in America. So they have resurrected racism as the *raison d’être* – the all-purpose rationale – as to why large percentages of minorities have not effectively entered the economic mainstream.

Thus in 2017, we have the perfect “Catch 22.” Over many decades, create and enforce policies that lead to miserable lives, rioting in the streets, more crime, and cultural depression. Then blame everything on others who

had little or nothing to do with enacting such policies, call them racists, make them feel guilty, and throw more money at the problem.

Let us all bow our heads, for we have entered the cultural, social, economic, and political Twilight Zone.

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## Dancing

BY LOU LIPSITZ

I’ve forgotten almost everything. Yet even thirty seconds of a song can bring back so much. How can it be that after fifty years you are still buried in me and still dancing.

**SPEAK OUT!**

SEND YOUR LETTERS OR ARTICLES TO JULIAN SERENO

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