

Breitbart “News” Spreads Some Bright Lies

by Julian Sereno

I never understood why Breitbart News wasn't thoroughly discredited a few years back, when it posted a video that had been edited to put words in the mouth of an African American civil servant to make it appear she made a racist anti-white statement when she had said no such thing.

In 2010, Shirley Sherrod, Georgia State Director of Rural Development for the U.S. Department of Agriculture gave a speech to the National NAACP about the importance of overcoming racism. Andrew Brietbart, since deceased, excerpted her remarks to make it sound like she said the opposite, and posted it on his eponymous website.

President Obama bit and swallowed it hook, line and sinker, as did Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who fired Sherrod. It wasn't until the entire tape of her speech was examined that the truth came out and Breitbart's big lie was exposed. Obama and Vilsack apologized and offered her a better job at the USDA, which she declined. In 2014 she sued Breitbart and co-defendant Larry O'Connor for defamation. They settled before

trial in 2015; terms were not disclosed.

After that, knowing them to be willful liars, I stopped reading anything they posted. Breitbart's credibility should have been in tatters, but instead of withering away, it metastasized. Robert Mercer, an American oligarch, endowed it with \$11 million. Steve Bannon, eminence gris of the Alt. Right, took over after Breitbart died in 2012.

This was the dawn of Fake News, the reporting of falsehoods and rumor as fact. Once disparaged as canards, hoaxes and con jobs, they gained currency. Credulous conservatives believed it all; no matter how painstakingly lies were exposed, they fit so perfectly with their world view. And the lies spread.

Breitbart's falsehoods were posted on the enormously popular Drudge Report, broadcast on Fox News, and printed and posted elsewhere. They were picked up by Donald Trump who used them as the basis of his political platform. And they spread through Facebook, Twitter and Google, with a big assist from Vlady Putin's legions of Bolshevik bots. How wide was the Russian reach? Their ads

reached 126 million American Facebook users, according to recent testimony before congress from the Tech oligarchs and their lawyers.

Breitbart's lies were worthy of their ideological forebear, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda: That Barack Obama was a Muslim born in Kenya; that he supported terrorists, that he wiretapped Trump tower during the 2016 election campaign. That Hillary Clinton and other prominent Democrats ran a sex ring with enslaved children out of various restaurants, including the Cosmic Ping Pong Pizzeria in Washington D.C. The list goes on and on.

Less than a year ago, a credulous true believer, Edgar Maddison Welch of Salisbury, NC, enraged by the false reports, went to investigate, armed with an assault rifle. He shot up the restaurant, thankfully without harming anyone. He is now serving four years in prison after a plea deal. And not a single child sex slave was to be found.

Now there are many more purveyors of propaganda, conspiracy theories and right-wing lies. Alex Jones “infowars” comes to

mind. Steve Bannon left Breitbart to head up the Trump campaign last year and then moved on to the West Wing of the Trump White House. Now he is back at Brietbart, taking aim at Establishment Republicans in next year's election.

Breitbart continues to serve up falsehoods flambe. Most recently, it reported that an undocumented immigrant started the wildfires in the California wine country in October. The Sonoma County Sheriff issued a statement: “This is completely false, bad, wrong information that Breitbart started and is being put out into the public.” Brietbart's true believers, including President Trump, loved the lie and embrace it nonetheless.

But probably not Edgar Maddison Welsh anymore.

Chico Marx's question sounds sadly prophetic: Who are you going to believe? Me or your own two eyes?

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.

Changing Times

by Don Lein

“The times, they are a-changing” is an old familiar cliché, but apparently the tide is turning and the general public wishes to return to a time when they were more comfortable, embracing traditional values. For the last several decades traditional values have been eroded, international values have assumed primacy over national values and power has been centralized in Washington (the Swamp). The election of Obama seemed the crowning achievement of that era. During/after Obama we were left with higher taxes, higher deficits, new entitlements, internationalism assuming primacy over nationalism and American exceptionalism being scorned.

Alas, the wheels came off the bus when the anointed successor to these decades of change lost at the polls to a political novice!! Egads, the deplorables prevailed!!! For whatever solace it may be worth, Hillary Clinton still is in the running for the worst candidate ever put forward by any major party in the history of our republic. The voters in flyover country simply wanted a return to a more patriotic nationalism, even if that were in the person of a reality TV star who rejected the political correctness of the hubristic left. Surely, the sky was falling and the reactions from the purported “permanent majority” consisting of the snowflake/microaggression, media, university, entertainment sets, were predictable, if not humorous.

Firstly, the most privileged young people in the history of the world pitched hissy fits on some of our most prestigious campuses because speakers might state opinions they did not agree with and used violence to shut them down while administrators looked down from their ivory towers. The voting public (“deplorables”) looked upon this arrogant dismissal

of constitutional rights and saw that progressives/liberals were encouraging these actions and decided it was time for a change. The universities may regain their prestige if/when they allow/encourage a diversity of viewpoints to exist on their campuses, not only within the student body, but more importantly within the faculty.

The change in the media coverage of politics/presidents is palpable. From the “slobbering love affair”, which Bernie Goldberg used to describe the media's coverage of Obama, the media has turned into political activists constructing partisan narratives. Has so much fake news in such a short period of time ever been conjured up in the history of journalism? While they construct these narratives for Trump, they simply ignore the Harvey Weinstains of the world—gross sexual exploitation for decades. The glitterati have lionized Weinstein, who has had assaults on, at least 30 women over the years, yet they insist they are champions of women's rights. Jane Fonda's admitted moral cowardice on the issue illustrates their relativistic moral standards.

Alas, another example of elitist morality has occurred on the playing fields of the National Football League. The race card being played by the rich 1 percenters in lying about police encounters with blacks has added to the Democratic narrative of endemic racism in American society. The blaming of white people by blacks richer than most people who have ever lived, is simply not credible. They seem more interested in hiding their privileged lifestyle and berating whites than in helping out their brothers and sisters. Not surprisingly, a number of fans who attend and watch games are annoyed and have stopped watching/attending games. Haven't the owners seen the example of ESPN, where peddling the progressive doctrine has resulted in a sizable reduction in viewers.

While there are changes in politics/sports, UNC has breathed a sigh of relief when the NCAA did not assess any punishment for questionable practices by the university over several decades. Apparently, the NCAA had not proscribed the practices in question, which apparently the NCAA was not aware of, heretofore. Once UNC's lawyers pointed out that inconsistency, a case no longer existed. Unlike UNC, Louisville had the hammer drop upon them by, of all people, the FBI. While Louisville practices would certainly seem questionable under amateur guidelines, one wonders what federal law was broken by shoe companies/coaches paying athletes above or below the table. Perhaps more changes will follow. One wonders what would have transpired if Louisville had been investigated by the NCAA and UNC by the FBI??

Harkening back to my earlier days as a sports fan, I can recall Major League Baseball during WWII. Players, when asked to illustrate their patriotism, forsook baseball to fight for their country. Ted Williams coming off the last .400 batting average recorded in baseball history did not “take a knee”, nor did dozens of others including Hall of Famers Stan Musial, Bob Feller, etc. If an athlete had disrespected his country/flag in those days, they would have been through – so we have had dramatic change in that area. Unfortunately, college basketball has tended to stay the same. In those days we had players such as Beard and Groza of Kentucky and the whole CCNY basketball team who won both the NCAA title as well as the NIT, who were guilty of cheating/point shaving. One wonders what the successor to the African American studies scam will be in another 50-60 years.

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

Consequences of Over Population

by Jeff Davidson

As our world becomes increasingly over-crowded, several negative consequences can be seen, including crime, masses of migrants, vanishing resources, fewer jobs, and damage to the earth.

The increasing global population is infiltrating every aspect of your life, and increasing more stress as it does so. The unrelenting stress you might experience even getting to work, finding an empty park bench, or simply jockeying for a corner office, in part can be attributed to an increasing world population density.

One of the ongoing tragedies of over-population on earth is the growing incidence of humankind's capacity to neglect the plight and the dehumanization of others. Three dramatic examples illustrate this point:

1. Legions of children – street urchins – are shot to death in principle cities of Brazil each year as reported by the United Nations. Local merchants employ assassins to rid the street of such paupers, beggars, and thieves, or the local police commit the murders. The government, at both the federal and local level, repeatedly looks the other way. The implied understanding is that there are too many homeless, unwanted children roaming the streets and that they represent a detriment to the economy, tourism, public health, and state resources.

2. As reported in “Time”, multi-millions of females worldwide are forced into prostitution. These women and young girls – some as young as 9 years old – are often “placed” into service by their fathers or brothers. Many become the champion breadwinners of their families. German, Japanese and, increasingly, U.S. businessmen go on business/drug/sex junkets to Southeast Asia, principally Thailand, and hence preserve a strong demand.

The situation is deplorable and these women lead wretched lives. Exposure to sexually transmitted diseases is one of the many hazards they encounter. Brutality on the

part of “customers,” filthy environments, ill-nourishment, and poverty of the soul doom many to a short, miserable life.

3. Ethnic hostilities around the world grab their share of headlines. Few people are willing to take action, not because the situation doesn't merit intervention, but perhaps because the number of ethnic and nationalist clashes around the globe is on the rise. Who wants to offer their time and attention, as well as their compassion, resources, and regiments?

On any given day, a significant portion of the world's 7.6 billion people are engaged in economic, nationalistic, or ethnic turmoil whether it's in Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Myanmar, South Africa, Chad, Somalia, Egypt, Yemen, Niger, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, South Sudan, Serbia, Italy, Hungary, Germany, and even Mexico. Who can keep up? Who can care about them all? The harsh reality is that most people don't have the time or energy to follow all of this in the news, let alone take meaningful action, other than maybe to write a check for a worthy cause.

As I observed in my book *Breathing Space*, it makes little sense to intellectually resonate with the world's challenges and problems. Pick one cause or one issue, and take some kind of action. Your ability to make a real, if tiny, difference will help you feel better and could, indeed, benefit the world.

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To The Editor

Voting is underway in Pittsboro for all for municipal elections in Chatham County.

And although I am not a municipal resident, I am still interested in the outcome of the elections. I have been attending the Pittsboro Town Board meetings since 2011 and have had a chance to observe the Town Board up close and personal.

I have seen Mayor Voller hand the gavel to Mayor Terry in December of 2013, who then handed the gavel to Mayor Perry in December of 2015. This fall in Pittsboro Mayor Perry is running unopposed, but there is a race for the Town Board.

Incumbents Pamela Baldwin and Michael Fiocco are being challenged by Alexander Kast and Cabell Regan.

Now I do not know much about the challengers nor have I seen them serve on any of the advisory boards for the Town of Pittsboro, but I have seen Mayor Pro-Tem Baldwin and Commissioner Fiocco dozens of times work on behalf of the citizens at Town Board meetings and other public functions in the community.

Commissioner Baldwin has a multigenerational family history in the community and she is the longest serving member on the Town Board.

She is the only African-American woman ever elected to the Town Board and she graduated from Northwood High School. She always has a smile and comes to meetings prepared to ask penetrating questions and move the business of the Town forward on behalf of its citizens.

She has learned a lot over her three terms and will set aside personal preference to take input from citizens and stakeholders in town to make a vote that she can support.

I saw her do just that during the discussion and vote on whether Pittsboro should adopt the new Sunday Brunch Ordinance that would allow restaurants and gathering places to serve items such as a mimosa on a Sunday morning. Pam essentially said that although this was not something she intended to do on a Sunday morning, she had received a lot of support for the ordinance from the business community and citizens at-large so she voted to approve it.

Pam Baldwin deserves your vote and should be re-elected.

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