



GET REAL

BY DICK LYLES

Predictions about Trump's presidency

Like many Americans during the past election, I was strongly opposed to the candidacy of Hillary Clinton, but wasn't a particularly avid Trump supporter. When asked to predict what would happen during a Trump presidency, I avoided making predictions because of Mr. Trump's non-politician background. Historically, his positions on issues had been all over the map, making it difficult to discern his politics. Now, after three months of the Trump presidency, a few predictions seem reasonable.

First is that his chief of staff, Reince Priebus, won't last through the year, although there were valid reasons for tapping him for this role. He was

chosen primarily to build bridges with both establishment Republicans and with Congress. As former head of the Republican Party from Paul Ryan's home state, he has strong ties to both. However, in his previous role, he was more a puppet of the Republican elites than one of its leaders. Thus, the elites expected him to do their bidding as the new chief of staff rather than expecting him to try to influence them to bend to the priorities of the new administration.

When Paul Ryan botched the health care reform initiative, much of the blame had to fall into Priebus' lap, because he surely lobbied the president to tackle this issue ahead of tax reform. Although the party line is that Mr. Ryan and Mr. Trump worked hard together to

make reform happen, it failed. The failure was because Ryan and the elites tried to push something through that true reformers (most of whom are strongly aligned with Trump) would not support. Working with Capitol Hill is a critical role of the chief of staff so this setback was a huge first strike against Mr. Priebus.

Second, is the prediction that the elites from both parties will morph into something new. The reality is that even though the Obamacare reform effort was a setback for Mr. Trump, it was also a big setback for Congress and the governing elites. They thought the president would be so interested in achieving a "quick win" that he (and the Freedom Caucus) would sign off on any bill, even though it lacked the level of reform voters demanded. When Mr. Trump shut it down, the establishment and Congress lost big.

Mr. Trump is thus setting new norms, one of which is "do the right thing (in this case, fulfill election promises) in the right way (so they produce the intended result), or don't do anything at all." This is a radical departure from the past for Washington, where the recent norm has been to "do what serves the elites and when the people suffer, blame someone else." In business

one quickly learns that doing the right thing is more important than failing and blaming someone else, which is a prescription for failure. It will be refreshing to watch this new philosophy re-shape the norms of federal governance.

Finally, America will continue to grow stronger, not only by doing the right thing at home, but also abroad. The president's response to the gas attacks in Syria received overwhelmingly positive global response. There is no substitute for taking the right action at the right time. Meanwhile, the economy is gaining strength at home. Employment is up. The stock market continues its post-election climb.

Despite the silly carryings on of politicians and politically-motivated activists, Americans are gradually embracing a new definition of hope and a more solid optimism about our future. True hope is based on the premise that our choices matter. Slowly, Mr. Trump appears to be re-connecting mainstream America to that reality.

Lyles, a Poway resident, is a management consultant and best-selling author. Reader comments, though letters to the editor, are encouraged. They may now be composed online or can be emailed to editor@pomeradonews.com.

Bridging San Diego County's foster care gap

GUEST COLUMN

BY JEFF WIEMANN

In my work supporting San Diego families who foster, there's a lot to feel good about. Every day I see children thriving in stable, safe and loving environments while their biological parents are given needed time to get their lives back on track. Families who open their homes to children in need find the rewards are immense. When my family fostered a baby boy, we absolutely fell in love with him – and went through an experience as a family that has forever strengthened our bond.

Sadly, there is a very real problem in the San Diego foster care system today. We have a crisis-level shortage of families volunteering to care for children in need. The unfortunate reality is when the San Diego County Department of Child Welfare calls us at Angels Foster Family Network, we are only able to meet the needs of one in three young children. This is heartbreaking on many levels. First and foremost, these infants and toddlers need help. Second, when they do not receive the care they need, our whole community pays the price.

Placing infants and toddlers in stable, safe and loving environments supports healthy brain development and teaches them how to form healthy attachments to other humans. Later in life these healthy attachments allow them to succeed academically, socially and become

productive adults. The opposite holds true as well and seriously impacts our communities.

I understand why most are hesitant to foster children. Many believe their heartache will run too deep when it is time to say goodbye. It is one of the toughest things to do, but every foster parent I've met will tell you the same thing: It's worth it. A foster mother I spoke with recently dabbed tears from her eyes as she talked about the toddler she cared for who had been reunified with his biological family. She said she would do it all over again just for the chance to connect with her foster son. The only thing greater than the pain of loss is the joy of making a positive life-long difference for a child in need.

Many fail to realize parents who foster often stay connected with the children they have cared for. The ability to create and sustain positive relationships with the biological families occurs because of the extensive training and support we provide. Our expert staff and diverse group of foster parents have seen it all, and share their wealth of knowledge generously so that no one ever has unanswered questions or faces challenges alone.

Assuming a child is somehow responsible for their placement in the system or a threat to others are two of the biggest misperceptions I encounter. Let's be clear, the actions of the parents are the sole reason a child is placed in foster care. Second, some foster children have challenging behaviors as all have been traumatized. You would be too if by the age of six weeks you had

figured out that none of your basic needs would be met no matter what you did. I vividly remember first meeting my foster son and touching his hand and finding it cold -- a sure sign of the depth of trauma he had already endured. The first few weeks in our home he was expressionless. He didn't cry. He didn't coo. He didn't smile. He was conserving his energy because previously any expression on his part resulted in no action by the adults in his life. All of our families are educated in the trauma-informed model of care, providing them the ability to look beyond the immediate behaviors to discover the root cause. In our case, getting him on a regular schedule of eat, play, sleep did wonders. In a few weeks he was back on track. It is amazing how resilient young children are and how quickly they recover once they are in a stable, safe and loving environment.

Atrocities about fostering make the news headlines and are great stories for television. Far more common are the success stories I see every day. As a parent who has fostered I know it is not easy and not for everyone. However, as a community we must address the shortage of families who will foster and not doing so only pushes the challenges and costs to the next generation. By sharing more information about the need and realities of fostering, I hope others will consider volunteering to follow the path of my family. If not, there are many other ways to support the needs of children in foster care and all are appreciated.

Wiemann is the executive director of Angels Foster Family Network.

FROM LETTERS, A20

Trump has a real army

After reading opinions for the past eight years, I feel compelled to respond to Dick Lyles's column about the Obama "army."

I checked the date of my newspaper and it was April 6, 2017. This is nearly five months since Donald J. Trump was elected president, yet Dick still seems too consumed and confused by Barack Obama. The idea of Obama organizing a "private political army to destroy the presidency of his successor" is preposterous and unstable thinking. Do not worry Dick, President Trump has a real army to defeat any insurrection organized if we are implored to pray for anything, let it be world peace, a safe community, streets without potholes and maybe even a shiny, new, black trash can.

Thomas R. Ferriolo
Rancho Bernardo

FROM LEADERS, A20

senator.anderson@sen.ca.gov

State Senator (Rancho Bernardo, 4S Ranch): Toni Atkins, State Capitol, Room 4072, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: 916-651-4039. Email: senatoratkins@sen.ca.gov. San Diego District office, 710 B St. Suite 1840, San Diego, CA 92101. Phone: 619-645-3133.

U.S. Representative: Scott Peters, 52nd District, 2410 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; Phone: 202-225-0508; District office: 4350 Executive Drive, Suite 105, San Diego, CA 92121; Phone: 858-455-5550 Website: scottpeters.house.gov

County Supervisor (Poway): Dianne Jacob, District 2. County Administration Building, 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101. Phone: 619-531-5522. Fax: 619-696-7253. Email: dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov

County Supervisor (Rancho Bernardo, 4S Ranch): Kristen Gaspar, District 3. 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335, San Diego, CA 92101. Phone: 619-531-5533. Email: kristen.gaspar@sdcounty.ca.gov

Poway City Council: Steve Vaus, mayor, Jim Cunningham, John Mullin, Dave Grosch and Barry Leonard, members. Meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month in the City Council chambers, 13325 Civic Center Drive. Tina White, city manager. City Hall: 858-668-4400.