

Editorial Opinion

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Human trafficking is real, growing threat



Your Turn
Linda Oberhaus
Guest Columnist

Even as our community gathered to celebrate freedom and equality during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration last week, countless Collier County residents are living in bondage, enslaved by traffickers.

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. As you read this commentary, it is important to note that human trafficking is the fastest-growing and third-largest organized criminal activity in the world, just behind the drug and arms trades.

It is very lucrative. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, a trafficker can make up to \$150,000 to \$200,000 per person each year, and the average trafficker has four to six victims.

Unlike what is portrayed by the movie industry, victims are seldom “taken,” but more likely lured into trafficking with promises of employment or through feigned romantic or trusted relationships. Some victims are intro-

duced to traffickers by a “friend” or relative. The most vulnerable populations include runaway and homeless youth, as well as victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Once caught in the trap, traffickers control their victims with a variety of tactics including violence, threats, debt bondage and drugs. Once caught, it is very difficult to get out.

Trafficking can happen to anyone, anywhere, and, yes, it is happening in Naples, Florida.

According to Polaris, which operates the National Human Trafficking Hotline, the state of Florida ranks third in the nation, with 550 cases in 2016. Texas is second with 670 cases and California first, with 1,300 cases. We know this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Here in Collier County, we are fighting back. The Sheriff’s Office’s Human Trafficking Unit leads the region in the number of human-trafficking investigations and arrests. From 2014 to 2016, the unit investigated more than 80 sex-trafficking cases and arrested 20 traffickers; however, the fight to rid our community of this horrific crime is daunting.

Two years after their arrests on

Guest commentaries

A guest commentary can be 600 words or less on a topical subject. Authors must have considerable experience, public involvement or expertise in the subject matter. A guest commentary may be returned to the author with a recommendation to resubmit it as a Letter to the Editor within the guidelines for letters. It is recommended that authors receive preclearance before submission; call 239-435-3457.

charges of sex trafficking and racketeering, Keith Lewis and Gregory Hines still await trial and are in the Collier County jail. Of the 22 women they victimized, only four have agreed to testify against their perpetrators and two have died of drug overdoses.

Even with their traffickers in jail, officials say these victims are in so deep, they cannot see a way out. Most were usurped by other traffickers and remain on the streets, suffering serious physical and emotional injuries as well as addiction and mental health issues related to the trauma they have experienced.

Headway in the fight against trafficking can only be accomplished through education, intervention and availability

of long-term recovery services. The Shelter for Abused Women & Children is committed to providing these services through our newest facility, the Shelly Stayer Shelter for Victims of Human Trafficking & Domestic Violence. This summer we will break ground on this unique 32-bed, 21,000-square-foot facility located on 5.6 acres in Immokalee. This new shelter will feature a wing specifically designed to meet the specialized needs of human-trafficking victims, as well as a separate wing for survivors of domestic violence.

Unfortunately, few victims of human trafficking ever come forward. They are invisible victims of unspeakable crimes, and it is up to each of us to learn to recognize the signs of human trafficking and report anything suspicious. Please go to naplesshelter.org/trafficking for more information about how you can help identify human trafficking and become part of the solution.

If you know or suspect that someone is a victim of human trafficking or domestic violence, call the shelter’s 24-hour crisis hotline at 239-775-1101.

Oberhaus is CEO of The Shelter for Abused Women & Children.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Sunday, Jan. 21, the 21st day of 2018. There are 344 days left in the year. On this date in:

1793: During the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed on the guillotine.

1861: Jefferson Davis of Mississippi and four other Southerners whose states had seceded from the Union resigned from the U.S. Senate.

1954: The first atomic submarine, the USS Nautilus, was launched at Groton, Conn. (It did not make its first nuclear-powered run until nearly a year later.)

1977: On his first full day in office, President Jimmy Carter pardoned almost all Vietnam War draft evaders.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS

Opera singer **Placido Domingo** is 77. Singer **Mac Davis** is 76. Actress **Jill Eikenberry** is 71. Guitarist **Jim Ibbotson** is 71. Singer **Billy Ocean** is 68. Actor **Robby Benson** is 62. Actress **Gee-na Davis** is 62. Actress **Charlotte Ross** is 50. Actress **Karina Lombard** is 49. Actor **Ken Leung** is 48. Singer **Cat Power** is 46. Singer **Emma Bunton** is 42.

TODAY'S QUOTE

“It is bad policy to fear the resentment of an enemy.” — Ethan Allen

BIBLE QUOTE

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. — 2 Timothy 4:7



THEN & NOW

Recognize this building in Naples? If you think you know what is there now, go to www.naplesnews.com, click the “business” tab and then the quick link “breaking ground” to enter your answer.

Last week's answer:

Bayfront, Goodlette-Frank Road and Fifth Avenue South.

Last week's winner:

Larry Lancit

FILE PHOTO

Will Trump spark a kindness backlash?



E.J. Dionne Jr.
Columnist

WASHINGTON — If you are appalled by the chaos, division and meanness of the Trump presidency, if you are tired of the lies he and his apparatchiks tell, take heart. Most of your fellow Americans feel the same way.

There is a condescending habit in the nation’s capital of seeing voters as detached and indifferent to the day-to-day workings of government.

The folks who promised to drain the swamp are guilty of a particularly pernicious form of this elitism. President Donald Trump’s defenders regularly claim that his base is so blindly loyal that nothing he says or does will ever drive its members away.

But news from across the country should shatter these illusions. A large majority of voters, including many erstwhile Trump supporters, are rebelling. The evidence is overwhelming that Trump’s foes are as determined and motivated as any opposition in recent memory.

This message was already delivered in elections in November and December. The latest tidings are from Wisconsin, which led the way toward the style of politics that Trump exploited to get to the White House, even though he fared poorly there in the 2016 primaries.

In the rural 10th Senate District in the state’s western reaches, Democrat Patty Schachtner defeated Republican Assemblyman Adam Jarchow by an impressive 9 percentage points in a special election on Tuesday. Consider that Trump carried the district by 17 points in the presidential election (up from a six-point margin for Mitt Romney in 2012) and that the seat had been

Republican for 17 years.

It was, as my Washington Post colleague Dave Weigel noted, the Democrats’ 34th legislative pickup from the Republicans since Trump’s election. Republicans have flipped just four.

And lest anyone dismiss the importance of what happened, Wisconsin Republican Gov. Scott Walker, who rode to power on the 2010 conservative wave, warned that Schachtner’s victory was “a wake up call for Republicans in Wisconsin.”

It might usefully rouse Republicans in Washington, too.

Wisconsin matters, and not simply because it was, along with Michigan and Pennsylvania, one of the closely run states that gave Trump his Electoral College victory. It is also the place where American progressivism took root at the turn of the last century, but where conservatives have staged a dramatic realignment of popular sentiments over a short period.

Democrats won Wisconsin in every presidential election from 1988 to 2012. Hillary Clinton’s strategists made the mistake of taking the state for granted in 2016. What they missed were trends brilliantly analyzed by Katherine J. Cramer, a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin, in her prophetic book, “The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker.” It was published eight months before the 2016 vote.

As the title suggests, the conservative resurgence Walker engineered was built on a backlash in the countryside against Milwaukee and Madison. Trump profited from the same rural and small-town discontent — and not just in Wisconsin.

“We are in a time of increasing economic inequality and of stark policy bias in favor of the affluent,” Cramer wrote, “and yet the politics of resentment draws our attention to our animosity toward each other rather

than the ways in which the political system is not working for anyone but the very few.”

But backlash politics provokes a backlash of its own, and in an interview on Wednesday, Cramer said the voters are weary of division. “Wisconsinites believe in ‘Wisconsin Nice,’” she said, “and they really dislike ‘us versus them’ politics.”

This is certainly Schachtner’s view. The chief medical examiner for St. Croix County — Trump prevailed there by 18 points — told The Associated Press that her victory “could be” a portent of Democratic gains, and added: “My message has always been be kind, be considerate, and we need to help people when they’re down.”

Now this would be a change of pace.

With Washington engulfed in controversy over Trump’s hate-filled comments about people from certain countries, Republicans would do well to note the costs of unkind politics.

A Quinnipiac poll released on Wednesday made clear where the passion in politics lies right now. The survey found Trump with a dismal 38 percent approval rating. More significantly, only 29 percent strongly approved of his performance, while 49 percent strongly disapproved. Intensity of feeling is important to voter turnout, especially in midterms.

Predicting this November’s elections in January is, of course, a fool’s game. But failing to see the depth of the loathing for Trump is a form of political malpractice. He has given nice a chance to prevail.

Dionne writes about politics in a twice-weekly column and on the PostPartisan blog. He is a senior fellow in Governance Studies at the Brookings Institution, a government professor at Georgetown University and a commentator on politics for National Public Radio, ABC’s “This Week” and MSNBC. He is the author of “Why the Right Went Wrong.”