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QUOTE FOR THE DAY

“We may be opponents, but we are not enemies. We are Americans.” President elect Joe Biden last Saturday.

NICE THOUGHTS, BUT

But, quite a bit different from saying, “I’m a proud Democrat, but will be president of all the people,” as Mr. Biden said earlier on. Yes, the Republicans would say. We are all Americans, and thanks for acknowledging that, and, at the same time, implacable opponents.

First off, congratulations are in order for Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris, and good wishes for moving the country forward on the many knotty issues facing us. My one hope is that Mr. Biden’s efforts be supported by a good number of the 70 million Republicans who voted for president Trump. That wish is, however,

somewhat fanciful, as the virtual unanimous vilification of president Trump by the Democrats dates back to more than four years ago, continuing even through Tuesdays election. – a very big, “make nice” project for the incoming president.

FORGET SHERMAN’S MARCH TO THE SEA

For outgoing president Trump, please, please don’t burn and slash, and don’t trash the White House like the Clintons did. This is no time to be firing Dr. Fauci, FBI’s, Wray, SecDef Esper and the head of the CIA. In fact, just don’t fire anyone. Oops – too late on Esper- just found out he’s toast. Soon to be ex-president, Trump will continue to exert major impact on the Republican party; could even be a Grover Cleveland, the only president elected to two non consecutive terms. Leaving office as a spoiler will do nothing to enhance Trump’s image or future prospects.

That said, he does have every right to pursue state voting tallies. Most states mandate recounts where the victor has won by only .5

points or less, and the losing candidate can challenge at any point differential above .5. From what I see in the press, pursuing allegations of voter fraud is simply an ill advised venture – no evidence thus far, and even if there were some – miniscule, and of no effect to the previously announced results. However, in very close races, errors can occur and recounts are justified.

Pennsylvania will be an interesting case. According to Holman Jenkins of the WSJ, in “plain contravention of state law, Pennsylvania extended its ballot deadline.” Associate Justice, Alioto of SCOTUS thinks the issue is worthy of consideration and has requested that ballots received after the deadline be segregated from all other ballots.

Bottom line, these are perfectly legal recourses being pursued by the Republicans, but appear to me like grasping at straws. At the appropriate moment, it would be helpful for the country to witness a dignified concession, congratulating Mr. Biden on his victory.

EFFECT ON THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The factions within the Democratic party are almost as complex and war-like as those between the Reds and Blues.

I am reminded of the 1968 football game between Harvard and Yale, the most famous in Ivy League history where, Harvard, trailing badly, scored 16 points in the last 42 seconds to tie the game at 29 as the clock ran out. The headline read, "Harvard beats Yale 29 - 29."

Well, the Republicans did not tie the Democrats last Tuesday, but they scared the hell out of them. With 70 million votes, Trump got 7 million more than in 2016, the Congress lost seats instead of gaining and there was not a sweeping take over of the Senate, although control is still being contested. In short, there was no Blue wave, as enthusiastically forecast by the pollsters.

A likely contributor to the barrel of ice water on the heads of the Democrats, is the Progressive faction in the party. I actually dislike that word. "Progressive" has a good sound to it, like apple pie and milk. Positive-

moving forward – right? Perhaps a bit intimidating as well, as in, “I’m a progressive and you’re not.” Seems a lot of folks don’t share enthusiasm for the progressive’s views, and not just Republicans. In ultra liberal California, “Californians rejected affirmative action, decisively shot down an expansion of rent control and eviscerated a law that gives greater labor protections for ride-share and delivery drivers...” Further, “A measure that would have raised taxes on commercial landlords to raise millions for a state that sorely needs revenue also seemed on track for defeat.”

The bottom line is that president elect Biden is going to have his hands full with the progressives. Elizabeth Warren is already laying claim to Secretary of the Treasury and, obviously there’s got to be a nice home for Bernie. Mr. Biden has a consistent reputation as a moderate and he had better keep the progressives in check. Enemy pundits are already smacking their lips about the prospects for 2022 mid terms if the Democrats tilt too far left.

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE ACT (ACA)

November 10th begins hearings at the SCOTUS about the future of the act. Democrats are watching with dread lest a Supreme Court, with an additional conservative justice, scrap the entire program. Based on an extensive article in today's NY Times, I just don't see that happening.

First of all, the current administration promised a replacement program that would include the provision to cover all those with pre existing conditions. After four years nothing has happened. Striking down the existing law would increase the ranks of the uninsured by 20 million. "The biggest loss of coverage would be among low-income adults who became eligible for Medicaid under the law after all but a dozen states expanded the program to include them." Scrapping ACA without a replacement is both impractical and inhumane.

Further, health insurers who are critical to the functioning of any health plan have urged the court to save the law. "Make no mistake about

it: invalidation of ACA would wreak havoc on the entire health care system.” At some point the law must reflect reality, and to leave 20 million Americans uninsured and a health care system in chaos would not be a decision with which I would want my name associated.

The major issue that brings this topic again to the court is the individual mandate, that is, the requirement of all participants to pay monthly premiums. In 2017 the Congress eviscerated that aspect of ACA by reducing the premium to zero. “The new challenge starts with the argument that this made the mandate unconstitutional because it could no longer be considered a tax.” Opponents of ACA would contend that by doing away with this provision it would be necessary to scrap the entire act.

Now we come to the concept of “severability” about which the new justice, Ms. Barrett, was very articulate. She has no problem separating out parts of legislation in order to keep an otherwise good law in place. Last June, in commenting about a similar situation with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Chief Justice Roberts said, “We think it clear that

Congress would prefer that we use a scalpel rather than a bulldozer in curing the constitutional defect we identify today.” Bottom line, the concept of, “severability” can save ACA, and, for practical and humane reasons it must happen.

COVID- 19 (CV) UPDATE

In the midst of gloomy news – more than 100,000 new cases a day (think Michigan State stadium fully packed) and more than 10 Million cases in the U.S. since the start of the pandemic. Add to that Dr. Fauci’s prediction that with the colder weather it will only get worse – with all that gloominess, Pfizer announced this morning that its vaccine is 90% effective and the stock market has gone nuts on the positive side. Additionally, but unrelated, it has recently been reported that an easy to produce and administer nasal spray Has had a 100 % success rate in defending a small group of Ferrets from sickness. With the Pfizer announcement, it can be conjectured with a high degree of confidence that this is the first time we have truly glimpsed the light at the end of the tunnel. Next comes final FDA

approval and the roll out. Front line medical care workers and infirm elderly first, then high vulnerability people, followed by those 65 and over. Etc, etc. The foregoing is not a final vaccine administration schedule, but a compilation of previously recommended ones. This is to be a two dose vaccine with the first 15-20 million doses to be available by year end. Ramp up time for additional doses is said to be very fast. Sunny day, America!!

BACK TO SHOPPING

It's time to focus on our much neglected wardrobes. Coming on the scene is Lanvin with scratch and sniff fruit scented T shirts at \$590 apiece. Cherry, with big cherries on the front for men; blackberries for women and strawberries for both. Our reviewer found the cherry T shirt smelled like cherry cough suppressant and the blackberry smelled like artificial grape. Lanvin says the aroma should last 50 washings, but the cherry cough drop T only kept its flavor for one washing, maybe all for the good. Hey that's the same \$600, 30 million Americans got as their supplement. Your faithful scribe, PB

