

## Reader Asks: Why Do I Keep Writing About Donald Trump? He's Gone!

Good question. The answer is that his spirit lingers among those I call Trumpers. Cult-45 is very real, and the disgraced ex-president holds his diminished fan base like no other cult leader in our history.

The real culprits in nurturing Cult-45 are Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity and Laura Ingraham at Fox News plus those two far right networks supporting Trump's "Big Lie," One America News Network (OAN) and Newsmax, although I have never watched those. However, the audience for these conspiracy mongers and promoters are Trump's base, and there's no better term for them than Trumpers. (Can you make such a term from those other names? Tuckerers?)

We know Trump's base, loud though it may be, is diminished by the size of the crowds at his rally, but I see its reduction myself in readers who were Trump supporters in 2020 but don't

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identify themselves with him any more. "Not all Republicans support Trump, including me," more than a few readers have told me. "Stop attacking all Republicans," they beg, and I concur. Not all Republicans, thank God, are Trumpers. Many want the Party to move on from him and are as upset as the rest of us that the majority of the party rank-and-file, according to polls, have been convinced by Trump's Big Lie and still like him. That's the power of a cult.

A friend driving north from Castle Rock on I-25 last week told me that she saw some flag waving Trumpers on an overpass, a couple of them displaying banners that read "Trump Won." Really? These cult followers are really deep into it. They, not Trump, are the target of our anger and disgust — but they also reflect for us all how one insecure, monomaniacal and psychopathic man has infected a statistically significant percentage of the population with democracy-destroying beliefs that our electoral system is corrupt. It is not.

Equally disturbing, however, is the

fact that because a large percentage of the Republican rank and file still likes Donald Trump, the Republican members of Congress feel that telling the truth about Trump could cost them something they hold more dear than the flag they pretend allegiance to — their own political survival.

But Republicans alone can't win elections without their disaffected members and, more importantly, independent voters. Here in Colorado, the biggest voter registration is "unaffiliated." It's they who win elections in most races, and having only 80% of the Republican Party without a majority of independents will not do it for Trumpers except in the very reddest of districts. The rest of the electorate is appalled at what incumbent supporters of Trump have done. Painting the Jan. 6th insurrection as "noisy tourists" does not bode well for their all-important survival. At least it shouldn't, and if those Republicans, especially Lauren Boebert, win re-election over a good, centrist Democratic candidate, our country is going to look a lot like our climate — beyond the tipping point into irreversible self-destruction.

**Change of subject:** I'm writing this week's column from an Alaskan cruise. Finally, a post-pandemic vacation on a ship where everyone had to be fully vaccinated and also test negative before boarding. (Not possible in Florida, thanks to their idiot governor — will that policy win him re-election? Let's hope not!)

Anyone who has been on a cruise ship knows that 90 to 99% of the crew is international — mostly Filipino, but also Caribbean, Central American and other Asians. On our ship there are 1,800 crew serving 2,500 Americans. A crew member I spoke with could only name three American co-workers.

Without immigrants, legal or illegal, our vegetable and fruit growers would be hard pressed to get laborers at any price, and roofing companies would be hard pressed to replace hundreds of roofs after a hail storm.

America needs to come to terms with the kind of racism epitomized by Donald Trump's immigration policy. We need to appreciate those who walk hundreds of miles or more to enter America to make a living and support our economy. *End of sermon!*

Talking Turkey



By Jim Smith