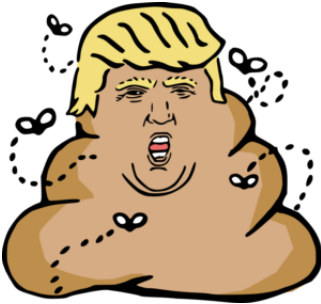


Trump's Shithole Country



Pres*dent Trump

So a couple of days ago our Pres*dent expressed his knowledge of world geography by referring to all African nations, the Central American nation of El Salvador, and the island nation of Haiti, as “shitholes.” This presumably also referred to the people native to those countries, as trump used his “shithole” comment to prove why those people should not be allowed to emigrant to the United States of America.

I have something to say about this.

I know a family who are natives of the Republic of The Gambia, which happens to be an African nation. They have an amazing (to me) life story. The husband grew up on a farm helping his dad, then went to college and earned a degree in Information Technology (IT). He had a girlfriend but wanted his family to live in America. So each year he entered the “Visa Lottery” and after his third annual try won a visa. He emigrated to America and immediately applied for a green card. After two years he earned permanent legal residency. He immediately returned to Gambia and married his girlfriend, then came back to America.

He worked and waited for his five year's minimum residency, then applied for citizenship. Once an American citizen he brought his wife over (in trump's words “chain immigration”) to America. They settled down here and started a family.

Although the husband has an IT degree he started a landscaping business as he loves working with soil and plants. His wife works at a senior citizen center local to their home. As of this writing, they have three lovely children. These honest, hard-working people are among the kindest, most polite people I know; full of life and love.

I know a young woman who is native of the Democratic Republic of The Congo, another African nation. She was adopted by an American family as a minor, through a religious group, and brought to America. At the time she was adopted she was living with her Grandmother as her parents had died. At the age of seventeen she was working full-time at a hotel local to her home and going to college. She later dropped out of college, managed to earn her seaman's card and landed a job on a Cruise Ship as housekeeper. After working on the Cruise Ship for several years she landed a job with an airline as flight attendant. As with the family from Gambia, this young woman is a pure joy to be around. She is full of life and love, a hard worker who lights up the lives of everyone around her.

I've tutored English as Second Language (ESL) students over the past year. My recent student is a young woman (younger than me) who moved here with her husband from the Republic of El Salvador about 20 years ago. I think they may have come here under the El Salvador refugee program but I have never asked. After arriving in America her husband started a roofing business and she started a house cleaning business. neither of them spoke any English when they arrived, and her husband still doesn't. They have four children, all born here in America and all in public schools, and help translate for the parents.

Over the past year my student has gone to a private language school and received tutoring as she needs to learn English for her business and to help her husband. She told me that her first cleaning customer used to keep a Spanish-English dictionary in the house to help communicate. She is a sweet

and hard-working woman, unfailingly polite, and is very proud when she masters another small bit of English.

These are the people I know from the countries trump considers "shitholes." I have a different perspective. The "shitholes" I see include the trump family, and the many people (mostly all Republicans) who are supporting and enabling the trumps. These people are turning our once great United States of America into a "shithole."

We have entire cities of Americans [drinking poisoned water](#) because of Republican policies. We have millions of Americans who [lack electricity and running water](#) months after a hurricane devastated their island, with no relief in sight, because of Republican's neglect. Our nation has the "[highest rate of maternal mortality in the industrialized world.](#)" Our average life expectancy has [declined for the second year in a row.](#) We currently rank [31 in the world](#), above Cuba but below Costa Rica.

Our national railway system is a joke, with our trains derailling at speeds of 30 miles per hour. Meanwhile, over in China, in the space of about ten years that country has developed the most [extensive high-speed railway system in the world](#), with the fastest trains and still improving. Our [infrastructure is close to failing](#), with no serious plans by our Republican-controlled Government to fix it anytime soon.

[Our poverty rate is increasing](#); In 2015, 13.5% (43.1 million) Americans lived below our poverty rate. I won't even get into our children learning "active shooter" drills in grade school, a direct result of NRA-directed Republican policies allowing any psycho access to military-grade weapons. Or that we [experienced 1,156 mass shootings in 1,735 days.](#)

So excuse me, but just maybe trump, his Republican enablers and strap-hangers and sycophants, might want to stop and look around before calling one-third of the world's nations

“shitholes.” We’re not doing a great job of taking care of our own, and our own people are voting with their feet. In 1999 the [US State Department estimated there were between three to six million American’s living abroad](#). In 2016, estimates were nine million Americans had voted with their feet and moved abroad.

We should feel grateful that people of other nations continue to see us as that “Shining City on a Hill,” with Lady Liberty still standing in New York harbor as a global symbol of freedom and hope. I have to wonder how much longer other people will see us that way.

Edited for format and grammar: January 14, 2018

Bringing In The New Year of 2018



Happy New Year 2018

Happy New year of 2018 everyone! We all survived the horrors of 2017, with a promise that 2018 will be a better year for everyone. So, to ring in the new year properly we need a bit of holiday music.

For the new year of 2018, I think this lovely piece of music speaks for hopes of better times ahead.

Believe it or not, this song was released way back in 1976. From the ever-wonderful Wikipedia:

Year of the Cat is the seventh studio album by Al Stewart, released in 1976 and was produced and engineered by Alan Parsons; it is considered his masterpiece [...] While Stewart is known for his guitar virtuosity, the song is recognized for producing amazing interplay of multiple guitars, piano, saxophone, violin, and drums

So here it is, for your start of the new year enjoyment.

Merry Christmas, Now With Music



Trans Siberian Orchestra

I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas to end what has generally been an awful year. So I think a bit of uplifting music is in order for this magical day.

I first heard of the band "[Trans Siberian Orchestra](#) (TSO) from

some people in my carpool, about eight years ago. Hearing them rave about this group got me curious, and I purchased my first TSO album "Christmas Eve and Other Stories." I was immediately hooked. I've since picked up two other albums by this group, (one Christmas album, and one rock opera) and I remain in awe of the power of their music.

The two TSO Christmas albums mix renditions of classical Christmas music mixed with their original work. Their music speaks to me in a way very few singers do.

I joined the Navy at the ripe age of 17 and celebrated my 18th birthday in Navy Boot Camp. I ended up stationed on my first submarine in San Diego, California, on the opposite side of America from the rest of my family. After several years other members of my family migrated out to California but for the first few Navy years, I spent my holidays alone. Christmas was usually the loneliest holiday as all my married shipmates spent the day with their families, which left single folks like me to fend for ourselves. This meant Christmas in the barracks or (once I turned 21) at the designated local bar. Some years I volunteered to take a duty day for one of my married shipmates so they could be at home, and I could spend my day onboard my sub around the only people I then knew.

The TSO song "The Old City Bar" brings me back to my early Navy days of not having any family around. I can't listen to it without bringing back strong memories of my first few Christmases in the Navy. For this Christmas, after a horrendous year that was witness to the wholesale government-directed looting of our country and citizens taking increasingly sharp sides over who we are as a nation; I think this song is worth listening to.

So here is a live rendition of TSO's incredibly powerful Christmas song "The Old City bar."

Merry Christmas everyone. May the coming year bring us peace.

This and That, Christmas 2017 Edition



This And That

After a long writing hiatus, I'm back in action. Time flies when you're having fun, time flies when you're not having fun, time flies when you're busy, and time flies when you're not looking. So why can't we ever catch time and stash it away for a rainy day?

This Christmas I decided it's time to catch up my loyal readers with all the news fit to print (and more) on the Virginia edition of the Charest family. This has been a good year, and a busy year, for both Winnie and me.

In January we resumed our home improvement project of replacing all the worn carpeting in our home with wood flooring. We had started the previous January, foolishly thinking it would only take about four months to replace three levels worth of flooring. So this January, we only had the upstairs flooring and stair treads left to do. About the same time, I was hired by a Washington, D.C., language school as a part-time English Second Language (ESL) teacher, teaching an evening class. Winnie did the flooring work on weeknights and I made my home improvement contributions on weekends while

working weekday evenings.

I really enjoyed teaching again and enjoyed the atmosphere of working in a teaching environment. Over the next few months, I had students from Mongolia, China, Saudi Arabia, several South and Central American countries, and one student from the Gambia. However, with evening classes, my day job, and commuting, I was putting in eighteen-hour days. I started to realize that at 60, I just couldn't keep up that kind of pace. So after several months, I dropped down to just tutoring a couple of students and being available as an occasional substitute teacher. This was a schedule I could manage long-term, and I'm still affiliated with the language school.

Meanwhile, Winnie and I finished out the upstairs flooring along with side projects of building a new closet, adding a door into an attic space, and repainting everything. We completed the work in June, just in time for our next big adventure of another vacation trip to China.

Winnie had gone back to China about three years ago, but on that trip, she spent all her time nursing her mother through a bad spell. I hadn't been to China since 2011, and I really wanted to explore more of the country and visit Winnie's family.

So in late August, we made a jammed two-week trip. We flew non-stop from Dulles, Virginia, into Beijing and then jumped to [Xi'an](#), the location of the [Xi'an Terracotta Warriors](#), for the first leg of our trip. From there we jumped to [Hangzhou](#) and explored the beautiful [West Lake](#). We also toured the [Leifeng Pagoda](#) which is the source of the "[Legend of White Snake](#)." From Hangzhou, we jumped to [Liuzhou](#) to visit family, then on to Luchuan, Winnie's home village of Baijing, and then Nanning and home via Beijing. Interestingly, on this trip, our flight from Dulles airport took us east over Greenland, down over central Russia and Mongolia, and into Beijing. On our way home we left Beijing and continued east over eastern Mongolia,

Russia, Alaska, then down over central Canada and back into Dulles. So we made an around-the-world flight as a bonus to our other adventures.

During the year I also made a couple of quick weekend trips to Rhode Island to visit family and check on an aging Aunt and Uncle. We did have a big loss this year; my Aunt Noella Papangno passed away in November. One of my trips to Rhode Island was to attend her memorial service.

Over the summer we did our usual; Winnie planted and tended her normally fantastic vegetable garden, and I took either my kayak or powerboat out on the water whenever I had some free time. Winnie continued to go swimming at our local rec center several times each week and occasionally managed to drag me out with her.

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, Winnie and I made a quick trip out to Tennessee and visited other families including Mom, who turned 90 this past October.

So that's pretty much been our year. We're down to one major home improvement project left (finish out an attic) plus a few minor projects that we'll probably take care of this year. My job continues to be stable, which is a real blessing considering the Government contracting industry. Winnie is still working as a Physical Care Assistant (PCA) and mostly likes the work for the opportunity to meet interesting people.

Winnie and I want to wish all our family and friends a very Merry Christmas, and a New Year of good health, happiness, and prosperity!

Are We A Police State Yet?



Unfriendly Cop

This past Sunday, a paying passenger was forcibly removed from a United Airlines (UA) flight in Chicago's O'Hare Airport, in the process beaten and his face bloodied by airport security officers removing him. The paying passenger's crime, the reason for this violent removal from an aircraft after being seated? UA needed the seat so some of their own employees could travel instead.

The President of UA, and lots of otherwise normal people, are currently defending the actions of these security officers.

In what world does a business claim the fucking right to deny service to a customer who has ALREADY PAID FOR SERVICE?

In what world does that same business get Government law enforcement, hired and paid for by the Government of the People, By the People, For the People, to do their bidding in a purely commercial squabble with a customer WHO HAS ALREADY PAID FOR SERVICE?

In what world does Government-paid security officials claim the right to forcibly beat up a non-violent unarmed person who has in fact done nothing except EXPECT TO RECEIVE SERVICE FOR WHICH HE HAS ALREADY FUCKING PAID FOR?

In what world do people in authority, both Government and Senior Executives of the business involved, defend the

actions of beating up an American Citizen/Paying Customer for EXPECTING SERVICE FOR WHICH THAT CUSTOMER HAS ALREADY FUCKING PAID?

Apparently, this is the world we are now living in.

Although it may be relevant that the passenger who was removed was a [69 year-old ethnic Asian doctor](#), and needed to get home on schedule to attend to patients who depended upon him, it's beside the point. It may be relevant that although [Contract of Carriage Rule 25 allows an airline to refuse passage to a paying customer, rule 21 actually applies](#) because the customer was already seated and had extenuating circumstances why he should not be forced to give up his seat; it doesn't fucking matter.

What matters is that an American citizen paid airfare to a commercial entity for a flight home, boarded the airplane and was seated, then told to give up his seat and wait for another flight so an employee of that commercial entity could fly instead. When the American citizen refused, employees of that commercial entity called in Government law enforcement officials who beat him up and forcibly dragged him off the airplane, simply because a commercial entity asked them to.

What matters even more is that people in authority, both commercial and Government, are defending these actions.

This is what a police state with no regard for "Rule of Law" looks like. We as a nation have gone pretty far down that rabbit hole, and I'm not sure how we find our way back out.

Editor's Update, April 12: After watching the [video of this passenger being forcibly removed](#), what disturbs me the most is actions of the other passengers. Although they did take video footage, NOT ONE PERSON attempted to intervene with law enforcement.

While I can almost excuse the passengers for being frightened

of arrest if they intervened; where the fuck was the airline crew and pilot? The pilot was ultimately responsible for his plane and passengers, why didn't he/she intervene? In my opinion, the flight crew is just as responsible for this atrocity as the cops, and should be held equally responsible.

As for the other passengers; when do we reach a point when witnessing blatant abuse of power by law enforcement rises to the level where citizens have the "right," the obligation, to physically intervene? At what point does people of a "free society" have an obligation to take back power from Government officials representing We the People?

Related Stories:

- New York Post: [Dragged passenger kicks and screams his way off overbooked flight](#)
- Law Newz: [Cops' Side of Story About Viral United Passenger Removal Video Gets Even Weirder](#)

This and That, Busy Spring Edition



This And That

It's cherry blossom festival in our nation's capital this

week. Trees that survived the erratic winter are preening their all for hordes of gawking tourists who come from near and far to admire the temporary pink flowers. Meanwhile, chaos continues apiece in the Charest household eclipsed only by the magnitude of chaos in our centers of government power.

Winnie and I tend to do a bunch of stuff all at the same time, take a long hibernation pause, then jump back into doing another bunch of stuff again. Our current home improvement project is more of the same. As detailed in a [previous story](#); in January 2016 we embarked on an ambitious home improvement project of replacing all the worn out carpeting in our home with wood flooring. We had three levels of flooring and two staircases of carpeting to replace, and we figured that by starting on January 1 we could be done by April, in time to start boating season.

It was a plan.

By June we finished remodeling the kitchen, a previously unplanned project that became necessary when the new wood flooring made the old kitchen look really old. I also finished up my Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certification program, earning a Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) certification that I could add to my collection of other highly important documents. We took off the summer for a few weekends of boating and in the beginning of September were ready to start the third and last level of carpet replacement.

Then we discovered a leak in our main floor bathroom. In order to gain access to the piping, we had to tear out the fixtures and one wall. We hadn't planned on remodeling this bath as it was in pretty good shape, but we ended up remodeling anyway. As we were finishing up the work in late October I managed to cut my finger in a table saw accident. Not as bad as it could have been; I didn't permanently lose any body parts, but it did dampen our enthusiasm for home

improvement projects for a few months while I healed up.

Winnie had quit her Personal Care Assistant (PCA) job in late September so she would have time to work an income tax preparation course. Course completed, she took off a few months to just enjoy being around the house. By December we were getting restless to finish up our home improvement project.

Finally, in early February, we got back into the last (so we think) phase of carpet replacement, just about at the same time Winnie went back to work. This was also the same time I landed a part-time evening job teaching English as Second Language (ESL) at a private language school. This was something I wanted to do, but also meant that now neither of us had much free time to work our home improvement stuff.

We started replacing flooring in our upstairs hallway, then moved into the smaller of the two upstairs bedrooms. We couldn't just replace the carpeting on account of that was too simple of a project. We have unused attic space over our attached garage, that Winnie wants to use for living space, adjoining the smaller bedroom so we made a door between the two rooms. Adding the door meant first removing a small closet we didn't need anyway. Really. I also relocated an A/C floor duct after removing the closet, and then built a small dresser into one knee wall. Then we started the flooring.

While Winnie was putting down flooring I was busy in our master bedroom expanding our closet into the unused space under the eaves. This project involved removing existing walls, relocating electrical wiring, new framing and insulation, then putting in several sheets of new drywall. As of today, the newly expanded closet is mostly completed except for trim work that I'll do after the flooring is down. Next I'll be adding another built-in dresser in our master bedroom to match the dresser in the small bedroom, then we can start the flooring. We finished the flooring and trim in our

smaller bedroom, and Winnie is pushing to get the master bedroom finished.

So, Winnie is putting in a couple of hour's home improvement per weekday between her job and taking care of household chores while I'm working 16-17 hour days. We do major construction work during the weekends so Winnie can properly supervise me. The house is in home improvement chaos, and with our present schedules will probably stay in chaos for another month.

The last major project for this year is rebuilding our main staircase with hardwood stairs to replace the nasty wood formerly hidden with carpeting. At which point it's boating season again. I suspect next winter we'll be working on finishing off the attic space we can now easily access. I'm excited.

Happy springtime everyone!

We Are All Immigrants



Statue of Liberty

All four of my grandparents were immigrants. One, my maternal grandfather, entered the US “illegally.” Both my first and present wives are immigrants. My first wife left the Philippines during the final years of the Marcos dictatorship, at a time when conditions in that country were rapidly deteriorating.

The decree Pre*ident trump issued this past Friday, blocking all Muslims of seven nations from entering America, deeply and personally offends me.

As I think about what trump’s decree means to us as a nation, my insides burn. We are all immigrants from other countries. Our parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, or maybe even further back, packed up everything they could carry and took a chance on traveling to a distant land in the desperate hope they could build a better life for their children. Those people, every one of them, demonstrated more courage than our current pre*ident will ever display or even understand.

I remember Winnie entering America for the first time in Los Angeles International Airport. [After a 20 month struggle](#), she finally obtained her visa on her first try at the US Consulate in Guangzhou and purchased her ticket here the very next day.

Her point of entry was Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), the International terminal. I flew to Los Angeles the day before her arrival and stayed with my brother and family. The next evening we all went down to LAX, arriving about two hours before Winnie's scheduled arrival. Then we waited.

I knew when Winnie's plane had landed and people were clearing customs because of the many Chinese people coming out. So many of them were young women with a baggage cart loaded with cloth bags stuffed full. These were all women like Winnie coming to America to be with their new husbands, seeking a better life, and carrying everything they now owned.

Our identity as Americans are bound up as a nation of immigrants, a nation that welcomes in the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breath free. The people of past generations and the people trying to come here today are what our country stands for. This is who we are.

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.*

*"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Emma Lazarus, 1883

No person, even if they happen to temporarily occupy our White

House, has the right to deny what America is all about. We as Americans are now facing a test; do we continue to stand for freedom and liberty for all who have the courage to ask? Or do we throw up a wall and hide behind it, quivering in the fear that new immigrants might bring new ideas and new customs and new ways of thinking.

I know on which side I stand.

A Day To Stand Up



Woman in Pink

Yesterday our national nightmare started, and today is the first day for American's to stand up and let the world know that this is not who we are. I cannot get to the Women's Watch on Washington event, so I'm going to have to do what I can to show my support. Consider this simple post on my bit of Cyberspace as my contribution to the cause.

This post is my way of showing that Trump does not represent me. Anyone who supports Trump does not speak for me. I believe America is better than the image Donald Trump described in his Inauguration Speech and better than the America he depicted while campaigning for the right to represent us on the world stage.

He won the right to represent our nation, our country, on a technicality. He may indeed represent the beliefs of some American's, but thankfully those Americans are in the minority. Those beliefs are not and never will be mine.

Donald Trump brings a lot of negative baggage into the White House. Just a few of his most recent and ongoing legal (ethical) issues include:

- At present The [FBI is leading a multi-agency investigation](#) into possible links between Russian officials and Trump during his campaign.
- As of 12:01 PM yesterday afternoon, [Trump is violating the emoluments clause](#) of our Constitution.
- There is an [ongoing investigation by the Attorney General of New York City on the Trump Foundation](#).
- There are [workman's liens and potential lawsuits pending against Trump over his renovation of the Old Post Office Building](#) in Washington D.C.
- Again as of 12:01 yesterday afternoon he [opened a contract violation with the GSA over his operation of that building lease](#).
- He has a [sexual assault lawsuit filed against him](#) just this past week over actions that allegedly occurred several years ago.

A large part of my anger towards the people who voted for Trump, and continue to support him, condemned Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as "unfit for President" for her alleged ethical violations that approach insignificance in comparison to those of Trump's. Any attempt to point this out to Trump

supporters feels as if I'm speaking to people occupying an alternate space-time continuum.

I don't know how we can fix this, and I don't know how we can come together again as a nation and family and friends. Maybe we cannot, and perhaps not bridging the gap between two diametrically different and opposed worldviews is what this country now needs to do.

I simply do not know.

I do know that singer [Pat Benatar](#) is one of my favorites. Her small contribution to today's Women's Watch on Washington was to release a song specifically for the event. I'm ending my post with her music because I can't think of any better way to end it.

The Last Week of Obama's Presidency



President Barack Obama

Not only is today a national holiday celebrating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it also happens to be the last week of the presidency of Barak Obama. On this day of remembrance, I need to share my thoughts on our regrettably too-soon-to-be former President.

I have not always agreed with the policies of the Obama Administration. I feel that President Obama has been too accommodating to Republicans, too willing to compromise away progressive, liberal, beliefs. His administration has been too hard on legitimate "whistleblowers," and vastly increased the "surveillance state" bequeathed by the Bush jr. administration. Not only did his administration not completely pull out of Afghanistan, but he also expanded our middle east involvement through bombing and special forces campaigns in Yemen and Pakistan.

On the flip side; Obama has worked hard to create public policy that benefits American families. While I'm not a big fan of the Affordable Care Act (I think we should have a single-payer "Medicaid for All program), it is far better than what we had before, and irrevocably established the precedent that managing medical care is a proper function of Government.

I also feel that Obama appointed capable people to his administrative positions, people who took their responsibilities seriously and performed their jobs to their best abilities.

Despite my criticisms, I deeply admire Obama as a person. I consider one measure of a man is his family. Barack Obama, by every sign, loves his family and cares for his wife and children. There has never been any hint of extra-marital affairs or other improprieties. His daughters have grown up in the public eye with grace and style. First Lady Michelle has spent much time working to improve the nutrition and early education of America's children and has conducted herself with grace and poise.

But it has been in Barack Obama's personal conduct that I have grown to admire him the most. I don't forget how the Republican Party, and Republican hanger-on's, have treated Obama from the day he established a national presence. Republican's have excelled in the politics of personal destruction since at least the Nixon presidency, but their treatment of Obama hit new lows.

I don't forget the statement made by then-Republican minority leader Mitch McConnell (R – KY) towards President Obama of "[The single most important thing we want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president](#), in 2010." This at a time when we were facing the worse economic crisis since the Great Depression.

I don't forget our President [heckled and called a liar](#), during his 2009 State of the Union speech by Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC). Although Wilson did apologize afterward, he also used this incident to fund-raise.

I don't forget then-Arizona Governor Jan Brewer publicly [sticking her fingers in President Obama's face](#), shouting at him, at the Phoenix airport. Then she and the Republican party used the incident to fundraise.

Finally, I don't forget the years that Republican's questioned Barack Obama's real birthplace. Even after our President had released his long-form birth certificate showing he was born in Hawaii, which is and was then an American State, Republican's continued to challenge him and the legitimacy of his presidency.

I could post images of our President that floated around Cyberspace these past years, some of which are so obviously racist, as an American I sometimes felt ashamed. However, I'm not going give these pictures cred by posting any on my site. I will offer a [link to Mr. Google](#), so my readers with a strong enough stomach can browse at their pleasure.

Beyond the personal abuse, our President also had to endure the abuse and racism directed towards his wife and daughters. Whatever one might think of an elected public official, unelected families are expected to be off-limits.

Through all this abuse, Barack Obama showed unflappable dignity and grace. He never publicly attacked the people mocking him. Obama never gave the appearance of taking actions that retaliated against critics. He continued to “bend over backward” to accommodate people mocking him. For all his efforts to work with Republicans, Obama received no praise and credit from them. Nothing he ever did to adapt their policies was enough, even when he [supported the very policies Republicans had supported just a few years earlier under Bush.](#)

Honestly, I do not think I could have shown such grace to people mocking my family and me, the way Barack Obama has. I have to admit; Obama has now become a role model for me in conducting myself in public. But, his is a standard I doubt I’ll ever meet, and I’m ok with that.

So on this national holiday celebrating the life of one extraordinary man, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I want to remember the service of another remarkable man, President Barack Obama.

Thank you, sir, for your service these past eight years.

Snow Falls In Virginia



Music Inside

Today I'm watching the first snowfall of this season, and coincidentally the first snow of 2017. At least here in Northern Virginia. As luck would have it, today is a Saturday, so I've avoided the Mad Max-like horrors of traveling out on our snowy highways. On the flip side, I'm stuck in the house all day and cabin fever strikes quickly.

We're presently up to about one-half inch, and with any luck, we'll have Washington, D.C. shut down for a week.

On this cold, snowy day, we need a little something to warm the place up. Something like, [Vanessa Mae](#) playing something really hot. With ice. Okay, just about everything Vanessa Mae does is pretty hot, but some things are hotter than others. So, how about a music video clip of Vanessa Mae in "The Devil's Trill."

On a snow-related question; Every time we get a snow storm everyone runs out and buys up melting salt and snow shovels. Now, I get the melting salt, but, snow shovels? What the hell did everyone do with the shovels from the last year?

A question to ponder...