Opinion



by Michael Sean Winters

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Congratulations to the magnificent Melinda Henneberger of the Kansas City Star for being a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. Those of us who write columns with regularity all hope to become Melinda when we grow up. Next year, we expect her to win the darned thing!

Why didn't I see the connection? President Donald Trump invoked the memory of his predecessor, Abraham Lincoln, in describing his own heroic response to the coronavirus. "With malice toward none, with charity for all" certainly describes Trump's public utterances.

Relatedly, in The Washington Post, David Von Drehle examines the president's rebuke of George W. Bush and what it reveals about his character. Von Drehle also finds the perfect adjective to describe Trump's narcissism: "florid." The role of Pete Hegseth, a Fox News personality, in the saga is also noteworthy. Team Joe Biden needs to find which surrogates can really get under the president's skin in ways that make him look worse than he already does and send them out to appear on Fox News.

Waves usually start small and they do not usually start in Iowa, but this report at The Hill, indicates that the Senate race in the Hawkeye state is tightening and incumbent Republican Sen. Joni Ernst currently has only a 1-point lead over her likely opponent Theresa Greenfield. (The poll had a margin of error of +/-2.8%) The election is far off, and Greenfield has a primary to get through first, but this is the kind of news that has to make other Republicans in Washington wonder if November will see a wave crash on them.

One way to guarantee there will be a Democratic wave election? At a time when your governor's inexplicable decision to prematurely reopen your state's economy and people are profoundly and rightly anxious, highlight your own wealth and independence as a central theme of your campaign. That is what Georgia Sen. Kelly Loeffler is doing in her effort to win at the polls the seat to which she was appointed. Politico has the story. I suppose it beats talking about suspicious stock sales based on inside information about the coronavirus?

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One of the qualities of weather is its unpredictability. And so it is not entirely surprising to see Republicans, who have never met a tax cut they did not like, now pushing back against the Trump administration's commitment to reducing the payroll tax. Democrats take note: Cutting the payroll tax has one immediate and undeniable effect. It moves the Medicare and Social Security trust funds closer to bankruptcy. There is one of your principal campaign themes. Politico has the story.

The pandemic is causing so many problems and there seem to be so few solutions. In France, Politico reports that cheesemakers may have to let thousands of tons of cheese go to waste because of breakdowns in the market. There is a solution for this problem: Send it to me!

[Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]

Editor's note: *Don't miss out on Michael Sean Winters' latest. Sign up and we'll let you know when he publishes new Distinctly Catholic columns.*