

Mike Berman's

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*Any statements in this issue of the Watch which are not sourced are mine and identified by “WW”.

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State of the Nation

Second quarter GDP hit 4.1% which is up from 2.2% in the first quarter. Quarterly GDP has exceeded 4.1% four times since the fourth quarter of 2009: 4.5% - Fourth quarter 2009; 4.7% - Fourth quarter 2011; 5.1% - Second quarter 2014 and 4.9% - Third quarter 2014. [Steve Rattner]

The question for which we will all wait with bated breath is whether these growth numbers will sustain. [WW]

38% of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction, 53% say it is on the wrong track. [*Economist/YouGov*, 7/24/18]

In June, 63% of Americans were satisfied with the state of the U.S. economy while 37% were not satisfied. [*NBC/WSJ*, 6/18]

In mid-June, 38% of us were satisfied with the way things were going in the United States. This is up from 29% in March/April. In March/April, satisfaction among Republicans had fallen to 54%; in May/June it rebounded to 68%.

A similar rebound occurred among Independents which had dropped to 25% in March/April. In June it was 36%. Among Democrats, there was no increase in satisfaction from March/April to May/June.

Other significant changes in satisfaction between March/April and May/June occurred among those living in towns/rural areas where the increase was +14 points and among those 55 years of age and older where the increase was a +12 points. [*Gallup*, May/June 2018]

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Employment

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for June 2018 is 4.0%. This is an uptick from May when the rate was 3.8%. This increase is likely driven by the fact that nearly 600,000 people who have been on the sidelines decided to enter or re-enter the workforce.

If one takes into account the total number of unemployed + those marginally attached to the labor force + those working part-time who want full-time work, the unemployment rate for June 2018 is 7.8%, also an uptick from May.

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The Demographics of Unemployment

There has been an uptick of various sizes in all of the circumstances below.

Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women – 3.7%

Men – 3.7%

Unemployment by Race (all races)

White - 3.5%

Black – 6.5%

Hispanic - 4.6%

Asian – 3.2%

Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

Less than high school – 5.5%

High School – 4.2%

Some college – 3.3%

Bachelor's Degree or higher – 2.3%

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“Between the first and second quarters of 2018 – after the tax cuts were enacted – real wages fell by 1.8%.” [Ezra Klein]

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In 2016 the fertility rate in the United States was the lowest it has ever been. It was 1,765 births per 1,000 which is below the replacement rate. [Center for Disease Control]

The U.S. has the highest maternal death rate among the world's developed nations. There are 26.4 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. In every other developed nation, the death rate has been stable or falling. In the U.S. it has been getting worse. Two women die in childbirth almost every day in America. [USA Today, 7/26]

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In 1978, 58% of 16-19 year olds were employed in the summer. By 1989 the number was 57% of teens. In 2017 that number had dropped to 35%. There seem to be a number of reasons for this change. There are fewer low-skill/entry-level jobs than in decades past; more students are enrolled in high school or college during the summer; more students are taking unpaid internships; more teens are doing unpaid community service work as part of their graduation requirements or to burnish their college applications. When it comes to the rest of the year, in 1978 45.1% were employed and by 2017 the number was 28.7%.

Millennials (21-36 years of age) became the largest generation in the labor force in 2016 and continued to grow in 2017. 35% of the American labor force participants were millennials in 2017. [*PEW Research Center, 4/18*]

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Between 2000 and 2015, American companies hired 4.3 million people in the United States but added 6.2 million jobs overseas. [Steven Rattner, 7/2/18]

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This and That

The share of U.S. children living with an unmarried parent has more than doubled since 1968, jumping from 13% to 32% in 2017.

That trend has been accompanied by a drop in the share of children living with two married parents, down from 85% in 1968 to 65% in 2017. Some 3% of children are not living with any parents.

21% of children under the age of 18 are living with a solo mom. That number has been about the same since 1997. In 1968 that number stood at 12%.

4% of children are living with a solo father and 7% are living with cohabiting parents. [PEW analysis of U.S. Census Bureau and current population data]

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64 million people now live in multigenerational households. This is up from 32.2 million people living in multigenerational households in 1950.

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By 2040, eight states will be home to nearly half (49.5 percent) of the country's entire population. An implication of that bit of trivia: 30 percent of the American population will control 68 percent of the U.S. Senate. "The House and

the Senate will be weighted to two largely different Americas,” the Post writes. [WP, 7/16/18]

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The Trump Administration has significantly reduced the number of people attempting to legally move to the United States. The number of people receiving visas to move to the U.S. permanently will drop **12 percent** through Trump's first two years in office. Setting aside dramatic drops from countries targeted by the administration's ban on travel from a set of Muslim-majority countries, the number of visas approved for Africans is on pace to fall 15 percent and applications for the H-1B visa fell for the first time in five years. [WP]

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Within the past few months, we have seen things occur on our American borders that are so shockingly and disgracefully inhumane and un-American that it is simply enraging. And we have heard people in high positions in the American government blaspheme in the name of God and country that it is a moral thing to assault the children amongst us. [WP, 6/22]

“There’s been a shocking increase in the backlog of citizenship applications. Nearly three-quarters of a million legal permanent residents eligible for citizenship are awaiting processing of their naturalization applications,” Joshua Hoyt, executive director of the National Partnership for New Americans, a coalition of immigrant rights groups, told ABC News. US Citizenship and Immigration Services, the government agency that oversees the naturalization process, rejected claims made by the report. (Meena Venkataramanan, *ABC News*)

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The U.S. Supreme Court

66% of Americans have a favorable view of the Supreme Court. This is a substantial increase from July 2015 when 48% had a favorable view of the court.

71% of Republicans and GOP-leaning independents have a favorable view of the court, up from 51% in August 2016. 62% of Democrats and Dem-leaning independents have a favorable view of the court, down from 70% in August 2016 and about the same as July 2015.

55% of Americans say the Supreme Court should base its rulings on what the Constitution means in current times rather than what it means as originally written. On this question there is a substantial difference between the views of Republicans and Democrats.

67% of Republicans and GOP-leaning independents say the judges should decide cases based on the Constitution's original meaning while 78% of Democrats and Dem-leaning independents say that they should rule according to what the constitution means in current times.

Not surprisingly, the younger of age a person is when appointed to the court the longer he or she serves. Justice Anthony Kennedy, who just announced his retirement, joined the court in 1988.

Eight of the current Supreme Court justices served previously as federal appeals court judges. 69 of the 113 justices had previous experience as judges. 105 of the justices had experience in private practice. Of the 113 justices some 58 also held some form of elected office.

Only 4 women have served on the court and 3 are currently serving. Only 3 non-whites have served and 2 are currently serving. [PEW, 6/12/18]

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The United States has found a place on the list of the ten most dangerous countries in the world for women.

Seven years ago the Thomson Reuters Foundation convened a panel of 550 experts on women's issues to rank the five most dangerous countries for women in the world. In that 2011 survey the rank order was Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, India and Somalia.

The survey was repeated earlier this year and the list was expanded to ten. Here is the list in rank order: 1) India, 2) Afghanistan, 3) Syria, 4) Somalia, 5) Saudi Arabia, 6) Pakistan, 7) Democratic Republic of Congo, 8) Yemen, 9) Nigeria, 10) United States.

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56% believe that immigration helps the United States more than it hurts. 31% have the opposite point of view. [NBC/WSJ, 7/18]

72% of Americans, including 86% of Republicans and 62% of Democrats, believe it is at least somewhat likely that social media sites intentionally censor political viewpoints. [*Axios*, 6/28/18]

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The U.S. Patent and Trademark office has issued U.S. Patent #10,000,000. For what was it issued, you ask? “Coherent Ladar Intra-Pixel Quadrature Detection”.

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On average, 43% of the volume of a bag of chips is air. An experiment measured the difference between water displacement of the unopened bag and the vacuum-sealed contents of the snacks. On the high end, Cheetos bags are 59 percent air, while on the low end 19 percent of a bag of Fritos is air. [*Numlock*, 7/16/18]

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The U.S. Mint made over **1.3 billion nickels in 2017**, and despite the fact that they literally print money, the Mint made all those coins at a loss. The penny has long been a money-loser for the Mint, with each coin costing more to make than the cent its worth. The nickel has been a money loser since 2006. The copper and nickel in a five cent piece went up in price and is now about 7 cents, and in 2017 the mint lost \$9.5 million making them. Changing the composition of the coin isn't easy — vending machines and coin counters in America use conductivity to delineate different coins and the reprogramming would cost tens of billions of dollars. [Katherine Ellen Foley, *Quartz*]

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At least for now, Maggie Haberman of the N.Y. Times will no longer send tweets.

"After nearly nine years and 187,000 tweets, I have used Twitter enough to know that it no longer works well for me. I will re-engage eventually, but in a different way."

She went on:

- "The viciousness, toxic partisan anger, intellectual dishonesty, motive-questioning and sexism are at all-time highs, with no end in sight. It is a place

where people who are understandably upset about any number of things go to feed their anger, where the underbelly of free speech is at its most bilious."

- "Twitter is now an anger video game for many users. It is the only platform on which people feel free to say things they'd never say to someone's face. For me, it had become an enormous and pointless drain on my time and mental energy."
- "Twitter is a useful and important platform. It's a good aggregator for breaking news. I still check my feed to see breaking news developments, and I will continue to."

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey replies with a thoughtful Twitter thread, acknowledging that she has a "lot of fair critiques":

"Fundamentally, we need to focus more on the conversational dynamics within Twitter. We haven't paid enough consistent attention here. Better organization, more context, helping to identify credibility, ease of use."

[Maggie Haberman, *NYT Sunday Review*]

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Over the past two years, merchants have passed off the equivalent of 10 million bottles of cheap Spanish wine as French rosé to fuel insatiable American demand. I really can't decide here between a Spanish joke, a French joke and an American joke. [WP, 7/16]

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Smoking in America continues to decline. 14% of U.S adults (about 30 million people) were smokers last year, down from 16% the year before, and 42% in the 1960s, per government figures out today. [AP, 6/19]

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Sylar lives in a \$500,000 mansion in Beijing. Sylar is named after a character on the TV show "Heroes." Sylar did tricks. Sylar went viral. Sylar got hundreds of thousands of followers on social media. Sylar made his owner rich. Sylar is a border collie. [WP]

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For those who cannot begin their day without checking cable early morning news programs, here are the Nielsen ratings for the 2nd quarter of 2018.

Total Viewers/Age 25-54:
Fox & Friends: 1.55 million/329,000
MSNBC’s Morning Joe: 1.06 million/232,000
CNN’s New Day: 564,000/183,000

If instead you start your day watching one of the major broadcast network morning shows, here are the Nielsen ratings for the week of July 16th.

Total Viewers/Age 25-54:
ABC: 3.68 million/1,071,000
NBC: 3.485 million/1,147,000
CBS: 2.775 million/692,000

[TVNewser]

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Americans have varying degrees of confidence in our institutions.

	<u>Great deal/Quite a lot</u>	<u>Not much/None</u>
The Military	88%	11%
The U.S. Supreme Court	58%	38%
The FBI	56%	40%
The Presidency	43%	54%
The Media	25%	70%

[NPR/PBS/Marist, 7/22]

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Quotes

“Trump has given away the whole ballgame here. He does not want a justice who will be neutral, impartial, or open minded. He wants justices who are political ideologues and whose decisions will be driven by their political agendas.”

–Geoff Garin

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“Society expects things of leading companies and sometimes we should take a stance on something.” – Walmart Chief Executive Doug McMillon

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“The Bible, like a gun, is a dangerous thing in the hands of a bigot.”
– Michael Gerson [WP, 6/19]

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“Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.” – Dr. Seuss

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“A person who is nice to you, but rude to the waiter, is not a nice person.” – Dave Barry calls this the “waiter rule”. [WP, 6/19]

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“**You miss** 100% of the shots you don’t take.” – Wayne Gretzky

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“When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.”
– Maya Angelou

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President Trump

President Trump consistently does better among registered/likely voters than among all adults.

On July 22, 2018, Gallup found (among all adults) that 42% of Americans approve of President Trump’s job performance and 54% disapprove.

Gallup is no longer providing a daily approval rating of the president. In the future, these reports will be dated weekly.

Beginning with this edition of the Watch I am including a first day of the month polling summary--Registered and Likely Voters--by FiveThirtyEight.

	Gallup (All Adults)		FiveThirtyEight (Reg/Likely voters)	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
8/1/18	--	--	41.4	52.9
7/29/18	40%	55%	xxx	

7/22/18	42%	54%	--	--
7/15/18	43%	52%	--	--
7/8/18	41%	56%	--	--
7/1/18	42%	53%	41.8%	52.3
6/24/18	41%	55%	--	--
6/17/18	45%	50%	--	--
6/1/18	--	--	41.6%	52.7%
5/20/18	42%	54%	--	--
5/1/18	--	--	43.8%	52 %
4/8/18	41%	54%	--	--
4/1/18	--	--	41.4%	53.7%
3/11/18	39%	56%	--	--
3/1/18	--	--	42.7%	53.2%
2/11/18	40%	57%	--	--
2/1/18	--	--	42.0%	53.3%
1/14/18	38%	57%	--	--
1/1/18	--	--	39.5%	55.8%
12/1/17	33%	62%	38%	55.9%
11/1/17	38%	58%	37.8%	56.8%
10/1/17	37%	57%	38.7%	55.4%
9/1/17	34%	61%	37.3%	57.3%

The following are some additional looks at the President’s job performance. The numbers below are of registered voters unless followed by an “A” which means “all voters”. (QUPIAC = Quinnipiac)

<u>Date</u>	<u>NBC/WSJ</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN/</u>	<u>NYT/CBS</u>	<u>FOX</u>	<u>QUPIAC</u>
JULY’18	45/52	xxx	xxx	xxx	46/51	40/55
JUNE’18	44/53	xxx	41/54	42/52cbsA	45/51	43/52
MAY’18	xxxx	xxxx	44/51	40/55cbsA	xxxx	xxx
APR’18	39/57A	44/54	xxxx	xxxx	44/53	39/54
MAR’18	43/53A	xxx	42/54	38/57cbsA	45/52	40/53
FEB’18	xx	xxx	39/56	xxx	43/53	37/38
JAN’18	39/57A	38/58	43/53	37/58cbsA	45/53	36/58
DEC’17	41/56	xxx	36/59	36/57 cbsA	xxx	37/57
JAN’17	xxx	xxx	44/53	40/48cbs	xxx	36/44

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57% of suburban women strongly disapprove of President Trump.
 [NPR/PBS/Marist]

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The following are job approval numbers from Gallup for the last nine presidents and Trump. As you can see, Trump’s job approval rating by the public at large is the worst of any president at this point in their tenure.

Job Approval – Roughly 18 months into the 1st term

GHW Bush	74% (8/90)
GW Bush	71% (8/02)
Kennedy	67% (8/62)
Eisenhower	67% (8/54)
Nixon	55% (8/70)
Obama	44% (8/10)
Clinton	43% (8/94)
Carter	43% (8/78)
Trump	42% (8/18)
Reagan	41% (8/82)

On the economy, Trump’s approval ratings have been quite consistent over the last couple of months. Since April his approval rating has exceeded his disapproval rating.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
7/25/18	50.4%	42.3%	RCP average 6/14-7/25
7/23/18	49%	47%	Quinnipiac
7/18/18	50%	34%	NBC/WSJ
7/11/18	53%	43%	Fox News
6/5/18	49%	46%	Quinnipiac
5/6/18	50.3%	44/8%	RCP average 4/6-5/6
4/11/18	49%	46%	ABC/WP
3/11/18	46%	48%	CBS News
2/27/18	49%	44%	“
1/16/18	46%	49%	“

On foreign policy, Trump’s approval ratings have not even come close to his disapproval rating during this year.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
7/25/18	40.4%	52.3%	RCP average 6/14-7/25
7/23/18	38%	58%	Quinnipiac
7/18/18	38%	45%	NBC/WSJ
6/5/18	40%	52%	Quinnipiac
6/5/18	41.6%	51%	RCP average 5/2-6/5
5/8/18	43.2%	52.6%	RCP average 4/20-5/8
5/6/18	45%	49%	CNN – Registered Voters
4/9/18	39%	55%	Quinnipiac
3/25/18	41%	52%	CNN
3/5/18	33%	61%	Quinnipiac
2/5/18	37%	57%	“
1/16/18	36%	60%	“

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Among the last 13 presidents of the United States, only one had a higher level of approval than Donald Trump among the members of his own party on July 4th of the mid-term year and that was George W. Bush.

- 96% - George W. Bush
- 88% - Donald Trump
- 86% - LBJ
- 84% - JFK, Dwight Eisenhower & Richard Nixon
- 83% - George HW Bush
- 81% - Barack Obama
- 79% - Ronald Reagan
- 77% - Gerald Ford
- 67% - Bill Clinton
- 61% - Harry Truman
- 52% - Jimmy Carter

[Gallup – Bruce Mehlman]

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About President Trump

Donald Trump is not and will not be a “conventional” president. So we ought to stop evaluating him by “conventional” standards. Rather we need to evaluate him on what he does or does not do, not about how he does it. [WW]

Trump gave to Kim Jong-Un and Vladimir Putin exactly what they wanted – to be on the same stage as equals with the president of the United States. [WW]

“Trump pretends what he wants to be true is true.” [Jon Meacham, *Morning Joe*, 7/30/18]

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Steve Rattner demonstrated on Morning Joe an analysis of President Trump’s proclivity for disregarding the truth. He presented work done by the Toronto Star. “The Star analyzed the 1,340,330 words that Mr. Trump has spoken (and tweeted) since he took office through July 1st.” (The number of lies has been updated through July 17.)

During the relevant period, the Toronto Star tally identified 2,029 lies. The Star identified circumstances in which the false claims were made. Speeches – 648; Interviews – 380; Informal remarks at events – 369; Twitter – 339; Press conferences or scrums – 192.

The analysis suggests that the President has been using falsehoods at an increasing rate.

The Washington Post has also been collecting falsehoods. Through July 31 it has tabulated 4,229 false or misleading claims.

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In an interview with Jake Tapper on CNN, Speaker Paul Ryan said:

“I want to be as clear as I can to the world and the country. We stand by our NATO allies and all those countries who are facing Russia aggression. How many times have I stood up here and told you what I think about Vladimir Putin? Vladimir Putin does not share our interests. Vladimir Putin does not share our values...”

“...They did interfere in our elections. It’s really clear. There should be no doubt about that. It’s also clear it did not have a material effect on our elections. But as a result of that we passed tough sanctions on Russia so that we can hold them accountable. I understand the desire and the need to have good relations. That’s perfectly reasonable. But Russia is a menacing government that does not share our interest and it does not share our values...”

“...Here’s what we’ve already done and what we can continue to do, which is to put sanctions on Russia. You just saw the indictments from the special counsel. Those GRU officers – I’ve already seen the intelligence – they were the people that conducted this cyberattack on our elections. We’ve already put in place sanctions. If [committees] think that there are other sanctions we have not yet placed upon Russia, I am more than happy to consider those.” [CNN, 7/15/18]

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Total U.S. farm profits are at their lowest level since 2006, which means that for the people who grow our food this may not be a great time to pick a trade war.

Farm profits are at their lowest level since 2006. They have fallen from \$123 billion in 2013 to less than \$60 billion this year. New punitive tariffs will fall heavily on Farm Belt states, particularly regions that backed the President in the 2016 election. Every one of the 30 congressional districts hardest hit by new tariffs on soybeans broke for Trump. [Joshua Green, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 7/13/18]

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There are 9 Supreme Court Justices, 167 Appeals Court Justices and 667 District Court Judges.

	Nominated and Confirmed to Date			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supreme Ct</u>	<u>Appeals Ct</u>	<u>District Ct</u>
Trump – thru 7/31/18	45	1	24	20
Obama – 8 years	329	2	55	268
GW Bush – 8 years	327	2	62	261
Clinton – 8 years	378	2	66	305
GHW Bush – 4 years	193	2	42	148
Reagan	383	3	83	290
Carter	262	0	56	203

[uscourts.gov]

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Trump and Putin – a Bromance?

“It was a sad day for the rest of us who remember Ronald Reagan challenging the Soviets to “tear down this wall” and tossing communism into the “ash heap of history.” What Putin could not do for Russia in 18 years, Donald

Trump served up for him in a press conference: Trump pulled the decaying corpse of the Soviet Union from its resting place in antiquity, polished it with compliments, and renewed its shiny status among the superpowers of the world...
– Alex Castellanos, Republican media consultant and strategist

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James Fallows wrote the following after the Helsinki meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin:

“Either Donald Trump is flat-out an agent of Russian interests – maybe witting, maybe unwitting, from fear of blackmail, in hope of future deals, out of manly respect for Vladimir Putin, out of gratitude for Russia’s help during the election, out of pathetic inability to see beyond his 306 electoral votes. Whatever the exact mixture or motives might be, it doesn’t really matter.

“Or he is so profoundly ignorant, insecure, and narcissistic that he did not realize that, at every step, he was advancing the line that Putin hoped he would advance, and the line that the American intelligence, defense, and law-enforcement agencies must dread.”

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45% believe that Trump is too friendly with Vladimir Putin to a level that is not appropriate for an American President to have with the president of Russia. 29% say Trump is not too friendly with Putin.

When asked about Putin directly only 5% of Americans have any form of positive feeling about him while 65% have negative feelings.

72% of Americans see Russia more as an adversary than an ally. 16% see Russia as more of an ally. In 2002, 52% of folks saw Russia as an ally while 26% saw the country as an adversary. [NBC/WSJ, 7/18]

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46% of Americans believe that Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into Russia’s involvement in the 2016 presidential election should continue. 38% would end the investigation.

28% of us have positive feelings about Mueller. This number is slightly higher than it was when the question was first asked in June 2017. 50% of those asked are neutral or don't know. Negative feelings have been the same since December of last year, 19 to 22%. [NBC/WSJ, 7/18]

In another survey, 68% (including 60% of Republicans) believe Mueller should be allowed to finish the investigation. 64% believe that President Trump has not been tough enough on Russia. This includes 47% of Republicans.

Interestingly Americans are divided 45% to 44% on the question of whether Putin should be seen as an enemy or an ally. Although 69% (including just over half of the Republicans) believe there was Russian interference in 2016.

57% believe there will be Russian interference in the midterm elections. This includes 58% of Independents, 38% of Republicans and 73% of Democrats. [NPR/PBS/Marist, 7/22]

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50% disapprove of the way that President Trump handled his meeting with President Putin.

40% believe that Trump went too far in supporting Putin. 15% said he did not go far enough and 35% think he handled it about right.

47% say that America's leadership in the world has gotten weaker. Some 30% say it has gotten stronger.

56% disapprove of the manner in which Trump expressed doubts about U.S. intelligence conclusions that the Russian government tried to influence the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. [ABC/WP, 7/20/18]

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Disassembling

Trump is considering revoking the security clearances of a variety of ex-officials who have in his view "politicized" their positions by accusing him of having inappropriate contact with Russia. Apparently he believes that the existence of their clearances provides inappropriate legitimacy to accusations with zero evidence [Sarah Sanders, White House Briefing, 7/23/18]

“The Trump administration discouraged the use of race in college admissions and public school enrollment by revoking federal guidance on affirmative action from the Obama era.”

Also withdrawn were Obama-era guidance that allowed transgender students to use bathrooms in accordance with their gender identity.

The Department of Education also spelled out how schools should investigate sexual assault. The goals of the new guidance are designed to safeguard the rights of accused students. [WP, 7/4/18]

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Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos is set to roll back Obama-era protections for students indebted to for-profit colleges. Most for-profit college revenue is derived from federal sources like Pell Grants and other student aid, and that type of institution is linked to a majority of federal fraud claims. The Obama administration’s protections reduced the amount of federal dollars going to for-profit institutions from \$32 billion in 2010 to \$16.6 billion in 2017. Rollbacks could lead to that figure rising again. [Heidi Przybyla, *NBC News*]

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Last year the Trump administration insisted that tax cuts were so important it was worth adding \$1.5 trillion to the national debt. Now the administration is telling Congress that it cannot afford to add \$1.6 billion to the deficit to expand health care options for veterans. [*The New Yorker*, 7/22/18]

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The U.S. Treasury will no longer require certain tax exempt organizations, including politically active non-profits such as the National Rifle Association and Planned Parenthood, to identify their financial donors to U.S. tax authorities. [*Reuters*, 7/12/18]

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On July 13th, the last day of Scott Pruitt’s tenure, the EPA granted a loophole that will allow a major increase in the manufacturing of a diesel freight truck that produces as much as 55 times the air pollution as trucks that have modern emissions controls. [*NYT*, 7/15/18]

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The administration is planning to “freeze fuel-efficiency standards for cars and light trucks for six years” and challenge the right of California and other states to set their own tailpipe standards. [WP, 7/25/18]

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At the spring meeting of the United Nations affiliated World Health Assembly, the United States opposed a resolution designed to encourage breastfeeding. First the U.S. delegation tried to water down the resolution by removing language that called on governments to “protect, promote and support breastfeeding and that called on policy makers to restrict the promotion of food products that many experts say can have deleterious effects on young children.

When that effort failed they turned to threats including threatening the country of Ecuador, which planned to introduce the resolution, with punishing trade measures and withdrawal of crucial military aide. [Political Playbook, NYT, 7/18/18]

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2020

The following is a list of people who have been mentioned (by either themselves or others) as potential candidates in 2020. Folks are on the list whether or not they have claimed or disclaimed any interest in running. When an individual suggests publicly that he or she is not interested in running, their name is struck through. It should be noted that Senators who are up in 2018 deliver an obligatory denial that they are not planning to run for president. There is no penalty for changing their minds after they have been re-elected.

The three candidates who are polling best at the present time, Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are respectively 75, 76 and 69, an average age of 73 years. [Chris Cillizza] By the time of the 2020 election they will be an average age of 75. Donald Trump, the likely Republican candidate, will be 74 years of age. In 2020, the median age of people in the United States of voting age and older will be an estimated 39 years of age.

While it is certainly premature and much has transpired since then, a January 2018 Harvard CAPS/Harris poll showed the following among Democrats: Joe Biden – 27%; Bernie Sanders – 16%; Hillary Clinton – 13%; Oprah Winfrey – 13%; Elizabeth Warren – 10%; Cory Booker – 4%; Kamala Harris – 4%; Andrew Cuomo – 2%; Kirsten Gillibrand – 1%.

Ultimately, the list will narrow for a variety of reasons. Among those reasons is “opposition research” done by folks who are supporting other candidates. Events from a person’s past inevitably come to light in a presidential campaign and take on added significance as a result of the standards of the time.

The list of people without government experience is followed by a list of current or past government officials who have been mentioned or have done something to suggest they are thinking about running for president.

~~Dwayne Johnson~~ — Actor

~~Bob Iger~~ — Disney

Howard Schultz – Founder & Exec. Chairman, Starbucks

Mark Cuban – Businessman and Owner, Dallas Mavericks

Kanye West – Entertainer

Tom Steyer – Billionaire philanthropist

~~Sheryl Sandberg~~, COO, Facebook

~~Mark Zuckerberg~~ — CEO, Facebook

~~Oprah Winfrey~~ — CEO, OWN

Michael Bloomberg

Andrew Cuomo (D) – Governor of New York

John Hickenlooper (D) – Governor of Colorado

Steve Bullock (D) – Governor of Montana

Jerry Brown (D) – Governor of California

Jay Inslee (D) – Governor of Washington

Gina Raimondo (D) – Governor of Rhode Island

Martin O’Malley (D) – former Governor of Maryland

Terry McAuliffe (D) – former Governor of Virginia

Deval Patrick (D) – former Governor of Massachusetts

Congressman John Delaney (D) – Announced 7/22/17

~~Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (D)~~

Congressman Tim Ryan (D)

Congressman Seth Moulton (D)

Congressperson Maxine Waters (D)

Congressperson Tulsi Gabbard (D)

Congressman Eric Swalwell (D)

Congressman Joe Kennedy (D)

Cory Booker (D) – U.S. Senator

Amy Klobuchar (D) – U.S. Senator
 Kamala Harris (D) – U.S. Senator
 Bernie Sanders (D) – U.S. Senator
 Kirsten Gillibrand (D) – U.S. Senator
 Tim Kaine (D) – U.S. Senator
~~Elizabeth Warren (D) – U.S. Senator~~
 Chris Murphy (D) – U.S. Senator
 Sherrod Brown (D) – U.S. Senator
 Mark Warner (D) – U.S. Senator
 Lincoln Chafee (D) – former mayor, Rhode Island governor and U.S. Senator
~~Al Franken (D) – former U.S. Senator~~

Eric Holder (D) – former Attorney General
 Joe Biden (D) – former Vice President, former U.S. Senator
 John Kerry (D) – former U.S. Senator, former Secretary of State, former general election candidate for president

Eric Garcetti (D) – Mayor of Los Angeles
 Mitch Landrieu (D) – Mayor of New Orleans
 Bill de Blasio (D) – Mayor of New York City
 Pete Buttigieg (D) – Mayor South Bend, Indiana
 Julian Castro (D) – former Secretary of HUD

Another extremely premature look at the 2020 election finds the following results in 3 mid-western states, two of which Trump won and a third which he lost by a fraction.

The question put to voters in these three states was whether they approve of the job Trump is doing and whether Trump deserves re-election. Here are the results.

	Job approval	Job disapproval
Michigan	36%	54%
Wisconsin	36%	52%
Minnesota	38%	51%
	Deserves re-election	Give new person a chance
Michigan (Trump won in 2016)	28%	62%
Wisconsin (Trump won in 2016)	31%	63%
Minnesota (Trump lost in 2016)	30%	60%

[NBC/Marist, 7/19]

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2018

95 days until the election

The majority of eligible voters are 53 years of age and younger – 135 million of them. There are 93 million folks who are 54 years of age and older.

However, in the 2014 mid-term election the “old folks” cast 57 million votes and the ‘youngsters’ cast 36 million votes. [*PEW*, 6/19/18]

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The Brennan Center for Justice reviewed a years’ worth of data from the Election Administration and Voting Survey. It reviewed voter roll purge rates across the country, in counties large and small, calculating the rates for some 6,600 jurisdictions. Among its key findings:

More people are being purged from voting rolls now than at any time in the past decade. Between the federal elections of 2006 and 2008, boards of election collectively removed 12 million voters from their rolls. In the two years leading up to the presidential election of 2016 that number grew to 16 million, an increase of 33 percent.

Voters often don’t know they’ve been removed until they arrive at the polls on Election Day. [*New Republic*, 7/24/18]

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Congress

Congress’ approval rating continues at a subterranean level.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Politics 7/25	15.2%	73.2
Real Clear Politics 7/5	15.7%	72%
Real Clear Politics 6/5	16.6%	70.6
Real Clear Politics 5/1	16.6%	72.6%
Real Clear Politics 4/2	13.6%	75%
Real Clear Politics 3/2	15.8%	72.6%
Real Clear Politics 2/4	16.2	73.9%
Real Clear Pol. 1/4/18	15.8%	72.6%

* * * * *

Three national polls find Democrats leading on the question of whether folks want Democrats or Republicans to control the Congress after the 2018 elections.

Dem GOP

49%	43%	7/15-18	NBC/WSJ
49%	37%	7/17-23	Kaiser Family Foundation
51%	39%	7/18-23	Quinnipiac

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Only one-third of Americans believe that Democratic or Republican candidates for Congress are generally in the mainstream of most American’s thinking.

	<u>In the Mainstream</u>	<u>Out of step</u>
Republican candidates for Congress	33%	57%
Democratic candidates for Congress	33%	56%

Over the last two years the biggest change has come among Democratic candidates for Congress. In July 2016, 48% of Democratic candidates were seen as in the mainstream while 31% of Republican candidates were seen as in the mainstream. [*NBC/WSJ*, 7/18/18]

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By a modest majority of 51% to 43% Americans believe that American elections are fair and open. 84% say that federal election laws are necessary to ensure fair elections. 87% say that political ads on TV should be required to say who paid for them. [*Ipsos/UVA Center for Politics*, 7/6/18]

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

[WW uses David Wasserman and the Cook Political Report for the House chart below. 7/24/18]

Heading into the 2018 election there are 42 open seats currently held by Republicans.

Democrats	195
Republicans	240

	Democrats	Republicans
Safe in 2018	181	153
Likely	12	28
Lean	9	26
	Tossup	
	2	24

* * * * *

The fourth ranking House Democrat, Joe Crowley, an almost 20 year House veteran, lost the Democratic primary in the NY 14th congressional district to Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez’s, a Latina democratic-socialist. She won the old fashioned way—on the ground. She won by 15 points; 57.5% to 42.5% or 15,897 votes to 11,761 votes. There are 235,745 registered Democrats in the district, only 11.8% of them thought it was important enough to come out and vote.

Ocasio-Cortez was a Bernie Sanders organizer in 2016. She was out spent by about 10 times. The district is 48% Latino and 24% white. [Cook Political]

Ocasio-Cortez has since become busy campaigning for other House candidates of similar persuasion.

Meanwhile Crowley will also be on the ballot as the candidate of the Working Families Party in the 14th District. Stay tuned.

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86% of House Republicans are white men as compared to House Democrats in which 32.7% are women and 39.7% are white men. [*Legistorm/Pew*, Bruce Mehlman]

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THE SENATE

[WW used a combination of the Cook Political Report and Inside Elections to create the Senate chart below.]

There have been a few changes since the last issue of the Watch. Likely Democrat seats grew from 4 to 5. While there is no other actual change, there is

some evidence that Heitkamp’s position may have weakened. On the Republican side there have been no changes.

At the moment the best that the Democrats can hope to do is get to 50/50. In order for that to happen, the Democrats would have to hold four of the five seats in the Democratic toss-ups below and the Republicans would have to lose two of the three seats they have in the toss-up column.

Republicans	51
Democrats	47
Independents	2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Seats not up in 2018	23	42
Safe in 2018	16	5
Likely	5	1
	Casey	Cruz
	Baldwin	
	Tester	
	Smith	
	Brown	
Toss-ups	5	3
	Donnelly	Heller
	McCaskill	Arizona (open)
	Manchin	Tennessee (open)
	Heitkamp	
	Nelson	

* * * * *

Women Will Get It Done

Based on data from over a quarter-billion standardized tests, Stanford researchers have found that, across the country, girls perform about the same as boys in math — contrary to the tired stereotype.

However, in school districts that are rich, white and suburban, boys tend to outperform girls. The research suggests that this discrepancy is due to “local norms” that have a larger effect on boys than girls.

In every district in the data, however, girls performed better than boys in English. The study is “one of the most comprehensive looks at the gender gap in test scores at the school district level,” according to the New York Times’ Upshot. [*The Upshot*, 6/14/18]

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Sexual harassment is derailing the careers of far too many women in science, engineering, and medicine. That’s the central message of a searing new report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine on the prevalence of sexual misconduct in those fields.

The report estimates that half of women in science experience some form of harassment. “What is especially discouraging about this situation is that at the same time that so much energy and money is being invested in efforts to attract and retain women in science, engineering, and medical fields, it appears women are often bullied or harassed out of career pathways in these fields,” the report says. [*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 6/14]

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On Friday, June 15th, *The New York Times* published several accounts that illustrate the kind of bias that exists today.

Take, for instance, the story of Erin Murphy, who had been praised for her work at Glencore, the commodity trading and mining company, until she became pregnant. Murphy says her boss told her that her career would “definitely plateau” because of her pregnancy. In another episode when Murphy asked about future career moves, she claims he told her, “You’re old and having babies so there’s nowhere for you to go.”

After being passed over for several promotions, Murphy has retained a lawyer and is planning to file a lawsuit. A Glencore spokesperson has defended the company as being “committed to supporting women going on and returning from maternity leave.”

The *NYT*'s piece shows that Murphy is not alone in her experience—as do EEOC statistics. The agency fielded 3,184 complaints of pregnancy discrimination last year—nearly double the number it received when it started keeping track electronically in 1992.

"There are 20 years of lab studies that show the bias [against pregnancy] exists and that, once triggered, it's very strong," Joan C. Williams, a professor at University of California Hastings College of Law, told the *Times*.

The Broadsheet writes a lot about breaking glass ceilings, but it's vital to remember that many women don't get that far; as Williams puts it, they're "[hitting] the maternal wall" first. [*New York Times, Business Day*]

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Women held only about 10% of the top executive positions (defined as chief executive officers, chief financial officers and the next three highest paid executives) at U.S. companies in 2016-17, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of federal securities filings by all companies in the benchmark Standard & Poor's Composite 1500 stock index. And at the very top of the corporate ladder, just 5.1% of chief executives of S&P 1500 companies were women.

Nor do many women hold executive positions just below the CEO in the corporate hierarchy in terms of pay and position. Only 651 (11.5%) of the nearly 5,700 executives in this category, which includes such positions as chief operating officer (COO) and chief financial officer (CFO), were women. Although this group in general constitutes a significant pool of potential future CEO candidates, the women officers we identified tended to be in positions such as finance or legal that, previous research suggests, are less likely to lead to the CEO's chair than other, more operations-focused roles. [*PEW, 4/18*]

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Souad Abderrahim, a 54-year-old pharmacist from Tunisia's moderate Islamic party, has been elected mayor of Tunis, the country's capital. Abderrahim, who this story describes as "a former lawmaker and militant for women's rights," is the only woman ever to hold the position. [*NBC News*]

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Among more than 7,000 female sales professionals, 57% reported receiving unwanted sexual advances or otherwise being harassed by clients. [National Assn. of Women Sales Professionals]

35% of employers said they had received harassment allegations in the past year. 19% of those who answered said the reports involved clients or other third parties. [Society for Human Resources, *WSJ*, 7/7-8/18]

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64% of female writers of the Writers Guild of America West have encountered workplace sexual harassment. [*Deadline*, 7/26/18]

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A new study from the Directors Guild of America looking at feature films released in 2017 that made over \$250,000 found that only 12 percent of those 651 films were directed by women and only **10 percent of directors** were people of color. It's a pretty significant step back for minority directors; in 2013, 17 percent of directors were people of color. [David Ng, *Los Angeles Times*]

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Restaurants

A reminder: When I write about a restaurant it means that I think it is worth trying and that I would go there again. If I don't like it, I don't write about it.

Town Square Tavern
360 East Avenue N.
Ketchum, Idaho 83340
208-726-6969
Ketchumtavern.com

Open 7 nights a week at 5:00 p.m. for dinner.
Open for lunch Thursday thru Saturday 12 noon – 2:30 p.m.

As you enter there are a variety of seating options including an “L” shaped bar that seats 4 on one side and 6 on the other. There is a communal table that seats 10. At the far end a banquette that fronts a series of two and four tops which can be combined in a variety of ways. It is here that we were seated. The balance of the restaurant is 2 and 4 tops.

There is a large covered porch which is open to the elements in the summer and seats many folks at 2 and 4 tops. During the cold months it is closed and unused.

We were seated at a two top on the banquette in the main restaurant.

The restaurant describes itself as serving inspired “world cuisine,” claiming to have something that is sure to please everyone’s palate.

Debbie and I ordered a variety of dishes that we shared.

Kale Salad – Smoked Trout, grapefruit, Parma Cheese, Almonds (we asked that the grapefruit not be included.); Crispy Onions, Harissa Aioli; Triad of House Dips & Pita – House Labneh, Hummus, Roasted Eggplant; Summer Watermelon Salad – Feta, Mint, Evoo; Tavern Lamb Burger – Aged White Cheddar, Bacon, Lettuce, Onion, Tomato, Harissa Aioli, Ciabatta bun & French Fries. All of the portions were ample; the serving of Crispy Onions was particularly large.

For dessert Debbie ordered Affogato, Drowned in Maps Espresso, Cardamom Ice Cream. I ordered a couple of scoops of house ice creams.

The restaurant has an excellent list of non-alcoholic beverages from which I selected Dry Rainier Cherry Soda.

The service was on the spot.

There is a single unisex restroom near the front door of the restaurant. The floor is covered with dirty grey tiles. The walls are covered floor to ceiling in tan wood paneling, as is the door. There is a white ceramic table with a square washbasin inserted, topped by a mirror. On the top there is a wooden basket with paper towels and a couple of bottles with soap products. Underneath are two baskets, one for waste and the other holding extra paper products. Across from the washbasin is a white ceramic commode.

This restaurant space used to house Rustic Moose, run by the Moose sisters. The Rustic Moose was written up in the July 2000 Washington Watch.

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Duck Duck Goose
7929 Norfolk Avenue
Bethesda MD 20814
301-312-8837
info@ddgbethesda.com

Lunch: Tuesday-Thursday 11 a.m. -3:00 p.m.
Dinner: Monday-Thursday 4:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Friday-Saturday – 4:30 pm – 11:00 p.m.
Sunday - 4:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Gail and I went to this restaurant on a Tuesday night. It is literally at the corner of Norfolk Avenue and Cordell.

The restaurant is relatively small, seating only 30 people inside at a bar and a series of 2 and 4 tops that can be rearranged to accommodate larger parties. There are a number of sidewalk tables which did not appear to be in use the night we were there. (See the message at the bottom of this page.)

We had a 6:30 p.m. reservation at which time it was relatively quiet. By the time we left some 2 hours later when the restaurant had filled up and it was quite loud. Gail and I agreed that landing an early evening reservation makes the most sense.

The kitchen is visible at the end of the restaurant through a figured glass wall so it is easy to watch the final prep of each dish if you happen to be sitting near the wall and facing into the kitchen as I was.

Gail started with Roasted Japanese Eggplant - lemon yogurt, fresno peppers, mint, pistachios. I started with Charred Broccolini – almond puree, lemon curd.

We then ordered Cauliflower Steak – smoked date and cauliflower purees, pickled cauliflower.

We shared these three dishes.

For main courses Gail selected Scallops- Israeli couscous, parsnip puree, compressed apples and I picked Chicken Forgione – broccolini, potato, charred lemon, chicken jus. The chicken was a bit over cooked.

I wanted dessert (Gail did have a bite or two). I chose Vanilla pot de crème with raspberry puree.

The service was quite attentive.

Gail suggested that one could have an entire dinner ordering from what are described on the menu as “Smalls” and “Shares” skipping the dishes that are in the section of the menu called “Mains.”

There are two unmarked unisex restrooms. They are located behind a curtain just past the end of the bar and next to the kitchen.

As you enter the restroom there is a square white ceramic washbasin with a small pine tree in a pot on the corner. Immediately next to the tree is a white ceramic commode with a basket filled with white towels on the top of the shelf at the top of the commode. The toilet paper is attached to a small table in the corner. Below is a wastebasket for the towels. The walls to waist level are covered with rectangular white ceramic tiles topped by a six inch panel of very tiny square tiles. The balance of the walls are painted black. The floor is covered with six sided white tiles.

At the bottom of the menu is the following legend which I have never seen before:

Please note: Due to the size of our restaurant all parties are allotted 2 hours from the time of their reservation. This will allow us to be ready to serve our next guest at the time of their reservation.

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Momofuku CCDC
and Milk Bar
1090 I Street NW
Washington DC 20001
202-602-1832
Momofuku.com/ Opentable.com

Debbie and I went to Momofuku with Florence and Peter on a Saturday night.

The main door of the restaurant is actually on 11th Avenue at the corner of 11th and “I” street. It shares an entrance with an ice cream specialty shop called

Milk Bar. There is a closed street along the “I” Street side and there is an area for outdoor dining which was not being used the night we were there.

As you enter the restaurant, slightly off to the right is a square bar that has seats on three sides seating 6, 5 and 5 with wooden square stools. At each stool at the bar there is a hook for hanging a purse or whatever. Further to the right is the kitchen which has a second bar area looking directly into the kitchen with seating for 6 people from which you can watch the food preparation.

Once you move past the regular bar and into the restaurant, at the end of the room there is a slight incline which leads to a multi-table dining area that can be closed for private parties.

The main restaurant seats approximately 150 people exclusive of the bar. Another 60 people can be seated on the patio.

There are a variety of seating arrangements. There is a banquette with a number of two tops which of course can be moved together. There is a square table that seated two on each side the night we were there but could easily handle three on each side. And of course there are a variety of 2 tops, 4 tops and a 6 top.

The whole “I” street side of the restaurant is made of glass and we had a 4 top right at the window.

For libations before dinner, Florence and Debbie ordered Salt Plum Rickeys - gin, salt plum, lime, black current, soda; Peter ordered a gin and tonic and I had a specialty lemonade.

Another Michael, who had been at Momofuku a week earlier, recommended that we order the small plates (appetizers) and not order the main courses until the small plates were complete. His experience was that if you ordered them all together the main courses came well before you had finished the appetizers.

The small plates we ordered were delivered in phases.

Burrata – pine nuts, rhubarb; Maryland Blue Crab Dip – Old bay, parmesan, bread crumb; Curried Red Beets –peanuts, citrus, puffed rice; Peach & Lemon Cucumber Salad – labne, pistachio za’atar, cotija; Dry aged Beef and Lamb dumplings – scallion oil, dried chili.

For large plates we ordered - Whole Roasted Chicken - chicken fat basmati rice, green olives, cilantro yogurt, fried eggs (Menu say it serves 2 - really serves 4) and Grilled Lamb Leg – eggplant caponata, mint, carrot puree. We all agreed this was the single best dish of the evening.

One of our party did not like having fried eggs on top of the rice with the chicken dish. We asked that the fried eggs be removed. Two new dishes arrived...one with just rice and another new dish with three fried eggs.

For dessert Peter ordered a slice of chocolate malt cake from Milk Bar, Florence tried to order a Soft Serve – Chocolate covered pretzel also from the Milk Bar—but they were out and she did not want a substitute. I selected the Chocolate Coffee Custard – crème fraiche, almonds, mint from the restaurant menu.

The service overall was excellent.

As the evening went on it became pretty loud but not insufferable.

Lindsay is the general manager. She stopped by when we had the confusion with the rice dish. With Peter doing his usual questioning we learned that she had been in Washington managing this restaurant for about six weeks. We learned a lot about the restaurant and her personal history.

I had noticed that two of the bartenders at the U-shaped bar were women, which was a bit unusual. I subsequently learned from the manager, a woman, that there are many women in management positions in the company including the five general managers of the restaurant chain.

The restrooms are located at the end of the room near the ramp that goes to the upper level of the restaurant. The wall has large sign “WC”. There is a split drape printed with a large fruit that covers the entrance.

There were too many men in the men’s room to for me to do my usual which is to take photos so I have a little less detail than usual. At the end of the room there is a commode area which has a closed commode room that can readily accommodate someone in a wheel chair. Two wall hanging urinals are next with a small wall between them. Then there is a wall that separates the two urinals from a long rectangular shiny metal washbasin with dual faucets and a full mirror.

As we were leaving the restaurant, Peter engaged four women who were leaving at the same time and solicited their experience which they described as positive.

After our visit I emailed Lindsay, the manager, to say we had enjoyed our meal and to ask her why our coffees and espresso at the end of dinner were served in paper cups. I heard back from her rather quickly.

“Glad you enjoyed it! Currently we partner with Milk Bar for coffee service so everything is served Milk Bar style, which means paper cups. Early next year we are aiming to add our own in-house coffee program, but for the time being we are only serving Milk Bar coffee products. Lindsay”

We were able to find parking on the street.

* * * * *

Mike

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