

*Mike Berman's*

# WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

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Washington  
Kellari Taverna

San Francisco  
Eliza  
Garabaldi  
Mourad  
North Beach Restaurant

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

Note: I was recently asked when I started writing the Washington Watch. It was in 1987 as the Kirkpatrick and Lockhart Washington Watch. I was a partner in that law firm at the time. The only copy which I have on hand is issue #4 from July 1987.

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### **State of the Nation**

63% of Americans say the country is on the wrong track, including 62% of men and 64% of women. 37% of Americans say the country is headed in the right direction. This includes 38% of men and 36% of women. [Morning Consult/Politico 8/7/19]

In July, 36% of us were satisfied with the way things were going in the United States while 62% were dissatisfied. [Gallup 7/12/19]

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The U.S. government expects to borrow more than \$1 trillion in 2019. [WSJ 7/30/19]

As of June 2019, the government’s total debt was \$22.023 trillion. This is greater than the gross domestic product.

26.5% of the debt is owed to another arm of the federal government, Social Security. Another 13.3% comes from retirement and disability funds. The Federal Reserve is another big holder of treasuries, 9.5% of the total debt.

Net interest payments on the debt are estimated to be \$393.5 billion in this fiscal year or 8.7% of all federal outlays.

Contrary to popular belief, mainland China holds only 5% of the total debt, \$1.18 trillion as of May. Hong Kong owns another \$0.20 trillion while Japan holds roughly \$1.03 trillion. [PEW 7/24/19]

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Is the U.S. on its way to joining the move to negative interest rates? Globally, more than \$15 trillion in government debt has a negative yield, meaning those bond holders pay to store their money. Examples of where this is at work now include Denmark, Germany, Japan and Sweden. [Bloomberg 8/8/19 -WSJ 8/12/19]

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July 2019 is the earth's hottest month ever recorded. The previous record was July 2016. Also in July, Greenland's ice sheet poured 197 billion tons of water into the North Atlantic.

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In 2018, 22 states were Democratic in party orientation, based on the party preferences or leanings of their residents. 18 states were Republican and 10 states were competitive. Things turned south for the Democrats in the first year of Obama's presidency.

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Solid Democratic	14	13	23	29
Lean Democratic	8	9	10	6
Competitive	10	18	12	10
Lean Republican	5	5	1	4
Solid Republican	13	5	1	4

[Gallup – Based on annual state averages of party affiliation from Gallup tracking]

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### Wealth in America

In 2018:

- American households held over \$98 trillion of wealth. (Wealth is total assets minus total liabilities.)

- U.S. households held over \$113 trillion in assets.
- American households hold over \$15 trillion in debt (2/3 of that debt is in homes)

In 2016:

- The top 20% held 77% of household wealth
- The top 1% owned 29% - \$25 trillion - in household wealth.
- The middle class owned just \$18 trillion (middle class is defined as the middle 60% of the usual income distribution).

A recent Federal Reserve Board survey found that:

- 61% of Americans said they would cover a \$400 expense with cash or equivalent.
- 27% said they would cover the expense through a credit card, paying it off overtime, etc.
- 12% said they would not be able to cover the expense right now.

[Brookings 6/25/19]

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In 2004, less than one-third of the deceased in the United States were cremated. In 2016, half of those who died here were cremated. It is projected that by 2028, 65% will be choosing cremation. [Axios 8/8/17]

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73% of U.S. adults under 30 believe people “just look out for themselves” most of the time. 71% of those under 30 believe that most people “would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance” and 60% say that most people “can’t be trusted.”

Percentage of U.S. adults of each age group who say...

	<u>65+</u>	<u>50-64</u>	<u>30-49</u>	<u>18-29</u>
Most of the time, people just look out for themselves	48%	58%	67%	73%
Most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance	39%	56%	62%	71%
Most people can’t be trusted	29%	43%	52%	60%

[PEW Fact Tank 8/6/19]

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## **Employment**

The official BLS seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for July 2019 is 3.7%, down from 3.9% a year ago.

If one considers the total number of unemployed + those marginally attached to the labor force + those working part-time who want full-time work, the unemployment rate is 7.0%, as opposed to 7.5% a year ago.

164,000 jobs were created in July, down from 224,000 in June. The average monthly growth so far is about 165,000 jobs. [BLS 8/2/19]

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### The Demographics of Unemployment for June 2019

#### Unemployment by Gender (20 years and older)

Women – 3.8% (decreased since last month)

Men – 4.0% (increase since last month)

#### Unemployment by Race

White – 3.3% (no change since last month)

Black – 6.0% (decreased since last month)

Hispanic – 4.5% (increased since last month)

Asian – 2.8% (increased since last month)

#### Unemployment by Education (25 years & over)

Less than high school – 5.1% (decreased since last month)

High School – 3.6% (decreased since last month)

Some college – 3.2% (increased since last month)

Bachelor's Degree or higher – 2.2% (increased since last month)

In June 2019, 32 states had unemployment rates below the national rate; one state had an unemployment rate that was exactly at the national rate of 3.7%; 19 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico had unemployment rates that were above the national rate.

Alaska, at 6.4%, had the highest unemployment rate in the country. Mississippi and D.C. had unemployment rates of 5.0% or more but less than 6.0%. 14 states had unemployment rates that were 4.0% or greater but less than 5.0%. [Bureau of Labor Statistics]

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Another way of looking at the unemployment rate is the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and it is also made available monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. While the unemployment rate tabulates the number of men and women who are actively job-hunting, it omits those who have stopped actively looking for a job. However, this latter group is included in the LFPR. In other words, the LFPR refers to the number of people available for work as a percentage of the total population.

The LFPR in the United States averaged 62.99% from 1950 to 2019 reaching an all-time high of 67.3% in January 2000. The record low was 58.1% in December 1954.

In July 2019, the LFPR is 63.0%. Going forward, the labor force participation rate will be noted in the first paragraph of this section along with the unemployment rate.

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Americans are not particularly trusting in various public and private entities' ability to protect their personal information.

	<u>Amazon</u>	<u>Google</u>	<u>Facebook</u>	<u>Federal Government</u>
Trust a lot	7%	6%	3%	7%
Trust quite a bit	15%	13%	3%	12%
Not sure	5%	1%	2%	0
Some	45%	43%	32%	46%
Not at all	28%	37%	60%	35%

[NBC/WSJ 3/27/19]

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At least 144 people have died in 31 mass killings in the United States since the beginning of the year. Most of them, 141, died of gunshot wounds. The ages of the victims ranged from one to 83. [FactCheck.org 8/10/19]

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## **This and That**

49% of Americans oppose a single payer health care system in which all Americans would get their health insurance from one government plan that is financed in part by taxes. 44% support such a plan. [NBC/WSJ 7/9/19]

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As of June 30, there were 282 active U.S. drug shortages, this is up from 224 last year. There are people of all ages who are suffering at this moment because of these shortages. [WSJ 8/10/19]

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The bottom seems to have dropped out of the public's view of the technology companies.

In 2015, 71% of respondents said that the technology companies were having a positive impact on the way things are going in the country. By 2019, only 50% share that view. The negative view of the companies has grown from 17% to 33%.

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By 54% to 44% Democrats and Dem-leaning Independents are more likely than Republicans and GOP-leaning independents to have a positive view on the way things are going in the country. [PEW 7/29/19]

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With the Common Application now accepted by more than 800 schools, the average college applicant submits roughly 4.85 college applications. [WSJ 8/4/19]

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Starting next month, you will no longer be able to buy newspapers at your favorite Starbucks. Starbucks has not given a reason for the change but apparently, they will also remove the shelving and fixtures that display whole bean coffee and grab-and-go snacks. [NYT 7/13/19]

I asked several baristas at my local Starbucks why they were no longer going to sell newspapers. If they knew they did not let on and simply said they did not know.

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What is your favorite sandwich? The following is the result of a recent YouGov survey. Respondents liked or somewhat liked the following: Grilled cheese – 79%; Grilled chicken – 75%; Turkey – 75%; Roast beef – 71%; Meatball – 56%; Reuben – 48%; French dip – 46%.

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In 1999, the average health insurance coverage for a family consumed 14% of the average household income. By 2017, family coverage absorbed more than double this amount, about 31% of take-home pay. Health insurance has hovered consistently around 31% of household income since 2012. In that period companies have been shifting their employees to plans that had steady premiums but higher deductibles and out of pocket costs. [Axios Vitals 8/5/19]

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“Anyone interacting with the U.S. health care system is bound to encounter examples of unnecessary administrative complexity--from filling out duplicative intake forms to transferring medical records between providers to sorting out insurance bill. This administrative complexity, with its associated high costs, is often cited as one reason the United States spends double the amount per capita on health care compared with other high-income countries even though utilization rates a similar.

“Each year, health care payers and providers in the United States spend about \$496 billion on billing and insurance-related (BIR) costs, according to the Center for American Progress estimates presented in this issue brief. As health care costs continue to rise, a logical starting point for potential savings is addressing waste. A 2010 report by the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) estimated that the United States spends about twice as much as necessary on BIR costs. That administrative excess currently amounts to \$248 billion annually, according CAP’s calculations.”

The paragraphs above are the opening paragraphs of an article entitled, “Excess Administrative costs Burden the U.S. Health Care System.”

[Center for American Progress, 4/8/19]

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In the late 1970s, the average American consumed a bit less than 250 pounds of milk annually. By the late 1990s annual consumption had dropped to 200 pounds of milk per person. Today, average consumption has dropped to 149 pounds per year. [Lydia Mulvaney, Bloomberg 8/7/190]

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## Quotes

“As I try to live while confronting an incurable illness, I remember how much I enjoyed the youthful process of learning. Thus, I now read and learn from every book possible. I remember one of Blaise Pascal’s ‘Pensées,’ in my own translation:

‘Man is but a reed, the weakest in nature. A puff of gas, a drop of water is sufficient to kill him. But the difference between him and what kills him is that he knows he is dying.’

“It is my brain that still defines me. When I am thinking, I am living. I must fuel the brain by reading. It is that alone that separates me from the cancer that attacks my bone marrow and spills out too many white blood cells. Of course, I will fail as I try not to ‘go gentle into that good night.’ Perhaps it’s that failure that will again remind me I am alive.”

--The above is an excerpt from “A Good Life in My Dying Days: Despite my decaying body, I can still learn, teach and strive to live with dignity”.

by Fay Vincent,

Commissioner of Major League Baseball, 1989-92

Chairman of Columbia Pictures, 1978-88

Wall Street Journal 7/19/19

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“It’s as simple as good research, a lot of thinking and the ability to look at a person through the prism of humanity and kindness.”

--Taffy Brodesser-Akner

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“The average American is woefully undereducated about the history of race in this country.”

--Marianne Williamson,

Spiritual guru and author, Candidate for President

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“We educate women because it is smart. We educate women because it changes the world.”

--Drew Gilpin Faust,

Historian and first woman president of Harvard

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“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.”

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

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**President Trump**

As of August 7<sup>th</sup>, the Politico/Morning Consult survey found that 41% approve of the job that President Trump is doing as president while 56% disapprove. Those approving of the job he is doing include 39% of women, 44% of men, 30% of Hispanics, 10% of African Americans, 82% of Republicans and 8% of Democrats.

On August 6, 2019 the Economist/YouGov survey found that 44% of Americans approved of Trump’s job performance and 52% disapproved.

(Gallup no longer provides a daily or weekly approval rating of the president. Gallup now assess presidential job approval on a monthly basis.)

I now include a periodic polling summary—Registered and Likely Voters—by FiveThirtyEight. Note that year over year there has been little or no change in Trump’s approval among Registered/Likely voters.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Gallup (All Adults)</u>		<u>FiveThirtyEight (Reg/Likely voters)</u>	
	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Disapproval</u>
7/31/19	42%	54%	42.5%	52.9%
7/12/19	44%	51%	42.4%	52.6%
6/16/19	43%	55%	42.6%	53.0%
5/12/19	42	51%	42.4%	52.4%
4/9/19	45%	51%	42%	52.7%
3/10/19	39%	57%	41.8%	53.4%
2/10/19	44%	52%	40.2%	55.1%
1/27/19	37%	59%	40.4%	55.6%
12/22/18	39%	55%	42.2%	52.8%
11/4/18	40%	54%	42.2%	52.6%

10/14/18	44%	51%	42.1%	52.4%
9/30/18	42%	53%	41.5%	52.7%
9/2/18	41%	53%	40.3%	54.5%
7/29/18	40%	55%	41.2%	53.2%
7/1/18	42%	53%	41.8%	52.3%
5/12/18	43%	52%	42.1%	52.0%
1/14/18	38%	57%	--	--

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” or “L” which means “likely voters”.

<u>Date</u>	<u>NBC/WSJ</u>	<u>WP/ABC</u>	<u>CNN</u>	<u>CBS</u>	<u>FOX</u>
AUG’19					
JUL’19	45/52	47/50	xxx	xxx	46/51
JUNE’19	44/53	xxx	45/51	xxx	45/53
MAY’19	46/51	xxx	43/53	41/52	46/53
APR’19	xxx	42/54	44/53	xxx	45/51
MAR’19	43/53A	xxx	43/51	xxx	46/51
FEB ’19	46/52A	xxx	42/54	xxx	46/52
JAN ’19	43/54A	38/58	37/57A	36/59A	43/54
DEC ’18	43/54A	xxx	39/52	xxx	46/52
JAN ’18	39/57A	38/58	43/53	37/58A	45/53
DEC ’17	41/56	xxx	36/59	36/57A	xxx
JAN ’17	xxx	xxx	44/53	40/48A	xxx

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The following are job approval numbers from Gallup for nine of the last twelve presidents, roughly 29 months into their first term. Since Gallup is no longer providing a steady stream of approval ratings WW will use various other surveys to provide approval numbers on the current president.

GHW Bush	71% (8/91)
Eisenhower	71% (8/55)
GW Bush	60% (8/03)
Kennedy	62% (8/63)
Nixon	49% (8/71)
Clinton	46% (8/95)

Obama	40% (8/11)
Trump	44% (8/19) – Econ/YouGov
Reagan	44% (8/83)
Carter	32% (8/79)

On economic policy, Trump’s approval ratings have remained consistently positive since April.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
7/23/19	52%	41%	Fox News (RV)
6/11/19	53%	43%	Econ/Yougov RV
5/14/19	48%	46%	Fox News (RV)
4/16/19	47%	46%	Reuters/Ipsos (A)
3/26/19	50%	45%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
3/4/19	49%	45%	Quinnipiac (RV)
2/2/19	49%	45%	CNN (RV)
1/1/19	47%	46%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
12/6/18	48%	42%	CNBC (A)
9/9/18	51%	53%	CNN (RV)
7/18/18	50%	34%	NBC/WSJ
1/16/18	46%	49%	NBC/WSJ

On foreign policy, Trump’s approval ratings remain in negative territory.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	
7/30/19	41%	51%	Economist (RV)
6/11/19	46%	50%	Econ/YouGov I
5/14/19	43%	49%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
4/16/19	39%	52%	Reuters (A)
3/26/19	44%	50%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
2/19/19	44%	50%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
1/1/19	42%	51%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
12/11/18	42%	51%	Econ/YouGov (RV)
9/9/18	38%	56%	CNN (RV)
7/18/18	38%	45%	NBC/WSJ
1/16/18	36%	60%	NBC/WSJ

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## About Donald Trump

“Trump’s speculation that he could kill 10 million Afghans and ‘win the war’ is possibly the most stupid and unprofessional statement ever made in the Oval Office. It would be a criminal act of historic proportions if considered.”  
[Barry R McCaffrey 7/23/19]

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“I believe that what this president has done to our culture, to our civic discourse...you cannot unring these bells and you cannot unsay what he has said, and you cannot change that he has now in a very short time made it seem normal for schoolboy taunts and obvious lies to be spun out in a constant stream. I think this will do more lasting damage than Richard Nixon’s surreptitious burglaries did.” -- George Will, from an interview with New York Times Book Review podcast, 7/15/19.

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The Washington Post Fact checker database has counted 12,019 false or misleading claims by President Trump through August 5<sup>th</sup>. [WP]

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35% of voters think that Donald Trump was exonerated by Robert Mueller’s Russia probe.

	<u>Exonerated</u>	<u>Don’t know</u>	<u>Not exonerated</u>
All voters	35%	25%	41%
Republicans	58%	25%	17%
Independents	31%	34%	36%
Democrats	20%	18%	62%

[Morning Consult 7/25/19]

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Trump regularly says different things about the same person or situation as if he had never made a contrary statement. Here is an example, Tweeted by Peter Baker of the New York Times.

Trump 2018: “Steve Bannon has nothing to do with me or my presidency. When he was fired, he not only lost his job he lost his mind.”

Trump 2019: “Nice to see that one of my best pupils is still a giant Trump fan. Steve joined me after I won the primaries, but I loved working with him.”

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The 45<sup>th</sup> President is the first in American history with no prior governing or military experience. This has meant even more on-the-job-training than usual, and that’s been apparent to audiences both foreign and domestic. At a State Dinner in Japan in November 2017, Trump marveled at all the foreign leaders who called him after his victory a year earlier. “After I had won, everybody was calling me from all over the world,” he said. “I never knew we had so many countries.”  
[WP 7/1/19]

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### **Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date**

Because the U.S. Senate remains in Republican hands and the filibuster is no more, the President can continue unchecked his goal of remaking the federal judiciary.

#### Judges Nominated and Confirmed to Date

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Supreme Ct</u>	<u>Appeals Ct</u>	<u>District Ct</u>
Trump – thru 8/1/19	146	2	43	99
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 – 8 years	383	3	83	290
Carter -- 4 years	262	0	56	203

There are currently several nominations awaiting Senate action: one seat on the Courts of Appeals, 34 seats on the District Courts and two seats on the Courts of International Trade.

There are currently four vacancies on the U.S. Court of Appeals, 97 vacancies on the U.S. District Courts and two vacancies on the U.S. Court of International Trade. [USCourts/Wikipedia/List of federal judges appointed by Donald Trump]

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## Disassembling

Secretary Pompeo is shifting America's human rights focus abroad to the mistreatment of Christians, rather than LGBTQ and woman's rights. [LATimes 7/22]

The Trump administration is proposing a food-stamp rule that could cut 3.1 million people from the food stamp program and could save the government about \$2.5 billion a year.

43 states allow residents to automatically become eligible for food stamps through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) if they receive benefits from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The USDA wants to require people who receive TANF to pass a review of income and assets to determine whether they are eligible for SNAP. [AXIOS 7/23/19]

What the announced plan did not mention is that it put more than 500,000 free school lunches at risk. [NBC News 7/29/19]

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The Department of Homeland Security is expected to publish a notice that would allow the Trump administration to deport without a hearing before an immigration judge, undocumented immigrants anywhere in the United States who can't prove they have been in the country continuously for at least two years. The policy – known as expedited removal – has been used since 2004 in a more limited way to deport unauthorized immigrants caught within 100 miles of a U.S. land border and arrested within 14 days of their arrival. [Morning Consult 7/22/19]

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The Trump administration has asked a federal court to immediately lift a ban on executive orders that restrict the role of unions in the federal workplace. [WP 7/25/19]

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Attorney General Barr has issued an opinion that being part of a nuclear family targeted for persecution abroad does not qualify as a "particular social group" eligible for asylum in the United States. (The immigration courts are not part of the federal judiciary rather they fall under the purview of the Justice Department.) [Politico Playbook 7/29/19]

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U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Offices will close all but seven of its 20 field offices worldwide, including major hubs in London, Seoul and Frankfurt. [Public Policy Law360 8/9/19]

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The Trump administration plans to relocate most of the Bureau of Land Management's D.C. workforce to west of the Rockies. This is part of the administration's push to shift power away from Washington and shrink the size of the federal government. 85% of the 2.1 million federal employees already live outside the Washington area. [WP 7/15/19]

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Wyoming native William Perry Pendley has been named the acting director of the BLM. Pendley is a longtime crusader for curtailing the federal government's control of public lands. [WP 8/5/19]

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The Trump administration on Monday finalized rule changes to the Endangered Species Act that make it harder to protect plants and animals whose populations are in serious decline.

The rules were changed as part of President Trump's mandate to scale back government regulations on behalf of businesses. In that vein, language in the Act that required officials to rely heavily on science when considering whether to list a species as threatened or endangered regardless of economic impact was removed.

Potential threats to business opportunities and other costs of listing a species can now be considered and shared with the public. Officials said those considerations would not affect listing decisions.

The administration will also shrink the number of habitats set aside for threatened wildlife. Currently, land that plants and animals occupy is set aside for their protection in addition to areas that they once occupied but abandoned. [AP 8/11/19]

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After almost two decades, the Department of Justice said it plans to resume capital punishment and execute prisoners awaiting the death penalty. AG Barr ordered the Bureau of Prisons to adopt a new policy for lethal injections that would mirror protocols used in Georgia, Missouri and Texas. [Morning Consult 7/28/19]

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The Trump administration will significantly expand its power to quickly deport undocumented immigrants who have illegally entered the United States within the past two years, using a fast-track deportation process that bypasses immigration judges, what the administration is calling a “necessary response” to the influx of migration at the southern border. Nearly 300,000 of the approximately 11 million unauthorized immigrants could be subject to expedited removal. [WP 7/23/19]

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The Environmental Protection Agency has exceeded the Trump administrations goal of eliminating two regulations for every one created. It has rolled back 26 rules and promulgated three in the past two years. [Law360Public Policy 8/12/19]

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The Trump administration has announced a new rule that makes it harder for low-income immigrants who receive food stamps or other taxpayer-funded assistance to stay in the country legally. It requires that immigrants applying for a change in immigration status (like a green card) need to prove that they are unlikely to ever need public assistance and can bar some immigrants who received assistance in the past from ever being approved. [NBC News 8/12/19]

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### **Failings**

(the following are excerpts from a WP article)

“It was lunchtime when 2 ½-year-old Fletcher Hartz opened the door to the elevator at his grandparents’ home in Little Rock.

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“His mother, Nicole Hartz, stood a few feet away in the kitchen making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. She didn’t see him walk into the hallway and pull open the elevator door, which looked like an ordinary closet door. But she heard him cry.

“She went to check on him and found Fletcher trapped behind the door to the elevator, which her in-laws had installed a few years earlier to accommodate their own elderly parents at the two-story home.

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“She didn’t panic. He wasn’t hurt. It’s going to be okay, she recalled telling him that day in February 2017.

“But she didn’t know what many in the elevator industry had known for more than 70 years: that children caught between the doors had been killed and injured before, crushed by moving elevators when their tiny bodies collided with the door frame above or fell into the elevator shaft below — a danger allowed to exist all these years by companies and regulators despite a simple solution.”

\* \* \*

Corporate memos going back to at least 1943 highlighted the hazard. Lawsuits filed on behalf of dead and injured children since 2001 further spelled out the risk. In 2005, several elevator experts tried to change the nation’s elevator safety code to shrink the door gap — and were rejected. After more accidents, the elevator code finally changed in 2017, but it applied only to new installations. Nothing was done to fix hundreds of thousands of existing elevators, despite a problem that could be solved with a \$100 space guard, according to elevator experts. [WP 7/21/19]

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has not been able to agree on a traditional warning. Instead a warning titled “Safety Alert to Protect Children from a Deadly Gap between Doors of Home Elevators” was issued by the acting Chairwoman Ann Marie Buerkle along with two leading residential elevator industry groups. The agency’s other four commissioners declined to join the message because “they could not agree on the wording of the safety warning...” (Buerkle is stepping down in October.) [WP 8/3/19]

[Note: The failure of the Commission to deal with this issue began long before this administration. The Commission has 5 members of which no more than 3 may be from the same party. Members must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Buerkle, a Republican, was appointed by Obama who also appointed two of the other 5 members. Trump has appointed the other two members.]

\* \* \* \* \*

**2020**

The 59<sup>th</sup> presidential election will take place on November 3, 2020,  
445 days from today

\* \* \* \* \*

For the record – as of August 5<sup>th</sup>, 433 people have filed presidential campaign committees with the Federal Election Commission; 272 as Democrats, 113 as Republicans, 34 as Libertarians and 14 as Green Party candidates.  
[Ballotpedia]

\* \* \* \* \*

### Running in the Democratic Primary

26 individuals have announced they are seeking the Democratic nomination for president. As of August 15, three of them have decided to end their candidacies.

Michael Bennet (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 54  
Joe Biden (D) – former Vice President, former U.S. Senator – Age 76  
Cory Booker (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 49  
Steve Bullock (D) – Governor of Montana – Age 53  
Pete Buttigieg (D) – Mayor of South Bend, Indiana – Age 37  
Julian Castro (D) – Former HUD Secretary – Age 44  
John Delaney (D) – former U.S. Representative – Age 55  
Bill DeBlasio (D) – Mayor of New York, New York – Age 58  
Tulsi Gabbard (D) – U.S. Representative – Age 37  
Kirsten Gillibrand (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 52  
Kamala Harris (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 54  
Jay Inslee (D) – Governor of Washington – Age 68  
Amy Klobuchar (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 58  
Wayne Messam (D) – Mayor of Miramar, Florida – Age 44  
Seth Moulton (D) – U.S. Representative – 40  
Beto O'Rourke (D) – former U.S. Representative – Age 46  
Tim Ryan (D) – U.S. Representative – Age 45  
Bernie Sanders (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 77  
Tom Steyer (D) – Entrepreneur – Age 62  
Joe Sestak (D) – former U.S. Representative – 67  
Elizabeth Warren (D) – U.S. Senator – Age 69  
Marianne Williamson – Spiritualist, teacher – Age 66  
Andrew Yang – Entrepreneur – Age 44

### Have Left the Field

~~Mike Gravel (D) – former U.S. Senator – Age 88~~  
~~Eric Swalwell (D) – U.S. Representative – Age 39~~

\* \* \* \* \*

63% of U.S. adults say they have been following news about candidates for the 2020 presidential election “closely”. This is a substantially greater number of adults than have expressed that view in any presidential election at this time going back at least to 1987. The previous highs were 54% in 2015 and 53% in 1999.

65% of Democrat/Lean Democrat registered voters have an excellent/good impression of the candidates running for the democratic nomination. This is roughly the same number who held that view at this time in 2007. It is substantially greater than at this time in 2015 when only 51% had an excellent/good impression of the democratic candidates.

Those in the 65% who have excellent/good impression of the candidates, include 71% of women, 55% of men, 63% those age 18-64, 71% of those 65+, 70% of liberals, 75% of those with college degrees and only 57% of those without college degrees.

Those who have an excellent impression of the candidates number 23% in 2019 which is substantially higher than 2007 or 2015 at this time. [PEW 7/18/19]

\* \* \* \* \*

51% of Democratic primary voters say that in selecting a presidential nominee for the Democratic Party it is most important to them that a candidate come close to their views on issues. 44% say it is most important who has the best chance to defeat Donald Trump. [NBC/WSJ 7/9/19]

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The following are the Morning Consult survey results collected from August 5-11, 2019 and the Real Clear Politics average from August 1-11, 2019.

	Entered <u>the race</u>	Morning Consult <u>8/11/19</u>	Real Clear Politics <u>8/6/19</u>
Joe Biden	4/25/19	33%	30.8%
Bernie Sanders	2/19/19	20%	16.5%
Elizabeth Warren	12/31/18	14%	18.3%
Pete Buttigieg	1/23/19	5%	6.55%
Kamala Harris	1/21/19	9%	8.3%

Beto O'Rourke	3/14/19	3%	2.0%
Cory Booker	1/1/19	3%	2.0%
Andrew Yang	11/6/17	2%	1.3%
Amy Klobuchar	2/10/19	1%	1.0%
Julian Castro	12/12/18	1%	.8%
Tulsi Gabbard	1/11/19	1%	1.3%
Kirsten Gillibrand	1/15/19	1%	.3%
John Hickenlooper	3/4/19	1%	--
Tim Ryan	4/4/19	1%	.3%
Michael Bennett	5/2/19	1%	.3%
John Delaney	7/28/19	1%	.5%
Marianne Williamson	11/15/18	1%	.3%
Steve Bullock	5/14/19	1%	.5%
Bill de Blasio	5/16/19	0%	.3%
Jay Inslee	3/1/19	0%	.3%
Wayne Messam	3/13/19	0%	--
Seth Moulton	4/22/19	0%	--
Joe Sestak	6/23/19	0%	--
Tom Steyer	7/9/19	1%	.5%

\* \* \* \* \*

### What are the odds?

Scott Cooley runs a public relations firm called Cool Media Public Relations. His client, SportsBetting.ag, produces odds on just about anything on which you might want to wager including the Democratic presidential primary.

Here are the odds for who is likely to win the 2020 Democratic nominating fight as of August 12, 2019.

- Elizabeth Warren +250 (5/2)
- Joe Biden +300 (3/1)
- Bernie Sanders +650 (13/2)
- Kamala Harris +700 (7/1)
- Andrew Yang +1200 (12/1)
- Pete Buttigieg +1400 (14/1)
- Tulsi Gabbard +2000 (20/1)
- Cory Booker +3300 (33/1)
- Beto O'Rourke +3300 (33/1)
- Marianne Williamson +5000 (50/1)

Julian Castro +6600 (66/1)  
Amy Klobuchar +6600 (66/1)  
Kirsten Gillibrand +10000 (100/1)  
John Hickenlooper +10000 (100/1)  
Bill de Blasio +10000 (100/1)  
Seth Moulton +10000 (100/1)  
Jay Inslee +10000 (100/1)  
Michael Bennet +10000 (100/1)

If you want to get on Scott's mailing list, you can email him at [scott@coolmediapr.com](mailto:scott@coolmediapr.com).

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In an August Morning Consult survey, respondents were asked whether they had a favorable or unfavorable impression of each of the Democratic candidates.

Biden and Sanders had the highest favorability scores of 75% and 73% respectively. De Blasio had the highest unfavorability score of 26%. Leading the list of candidates who respondents had not heard of were Steyer at 53% and Inslee at 44%.

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Biden	75%	18%
Sanders	73%	20%
Warren	63%	16%
Harris	54%	18%
O'Rourke	49%	15%
Booker	46%	17%
Buttigieg	44%	12%

All of the other Democratic candidates had favorability ratings of 36% or less.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Democratic Debates of the 2020 Nomination Season

- Third Debate – September 12 & 13 in Houston TX at Texas Southern University an HBCU – TV by ABC and Univision. To qualify candidates must have received 130,000 unique money contributions and achieved at

least 2% in four qualifying polls. As of August 12<sup>th</sup>, 9 candidates have qualified.

- Fourth Debate – October, time and place TBD. Those who qualify for the third debate will also be qualified for this October debate.
- Fifth Debate – November, time and place TBD
- Sixth Debate – December, time and place TBD
- 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Debates – TBD

#### Audience size

- 1<sup>st</sup> Debate – Miami – June 26 – 15,300,000 viewers  
June 27 – 18,000,000 viewers
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Debate – Detroit – July 30 – 8,700,000 viewers  
July 31 – 10,720,000 viewers

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Fundraising

Below are the fundraising totals through June 30, 2019 which is the last day for which fundraising and expenditure totals had to be filed with the Federal Election Commission. The next filing period closes on September 30, 2019.

Candidate	Entered the race	Total Raised	Raised 2020 Camp	Trans. from other Camp	Cash on Hand 6/30
Joe Biden	4/25/19	22m	22m	00	10.9m
Bernie Sanders	2/19/19	46.3m	36m	10.3m	27.3m
Elizabeth Warren	12/31/18	35.7m	25.1m	10.4m	27.3m
Pete Buttigieg	1/23/19	32.3m	32.3m	00	22.7m
Kamala Harris	1/21/19	25.1m	25.1m	00	13.3m
Beto O'Rourke	3/14/19	13m	13m	00	5.2m
Cory Booker	1/1/19	12.5m	9.5m	2.7m	5.4m
Andrew Yang	11/6/17	4.6m	4.6m	00	1.1m
Amy Klobuchar	2/10/19	12.7m	8.9m	3.6m	6.7m
Julian Castro	12/12/18	3.9m	3.9m	00	1.1m
Tulsi Gabbard	1/11/19	5.6m	3.6m	2.5m	2.4m
Kirsten Gillibrand	1/15/19	14.9m	5.3m	9.6m	8.2m
John Hickenlooper	3/4/19	3.2m	3.2m	00	0.8m
Tim Ryan	4/4/19	0.9m	0.9m	00	0.3m
Michael Bennett	5/2/19	3.5m	2.8m	0.7m	2.2m
John Delaney	7/28/19	20.2m	0.2m	(*)	10.6m

Marianne Williamson	11/15/18	3.1m	3m	00	.5m
Steve Bullock	5/14/19	2.1m	2m	00	1.5m
Bill de Blasio	5/16/19	1.1m	1.1m	00	0.7m
Jay Inslee	3/1/19	5.3m	5.3m	00	1.2m
Wayne Messam	3/13/19	No info	available		
Seth Moulton	4/22/19	1.9m	1.9m	00	0.7m
Joe Sestak	6/23/19	No info	available		
Tom Steyer	7/9/19	No info	available		

(\*) Delaney has essentially financed his entire campaign with personal dollars.

The chart above is based on the best information WW has been able to find. It may not be wholly accurate.

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The Democratic nominating convention is scheduled for July 13-16, 2020 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Republican Primary**

#### Announced/Running

Donald Trump – President – Age 72

William Weld I – former Governor of Massachusetts – Age 73

There will be no debates.

The Trump campaign and the Republican National Committee have created a joint fundraising committee. The Trump campaign cannot accept more than 2,800 per person for each election – primary and general.

As of the end of June the joint effort has raised around \$237,000,000. The Trump campaign’s share is \$124,369,310 and it has \$56,237,365 cash on hand.

The Weld campaign has raised \$871,852 of which \$180,000 was contributed by Weld personally. The campaign has cash on hand of \$299,225 with \$226,456 in debt for a net cash on hand of \$72,769.

The Republican nominating convention is scheduled for August 24-27, 2020 in Charlotte, NC.

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**The General Election**

At least 17 million people were removed from the voter rolls between the 2016 election and the 2018 midterms according to a new report. The study offered further evidence that certain places continued to more aggressively remove people from the voting rolls. [HuffPost 8/5/19]

\* \* \* \* \*

The following are the results of three general election surveys taken 15 months before the election.

	<u>Survey USA</u> <u>8/9/19</u>		<u>IBD/TIPP</u> <u>8/6/19</u>		<u>Emerson</u> <u>7/30/19</u>	
	T	Dem	T	Dem	T	Dem
Trump vs Biden	42%	50%	41%	54%	49%	51%
Trump vs Sanders	42%	50%	45%	50%	49%	51%
Trump vs Warren	44%	46%	45%	49%	50%	50%
Trump vs Harris	44%	45%	45%	47%	52%	48%
Trump vs Buttigieg	44%	42%	xx	xx	52%	48%

\* \* \* \* \*

**Congress**

Approval of the Congress generally remains quite bleak, having dropped since the first of the year.

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
Real Clear Pol. 8/6/19	17.2%	71.4%
Real Clear Pol. 6/11/19	20.0%	69.8%
Real Clear Pol. 5/14/19	22.0%	66.2%
Real Clear Pol. 4/2/19	22.8%	66.8%
Real Clear Pol. 3/26/19	20.8%	68.8%
Real Clear Pol. 2/26/19	19.4%	70.0%
Real Clear Pol. 1/1/19	19.6%	69.3%
Real Clear Pol. 1/4/18	15.8%	72.6%

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

As of July 26, twelve incumbent members of the House are not seeking re-election – three Democrats and nine Republicans.

### THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2020

Democrats 235

Republicans 197

Independent 1

Vacancies 2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>
Safe in 2020	182	160
Likely	17	18
Lean	19	15
		<u>Toss Up</u>
	17	4

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE SENATE

[WW uses Jennifer E. Duffy of the Cook Political Report and Inside Elections for the Senate chart below. When those two organizations do not agree, WW uses Sabato as a tie breaker.]

In 2020, Republicans will be defending 22 seats while Democrats will be defending 12 seats. It is unlikely that the Republicans will lose control of the Senate in this election.

Republicans	53
Democrats	45
Independents	2

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independent</u>
Seats not up in 2020	33	31	2
Safe in 2020	7	13	
	Coons	Sullivan	
	Durbin	Cotton	
	Markey	Risch	
	Warner	Cassidy	
	Booker	Daines	
	Merkley	Sasse	
	Reed	Inhofe	
		Graham	
		Rounds	
		Moore Capito	
		WY (Enzi)	
		Tennessee (Alexander)	
		Hyde-Smith	
Likely	4	4	
	Smith	McConnell	
	Shaheen	Cornyn	
	Peters	Kansas (Roberts)	
	NM (Udall)	Ernst	
Lean	0	3	
		Collins	
		Perdue	
		Tillis	
Toss Up	1	2	
	Jones	McSally	
		Gardner	

\* \* \* \* \*

The number of roll call votes on amendments in the Senate since the beginning of 2019 is 18. During the same time period in the ten previous Congresses, senators took anywhere from 34 to 231 votes on amendments. [Political Playbook 8/4/19]

\* \* \* \* \*

## Women Will Get It Done

In Japan, women in the workforce are only 4% of managers and hold only 2% of seats on boards of directors. Women hold only 10% of the seats in the lower house of the legislature.

Married couples are not allowed to have different last names, which is a special burden on women who have established themselves in the workplace. 42.5% of adults support changing the law which requires women to take their husband's name, while 29.3% oppose change. 52.3% of those aged 70-79 opposed the change while 13.6% of those aged 30-39% oppose the change. [Marika Katanuma, Bloomberg]

\* \* \* \* \*

- In 1946, 35% of people thought men and women were equally intelligent.
- In 1995, 43% of people thought men and women were equally intelligent.
- In 2018, 86% of people thought men and women were equally intelligent.
- Also, in 2018, 9% believed women were more intelligent than men while 5% believe men were more intelligent.

Women's labor force participation has increased from 32% in 1950 to 57% in 2018. Men's labor force participation has fallen from 82% to 69%.

Women now earn more bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees than do men. [Gender Stereotypes Have Changed, American Psychological Association 7/18/19]

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The overwhelming majority of student debt is held by women. Of the country's \$1.46 trillion student debt, women hold two-thirds of this amount -- \$929 billion. [Women & Politics Institute, AU, 7/27/19]

\* \* \* \* \*

For the first time, there are more college-educated women in the work force than college-educated men. Women age 25 and older now make up 50.2% of the college-educated work force – up about 11% since 2000.

57.5% of the people who earned a bachelor's degree last year were women. Women are still earning far less money than men. It's true that women have been more likely to enter fields with lower income potential like nursing, education and

administration. However, even women doing the same work as men earn less. [NYT 7/2/19]

\* \* \* \* \*

Sotheby's Mei Moses's Art-Female index rose 72.9% between 2012 and 2018. That means that "a work by a female artist bought in 2012 would, on average, be worth 72.9% more if sold in 2018".

During that same period, the men's index rose 8.3%. The leap in the monetary value of women's art is jaw-dropping on its own but consider that for the past 50 years men's and women's indexes have moved in parallel and the jump is even more noteworthy. [Broadsheet 8/2/19]

\* \* \* \* \*

56% of voters have heard the media talk about how women candidates are unelectable. (75% of them also heard the media talk about how the current president is unelectable.)

However, looking at the last few years, 78% of voters say, "We can't predict what types of candidates are actually electable and shouldn't listen to people who say we can." [AU Women & Politics Institute/Barbara Lee Family Foundation 7/15/19]

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Men with bachelor's degrees make an average of \$26,000 more per year than women with the same credentials. Women are also severely underrepresented in certain fields with higher earning potential, namely STEM fields – science, technology, math and engineering – where they account for only about 25% of graduates and less than 30% of college-educated employees. [GenderAvenger Blog 7/16/19]

\* \* \* \* \*

In the S&P 500...

- 10 companies have boards that are at least 50% women, 5 of these companies have a female CEO or president
- 27% of current board members are women, up from 16% in 2009
- 6 companies have boards where women make up a majority of board members
- In 2009 there were 56 firms that did not include any women. Today there are none.

- There are 329 companies in the Russell 3000 index have no women on the board.
- Male or female minority directors make up 16% of the Fortune 500 Board seats.
- California has passed legislation that requires companies with their main offices in the state to have one to three female directors, depending on board size.

[WP 7/21/19]

\* \* \* \* \*

Women working in the technology industry are subject to “staggering” levels of sexism as discrimination remains a rampant problem, according to new research.

A study conducted by CWJobs, a recruiter in the industry, found that women are regularly subjected to backhanded compliments and uncomfortable encounters, while being overlooked and losing out to men during promotion opportunities.

From the more than 500 women surveyed, 50% claimed that they had been told that being a woman would hold them back in their career, while one in four women felt they were denied promotions due to their gender. [Article by Hasan Chowdhury – The Telegraph via GenderAvenger Blog 8/11/19]

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Restaurants**

Kellari Taverna  
 1700 K Street NW  
 Washington DC 20006  
 202-535-5274  
 Kellaridc.com

Rita, Bob, Debbie and I went to Kellari on a Sunday night. Rita and Bob had been there before. It was a first for Debbie and me.

As you enter the restaurant, straight ahead to the left is a long bar with 12 highchairs. Across from the bar are a series of two tops along a half wall topped with some see through screening.

Then comes the main dining room with banquettes at each side. The greeter's station is at the near corner of the main dining area.

There is a private room at the end of the dining room. It is open to the main dining room and the upper half of the "walls" that front the dining room are windows covered with somewhat opaque drapes. It is not as dark as many private dining areas but provides privacy. There is another more private entrance to the room. The night we were there, there was a private party in the room with a large number of folks sitting around a long table. (I got a peek inside when I walked by and the side door was open.)

Fish is a big part of the menu and at the end of the main dining area there is a large opening in a wall that features whole fish of various sizes packed in ice and presented in a way that allows you see the fish before you order. The fish are sold by the pound and you need to buy a whole fish.

The main room of the restaurant holds 2 tops, 4 tops, 5 tops and at least one 6 top. The restaurant can hold roughly 220 people at a single sitting.

Our server was Bryan, a bit of a character but an excellent server.

Rita and Bob ordered Greek Salads – Tomatoes, red onions, English cucumbers, olives, peppers, Kalamata olives, feta, olive oil. Bob tried to order the Avegemoto soup which he had enjoyed on his previous visit. He was told that the chef who made that soup was not there, so it was not available.

I opted for the Chopped Salad – Romaine, sweet corn, hearts of palm, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, chickpeas, feta. This salad was so big that I could not begin to finish it. I took it home.

Debbie did not order an appetizer.

For her main course, Rita ordered a Shrimp Cocktail. Debbie selected Lobster Youvetsi – Lobster, baked orzo, lobster tomato sauce.

Bob selected a Tuna Steak – Sesame crusted tuna, pan seared, giant beans, mushrooms, spinach, tomato sauce.

I was in the mood for fish, so I ordered Icelandic Cod – Icelandic cod fillet, clams, cherry tomatoes, sweet onions, capers, potatoes.

We ordered two dishes for the table, Kellari Chips – Crispy eggplant and zucchini, tzatziki dip, and Sweet corn.

The portions of all of the dishes were substantial and when it came time for dessert, we all passed.

The men's room is very large. To the left as you enter is a black marbled counter with two sunken oval wash basins. There is a very large mirror over the counter. To the right is a floor to ceiling wall, walling off two wall-hanging urinals, one higher than the other. To the right of the urinals is a floor to ceiling wall made of thin circular wooden tubes.

Further to the right is a standard size commode room with a white ceramic floor standing commode and to the left of the commode a metal wall hanging shelf with a toilet paper holder and a second roll of toilet paper sitting on top. To the right of the small commode room is a large commode room with appropriate metal railings and accessibility space.

The floor is covered with very large dark tiles and the walls are covered with somewhat smaller light tan tiles. There are also various dark wood decorative items on the walls.

There is no valet parking but there is a parking garage located under the building with an entrance on K street. The garage closes at 11 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

Garibaldis Restaurant  
347 Presidio Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
415-563-8841  
Garibaldisrestaurant.com

Debbie and I went to Garibaldis with John and Sue.

The restaurant is long and narrow and seats between 80 and 90 people. To the right as you enter is a bar that seats 10. To the left there are a variety of tables facing a banquette and we were seated at a table near the front. Debbie and Sue were seated on the banquette, John and I were on chairs facing them.

Further back there is a second level to the restaurant which is reached by a short flight of stairs. It is on this level that one finds the restrooms.

The menu is broken into three sections: Small Plates, The Classics and Larger Plates.

Sue ordered Roasted Broccoli Di Ciccio - lemon, shallot, hazelnuts, Calabrian chili; Grilled Monterey Bay Calamari – butter beans, salsa verde, aioli, chili oil, crispy tortilla; and Chopped Salad – crunchy vegetables, sieved egg, ricotta salata, buttermilk dressing.

Debbie selected Papas Bravas Quebradas – crispy potatoes, spicy tomato sauce, aioli & several onions. She followed that with the Chopped Salad and Chicken Milanese – mashed potatoes, arugula, cherry tomatoes, red onions, lemon caper beurre blanc.

John started with the Parisian Style Gnocchi – delta asparagus, gioia burrata mozzarella, lemon zest, toasted almonds and then ordered the Grilled Filet Mignon – gorgonzola crema, English peas, shitake mushrooms, ham, grilled levain bread.

I started with Salt Roasted Beets – cara cara oranges, endive, crème fraiche, champagne vinaigrette, then the Chopped Salad finishing with Marinated Lamb Tenderloins – couscous, almond, currants, green beans, tarragon bearnaise.

Debbie finished with Garibaldi's Coffee – Bailey's Irish Cream, Grand Marnier, crème de Cacao, Moschetti Coffee, Whipped Cream, Orange Zest. John ended with the Irish Coffee – Jameson Whiskey, Sweetness, Whipped Cream.

In the restroom, there is a white ceramic floor standing commode. To the right of the commode is a square white wall-hanging wash basin and a wall-hanging container of paper towels with an attendant metal trash container. There is a metal cabinet with a waist high top and a variety of doors and drawers. The floor is covered with very large tiles made of a material I could not readily identify. The walls are covered with very large off-black tiles. There are suitable accessibility bars throughout and, unique to most other restrooms, there is a wall plaque to be pushed to open the door automatically and what appears to be a red knob which would call for help if necessary.

\* \* \* \* \*

Eliza's  
Hunan & Mandarin  
2877 California Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
415-621-4819

Debbie and I had lunch with Stan at Eliza's, a restaurant that is owned and managed by two sisters, Betty & Jennifer. It seats 70 people.

The three of us looked over the menu, Stan had been there before, and each of us sang out the dishes that drew our attention. As a result, we shared the following – Eliza's Cakes, Pot Stickers, Wonton Soup, Mu-She pork, Braised Bean Curd with Shitake, Honey Walnut Prawns and Crispy Noodles.

The restroom is green and decorative. The lower part of the wall is a flowing array of tiny tiles with green painted walls above. There are various other green decorations running up and around the walls including bugs and tiny birds. There is a white ceramic wall-hanging washbasin with a mirror above and a white ceramic commode. In addition, there is a small table near the paper towel dispenser.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mourad  
140 New Montgomery St. #1  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
415-660-2500  
Mouradsf.com

Debbie and I had dinner with Peggy and Mike at Mourad on our anniversary.

As you enter, to the right is a long L-shaped bar that seats 10 folks on the long side and four folks on the foot. There is a tabletop and several long shelves covered with wines and other alcohols that form the back of the bar. The back wall itself is a series of waist to ceiling windows that face the outside.

To the left of the long side of the bar is a dining table that will comfortably seat 16 people.

Heading into the length of the restaurant, away from the bar there is a long room for dining. On each side of this area there are three very large interesting rectangular booths with banquette seating on the long side and at each end. The tables are split in the middle so that two parties can sit in each booth.

Between the two lines of booths, there are a series of 2 and 4 stops that can easily be moved to handle larger parties.

From pictures of the second floor it appears to be designed only a bit differently than the first. The far end of the room has tall windows and there are two lines of tables that stretch the length of the room in the middle of the room. In fact, but for the bar, the second floor is much like the first floor. (I am stuck with describing the second floor from viewing pictures on the website. I was not able to see it firsthand because the only way to reach it is a long set of relatively steep stairs. There is no elevator.)

The restaurant can seat up to 180 people at any one time.

If you go to their website, you will see one of the most enticing collections of photos of meals that I have seen in a long time.

There was a fair amount of sharing of appetizers and main courses. Peggy and Debbie ordered Lamb Tartare – smoked oyster, roasted garlic tahini, crispy lentil; and Duck Liver – citrus, ginger, rye, pistachio. Mike and Mike ordered Octopus – brussels sprouts, Cauliflower, mustard, Preserved lemon.

The three main courses that were ordered were BRANZINO – prawns, brown butter, Harissa, Radish; SCALLOP – lobster, vadouvan, cauliflower, tarragon and LAMB – carrot, Sesame, Fregola, Green garlic.

We ordered three desserts which were also shared: HONEY & ALMOND – beeswax, Orange blossom; PUFFS – donut, honey sugar, Chocolate caraway; PRESERVED LEMON – coconut, toasted meringue, Citrus, Thyme.

Our server was Anna. She was very helpful in answering a number of questions and the food was beautifully served.

This is only the third restaurant I can recall that has a restroom that was designed to be used by both women and men. As you enter to the left there is a very long modern marble wash basin with a mirror from the top of the wash basin

to the ceiling. The washbasin is designed to be used by several people at the same time. A little further on there is a shorter but similar washbasin. The floor is covered with tiny white tiles.

To the right there are five completely enclosed commode rooms. Within each commode room there is a floor-based commode and appropriate accessibility bars. There is a tile floor in each of these rooms composed of white square but angular tiles. The walls are covered with a multi-colored pattern of starbursts and flowers. There is a small wall-attached shelf topped by a mirror.

\* \* \* \* \*

North Beach Restaurant  
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Julia and Stan, Peggy and Mike and Debbie and I went to the North Beach Restaurant on the last night of our Menlo Park/San Francisco visit. (Dinner was followed by attending a performance of Beach Blanket Babylon – more about that at the end. The theater is a short walk from the restaurant.)

My notes about who ate what are a bit fuzzy, so I am simply listing items that one or another of our party ordered. A number of us ordered the same thing: Famous Home-cured Prosciutto and Melon, Calamari Vinaigrette, Spinach Salad, Spaghetti all' Amatriciana - Con Pancetta, Oso Bucco, Spaghetti Carbonara, Spaghettoni Lorenzo (has no cholesterol, 247 calories as tested by UC Berkeley).

The restaurant served biscotti with coffees.

One thing that I don't recall seeing in any other restaurant is that the cloth napkins had a buttonhole in one corner.

Our server was Daniel and he was as good at it gets.

The restaurant seats 300 people with slightly more than half that number on the main floor and the balance downstairs.

The restroom is very bright and well lit. There is a wall-hanging urinal close to a floor standing commode. Across the room is a square wall-hanging wash basin

with a wall-hanging mirror above it. There is the option of drying one's hands either in a wall-hanging device in which you insert your hands where they are air dried or by using paper towels; or both if you choose. There is an appropriate container into which the towels can be discarded.

There is a counter with a flower in a vase. The floor is covered with mid-size tan tiles, the walls with larger white tiles. There is a multi-colored, six-inch-wide strip around the entire room about 2 feet off the ground. There are appropriately located metal bars making the restroom completely handicapped accessible.

Following dinner, we all went to see *Beach Blanket Babylon*. It is the world's longest running musical revue and one of the most popular San Francisco attractions; it is a high energy pop culture satire. The *New York Times* says *Beach Blanket Babylon* is "updated more often than your smartphone!" The show has been running for 45 years, with nearly 17,000 performances, and has been seen by 6.5 million people. It is currently be performed at Club Fugazi in the North Beach district.

For reasons that are not important here, the show will close forever with its final two performances on New Year's Eve of this year. If you have not seen it and are going to be anywhere near San Francisco, I suggest you put it on your calendar. Except for occasional performances, all attendees must be 21 years of age or older.

The show's website gives you all the information that you need.

*Mike*

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