

What if the new Trump is just boring?

BY RAMESH PONNURU
BLOOMBERG

Donald Trump prospered after insulting John McCain and prisoners of war. His poll numbers kept rising after he went after Megyn Kelly and Fox News. Every time a pundit has predicted that he was about to implode, he moved up to new heights. Now the question is: Can he survive being boring?

The Trump of the second debate was a much more conventional figure than he has been during his spectacular rise. He was the center of the last one; this time, it was possible for long stretches to forget he was there. He has won a lot of fans by offending people and then refusing

to apologize. At this debate, he seemed cowed by Carly Fiorina. She was the one who brought electricity to the stage.

Trump's theatrics have benefited him by drawing attention and denying it to the other candidates, who have often been reduced to seeking some by talking about him. Within hours of a performance at the first debate that was mediocre, at best, he seized command of the media cycle by going after Kelly. After this second debate, on the other hand, he was anodyne: All the candidates had done well, he said.

Maybe Trump's new sobriety will overcome the doubts of many Republicans about him. The risk to him, though, is that he becomes just another Republican candidate, and both the

media and the voters start to lose interest.

Another candidate, though, may have suffered a more serious blow by being boring: Scott Walker. He has been losing support in the polls. He needed to make Republican voters sit up and take notice, and to make Republican donors get out their checkbooks. He did neither. He said nothing memorable; he barely said anything at all.

Fiorina and Marco Rubio were the winners, at least according to the people I follow on Twitter. But they were the winners of the Aug. 6 debate, too, and only Fiorina's polls improved. She had a misstep, too, letting her exchange with Trump over their business bona fides go on a bit too long and getting called on it by Chris Christie. She returned

to his criticism later, showing that it bothered her.

Jeb Bush's supporters may have hoped, when he got into the race, that he would outshine the other candidates in debate the way Mitt Romney had four years ago, that he would seem like the most serious and presidential of the bunch. That hasn't happened, in part because he is dealing with stronger competitors, in part because the party's divisions have grown more rancorous. (My wife works for his campaign.) But those supporters can take heart from the fact that he did better in the second debate than in the first, showing steadiness and good humor.

The first debate went off like a series of firecrackers, thanks to Trump. This one was more of a slog, which may be what the pri-

mary campaign is turning into as well.

I'd nominate another loser for the night: the whole Republican field. Bush was one of the few candidates to talk about economic growth. The debate told us more about where the candidates stand on vaccines, county clerks in Kentucky, and Ronald Reagan than what they would do about health care, the economy and college loans. The Republican candidates don't have to convince the voters to agree with them on every issue. They do have to convince them that they care about the same things.

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LINDA DAVIDSON | THE WASHINGTON POST

Terry Walsh, fire deputy chief in Portland, Maine, responds to a possible heroin overdose by an 18-year-old man in Portland in July.

Drugs

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pale in comparison — they increased to \$47 million in 2010 from \$19 million a decade earlier. By 2010, treatment accounted for only 3.3 percent of the total cost.

In all three studies, criminal activity accounted for the largest or second largest cost category. Meanwhile, across all three studies, substance abuse treatment was the smallest cost category, ranging from 2.8-3.3 percent of the total. In fact, the growth in criminal activity costs in this period was eight-to-nine-fold greater than the growth in treatment costs.

As Merry noted, in order to be effective, treatment must not be restricted to group counseling for substance abuse. Many individuals suffering from addiction to alcohol and/or other drugs have co-occurring mental health disorders that require additional, specific, individual counseling. Furthermore, various case management services must be an integral part of the treatment program.



TROY R. BENNETT | BDN

A small pile of a substance believed to be heroin sits on a scale at the state drug testing lab in Augusta in August.

Housing, for example, is a major area of concern. Individuals suffering from addiction need to live in a safe, drug-free environment in which they adhere to abstinence. Such resources are severely limited in rural parts of the state and will need to be established. Obviously, these individuals must be employed in order to pay for such housing. Similarly, assuming they don't have appropriate health insurance — and most do not because they can't afford it — they must be employed in order to pay for individual and group

counseling. Therefore, access to job training and/or re-training is another important and integral support service.

Lastly, before someone suffering from addiction leaves prison, he or she needs a comprehensive, individualized, pre-release plan that includes the full range of required support services.

What, then, of the “three-legged stool?”

The three studies cited above clearly document that, given the magnitude of the problem confronting our state, Maine's expenditure

for substance abuse treatment has been a very short “leg,” which explains in part why the stool has been unable to stand as an effective approach to dealing with addiction.

Moving forward, we need to ensure that the governor and Legislature are committed to reversing this situation. Stated simply, Maine cannot afford to turn down millions of dollars of federal funding for expansion of its Medicaid program, which would help defray the costs of effective substance abuse treatment. Similarly, the state must increase its efforts to secure federal grants supporting substance abuse treatment and case management services.

At the end of the day, the state must commit itself to a substantial increase in state dollars spent on substance abuse treatment and case management.

Dick Dimond is a retired physician from Southwest Harbor and the steering committee chair of the Hancock County Adult Drug Treatment Court. He also is a board member of the Acadia Family Center, a drug and alcohol treatment center in Southwest Harbor.

Teenage clockmaker wasn't naive — adults were paranoid

BY BARBARA SHELLY
THE KANSAS CITY STAR

The police chief of Irving, Texas, says a young Muslim teenager's humiliation and arrest for bringing a homemade clock to school was the result of “a naive accident,” presumably on the youth's part.

If so, how very sad.

Have we really reached the point where a mechanically inclined 14-year-old boy is naive for making something extremely clever and wanting to show his teachers?

Should Ahmed Mohamed have said to himself: “Hmm, maybe I shouldn't take this great homemade clock to school because I'm Muslim and my last name is Mohamed and some nervous adult might think it's a bomb?”

No. The problem here is adult paranoia, not youthful naivete.

If you listen to Chief Larry Boyd's statement to reporters, he's still in blame-the-kid mode.

“It certainly was suspicious in nature,” he says of the clock.

School resource officers questioned Ahmed, Boyd reported, but “the student would only say that it was a clock, and was not forthcoming at that time about any other details.”

Maybe that's because it really was a clock and there were no other details

You wonder what the school officers expected him to say before they called in the cops to handcuff Ahmed and haul him off to a juvenile processing center for more questioning

to be forthcoming about?

One can imagine by this time the boy was scared and probably made to feel embarrassed about wanting to show off his clock to a teacher. You wonder what the school officers expected him to say before they called in the cops to handcuff Ahmed and haul him off to a juvenile processing center for more questioning.

Anyway, it sounds as though Ahmed will be fine, having now received invitations to visit the White House, Facebook headquarters and numerous other places of interest to a technically talented 14-year-old.

But if bright young people are supposed to start worrying about whether their creations will be regarded as a threat to national security, I fear for the rest of us.

Barbara Shelly is a Kansas City Star columnist. Her column is distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Said

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But you raise an interesting point — where do the “yes on 1” people fall in this debate? Are they making common cause with the bear hunters? What a difference a year makes!

Cynthia: A “misdemeanor in office” is whatever wrongful act the Legislature deems it to be. Abuse of power, failing to abide by the will of the people, undue influence — any of these things could be the subject of articles of impeachment.

For checks and balances to work, we need players willing to throw a check now and again. LePage is slamming lawmakers into the boards, and their response is a referral to OPEGA for another report. The “yes on 1” people are likely “yes on checks,” as are the frustrated board members of LMF.

You can't play hockey by simply buying shiny new skates. You have to get in the darn rink. Lawmakers need to get in the game and throw a few checks.

Mike: And if the governor refused to obey the laws after the Law Court's veto decision, he would rightly face impeachment. But in all these controversies, no one has yet proved he broke the law or did not fulfill his oath of office. No different than Obama pushing the envelope. As long as the president obeys the court when

he loses, he will not be impeached. The same analysis applies to Gov. LePage.

But if we're moving to hockey metaphors, Gov. LePage is the 1970s Flyers — big, bruising, aggressive and effective, with the added bonus of beating communists! Lawmakers can get in the rink, or, switching sports, they can follow the Ravens and try to change the rules. Or, more simply, bodychecks and unbalanced lines.

Cynthia: The House of Representatives has the sole power of impeachment, according to the Constitution, meaning no assist from the Judiciary is required. A simple majority vote that the governor's actions are “misdemeanors in office” would send the matter to the Senate, which has the sole power to try the issue and render a judgment. That's the contest the Framers had in mind, and that's the game the people of Maine want to watch. Democracy works when people's heads and hearts are in the game.

The Legislature has the sole power to act. The question that remains is whether it has the soul power.

Republican Michael Cianchette is former chief counsel to Gov. Paul LePage, a Navy reservist who served in Afghanistan and in-house counsel to a number of businesses in southern Maine. Democrat Cynthia Dill is a civil rights lawyer with the Portland firm Troubh Heisler and a former state senator. Follow her on Twitter at @dillesquire.

Selfie

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“I truly believe in the secret ballot. That's the foundation of a democracy, to make sure people aren't coerced or fearful of casting a ballot,” said Deputy Secretary of State Julie Flynn, who oversees Maine elections. “I don't think that's something we should take lightly.”

To that end, there are consequences for violating the secrecy of the ballot. In Maine, it's a Class E crime — punishable by up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine — for an election official to intentionally disclose how someone voted to another person. Interfering with voters' ability to vote and attempting to influence them at the polls carry the same penalty. On Election Day, election workers have to station themselves in a way that doesn't allow them to see how voters have marked their ballots.

The end of secrecy?

As for ballot selfies, Maine doesn't have a specific law barring them, but ballots are not public documents, and it's a crime to make unauthorized copies of them.

On that basis, Flynn said, she would advise against ballot selfies. “If somebody said to me, ‘Is it OK to take a picture of my ballot?’ I would say, ‘No, they're private,’” she said.

But Maine's Legislature might have unwittingly removed the criminal restriction on ballot selfies. In 2012, the Digital Media Law Project, which tracks voting laws in every state, said on its website that a 2011 law change had made it legal for a Maine voter to disclose his or her own ballot. Last month, The New York Times reported Maine had changed its law, effectively allowing ballot selfies.

Selfies and the law

Indeed, as part of a broad-based revision of election laws passed in 2011, lawmakers changed state statute to specify it was illegal for someone “entrusted with

another voter's marked ballot” — namely, an election official — to disclose the contents of that ballot to someone else.

The change followed a 2010 incident in which, according to an attorney general's office investigation, Bowdoinham's town clerk mishandled absentee ballots in a special selectmen's election, saw how a fellow town employee voted, and told the town manager how that employee voted. That employee said the disclosure led to a hostile work environment.

“We amended the law to make it clear you can't disclose the content, whether you're showing it or disclosing it verbally,” Flynn said. “That isn't to do with somebody and their own ballot.”

Previously, the statute said it was a crime if a person “shows that person's marked ballot to another with the intent to reveal how that person voted” — a statute that could be read to bar someone from showing off his or her own completed ballot.

Flynn maintains Maine law effectively bans ballot