

Trump's election is no excuse for giving up

Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune

The morning after Donald Trump was elected president of the United States, the Lewiston Tribune received this email:

... For my mental health, I MUST cancel my subscription to my print and on-air news outlets. I can no longer be an informed citizen and be happy at the same time. For my mental health and stability, I must cancel my subscription today. ...

I cannot be exposed to the massive failure this nation has become on a daily basis and still maintain sanity. I can not be exposed to any news sources any longer.

The United States is now a banana republic, and now we are the laughing stock of the world - and rightfully so. I can't read about a failure the likes of the American Civil War day in and day out and maintain any measure of happiness in my life. ...

I can not be a part of today's

America.

Brian.

Dear Brian:

Take a moment.

Go for a walk.

Talk to a friend.

Reconsider.

We say that not because we are in the business of selling newspapers in an era when that's a precarious enterprise.

We say it because you are succumbing to a dangerous temptation, that somehow you can find some tranquility within a news-free island.

To say a Trump presidency is a troubling prospect is an exercise in trivialization. There are Americans - indeed citizens of the world - who awoke Wednesday contemplating a profound sense of fear if not dread.

Perhaps it is not enough to simply observe that the U.S. has survived its share of awful presidents. That doesn't make it any less true. And for every James Buchanan, Herbert Hoover, Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter, along came an Abraham Lincoln, a Franklin Delano Roosevelt and a Ronald Reagan.

The problems we encounter today are not intractable. We do not face a war of survival or even a bloody, costly stalemate on the other side of the world.

We are not caught up in an economic collapse.

Riots are not burning down our cities.

Political assassinations are not taking our best and brightest from us.

Our challenge is one of means - how do Americans so alienated from one another find a common cause?

Keep faith with our Constitution. Nowhere in that document will you find an imperial presidency. Should Trump pursue his darkest visions of deporting millions of people, disrupting military alliances or even upsetting delicate trade arrangements, he will confront the two other branches of government - and a national voice that withheld its popular vote from his mandate.

Beating within that Constitution is the pulse of an informed, engaged citizenry.

People such as the candidate who remains undeterred by an election loss.

Or the campaign worker who refuses to wallow in defeat.

It is the voter in the political minority who carries on by keeping score and holding the majority accountable.

This is no time for disillusionment.

No election in itself is final.

No outcome is absolute.

No one person always has the upper hand.

The next election is two years away. It will be a referendum on the Trump presidency and the Republican-controlled Congress.

Then, it will be up to you, Brian, to remain informed and engaged, to argue your case to your friends and family.

If you require inspiration, look no further than the New Yorker editor David Remnick's call to arms Wednesday: "Late last night, as the results were coming in from the last states, a friend called me full of sadness, full of anxiety about conflict, about war. Why not leave the country? But despair is no answer. To combat authoritarianism, to call out lies, to struggle honorably and fiercely in the name of American ideals - that is what is left to do. That is all there is to do."

And if you need eloquence, listen again to Hillary Clinton's gracious concession: "Our constitutional democracy demands our participation, not just every four years, but all the time. .. So now, our responsibility as citizens is to keep doing our part to build that better, stronger, fairer America we seek."

That is your right, Brian.

That is your obligation.

That is a political inheritance previous generations have handed down to you.

Please, don't throw it away. - M.T.