

State of the State

Written by Jack King, BT Contributor
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Competing ambitions in our GOP trio

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As we move deeper in to 2019, I have been trying to find some new stories to write about. Unfortunately, the president of the United States keeps coming up. And coming up. And coming up. No matter how hard I try, more insanity comes directly from President Don “The Con” Dumpster. No matter how hard we try, he seems to stand in our way to happiness.

So let’s move on to another subject for this month. Don’t worry. I assure you that the Dumpster will continue to make a fool of himself many times in the next two years.

Let’s look at how the Florida election cycle went in 2018. For the first time in 150 years, all three major elected officials are Republicans: the governor and two U.S. senators. And lest you might think that all three -- Rick Scott, Ron DeSantis, and Marco Rubio -- would become fast friends, it certainly has not worked out that way.

First, the threesome all came out announcing themselves as potential candidates for the presidency in 2020, or even 2024. That’s a large leap. Rubio “ran” the last time but didn’t even

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get close. The press did spell his name right. Scott and DeSantis are still living in political La La Land. Florida doesn't have a very good history for presidential hopefuls.

As Democratic Rep. Donna Shalala noted, "They're all going to compete with each other. Look already at Scott and DeSantis. Scott made a whole bunch of appointments and DeSantis is not happy. And Rubio? Whether they all want to run for president or not, I have no idea, but it's going to be fun to watch."

Rick Scott showed that he has pretty bad manners when he ignored a request to leave dozens of appointments to fill board openings to the incoming governor. Scott ignored that request and filled them himself. DeSantis has rescinded the 70 appointments and filled them himself.

And to show Florida that he's an unmitigated, ill-mannered pig, Scott showed up at the governor's inauguration and left before ceremony was finished. Gee, what good manners, Senator Scott!

Looking back on the 2018 U.S. Senate election in which Rick Scott won by 10,000 votes out of more than 8 million votes cast, I noticed that there were some really weird things, other than Rick Scott himself. The first one to stand out was that the top six counties by population went for incumbent Bill Nelson. Second, 13 counties voted for Nelson, while 54 counties went for Rick Scott. No matter how you look at this, it is odd.

If you've been paying attention to our demographics, you probably have noticed that Florida is the third most populous state in the nation. That's right, we're No. 3! But don't get your hopes up for ever being No. 1 or even No. 2. Those spots are reserved for California (39.7 million) and Texas (28.7 million). We've got 21.3 million. I don't think we even really *want* to be No. 3. We've got enough people already.

The tough problem is for us is that California and Texas are both three times the size of Florida. Yes, but a caveat there. We have more coastline than all the states but Alaska. And we'll take it!

The question is: Where does that leave us as a state -- or maybe even more important, where

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does that leave us as a place to live? The Milorganite pond that we refer to as Tallahassee has made South Florida a mess, as evidenced by the sugar business (considered by some as agricultural) around Lake Okeechobee.

How much further can we build into the Everglades until the state's official dwelling is a houseboat? One of the first builders in the Everglades, the Mackle Brothers, would have to change their name to the Mackle Boat Company.

As I look out my window in Coconut Grove, I can see quite a few condos under construction and quite a few for sale. They sure don't look like they're selling at all, but I could be mistaken. So many of the wealthy elite have a house every 500 meters.

Thankfully, we sold our house in south Grove last year and moved into a condo. It wasn't my first choice, but it soon became the best choice because I could walk almost anywhere and bike just about everywhere.

It's fun to look out from my balcony and watch the afternoon traffic pile up on S. Bayshore Drive. After watching it for a while with a glass of wine, I can then wander down the street for another glass of wine, watching the traffic stopped again on Main Highway. It's a lot of fun to wander through the village walking slowly, but faster than people are driving. What more could you ask for?

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com