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Ickler: A new year and more foolish than ever

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“So, what hopes do you have for our nation’s leaders at the start of this new year?” I asked as we sat in my Uncle Fud’s kitchen at Chigger Mountain Farm, eating Aunt Dud’s fresh-baked caramel rolls on the 13th day of the federal government shutdown.

“I wouldn’t trust them to load my dishwasher,” Aunt Dud said.

“That’s fer dang sure,” Uncle Fud said. “The loader in chief would say he had set a world record by packin’ more dishes into the dishwasher than anybody in history, and then when your antique cup got chipped he’d blame it on Barack Obama.”

“But he says he’s a ‘very stable genius,’” I said.

“That ain’t what Mitt Romney says,” Uncle Fud said. “The Old Mittser, who just elected to the Senate out in Utah, actually said Trump’s performance ain’t been up to snuff.”

“I’m afraid I don’t expect Romney to lead a Republican resistance movement against some of Trump’s nonsense,” Aunt Dud said. “As I remember Romney, he was noted for changing his position to go with whatever he thought would get him elected on several controversial issues.”

“So you’re expecting more of the same claptrap from the White House and more of the same bent-kneed obeisance to the master by Republicans in Congress in 2019?” I said.

“Maybe it’ll be worse. Look at the mess we’re in already with the government shut down,” Uncle Fud said. “Thousands of people not workin’. More thousands still workin’ but not gettin’ pay checks. Happy New Year to them.”

“Some of the mess is visible to the naked eye,” Aunt Dud said. “Trash is piling up and vandals are causing damage in our national parks. There was even a picture of mounds of trash bags piled up on the National Mall in the Boston Globe the other day. Who would have imagined anything so disgusting?”

“Right now we look worse than what Trump called ‘s-hole countries,’” Uncle Fud said. “All because he’s dead set on usin’ our tax money to build a wall that he promised to make Mexico pay for.”

“And of course he’s blaming the Democrats for the shutdown, after saying on TV that he’d be ‘proud to shut down the government for border security,’” I said. “He said he would ‘take the mantle’ for shutting it down, then promptly proceeded to pass the mantle.”

“The buck never stops on this president’s desk,” Uncle Fud said.

“Millions of government employees, and millions of American who depend on the services provided by government employees, are suffering over Trump’s demand for \$5 billion to build his so-called ‘beautiful wall,’” Aunt Dud said. “They’re telling people who can’t pay their rent to ask their landlords if they can make it up by doing chores. We’re making America great again by going back to the barter system.”

“Actual statistics don’t support the need for a wall,” I said. “For example, a census data analysis by the Cato Institute, which is a libertarian organization funded by the super-conservative Koch brothers, found that immigrants — legal and illegal — are far less likely to commit crimes and be imprisoned than native-born Americans. And a study published last year in an academic journal named Criminology showed that communities that have had an influx of undocumented migrants actually have lower violent crime rates than those with fewer immigrants.”

“I read a report that said illegal border crossin’s have been on the downswing for years, no matter what Fox News says,” Uncle Fud said. “The Center for Migration Studies says that two-thirds of our undocumented immigrants came here legally but overstayed their visas. If you want to pour some concrete, that \$5 billion worth would be better used to fix some roads and bridges around the country.”

“Facts don’t mean anything to this president,” Aunt Dud said. “He really went off the rails when he said Catholics should support his wall because there’s a wall around the Vatican, and claimed that the Obamas have a 10-foot wall around their house, which was an out-and-out bald-faced lie.”

“The real issue in this stalemate is not the need for a wall,” I said. “It’s the need to feed Trump’s colossal ego. He all but admitted that this week when he told Rep. Nancy Pelosi that he’d ‘look foolish’ if he compromised and dropped his demand for the \$5 billion.”

“I’ve got news for him,” said my Aunt Dud. “He been looking foolish every day since his first day in office.”