Happy New Year. Like all years, 2016 had its ups and its downs. 2017 will too, I’m sure.

In a few days, we Americans will swear in a new President. Like all Presidents, Mr. Obama had some positives and some negatives. Mr. Trump will too, I’m sure.

So, how about a quick recap of the Obama years? The opinions, of course, are mine alone and worth every penny you pay for them.

Mr. Obama came from out of nowhere and onto the political scene, defeating the mighty Clinton political machine to get the nomination for President. He had absolutely no administrative experience beyond that of community organizer and his past was somewhat shrouded from view. He followed a President that was a decent person, but arguably one of the worst Presidents in our country’s history. Many folks questioned whether Obama’s birth status qualified him to be President. Personally, I believe he is a naturally born citizen of the United States, and thus not disqualified to the office. Having obtained entrance to prestigious universities, for which his academic performance would not have qualified him, as a foreign student does raise some questions as to integrity.

The signature legislative accomplishment of the Obama years, domestically, is the Affordable Care Act. Those who would claim that our health care system was not in need of reform, are delusional at best. We had some real problems. True, we had the finest technology in the world of medicine. True that people from all over the world, including those places with more socialized medicine, would come to the US to get care … if they could afford it. There’s the rub, isn’t it? Lots of people in the US could not afford health insurance, and could not afford health care. The ACA did make it possible for many that didn’t have primary insurance coverage to get it. Far more, though, found insurance becoming unaffordable as premiums skyrocketed to pay for those that weren’t covered before. It was a very poorly designed act, which is not surprising when you consider that Congress didn’t even read it before enacting it. The Affordable Care Act decreased both affordability and care overall. Some speculate that it was designed to fail so it would be replaced with a single-payer government system. I won’t speculate on that, but taken in its entirety it’s been a failure, though some aspects did probably produce some positive results.

As one of the most racist Presidents of all time and probably the most racist in my lifetime, Obama has done a great deal to divide our country. He’s promoted the ideas that people should be treated differently depending on the pigmentation level of their skin. Dr. King would be appalled, I think. He came in saying he wanted to militarize the nation’s police forces, and has done much toward that end. At the same time, he’s openly supported groups that promote the wanton killing of police officers. One would assume that division is again the underlying purpose. Respect of Americans for Americans is as low as I can remember.

Many people were enraged to see the US President showing respect and deference to foreign leaders, in particular the King of Saudi Arabia. Just to make sure I can get hate mail from all sides, I side with the President on this one. When a leader visits a foreign country, it is proper to show respect and honor to the leader of that country as is customary there. We expect that when foreign leaders visit here, and when our leader is the foreigner he should offer the same show of respect. It’s no different than what we would do on ships, where prior to entering a port we would hoist to the place of honor the flag of the host country. Simple respect. He who won’t show respect, deserves none. It seems to come as a surprise to those that don’t travel outside the US, how absolutely arrogant Americans are seen as being throughout the world.

The Nobel Prize Committee, one would assume, is likely embarrassed at having given Obama the Nobel Peace Prize prior to doing anything. As it turns out, he’s been anything but a peace President. He’s continued, and expanded upon, the disastrous policies of the Bush administration in the Middle East. Under Bush/Obama
policies of promoting the overthrow of relatively stable, secular governments, many countries in that area have disintegrated into chaos. Given Obama’s formative time spent in Islam, and among domestic American terrorists, and hate spouting “churches” I suppose it’s not surprising that he has done much to strengthen Islamic terrorist organizations. As Bush gave opportunity Al Qaeda, Obama has given opportunity to ISIS, in addition to other groups. Now, where once women could get an education and had some opportunities, they have none. Now where Christians and others could worship, they can’t. To Obama’s credit, when he saw there was no public support for his desire to spread the “Arab Spring” to Syria, he has resisted the urgings of warmongers like John McCain, Hillary Clinton, Lindsey Graham and others to declare a no-fly zone over the sovereign country of Syria and begin shooting down Syrian and Russian planes. However, we arm and support “rebels” “freedom fighters” “terrorists” (what you call them depends on the angle you look at them, but they’re pretty much the same). Then we attack those groups. Then we criticize and threaten those that are attacking those we claim to be fighting. What a nutty mess! Again, throughout the world for the last 12-14 years at least, the US is seen as the biggest threat to world peace.

Under this administration, we have worked to overthrow the democratically elected government of Ukraine, and then blamed Russia when they reacted as they did. We certainly would have reacted similarly if Russia had worked to place a decidedly anti-US government in Canada, would we not? Also, under Obama we have placed troops on the Russian border in the Baltics. And then he tries to paint the Russians as aggressors?

Because Obama desires for all of us to be free from gun violence, he’s wanted to impose heavy gun control laws on all of us similar to those in the peaceful confines of Chicago. Thank goodness, he failed at that point. While wanting all of us peons to be disarmed, his administration provided weapons to Mexican drug cartels, which used them to kill citizens of both countries. That was a very shameful episode.

Under Obama we’ve seen the beginning of the end of 65 years of disastrous policy regarding Cuba. Kudos and a big thank you from me on that one.

While I am definitely in the camp of wanting to make it easier for good people to immigrate into our country, I think Obama is dead wrong to want to allow mass immigration from countries harboring terrorists who want to kill us. Islamists have been very clear in their desire to move into western countries and instill Sharia Law, which incompatible with our values. I realize that he probably favors Islam over Christianity, and he was elected twice with people knowing that, but America became great under the auspices of Christianity. Those values have served us well.

Under Bush, the federal debt grew more than under all prior administrations combined. It was horrifyingly incompetent. Unfortunately, Obama was not to be outdone. Under the Obama administration the debt has grown more than all prior administrations combined … including Bush’s. At this point we may be beyond the point of no return for our financial instability. That’s a scary thought. Under Obama the ranks of welfare recipients have swelled greatly, the wellbeing of almost all groups of people has deteriorated, but especially for the inner-city blacks. There has been some growth in the economy, but it’s been very anemic, and almost all benefit has gone to the very top tier. Real average wages have continued to be stagnant or declining. Unemployment, as it used to be calculated, and under-employment has soared, some due to things tied to the ACA, and some to other factors. Regulations, which choke the economy and send companies overseas, have continued to grow at an alarming rate. Overall, economically, the last two presidencies have been very damaging. Makes one long for the days of Bill and Newt.

Anyway, I think Obama has done some good things, but overall I think he’s got to rank down near the bottom as far as service to the country during his Presidency. The US is a more dangerous place domestically than eight years ago. The US seems at higher risk of war and more at odds with our most powerful contenders than eight years ago. The US is in far worse shape financially than eight years ago. The US is more divided in almost every conceivable way than it was eight years ago. The blame for all this can NOT be laid entirely at the feet of Mr. Obama, but he’s done precious little to help. Will his successor do any better? Can he? Only time will tell.