

# *Where's San Angelo's Donald Trump?*

*...election time is upon us...*

*by Kat Rowoldt*

*A little bit of...*

[MLK Day](#)

[Hidden Figures](#)

[Black Lives Matter](#)

[Black Conservatives](#)

[Trump Administration](#)

[85th Legislative Session in Austin](#)

[City Council Election in May](#)

[STRs - Short Term Rentals](#)

[Where's Our Donald Trump?](#)



What an interesting week awaits us! Today, we celebrate Martin Luther King Day, the man who is remembered for his immortal words, "I have a dream!" We also begin the final five days of America's first black President and end with the inauguration of America's first billionaire businessman to lead our country.

One of the best movies in theatres today is HIDDEN FIGURES, the true story of human computers who worked at NASA and were vital parts of successfully launching our space program. Who knew our space program's success was due to a handful of black women who were incredible mathematicians/statisticians. What an incredible asset they were to our country. (It's a must see movie, if you haven't.) Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream of one day seeing a country where all citizens are treated equal, working together to accomplish the good for everyone, and making America a wonderful God-fearing country. While he was speaking those words, Katherine G. Johnson and other black women were working at NASA to accomplish the incredible dream of putting a man into space and on the moon, while breaking through racial and gender barriers. Segregation was alive and well then, along with the mindset that women were only good for making babies and keeping house, but that reality soon began disappearing with each new step of humans working and living life together.

Most of us have not given much thought to racial inequality in years. If anything, now we are beginning to realize "affirmative action" has been taken to the extreme and is denying rights to people who are more qualified for a job, or being accepted into prestigious universities.

Suddenly, we began seeing a President who seemed to be creating more racial division than we ever dreamed could happen in our country. Why would President Obama want to take us back 50-60 years to a time when hate prevailed?

Ferguson erupted and quickly we found a new movement of hate being birthed against police officers. Out of it, Black Lives Matter was born. Unknown to most, the BLM movement was hijacked from the black community by the Muslim Brotherhood. It fit perfectly into their plans. But that's a story for another day.

Regardless, Black Lives Matter became the trending news. The racial agitators began attaching themselves to the movement, the violence heightened, businesses and communities were being burned out, and there was a shift in our social discourse.

As much as the media tried to tell us otherwise, there was a huge ground-swell of support for change in our country. The most unlikely candidate, a man who many believed was just jumping into the race for publicity, began to gain traction. He developed his message, and he won the Presidential Election. Out of the dust, the mud-slinging, and name calling muck of the election process, it became clear Americans were fed-up with how things were going. We were ready for change. People who had never voted in their lives registered to vote - living breathing voters, that is.

The black community was torn. Black conservatives were and are generally rejected by the black community at large. It's a perplexing situation, yet really rather clear. One mindset has broken free from government dependency and moved forward to create their own American dream, while the other is trapped in the mindset of staying dependent on government freebies.

A whole generation of kids who grew up together, played together, laughed together, intermarried, are now being told they are to hate one another. Classmates who never experienced inequality among themselves, are now being told they should not trust each other. A few days ago I heard a discussion about "white folks" having to pay reparations to blacks. When will we let go of the mistakes of the past, take pride in overcoming them, and move forward? Why should my generation, or my kid's, pay a debt we never owed? What entitles a person who has black skin to get monies when they may not be the descendants of slaves in America, but may be descendants of black slave owners or simply immigrants? My husband's family didn't even move to America until the 1900's.

There is a lot of work to be done to restore our damaged country to greatness, to stop the craziness, to regain our global position and build respect for one

another back into our social structure. We must do this! Americans are placing a lot of hope in Trump and his administration to reset the course from what we have been on for too many years. May God bless their efforts.

Last week the legislative session kicked off in Austin. We did not get a "Donald Trump" to challenge the status quo, instead we got the status quo reinstated. Joe Straus will continue to be the Speaker of the House. His track record, and those of his minions, will continue to work hard against the conservative movement in our state. Numerous family value issues will be challenged once again. It is going to require more and more citizen involvement to push through any change against this formidable barrier.

Locally, we are preparing for yet another election for positions on the City Council. This will be the first election for a full four-year seat. In visiting with several people who would have considered running for office, that four-year term length killed the possibility of them "doing their civic duty." David Nowlin, one who has shown much interest in running again for mayor, discovered four years is a long time when looking at how it would impact his daughter's last four years of school at home.

The positions that will be open are: Mayor - Dwain Morrison, SMD 2 - Marty Self, SMD 4 - Lucy Gonzales, and SMD 6 - Charlotte Farmer. This will be a major election for San Angelo. It will influence how our city will operate for years to come. Their decisions will impact our community in numerous ways. If we lack conservative leaders in these key positions, spending may end up totally out of control. We are there now - and it's scary to think it could actually become much worse.

I have been sitting in on City Council meetings since 2013. I've missed only a few meetings due to being on the road for business. I can attest it's not a spectators sport. I can also verify there are no citizens attending the meetings to keep the council accountable. Citizens show up when there is something on the agenda that directly affects them. They miss 99.9% of the issues that affect them every day - especially their pocket books.

You can tell when election season is rolling around because a new face or two will pop up at the meetings. These are the people who are considering running for office. Many of them do not stick around for the complete session or manage to make them all even during the election cycle. Due to work, some simply cannot be there, so they watch it on TV. But there is a big difference between watching it on TV and actually attending the meeting live - seeing who is there - feeling the tension - interacting with the Council - and working up the courage to go to the mic to speak.

Our hot topic this week at City Council will be STRs - Short Term Rentals. I chose to not take a side in this issue because as a former real estate broker, I have one opinion, and as a user of AirBNB for business, I have another. BUT...the town hall meeting that Councilman Bill Richardson held last Thursday night pushed me off my neutral stance.

I won't rehash the meeting, or rerun the discussions, but a couple of things finally hit home. As a San Angeloan, as a tax-paying citizen of this community, and as a woman who travels a lot, I have something to say on this subject.

As I thought about my experiences as an AirBNB customer, I realized something that was especially important to me, when I book a place to stay. I want the owner of the property to be there; to live on the property. This is a safety issue for me. So where I choose to stay is more closely aligned with a bed and breakfast type of property - though they do not offer breakfast.

As I have listened to many people speak at various meetings about the problems they have encountered with STRs being next to them, I realized the difference that not having the owner on site was having on those around them. OK - call me a bit slow, but I was caught up in the belief that property owners have the right to do with their properties as they choose. Now I see how that is taking away the rights of others in doing so.

To flip the coin to another example, we see the very same thing in numerous other ways. Schools won't allow prayer, but they now are allow Muslims to have a prayer room(s) - taking away rights from one and giving special privileges to another. That's exactly what the City Staff is proposing with this ordinance.

If this ordinance passes, whoever gets approved as an STR will have special rights which their neighbors will no longer have. The five-hundred-foot radius around the STR will block their neighbors from being able to have the same rights as the STR property. That's so wrong.

Joe Hyde, San Angelo LIVE, was suggesting homeowners apply to be STRs so they can protect their property from having an STR located near them. That's deceptive and just wrong.

Allowing any of our citizens to have special rights while taking away those same rights from others is discrimination and unethical. Mayor Morrison was emotionally moved to being "for" this ordinance because of a senior citizen's hardship story and how she needed that income to survive. Hurting her neighbors to benefit her isn't right. Her unexpected hardship isn't easy either. But...if she no longer intends to live in the property, she can sell it and live on the income from the property. She could also live there and operate it as a bed

& breakfast if it can be licensed that way or lease it out long term. There are other options that would not hurt her neighbors. Being an STR is not her only option.

People can lease their homes long term or operate bed & breakfast facilities within their homes. Both options are legal in San Angelo and have not been an issue. What has become an issue is turning a property in the middle of a neighborhood into a commercial venture. That was not what the neighborhood association or zoning ordinances allowed when people purchased their homes.

STRs are not "keeping up" with the times. STRs are a trend today that are receiving pushback in many communities. If you want a commercial motel, buy one.

So where is our Donald Trump? San Angelo needs a strong leader to step forward and guide us onto a better track for success. We have seen an uptick in crime over the last several years. Most of us want to return to our peaceful community that lacked the ugliness of big cities. On the City Council agenda, too, is a discussion to bring Interstate 27 through San Angelo, part of the Ports-to-Plains project. Can you imagine the crime-rate when we get a big highway for the transport of drugs, illegals and human trafficking through our city? Lord help us.

We will have enough growth with the coming return of the oil boom. The diversity our forefathers set in motion for our city: education, medical center, etc., have proven to keep San Angelo steady in the cross-hairs of growth, downturns, and booms. I, for one, would like to maintain what we all love about San Angelo, and not position ourselves for drastic destructive change that comes with every Interstate highway. Just ask the police their thoughts.

That's enough for now. Let me know if you have a Donald Trump in mind who might run for office. I'd like to meet Donald/Donna and hear what they have to say.

Happy New Year! Now let's get to work and capitalize on the blessings we have from the good Lord above.

Until Next Time....

*Kat Rowoldt*

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