Opinion

My social media following does not represent my beliefs

By LILLIAN CURTIN
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By now, if someone questions my beliefs, morals or political stance, they'd just have to go read the 50 plus pieces that I've published on The Chronicle. Half of which are political pieces.

Yes. I follow multiple members of the Trump administration on social media.

No. I do not support them.

The two do not correlate as much as people think.

Time and time again, I see people post on TikTok about how "disappointed" they are that their favorite celebrity is following someone they don't like.

Or they go on to boast about how they unfollowed and unfriended people because their follower list says they followed President Donald Trump.

Following a certain candidate on social media does not mean that you support them. I see absolutely nothing wrong with following people from all over the political spectrum. In fact, I highly encourage it.

Following the president and his administration allows me to get the stupidity straight from the source. Especially as a student journalist who runs this Opinion section, it's material in the palm of my hand.

If someone comes up to me and says, "Did you see what the president just said on Instagram?" I will often believe it, because, well, this man doesn't exactly have much of a filter. Of course, I fact-check anyway. So, if I'm following him, it's going to come up on my feed, and I'll be able to see the latest horrendous updates for myself quicker.

It's not about support, it's about staying up to date with politics. It sounds ridiculous. But with so much on social media, it's realistic that some people get their information this way.

Yes, I watch the news and can get the information that way too. I don't support social media being the main source.

I'm specifically referring to posts made by Trump, most of which don't even get discussed, no matter how ridiculous they are. If I have the opportunity to witness firsthand, why wouldn't I?

Also, my focus in politics is literally political communications. That means analyzing how candidates and politicians use media.

Do you think I want to be following any of them? No, absolutely not. I would love it if my feed were memes and hopecore. However, I decided to go to school for politics in 2023. So, I signed away any flicker of joy on my social media the minute I decided to dedicate my life to politics — specifically political communications.

I understand if you don't know the person who is following Trump, you may just assume the worst. But I swear to all things holy if I hear that someone unfollowed me because they saw that I followed someone like Trump, I might lose what's left of my sanity. Because if you know me, you know that's not the case.

How are you going to base your whole judgment on someone based on the following list? If it were me being unfollowed, they'd just have to Google my name, and they'd see where I stand politically.

I understand liking posts being a bit more problematic. But at the same time, I don't want a judgment being made about my morality because I double-clicked out of habit.

Following politicians that you don't agree with or hate is actually better if you want to debate or critique them. So let's stop judging morality and political stances based on the following list.



ILLUSTRATION BY KATERINA PARIZKOVA

Whitney Leavitt doesn't deserve her fame

By ADRIANA CERBONE AND WILLOW SEIBOLD

On Feb. 2, reality TV star Whitney Leavitt, known for MomTok and "Secret Lives of Mormon Wives" ("SLOMW"), made her Broadway debut as Roxie Hart in the musical "Chicago." A few months prior, she was a contestant on season 34 of "Dancing with the Stars ("DWTS")." But her fame does not end there.

Leavitt's rise to fame came from starring in three seasons of "SLOMW" with a fourth coming soon, where she was a part of MomTok. MomTok is a TikTok community of Mormon mothers living in Utah. The question is, does she deserve all the fame and love she has received?

"Dancing With the Stars" announced that it would select one member of MomTok to appear on the show on July 1 of last year. All the moms were very excited about this opportunity, but Leavitt ruined it for them. She admitted to only going on season three of "SLOMW" to win her spot.

It's disgusting to use the show that made you famous for more clout. She used her fame to take opportunities away from her friends, even though she had years of dance experience.

Leavitt studied dance and was seen at many different ballroom competitions.

Not only did she have dance experience, but she was partnered with Mark Ballas, a three-time Mirrorball champion. On top of all this, she laughed and covered her mouth when her MomTok co-star Jen Affleck was eliminated from the show.

For dedication night on "DWTS," she decided to dedicate the dance to her husband, Connor Leavitt, as the couple had gone through infidelity issues and remain together. This took away from the more meaningful dedications, such as Robert Irwin, who dedicated his dance to his late father, wildlife conservationist and zookeeper Steve Irwin, who passed away when he was young.

We should not be uplifting someone who acts this way and takes away from others.

On "SLOMW," she is portrayed as the mean girl who is unlikable, using her friends to get more clout and consistently bringing her MomTok group down to push herself up. We aren't completely sure how much of her true character is shown online or if it is all just an act.

People argue she is consistently put into situations to make herself look like the bad guy, but it could just be that it's a cover-up for her true nature.

We don't know how much the show is edited or what is real, but we do know that she used the show that made her famous for more fame and laughed at a friend's elimination.

Leavitt believes that she is better than all her peers and always expects their attention. She constantly says that MomTok would be nothing without her and she is the backbone of the group, though it's clear she causes more problems than solutions when the friends are together.

She would often get angry when the conversation shifted away from her, showing major attention-seeking behavior.

After many low moments in season one of "SLOMW," Leavitt aimed to redeem herself in recent seasons. She was able to return to the group, but several relationships were strained due to past tensions.

Leaving group chats and refusing to attend events that her castmates/friends were putting on is not something that a true friend would do. By intentionally excluding herself from events, she shifted the focus from those in the spotlight to herself.

She used her self-isolation to play the victim in the situation and hopefully win over the hearts of her audience. Some fell for it.

Many of the moments of Leavitt portraying herself as a villain in the show could be seen as "protecting her peace," but there is so much more to that.

These behaviors cannot be entirely fabricated. It's a conscious decision not to attend an important milestone for a friend in hopes of making others reach out to her.

Her ability to find success outside of "SLOMW" stemmed from these points of exclusion and from being made an outsider, which allowed her to be remembered in more significant ways. Maybe this is all a power play? Maybe it's just pettiness. Regardless, she has prospered, whether she deserved it or not.

Leavitt got to the top, but at what cost?



ILLUSTRATION BY LILIANA MIRABELLA