



# In heated political times, local's books promote message of peace

By Nick Carroll  
The Citizen

Like many Americans, Berlin resident Bob Dornfried is saddened to see how politically polarized the country has become in recent years. And he's doing his part to bridge the divide.

The longtime cartoonist has produced two books; both taking a whimsical look at the current political climate, while promoting a message of love and understanding.

"I've been through decades of elections - with Reagan in 1980 as my first - and I was dismayed at the divisiveness of the 2016 presidential election, which continued into Trump's presidency," Dornfried said.

"But the hatred and demonizing leading up to the 2018 elections was too much ... We were living in a society of hate and I wanted to send a message about that."

In Dornfried's "What to do in Orangutan Zoo," which he wrote, illustrated and self-



Dornfried

published, readers encounter such characters as President O'Llama, Hillary Clintuna, Kan-Yak West, Nancy Peloseagull and Kiwi Anne Conway.

The star of the book, however, is Orangutan - depicting President Trump - who urges the quarreling animals to set aside their differences for the benefit of their zoo home.

"Part of the objective was to get parents and kids to read the book, hopefully together," Dornfried said. "Kids respond to animals and it made sense with Democrat donkeys, Republican elephants, and the flexibility to represent public figures as animal derivatives. And lastly, one of the derogatory terms used against the president was an orange orangutan, so it all came together using animals and a zoo."

published, readers encounter such characters as President O'Llama, Hillary Clintuna, Kan-Yak West,

While the book portrays the Trump character in a favorable light, Dornfried's personal politics are not cut and dry. He describes himself as a lifelong Democrat, a "middle-of-the-road moderate."

"Before I would wear a MAGA hat. I would wear a hat with an American flag on it," Dornfried said.

"But there are things (Trump) is doing that I support. Not everything. His Twitter feed sometimes gets dicey."

When it comes to reader feedback, Dornfried said Trump supporters have had the most positive reaction to "What to do in Orangutan Zoo."

Melania Trump was sent a copy, and soon after, a note from the first lady arrived at the Dornfried home. In it, she stated, in part: "Thank you for the thoughtful gift. I am so glad that we share a passion for the well-being of our Nation's children."

Buoyed by the feedback he received from Trump fans, Dornfried followed up "What to do in Orangutan Zoo," with another 24-page animal-themed book, "Proud to be a Trumpanzee."

In this work, Dornfried aimed to explain why a great many citizens support the president, despite his perceived shortcomings.

Dornfried said he was intrigued by "the supposed terrible people - Trump supporters - the so-called deplorables, with all those nasty labels. And they are who inspired me to write 'Proud to be a Trumpanzee.'"

Currently, Dornfried is working on a third book about American politics: "Livid Lethal Lefty vs. Rowdy Rebellious Righty." He said Democrats will appreciate this one.

In the end, Dornfried hopes the message people take away from his books is: Love always wins.

"Recognize we are Americans before we are Democrats and Republicans or liberals and conservatives. Treat each other with dignity and be open-minded when listening and passionate when explaining your point of view," he said.

"I don't take the issues that face Americans lightly or pretend that we don't have problems as Americans - we do. But let's be civil and respectful to each other."

*Dornfried's books can be purchased online at [orangutanzoo.com](http://orangutanzoo.com).*