The Alleged News

_The American Nightmare_

Dare to float a proposal in to- day's marketplace of ideas that contradicts Republican dogma, and you will be accused of waging class warfare. There's a reason for that — it's called projection.

As their approval ratings cra- ter and jingoism debate how many election cycles the Party can withstand before it succumbs to the inevitable and retreats to a redoubt in the Old Confederacy, the GOP is confronting a question that Sherman did to Georgia: wagging one last, savage campaign to destroy what's left of the middle class. And they'll call it saving the nation.

**Disserve With a Smile**

The Federal minimum wage law is now 75 years old. Adjusted for inflation, the minimum wage today — $7.25 an hour — is the same as it was 63 years ago.

That's a dismal picture but it could be worse — and it was, during the Reagan and Bush #4 Administrations.

For nearly thirty years, from the mid-1950s until 1980, the mini- mum wage ran about $2 infla- tion-adjusted dollars higher than its current value. The nation never had it so good.

Then, during the administration of the affable old Gipper, inflation steadily lowered the value of the dollar. With the cutback in defense, a minimum wage workers watched their pay drop by one-third.

A slightly less-dramatic ero- sion occurred under the admin- istration of Bush the Lesser, un- til Congress passed a three-stage increase in 2007. Eighty-two House Republicans voted for the bill, which just goes to show how long five years can be in politics. These days they'll be drummed out of the party as Socialists.

Want SNAP With Those Fries? Late last month labor activ- ists released a tape recording of McDonald's corporate help line instructing a ten-year company employee how to apply for food stamps, heating assistance, and Medicaid.

A study released October 15th by the Labor Center at UC Berkeley showed that "more than half (52 percent) of the families of front-line fast-food workers are enrolled in one or more public programs, compared to 25 per- cent of the workforce as a whole — and the 'cost of public assistance to families of workers in the fast- food industry is nearly $7 billion per year.'

The GOP's Mandatory Diet Not Dead Enough Yet! It's not enough that Obama's food stamp increase will end — Republicans want to cut the program by another $40 billion over the next decade. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analyzed the effects this would "deny SNAP to approximately 3.8 million low-income people in

The Fortnightly Rant

Armistice Day Plus 95

Maine and New Hampshire are connected once again, thanks to the New Memorial Bridge; pedestrians can stroll or ride or drive with ease across the mighty and turbu- lent Penacook. The bronze eagle and accompa- nying plaque from the old bridge have been mounted on the new south- ern portal — exquisite pieces of artwork bridging our mundane present to more elegant days early in the last century.

Rounding out this profusion of civic propriety one hundred yards southwest of the magnificent old bronze eagle, a new Veterans Mem- orial Circle has been construct- ed at no cost to the City of Port- mouth or its resident veterans. The timing could not be better: just ten days from now we'll ob- serve what was used to be called Ar- mistice Day, commemorating the end of the War to End All Wars.

What could possibly be wrong with this picture?

That's the job of the journalist, now, isn't it — looking for flies in the ointment?

**Regarding This Gift Horse…**

The city's newest veterans' me- morial was first proposed at a City Council meeting on April 2, 2012. Mayor Eric Spear noted that a letter had been received from Attorney James Nocas, Jr. informing the Council. James and Laurie Teetzel were pledging $25,000 towards its construction. Councilor Anthony Coviello moved that the letter be referred to Art-Speak, the City's art com- mission, for a report back. The

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The Alleged News

_The New Hampshire Gazette_

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The Alleged News

 вот page two
Aware of the sensitive feelings of our corporate overlords, the SEC rule ‘would not prescribe a specific methodology for companies to use in calculating a ‘pay ratio.’ Instead, companies would have the flexibility to determine the median annual total compensation of its employees in a way that suits its particular circumstances’— so that its marketing geniuses could spin the results in the least-damaging way possible.

Dissenting Republican Commissioner Michael Piwowar, quoted by Reuters, said of the vote, “Proponents have acknowledged the sole objective of the pay ratio is to shame CEOs, but the shame from this rule should not be put on CEOs — it should be put on the five of us. Shame on us for putting special interests ahead of investors.”

Taxes Are For Little People
On October 22nd, USA Today reported that American corporate CEOs scored an average pay raise of 8.5 percent last year. A report published two days in the same paper helped explain why: 57 companies in the S&P — nearly one in nine — “have found ways to pay effective tax rates of zero.”

Meanwhile, down amongst the proles, CNN reported on October 23rd that “34 percent of Americans plan to work until they’re at least 80 — that’s up from 25 percent in 2011 and 30 percent last year. An even larger percentage, 37 percent, said they’ll never retire and plan either to work until they get too sick or die ….”

The Grand Sellout
For the past thirty-five years Republicans have droned on about Federal deficit spending, even as they demanded more tax cuts for the wealthy and waged war on credit. During the last four or five years that drone has been overlaid with the shrieking of Tea Party hysterics. The late and unlamented government shutdown represented the breaking of that budget fever. Unfortunately it seems to be a chronic ailment; like malaria, it will return.

According to Standard & Poor’s, the shutdown sucked $24 billion out of the U.S. economy and cost 120,000 people their jobs — but that was just the shutdown. A report by Macroeconomic Advisers for the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, gauging the cumulative effects of Congressional battles over the budget since 2010, estimates the cost at $700 billion.

By carefully ignoring the real causes of our economic woes, Republicans have diverted attention to Social Security, pronounced it guilty, and maneuvered it into the general vicinity of the chopping block. Soon a House/Senate conference committee will sit down and pretend they can come up with a budget agreement by mid-December. In the meantime, they are whetting their ax and eying what’s left of the nation’s safety net.

At least one member of that committee knows what’s going on: Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT). Last May he said of the latest report from the Social Security trustees, “[this] confirms what many of us have known, that Social Security is not ‘going broke,’ that it can pay every benefit owed to every eligible American for the next 20 years, and that after 2033 there is enough in reserve to pay three-quarters of future benefits.

“Our job now is to make sure Social Security is strong not just for 20 years but for generations to come. The best way to do that is not to cut Social Security cost-of-living adjustments as Republicans and President Obama have proposed, but to do what Obama called for as a candidate in 2008. We must lift the cap on Social Security payroll taxes and make the wealthy contribute the same percentage of their income as other workers. Today, someone making $10 million a year contributes the same amount of money as someone making $113,700. That is absurd.”

In 1954, Dwight Eisenhower wrote to his brother Edgar, “Should any political party attempt to abolish Social Security,
unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history. There is a tiny splinter group, of course, that believes you can do these things. Among them are H. L. Hunt (you possibly know his background), a few other Texas oil millionaires, and an occasional politician or businessman from other areas. Their number is negligible and they are stupid.”

Oh, for the good old days ….

Hello? Department of Justice?

Charlie Pierce, who blogs at Esquire.com/blogs/politics, frequently quotes little bits from James Madison. On Tuesday he unearthed this gem: “A political system that does not provide for a peaceable and authoritative termination of occurring controversies, would not be more than the shadow of a government; the object and end of a real government being, the substitution of law and violence.”

So do we have a government, or just the shadow of one? According to Madison, that depends on whether we have a way to induce Republicans peaceably and authoritatively to cut the &#### and allow the government to do its job.

Marc Belisle, who calls himself a “writer, progressive activist, English writing teacher and an opinionated smart-aleck,” believes that Title 18 U.S. Code, Section 2384 provides the means to terminate the present controversies:

Under the heading, “Seditious Conspiracy,” it reads in part, “If two or more persons … conspire to … by force … prevent, hinder, or delay the execution of any law of the United States … they shall each be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than twenty years, or both.”

Arguing that “extortion falls under the legal definition of ‘force,’” Belisle has created an online petition (petitions.moveon.org/lgm/arrest-and-try-haste) to arrest and try the House’s GOP leadership for seditious conspiracy.

“The House GOP leadership’s use of the Hastert Rule and H. Res 368 to shut down the government and threaten the U.S. economy with default is an attempt to extort the United States government into altering or abolishing the Affordable Care Act, and thus, is self-evidently a seditious conspiracy. Arrest the perpetrators in Congress immediately and bring them to justice.”

To be delivered to the House of Representatives, the Senate, and President Barack Obama, the petition currently has 55,045 signatures. Correction: 55,046.

Sacrifices of War

With so much local attention devoted to memorials right now, and Veterans Day coming soon, we’d be remiss not to mention the remarkable Maine Sailors and Soldiers Memorial in John Paul Jones Park in Kittery. As Jennifer Wingate notes in a 2008 article in Woman’s Art Journal, the monument is “[d]ifficult to view properly from the road,” but “comes into better focus from within the confines of the grassy common.” Those who park and approach the Memorial will be well rewarded, full of grace and dignity, it is also full of surprises.

Completed in 1926, just six years after the Palmer Raids rounded up thousands of suspect Bolsheviks for deportation, including seven in Portsmouth, the state-funded monument was created by Bashka Paeff, a young, Russian-born woman. Some memorials openly glorify war, others strive to express respect for the honor of those who have served. This one does neither. Depicting a mother attempting to shield her child from its chaos and destruction, with two drowned men at her feet, it prompts a question that is too rarely asked: to what purpose do we put those noble sacrifices made on our behalf?

R.I.P. Col. Robert Rheault

Col. Robert Rheault died in Owls Head, ME on October 16th at the age of 87. He commanded the U.S. Army’s Fifth Special Forces Group in Vietnam for three months in 1969. He was relieved of command and court martialed following the “termination with extreme prejudice” of Chu Van Thai Khac, a Cambodian double agent. Charges were later dropped because the CIA refused to provide witnesses. Rheault then retired from the Army with 23 years of service. He became an instructor and, eventually, acting president of the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School in Rockland, ME, where he developed a program to work with veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In his obituary in the Boston Globe, his son Robert said, “Time and again we find that our nation’s warriors come back and become advocates for peace.”

Support the Troops, Texas Style

Meanwhile, in Texas, KRIS-TV asked Rep. Blake Farenthold, a Republican representing the 27th Congressional District, how he would justify the recent government shutdown to retired veterans who were on the verge of losing their disability checks.

Farenthold explained, “I feel like my mandate when I was elected was to go reduce the size of government, lower taxes, and increase freedom, and freedom isn’t free, and sometimes you have to make a small sacrifice to move forward with what you’re after.”

Half a mile north of Portsmouth’s new Veterans Memorial Circle, in Kittery’s John Paul Jones Park is one of the nation’s most striking, controversial, and thought-provoking war memorials: Bashka Paeff’s Sacrifices of War.
White Mountains Not For Sale

To the Editor:

The proposed Northern Pass Project has had me concerned all along because its design calls for placing a 180 mile span, comprised of steel towers up to 155 feet tall, bearing high-powered transmission lines, across the face of New Hampshire, including an 11-mile stretch through our beloved New Hampshire White Mountain National Forest. However, I vowed to reserve judgment on which views I would be willing to compromise until I hiked to the summit of all 48 of the 4,000’ plus peaks in New Hampshire to provide witness. I truly recognize that we must, for vital national security and environmental protection reasons, wear ourselves of our long, dangerous addiction to fossil fuels, especially those obtained from oil-rich Middle Eastern countries ruled by tyrannical dictators and monarchs. Admittedly the only way to achieve this critical goal is via the development of diverse, affordable alternative renewable energy sources, to include hydroelectric power. However, I would find it bitterly repugnant to support these Northern Pass executives who wish to “borrow” and alter our publically-owned resources, to put on a backpack and pair of hiking boots to hike the Whites so they can feel the same sense of awe and decreased sense of self-importance and materialistic de- sires.

Wayne H. Merritt
Dover, NH

Jim Spline for Council

To the Editor:

Portsmouth has been through a lot of changes these last few years. I live in New Castle, but Portsmouth, which I represented in the New Hampshire State Senate for 14 years, and where I spend a lot of my time and have a lot of friends, has always been part of my neighborhood too. What Portsmouth needs is someone who has been involved in politics long enough to know how to bring people together to get things done for the common good of all. One of those is my friend Jim Spline, and the city I so love now has the opportunity to put him to work for that common good. Jim uniquely showed his ability to bring people together around an important cause by his leadership as a state legislator in passing the New Hampshire gay marriage law four years ago, and helping to defeat efforts to repeal it since then. It was an issue of great concern to me. He and I worked together through the years fighting for gay equality. While in the Senate, I helped lead the effort in the late 1990s to end discrimination in services, housing and employ- ment. Ours was just the 11th state to adopt such a law, and even to day only half the states have such protections. When Jim Spline decided to introduce a gay marriage bill in 2009, I met much resistance, even from supporters of equality who felt that the time wasn’t right yet. But he spent months forging ahead, putting together a coalition bridging parties and political views to do the right thing. Passage of the bill he sponsored surprised a lot of people, and it wouldn’t have gotten to Govern- nor’s Lynch’s desk for his signa- ture if Jim hadn’t been the first intro- ducing the bill at a time that many thought it couldn’t be done, and bringing people together to do what some felt was impossible back then. Many other leaders like Sen. Martha Fuller Clark, Speaker Terie Norelli, and area legislators helped lead the effort, and Jim was in the front of making it happen sooner rather than later.

Marriage equality and the fight for diversity is important to me. Part of that comes from the fact that my brother has been in a committed relationship for over 30 years, and discrimination against my brother is unacceptable to me. To me, the cause is personal. Jim and I worked to- gether to end what had been legal discrimination based on perceived sexual orientation and because of those efforts our state has been one of the leaders in this national human rights cause — and that fight is not yet done.

Jim is an outstanding public servant, who knows how to work well with all, and gets things done. I ask my friends to vote for Jim Spline as one of nine choices for City Council on November 5th. Portsmouth has a lot of issues, like too-tall buildings and out-of- match development, and having proven politicians who can bring people to work together on im- portant matters is vital.

Thanks Jim, for running!
Burt Cohen
New Castle, NH

Fight Voter Suppression

To the Editor:

There are other elections in Portsmouth on November 5 besides City Council, School Board, and Police and Fire Commissions. I refer to the elections for Ward Moderator, Clerk, Selectmen and Registrar, as well as for Registrar at Large. These are the officials who actually conduct our elections.

These are the only partisan races where candidates are identified as either Democrats or Republicans. I urge the voters of Portsmouth to vote for the Democratic candi- dates.

Party identification is important now because the Republican Par- ty nationally for the last few years has been carrying out a campaign of voter suppression, making it harder for people to vote. On the other hand, we Democrats en- courage people to register to vote and participate in our democracy. Below are the Democratic candi- dates. They are all good people committed to continuing Port- mouths tradition of clean, fair and accurate elections. I ask that you vote for them.

Registrar at Large: Barbara Ward
Ward 1: Moderator: Petra Pan- telakos-Barstow; Clerk: Joseph Pantelakos; Selectees: Nancy Brown, Joann R. Wyckoff, John Penney; Registrar: Penny Reynolds.
Ward 2: Moderator: Susan Denenberg; Clerk: Rebecca Mc- Beath; Selectees: Diane Stra- dling, Leslie McCarty, William McClure; Registrar: Candace Thayer.
Ward 3: Moderator: Raymond F. Mullally; Clerk: Catherine Blanchard Cosgrove; Selectees: Shirley Mullaly, Deborah Di- Franco, Jennifer Fahey; Registrar: Angelyne Hinson.

Voters are encouraged to visit Michael Gerald W. Ward; Clerk: Rahul Swiprasad; Selectees: Sharon Nichols, Pa- tricia Rowe, Matthew Hancock; Registrar: Marcia Main.
Ward 5: Moderator: Susan Hubbard; Clerk: Marsha Robin- son; Selectees: Nancy Gross- man, Mary Lou McElhawn, Brian Walder; Registrar: Sherwood R. Spelke.

Larry Drake
Chair, Portsmouth Democratic Committee
Portsmouth, NH

Reps Show True Colors

To the Editor:

Republicans like to brag about how they are “fiscally conserva- tive,” support “job creators,” and generally are good stewards of the economy. Let’s see how these boasts stack up with the recent Federal government shutdown. To review, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives shut down the government for 16 days last month in a futile effort to block implementation of the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”). According to the ratings agency, Standard and Poor’s, the shut- down cost the national economy $24 billion. Another organization, Moody’s Analytics, estimated the...
And Other Correspondence

lost economic growth at $23 billion. Congressional Republicans have thus demonstrated that they are absolutely irresponsible and cannot be trusted to govern effectively. I just wonder, after all is said and done, why anyone ever vote for a Republican again? Joan Jacobs
Portsmouth, NH

LFOD Alliance on Schoolcraft
To the Editor:
Last month’s decision by the New Hampshire Executive Council to deny a pardon for Thomas Schoolcraft, who was convicted of committing a series of burglaries nine years ago at the age of 19, reveals a fundamental problem with our laws on the books, which is the irrational minority can undo a law intended to serve the disadvantaged, and doing it dishonestly, is an act that no one should do.

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ANTIGUES

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Rebecca Rile, Gary Patton and Brendan Smith, n/a
Abigail Carroll, n/a
Thomas G. Malley, n/a
Kim Befall, n/a
Toni Jones, n/a
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The New Hampshire Gazette  - Page 5
Friday, November 1, 2013

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On page six

More Hate Mail, &c.

on page six

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Regret and Remembrance

by William Marvel

New England’s autumn has a decidedly bittersweet edge, with a hint of doom hovering behind its brilliant colors — especially for those who dread the long Yankee winters. That may contribute to the allure of old cemeteries at the height of fall foliage, where we can speculate on the hidden meaning of epitaphs and the relationships that once existed between those who now lie beneath the sod. There is a touch of comfort in the discovery that James and Polly Merrill, a West Side couple in their early 80s, died within four days of each other in 1862; there is a lingering sadness in the graves of Otis and Sarah Hatch, lost in the woods of South Conway, where she lived alone for half a century after his death.

Usually every headstone speaks a host of secrets, most of which are safe forever, but now and then one surfaces. Such is the case with Edwin and Bessie Shackford, who lie together beneath last summer’s geraniums in the Eaton Village Cemetery. According to his gravestone, Edwin died at 37, on September 30, 1913. According to the North Conway Reporter of October 2, 1913, he was shot to death as he lay in bed, asleep, and a few days later Bessie confessed to the murder. The Reporter took a typically self-righteous view of the case, noting that during her confession “the cold blooded woman” broke down only once. She implicated the fired husband, Wilbur Bean, and the two of them were lodged in the Osipee jail together. “The defense will plead insanity,” the newspaper continued, lamenting the virtual homelessness of the four small Shackford children.

Wilbur Bean apparently went free, suggesting that he may have taken no part in the crime, but among Bessie’s descendants the belief persists that she confessed for him. A fictionalized account of the murder insinuated that the motive involved money hidden in the clock, but the real reason for the killing remains unknown, even within the family. The Reporter seemed to suspect something akin to a virus in the air. On Thanksgiving Day that year, up at a lumber camp in the Crawford Notch settlement called Bemis, a Mrs. Addie F. Robinson shot a Finnish logger to death in what she claimed was self-defense. The Reporter editor seemed to dismiss that as an excuse, observing that “murders are coming thick and fast in Carroll County.”

After so long without a homicide, suddenly there had been two within two months, and both with women at the trigger. A later generation might have wondered whether there had not been some abuse involved, and especially in the case of Mrs. Robinson, who may have been the victim of an attempted sexual assault. She, at least, was released eventually, but in December Mrs. Shackford waived her right to trial. The life sentence she drew implies sufficient evidence of premeditation that she could otherwise have gone to the gallows, and soon after her 27th birthday she entered the state prison.

By 1930 Bessie was the only woman among 134 prisoners at Concord, working in the kitchen. At Christmas the governor usually issued a pardon or two, but in 1932 Governor John Winant announced that there would be no Christmas pardons that year. Then, at the last minute, he freed Bessie Shackford. Perhaps the surprise pardon had something to do with Governor Winant’s executive secretary, Burnham Davis, of Conway: his grandmother was a Shackford, and he surely knew the story. On Christmas Eve the prison chaplain drove Bessie to a delicious homecoming at her parents’ farm in Eaton, where her four children and one grandchild awaited her.

At the time of the murder, Bes- sie had borne four children within barely six years, and the youngest was only a few months old. If the phenomenon of postpartum depression had even been identified by 1913, it never occurred to the editor of the Reporter, but it would go a long way toward explaining behavior quite alien to the gentle character described by Bes- sie’s descendants. Severe depression may also account for her attorney’s stated intention to plead insanity.

After her release, Bessie lived with her oldest son, becoming known to her grandchildren as “a warm and loving person.” In 1969 she was buried beside the man she claimed to have killed. A stranger contemplating their matching headstones might speculate that the widow mourned her husband for more than 55 years, and that may not be so far from the truth after all.

More Mark Notes, HATE MAIL, And Other Correspondence, from Page Five

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by William Marvel

New England’s autumn has a decidedly bittersweet edge, with a hint of doom hovering behind its brilliant colors — especially for those who dread the long Yankee winters. That may contribute to the allure of old cemeteries at the height of fall foliage, where we can speculate on the hidden meaning of epitaphs and the relationships that once existed between those who now lie beneath the sod. There is a touch of comfort in the discovery that James and Polly Merrill, a West Side couple in their early 80s, died within four days of each other in 1862; there is a lingering sadness in the graves of Otis and Sarah Hatch, lost in the woods of South Conway, where she lived alone for half a century after his death.

Usually every headstone speaks a host of secrets, most of which are safe forever, but now and then one surfaces. Such is the case with Edwin and Bessie Shackford, who lie together beneath last summer’s geraniums in the Eaton Village Cemetery. According to his gravestone, Edwin died at 37, on September 30, 1913. According to the North Conway Reporter of October 2, 1913, he was shot to death as he lay in bed, asleep, and a few days later Bessie confessed to the murder. The Reporter took a typically self-righteous view of the case, noting that during her confession “the cold blooded woman” broke down only once. She implicated the fired husband, Wilbur Bean, and the two of them were lodged in the Osipee jail together. “The defense will plead insanity,” the newspaper continued, lamenting the virtual homelessness of the four small Shackford children.

Wilbur Bean apparently went free, suggesting that he may have taken no part in the crime, but among Bessie’s descendants the belief persists that she confessed for him. A fictionalized account of the murder insinuated that the motive involved money hidden in the clock, but the real reason for the killing remains unknown, even within the family. The Reporter seemed to suspect something akin to a virus in the air. On Thanksgiving Day that year, up at a lumber camp in the Crawford Notch settlement called Bemis, a Mrs. Addie F. Robinson shot a Finnish logger to death in what she claimed was self-defense. The Reporter editor seemed to dismiss that as an excuse, observing that “murders are coming thick and fast in Carroll County.”

After so long without a homicide, suddenly there had been two within two months, and both with women at the trigger. A later generation might have wondered whether there had not been some abuse involved, and especially in the case of Mrs. Robinson, who may have been the victim of an attempted sexual assault. She, at least, was released eventually, but in December Mrs. Shackford waived her right to trial. The life sentence she drew implies sufficient evidence of premeditation that she could otherwise have gone to the gallows, and soon after her 27th birthday she entered the state prison.

By 1930 Bessie was the only woman among 134 prisoners at Concord, working in the kitchen. At Christmas the governor usually issued a pardon or two, but in 1932 Governor John Winant announced that there would be no Christmas pardons that year. Then, at the last minute, he freed Bessie Shackford. Perhaps the surprise pardon had something to do with Governor Winant’s executive secretary, Burnham Davis, of Conway: his grandmother was a Shackford, and he surely knew the story. On Christmas Eve the prison chaplain drove Bessie to a delicious homecoming at her parents’ farm in Eaton, where her four children and one grandchild awaited her.

At the time of the murder, Bes- sie had borne four children within barely six years, and the youngest was only a few months old. If the phenomenon of postpartum depression had even been identified by 1913, it never occurred to the editor of the Reporter, but it would go a long way toward explaining behavior quite alien to the gentle character described by Bes- sie’s descendants. Severe depression may also account for her attorney’s stated intention to plead insanity.

After her release, Bessie lived with her oldest son, becoming known to her grandchildren as “a warm and loving person.” In 1969 she was buried beside the man she claimed to have killed. A stranger contemplating their matching headstones might speculate that the widow mourned her husband for more than 55 years, and that may not be so far from the truth after all.
Lobbyists Hope To Rebrand Themselves

by Jim Hightower

Here’s a scary number to ponder: 12,407. That’s how many registered lobbyists there are in Washington — the bulk of whom are paid handsomely to carry water for arrogant corpo- rations.

And that doesn’t count the un- told number of influence peddlers who do not stoop to register, for they don’t consider themselves to be mere lobbyists, even though they are paid extravagant salaries by elite lobbying firms. Rather than lobby, they “advise.” These are longtime Washington insiders who act as sherpas, guiding corporate favor-seekers through the labyrinth of congressional backrooms and executive-branche offices to reach the peaks of legis- lative and regulatory power.

Today’s lobbying corps, you see, is no longer the domain of com- mon hustlers, but of credentialed and well-connected professionals, including more than 4,000 former US Senators and House mem- bers, plus more than 5,000 former legislative staffers — all cashing in on the connections and insider knowledge they accrued at tax- payer expense. Lobbying is now a $3.3 billion-a-year influence industry — an unelected, private government of “by and for special interests.” And get this — it even has its own lobbying group, the American League of Lobbyists, which lobbies for lobbyists! As you might imagine, hav- ing such a powerful presence has given many within LobbyWorld an elevated sense of their own worth, so they now want to drop the tacky label of “lobbyist.” Instead, the League of Lobbyists is asking its members to suggest a more prestigious (and less pe- jorative) brand name. Reportedly, an early favorite is “Government Relations Professional.” But that’s a misnomer. The phrase needs to spell out a zippy acronym — like SLICK, CREEP, or LEEK — that really defines their work.

To paraphrase Shakespeare, a lobbyist, by any other name, would smell the same.

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They don’t consider themselves to be influence peddlers, or in- fluence brokers, or even hawk- ers. They consider themselves to be the benefi ciary of these attrac- tions and not the attraction itself to residents and visitors. This is the year I’ll be vote- ing for candidates who are putting the needs of residents first, but also recognize the value of our hospi- tality industry and are willing to encourage them to pay their fair share of the burdens they impose on our city and residents.

Peter Somssich
Portsmouth, NH

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Fact or Fiction?

To the Editor:

Too many of our elected rep- resentatives, both from the Right and the Left, make inflammatory statements without producing any factual data to support what they are saying. What those on the Right, both in government and their big money supporters, have been saying about the Affordable Care Act (ACA) refl ects this lack of fact based argumentation. Extreme examples of nasty, hysteria-inducing claims with no fact support are the despicable ad showing an evil Uncle Sam figure about to perform a gown examination on a young woman, and the repeated statements from elected representatives that the ACA is socialized medicine or a govern- ment take-over of health care.

Not true!

Under socialized medicine the government owns the hospitals and employs and pays the doctors, nurses and support staff from administrators through janitors. We have one bit of socialized medicine in the U.S. — the VA system. The current major government involvement in health care is Medicare, which is an insurance plan administered by the government, with medi- cal care provided by independent doctors and hospitals. Medicare is extremely popular with its enrol- lees.

The ACA expands the number of people covered, by govern- ment insurance, but by existing private insurance companies, who will contract with existing hos- pitals and doctors to provide the same kind of services that they do now. So the ACA provides commercial insurance health care coverage for millions more people and puts in place rules to make sure coverage is effective as possi- ble — no excluding people with pre-existing conditions, no annual or life-time caps. It requires cov- erage for a variety of preventive care, reduces drug costs for senior citizens and more.

Another claim made by the Right but unsupported with any evidence is that the ACA is a job killer. Long before the ACA became law, this trend has reversed this year as the recovery continues. Studies by a number of econo- mists fi nd no support for the al- legation that the ACA is having any signifi cant eff ect on jobs but that does not stop the right from saying it repeatedly as if it were a truth they would need no support for the assertion.

There are other claims about the ACA that are not fact-based, but probably the most outlandish is the claim that the ACA provides for death panels and rationing of health care through the Individual Pay- ment Advisory Board (IPAB). In reality the IPAB is set up to make recommendations to help control Medicare’s overall costs. It has no function to make decisions about individuals’ health care. The ACA law specifi cally bars the IPAB from any recommendation to ra- tion health care or restrict ben- efits.

Statements like this, masquer- ading as reality, hurt our democ- racy in two major ways. First they distort public information and understanding of reality when an informed public is essential to a functioning democracy. Second, they make it easy for our elected representatives to work together to fi nd reasonable solu- tions to our very real problems.

Robert Winston
Portsmouth, NH

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A Party With Faulty Wiring

To the Editor:

They call us as if we are from an unknown, undiscovered planet that produces beings that are void of empathy; in my opinion, that would be that part of Congress responsible for having the U.S. government shut down. Out of this group, some are claiming to be born-again Christians. It seems these types of born-again Chris- tians are takers rather than givers; helping the poor and needy does not seem to be any part of their agenda. However, giving tax breaks to the wealthy while demonizing the Affordable Care Act has been front and center in the Tea Party’s efforts to push back on the major- ity voice in this country. They behave as if they should punish the voters that voted President Obama in for a second term; that punishment came in the forms of sequestration, the government shutdown, and the threat not to raise the debt ceiling. Not only is this behavior destroying the heart of the Republican Party, it could have pushed the U.S. government into total chaos. It is no coincidence that the Tea Party (The Selfi sh Party) may have faulty wiring. Its members lack the capacity to have feelings for others of lesser means; if that is so, sensible Republicans are needed to rise up with courage to bring our great nation back to where it was before in national wisdom.

Alfred Waddell
West Dennis, MA

Alfred: The longer we pled the crazy state of things these days the more we come to believe that your hypothesis is correct.

Recent scientifi c studies have shown that people put in positions of power show lower levels of empathy and are also more inclined to cheat. Others show that our minds — all of us, not just the Right Wing — often make decisions on a gut level without any conscious input. Then we come up with rationalizations to support them.

The Editor

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Admiral Wolfe's Piscataqua River Tidal Guide (Not for Navigational Purposes)

Sunday, November 3

1798—Admiral Sir John Jervis, a British admiral, is born.

1804—President Thomas Jefferson signs a joint resolution that authorizes the President to negotiate a treaty with Native American nations for the establishment of a roadway for use by trading vessels and coastal shipping between the Atlantic and the Great Lakes.

1872—Congress passes the Comstock Law, which makes it a federal offense to distribute, sell, or exhibit obscene materials.

1898—The Spanish-American War begins.

1919—The Russian Revolution begins.

1928—Marilyn Monroe is born.

1939—The United States enters World War II.

1945—The United States drops two atomic bombs on Japan.

1961—The United States launches its first successful satellite, Explorer 1.

1979—The Iranian revolution begins.

1983—The United States launches cruise missiles from the USS Eisenhower toward Libya.


2001—The United States launches a military campaign against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

2003—The United States launches a military campaign against Iraq.

2008—The United States elects Barack Obama as its president.

2013—The United States launches a military campaign against Syria.

Monday, November 4

1579—The Spanish Armada begins its journey from Spain to attack England.

1763—The British Army begins the construction of Fort Ligonier in Pennsylvania.

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Wednesday, November 6

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Friday, November 8

1789—The United States Constitution is ratified.

1803—The Louisiana Purchase is signed.

1861—The American Civil War begins.

1914—The United States enters World War I.

1963—The United States begins its space program with the launch of Mercury-Redstone 3.

1995—The United States launches the Hubble Space Telescope.

2008—The United States elects Barack Obama as its president.

Monday, November 11

1775—The United States declares independence from Great Britain.

1861—The American Civil War begins.

1914—The United States enters World War I.

1963—The United States begins its space program with the launch of Mercury-Redstone 3.

1995—The United States launches the Hubble Space Telescope.

2008—The United States elects Barack Obama as its president.

Saturday, November 9

1773—The Boston Tea Party occurs.

1799—The United States begins the construction of the Tennessee River in the Tennessee Valley.

1861—The American Civil War begins.

1914—The United States enters World War I.

1963—The United States begins its space program with the launch of Mercury-Redstone 3.

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2013—The United States launches a military campaign against Syria.

Sunday, November 10

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