

The Fortnightly Rant

It's Time Capsule Time

Considering the circumstances, we have decided to craft this Rant as a time capsule, intended to give readers in the distant future a fuller sense of how the world in which they live came to be created.

That may seem an excessively hubristic undertaking, even for this boastful age. On the other hand, perhaps there is no need to apologize. We are, after all, the Nation's Oldest Newspaper.™ That unique characteristic doesn't just invite, it *requires* us to imagine the otherwise unlikely survival of this flimsy bit of newsprint.

Let us travel, then, into the future: here we are, face to face with... dwindling bands of *Homo sapiens*, gasping for breathable air and scrounging for food after the big bee die-off, hoping the locusts will return so they can get a square meal.

Oops—went too far. Let's dial it back a few decades. There—that's better.

Our old friend Charlie still survives on sandwiches from the Scollay Square station. Now, though, he's wearing scuba gear.

The adolescent hunger for risk remains. It just takes new forms in this new environment. Dirt-surfing on landslides has become an Olympic sport.

Economic inequality also persists, so the Manchin Family has prospered. Wise investments made by the patriarch—wise for his clan, anyway, if you take the narrow fiscal view and overlook widespread disapprobation—created the opportunity for his myriad descendants to own and operate an entire league of Hunger Game franchises. Mountaintops flattened for coal removal provided perfect venues.

No wonder we felt apologetic as we imagined future generations. There's little we could offer them

that's of any use—other than an honest account of how we came to kill them off.

Hmmm...that thought leads to another: traveling back in time must be impossible. Otherwise there would have been a spike in homicides among fossil fuel CEOs back in the 1980s.

Would they have been justifiable, or not? We'll leave that for an imaginary jury to decide.

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If anyone's going to do anything to stave off an unlivable future, they'd best get cracking. Historically, records for high temperatures have been surpassed by small margins—one or two degrees. The recent heat dome in the Pacific Northwest shattered previous records by as much as nine degrees—and that's just one freakish example. Rivers and reservoirs across the west are drying up. Wildfires are spreading like...wildfires—only more so than ever before.

For decades, climatologists have refused to attribute any individual incidences of our increasingly weird weather to anthropogenic climate change. Now, after that heat dome killed nearly 200 people, they are, to use a technical term, freaking out.

The old inhibitions against linking extreme weather to global warming have been swept away—along with the district of Ahrweiler, Germany.

A recent study in the journal *Nature Climate Change* found that heatwaves breaking old records by huge margins are “two to seven times more likely in the next three decades and three to 21 times more likely from 2051–2080, unless carbon emissions are immediately slashed.”

OK—“Slash Carbon Emissions Immediately” is now on the to-do list...what—it's not that simple?

According to widely accepted



dogma, the U.S.A. proudly leads the allegedly free world. To whatever extent that that is true, then, wherever the world ends up, we are to some degree responsible. Hold on—our BS detector just went off with a deafening clang. Get us re-write....

To whatever extent the U.S.A. actually does lead the free world, we may properly be held responsible—by anyone who can find the power to do so. Good luck on that score.

There can be no question that we led the world down the asphalt path to automobile dependency. The Powell Doctrine expired, though, during the second term of George W.[MD] Bush. Yes, we, with our fetish for internal combustion engines, have done more than any other nation to break the atmosphere—just don't expect us to pay for it.

Who's gonna make us? The International Court in the Hague? Good luck getting the U.S.A. to submit to its jurisdiction.

Centuries ahead of his time,

Thomas Jefferson feared he knew the answer: “I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.”

Maybe God is just—but is he on the job? We see no sign of that.

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Our last best hope would seem to be citizens standing up for their inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Unfortunately those rights seem no more accessible than God.

Nobody in Tillamook voted for an outdoor clambake that left a billion mussels cooked in their shells.

Nobody in Portsmouth voted to import smoke from the Pacific Northwest, turning our sunsets a greasy orange and making every breath unhealthy.

Nobody can explain why policies that are overwhelmingly popular with ordinary people can't get passed in Congress, either.

Winston Churchill said Russia was a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma. Disassembling the

matryoshka that is the U.S.A, we find a grift, wrapped in a Noh play, performed at a shopping mall.

A poll taken in June showed that 68 percent of New Hampshire voters support transitioning to a 100 percent clean energy grid by 2035. Sixty-two percent support the American Jobs Plan investments in clean energy jobs. As with slashing carbon emissions immediately, though, just try and make these things happen.

No, far be it from those of us who see a bad end coming fast to risk offending right wing snowflakes by pushing too hard.

No, better to stay on Joe Manchin's good side by protecting the filibuster and whatever's left of the coal industry.

All in all, things look bleak for future generations—and not that great for the rest of us today.

We're all going down for the stupidest reasons—but at least we're trying not to offend anyone.

The Alleged News®

The Grand Inquisitor's Mistress

On July 12th, Judi Hershman posted an extraordinary 2,600-word document on Medium. In it, the self-described “former professional partisan” laments what she accurately calls, “our country's biggest existential crisis since the Civil War.” It has come about, she writes, because “too many people like me stuck our heads in the sand, swallowed our doubts, [and] let the unacceptable slide, [having] convinced ourselves it was in the interest of the greater good....”

Hershman attained this perspective, she says, through a long and close association with one of the most influential unelected figures in the Republican power structure. That eminent personage was Kenneth Starr: Grand Inquisitor during the Clinton impeachment, arranger of the infamous Jeffrey Epstein plea

deal, mentor to Associate Justice Brett Kavanaugh, and an aspirant himself to the Supreme Court.

Hershman wrote that for about a year, beginning in 2009, she and Starr—who were both then married—conducted an adulterous affair.

More than a fortnight has now passed, and Starr has yet to confirm or deny Hershman's account.

Absence of a denial doesn't prove Hershman's story, of course. The story about LBJ, an aide, a rumor, an animal, and the punchline, “Of course it ain't true, but I want to make the son-of-a-bitch deny it” must be borne in mind. But still....

More perplexing is the media silence. There was a time—and an annoying time it was—when the corporate media seemed to be serving up Kenneth Starr's name on an

hourly basis.

Now, when there's something the public really should know about him, it's crickets.

Since his name has come up, here's more on Kavanaugh, Starr's mentee....

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Progressives Demand Probe After Revelations About FBI Investigation of Kavanaugh

by Jessica Corbett, *Common Dreams*

Rights groups and other progressives are demanding a probe of the FBI's rushed and limited 2018 background investigation into U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh after seven Democratic senators on Thursday revealed new details about the Bureau's actions.

Kavanaugh was nominated to the court by former President Donald Trump and narrowly confirmed by

GOP senators in October 2018, despite allegations of sexual assault, which Kavanaugh has denied. A newly released letter to lawmakers from the FBI sheds light on—but also raises more questions about—how the Bureau handled its investigation of those allegations.

In August 2019, Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) and Chris Coons (D-Del.) sent a letter asking FBI Director Christopher Wray to provide a full picture of the Bureau's 2018 supplemental background investigation of Kavanaugh. On June 30, 2021, they finally received a response from Jill C. Tyson, an FBI assistant director.

The FBI's letter, which the senators made public, says in part that:

“Justice Kavanaugh's nomination was the first time that the FBI set up a tip line for a nominee under-

going Senate confirmation. It was established at the direction of the FBI's Security Division to centralize and manage incoming information related to the nomination. The FBI received over 4,500 tips, including phone calls and electronic submissions. The Security Division section handling the BI and supplemental background investigations provided all relevant tips to the Office of White House Counsel (as the requesting entity).”

In a joint statement Thursday, July 22nd, Whitehouse and Coons, along with Sens. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), and Cory Booker (D-N.J.), revealed they sent Wray

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from page one

another letter Wednesday evening to request more information.

“The admissions in your letter corroborate and explain numerous credible accounts by individuals and firms that they had contacted the FBI with information ‘highly relevant to... allegations’ of sexual misconduct by Justice Kavanaugh, only to be ignored,” the senators wrote. “If the FBI was not authorized to or did not follow up on any of the tips that it received from the tip line, it is difficult to understand the point of having a tip line at all.”

Whitehouse was more blunt in remarks to *The New York Times*, suggesting that the FBI ran a “fake tip line that never got properly reviewed, that was presumably not even conducted in good faith.”

Progressive activists and advocacy organizations were similarly critical and demanded action from Congress and the U.S. Department of Justice.

“Three years ago, our nation watched as Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and Deborah Ramirez shared their painful stories with the world about Brett Kavanaugh’s abusive

behavior. Today, we learn that our institutions failed them both,” said Shauna Thomas, executive director of the national gender justice group UltraViolet.

Thomas called the recent revelations “deeply troubling” and said that “the Senate Judiciary Committee should hold a public hearing on the handling of the investigation by the FBI and interference from the White House Counsel and release those findings publicly.”

“We owe it to survivors to ensure that they have systems of justice that treat their accusations seriously—and the failure to do so in this case is not only a betrayal of these survivors’ trust, but of our nation’s justice system as a whole,” she said.

Wade Henderson, interim president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, similarly recalled witnessing “incredible courage as Dr. Christine Blasey Ford shared her truth with the world.”

Henderson continued:

“Today’s revelations confirm and make more dire what we knew at the time—the allegations by Dr. Blasey Ford and Debbie Ramirez against Brett Kavanaugh were grossly mishandled. The Trump White House



AM. ARTIST © 20 JULY 2021
FOR THE NEW HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE (3)
MICKEMER.COM, N° 1920

and Senate Republicans shamefully stifled an investigation to rush the process and guarantee their nominee a seat on the Supreme Court. These unconscionable actions undermine the Senate’s constitutional role and continue to cast a shadow on the integrity of the court.

“There are still numerous unanswered questions in the absence of a full and comprehensive investigation that should have taken place. We call for a full investigation into the large number of tips the FBI received about Justice Kavanaugh, how this process came to be, and who was involved. There must be full accountability.”

Alliance for Justice president Nan Aron concurred, noting that “we have said since the beginning that the FBI’s investigation during Justice Kavanaugh’s confirmation process was a sham designed to protect his reputation instead of investigate credible allegations of sexual assault against him.”

Aron called for the Justice Department to “immediately reopen its investigation into the past behavior of Justice Kavanaugh and determine

if he intentionally misled Congress and the American public during his confirmation hearings.”

She said the DOJ should also “conduct an expeditious review of how this investigation was conducted and share the details with the public.”

Applauding the senators who continue to push for answers, Aron added that “survivors deserve justice, and the country deserves to know the full truth of this situation, as well as the lengths the Trump administration was willing to go to cover up the truth about Kavanaugh’s behavior and ensure his confirmation.”

Like Aron, Demand Justice executive director Brian Fallon highlighted his organization’s long-standing critiques of Kavanaugh’s elevation to the Supreme Court and declared that “the public deserves to know the truth about the cover-up that took place in 2018 and what the Trump administration may have concealed.”

“Unlike in the fall of 2018, Democrats now hold the gavels in both the Senate and House,” Fallon noted. “With so much credible evidence

that Kavanaugh committed perjury, the relevant committees should be mounting their own investigation by directly interviewing the witnesses the FBI never spoke to, collecting the tips the Trump White House tried to bury, and insisting on the records from the National Archives that were withheld in 2018.”

Ford’s attorneys, Debra S. Katz and Lisa J. Banks, also responded to the revelations in a statement. The FBI’s letter, they said, “confirms what we knew”—that the Bureau’s investigation into Ford’s allegations against Kavanaugh “was a sham and a major institutional failure.”

“This never should have been an ordinary background check,” Katz and Banks continued, noting that the FBI refused to interview Ford or the corroborators listed in their letter to the Bureau’s director.

“The FBI should have referred the evidence it was receiving to the Criminal Investigation Division. FBI Director Wray must answer the question as to why he failed to do so,” the pair added. “Because the FBI and Trump’s White House Counsel hid the ball on this, we do not know



We hate to be alarmists—well, we hate to be perceived as alarmists—but we feel it’s our duty to warn the public that there may be a lion on the loose. We can definitively state that there’s usually a second lion atop this set of stone steps in front of the Rockingham—but it wasn’t there Monday.

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Sometimes Old is Good
 The Fechheimer Building, one of the finest examples of a cast-iron facade in Portland, Oregon, was built in 1885. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, it was restored in 1981 by Russell Fellows Properties, the principals of which enjoy a subscription to this newspaper.

THE NEW-HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE

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how many of those 4,500 tips were consequential, how many of those tips supported Dr. Ford's testimony, or how many showed that Kavanaugh perjured himself during his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Our nation deserved better."

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Something To Not Look Forward To
Beginning at noon on January 3, 2023, when members of the 118th Congress will be sworn in, New Hampshire's First District could be represented by the youngest person in Congress.

Karoline Leavitt will then be 25. If elected she'll also be one of the half-dozen youngest members ever to serve in the House of Representatives.

And she'll have one more distinction, not so easily quantified: she'll be among those Members whose ties to reality are the most antago-

nistic.

The *Conway Daily Sun* reported July 20th on Leavitt's first campaign event, a gathering of about 50 people at the Center Conway home of Mount Washington Valley Republican Committee Chairman Steven Steiner. Leavitt described working in the White House as an assistant press secretary under Kayleigh McEnany:

"I was so blessed to spend many amazing moments during the COVID-19 pandemic when he was briefing every day and fighting fake news media to get you real information, like the fact that hydroxychloroquine works and the fact that, I don't know, maybe COVID actually did originate in the Wuhan Lab."

Leavitt is a native of Atkinson, a town in New Hampshire's Second Congressional District. According to the *Sun*, she has been working for Rep. Elise Stefanik [R-N.Y.], but recently moved to Hampton.

Leavitt's former boss Stefanik is currently the youngest woman ever



Mike Detter 2021
The New Hampshire Gazette - N 1921
Mdetter.com (71)



Monday morning fog obscures the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge. Our Wandering Photographer obtained this image from a well-known vantage point on Bow Street. Being the prudent sort, he refrained from venturing onto the deck at that location. A modest pergola once graced this deck. That decorative element succumbed years ago to Newton's second law of thermodynamics. More recently the deck itself—originally capable of supporting perhaps a dozen free-sending tourists—has been fenced off by a tatty-looking stretch of perforated orange plastic netting adorned with a sign saying, "UNSAFE DECK—NO TRESPASSING." Eventually the rotting remains of this public amenity too will crumble, to lie on the rocky northern slope of this bluff above the river. Perhaps at that point the condo owners will find a way to keep the riff-raff confined to the sidewalk.

elected to Congress; she was 30 in 2014. She was elected to chair the House Republican Conference after Rep. Liz Cheney [RINO-Wy.] was ousted for telling the truth. The third most powerful Republican in the House by virtue of that position, she is also among those most reality-challenged. On Tuesday, she said, "The American people deserve to know the truth. That Nancy Pelosi bears responsibility, as speaker of the House, for the tragedy that occurred on January 6th."

Leavitt appears in a video clip posted by William Tucker at *MiscellanyBlue*, being interviewed by famed Presidential Pardon recipient Steve Bannon.

"Do you believe Donald Trump won on the 3rd of November in 2020?" Bannon asks. "Did he actually win the vote for the Presidency in your opinion?"

Leavitt replies, "Absolutely! The Democratic machine took over our election system months before Nov 3rd in the guise of pandemic precau-

tions, and they...there was chaos and irregularities that occurred across the country. That's why I proudly stood with Elise when she held the line on January 6th and objected to the electors."

Leavitt may face Matt Mowers in the GOP primary. Mowers, a former aide to then-New Jersey Governor Chris Christie during the Bridgegate scandal, lost to Chris Pappas in 2020. Since derangement is no longer a disqualification, Leavitt's local connections could put her ahead of a blow-in with a losing record.

Then factor in the pending redistricting process—which does not bode well for Democrats, what with the Republican trifecta in charge—and this frightening possibility could become our new reality...or surreality.

No, George Carlin Did Not Say That
Hampton Selectwoman Regina Barnes recently made the news by posting a meme that was simultaneously racist, transphobic, and dis-

missive of legitimate public health concerns. People have called for her to resign; she has refused.

Without meaning to diminish or dismiss the original complaint about Barnes, we wish to raise another. Her Instagram page includes a meme in which George Carlin is alleged to have said, "Political correctness is fascism pretending to be manners."

Barry Popick, an expert at tracking such things, wrote about this line in 2014. Carlin's name does not come up, just various online person-ages such as @Captn_Caveman.

Carlin is no longer here to defend himself. We wish he was still around for a lot of reasons. Now we have a new one. We'd love to hear what he'd say about Regina Barnes.

Climate Catastrophe: The Local Angle
Just 23 days into the month, this became New Hampshire's rainiest July ever. Six inches fell overnight on southwestern New Hampshire the weekend of the 17th and 18th.

Murph's Fortnightly Quote
"Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution."
—Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931) writer, poet

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— William Jennings Bryan, Democratic National Convention, Chicago, Illinois, July 8, 1896
john@wordpraxis.com

"A prosperous fool is a grievous burden."
— Aeschylus
— Not-So-Random Thoughts from an Oregon Subscriber

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**No Affordable Housing, Please—
We're Nimbies**

To the Editor;

Every town should file an "amicus brief" supporting Frankestown vs the state's unconstitutional "Housing Appeals Board [HAB]."

The HAB has had a devastating effect on Frankestown. They have ruled in favor of a developer, overriding the wishes of the people regarding Frankestown's historical district.

The HAB is made up of only three very compromised individuals with potentially serious conflicts of interest. The HAB has total control over any board in your town and the right to overturn any decision that has been made in compliance with a town meeting vote. This means a total loss of local control when it comes to having a say in the way you want your town to develop.

The mistake that "social justice warriors" make when they seek to have the "state" overturn local rules is thinking the town is imposing zoning and planning laws when it's the people who voted for those laws. This is the purest form of democracy—the popular vote—and governance that is closest to the people. It should be respected.

Ask your town select boards, councils, planning boards and zoning boards if they are aware of this situation and ask what they will they do about it. Demand Governor Sununu immediately sign an executive order to repeal this tyrannical state board that was secretly created within a previous budget because it failed to pass a vote of the legislature about three times. Otherwise, Sununu's legacy will be that he knowingly set out to destroy the New Hampshire Advantage.

Jane Aitken
Bedford Residents Association
Bedford, N.H.

Jane:

Just to be clear, we indulge your acrimonious screeds, not because we endorse your intent, but because we endorse your targeting.

Now how about getting on his case about his daddy's gold mine?

The Editor

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A Notice for N.H. Citizens

Dear Editor

July 19, 2021

Concord, N.H. - The N.H. Committee of Safety (NHCOS) & the N.H. Constitutional Republicans (NHCR) will be hosting a N.H. citizen declared State of Emergency on Friday, July 23, 2021. The executive boards of both NHCOS and NHCR urge patriots statewide to attend this Day of Action. This is a public event for all N.H. patriots and all friends of N.H. patriots.

Are you a patriot?

NHCOS and NHCR suggests asking yourself the following few questions:

Have you had enough of our defunct N.H. state government?

Do you want to take a stand against unconstitutional mandates & orders?

Do you want to learn more about the God & Country Rally next month?

Saturday, August 28, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Crossing Life Church, 122 N. Lowell Road, Windham, N.H.

If your answer is yes to any of these, then you should join us this Friday for a fantastic N.H. gathering of patriots.

Granite Staters need their voices heard NOW and their constitutional rights protected NOW! The legislature has adjourned for the summer, and we are on our own to convey to Concord that We the People are not content with our current "state" of affairs.

Now is the time to join fellow patriots for the first ever:

N.H. CITIZEN DECLARED STATE OF EMERGENCY

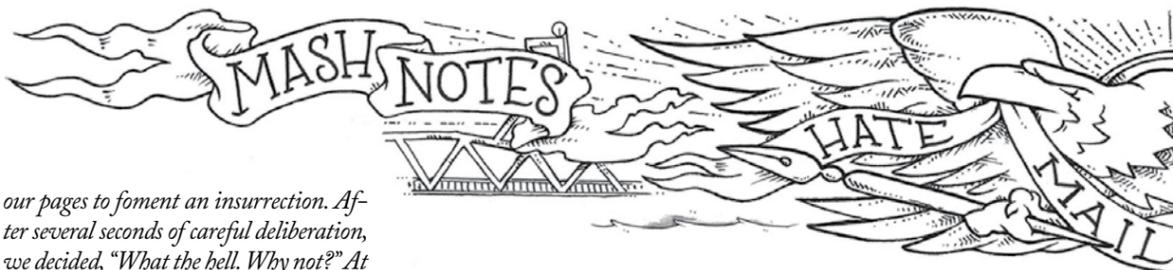
N.H. STATE HOUSE, CONCORD on Friday, July 23, 2021 at 7:00 p.m

"If you don't know your rights, you don't have any," [sic]

The N.H. Committee of Safety & the N.H. Constitutional Republicans
Regina Barnes
Hampton, N.H.

Regina:

Goodness gracious, as the late Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld might say: a Hampton Selectman attempting to use



our pages to foment an insurrection. After several seconds of careful deliberation, we decided, "What the hell. Why not?" At the rate such prosecutions are going, we expect to be dead and buried before the Justice Department gets around to prosecuting those who merely aid and abet the delusional in pursuit of their fantasies. As it happens, your call to action arrived too late for our previous paper. Now the event has gone by. We'll tell the judge, "no harm, no foul."

We expected comprehensive coverage on YouTube. The Committee of Safety's declaration nullifying the state government certainly droned on long enough. We couldn't find a thing, though. Was your event such a bust that nobody bothered to film it?

Good luck with your August farce.

The Editor

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Sympathy for the Doofus

Dear Editor:

Today (the 17th) in our car I listened to SXM, one of the old-time radio shows, "This Is Your FBI—148 Radio Classics." The episode rested on apprehending criminals, so the show's ending warning was "crime begets crime." Right away I thought of ex-President Trump and his slavish followers.

His January 6th wished-for disruption, messily, brutally, at our U.S. Capitol, so Joe Biden might not become U.S. President, came to mind when I heard the authoritative radio voice say, "crime begets crime." Trump asked for that destructive attack as our Congress sat, under the guidance of V.P. Pence, to certify the election. What a criminal mind Trump shows! Those who admire lawlessness and grabbing for what one wants—they love him. Some are your readers. Their parents must have had low standards of child-rearing that excluded teaching about what is moral, immoral, amoral—with no stand at all on "does morality matter?" Alas, there's a place for those in our

freedom-based culture. Until they are caught, they can be lawless and possibly get away with it. Freely they can lie and distort.

We watch with huge attention what catches up with Donald J. Trump and also what he evades—though not anymore with lawyer Giuliani's expertise.

Lynn Rudmin Chong
Sanbornton, N.H.

Lynn:

Alas, poor Dolt #45, deprived of Rudi's legal expertise! Now you've gone and made us sad!

The Editor

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The Solidarity Fund: an example of the strength of the Catalan independence movement

To the Editor:

The Solidarity Fund collects solidarity donations from thousands of anonymous people who support the victims of Spain's repression of the democratic and non-violent actions that characterise the Catalan independence movement. It was created by the civil organisations Assemblea Nacional Catalana and Òmnium Cultural when Spain imprisoned their presidents, Jordi Sánchez and Jordi Cuixart.

Now, when there are already 3,300 victims of retaliation, this Solidarity Fund is managed by an independent association. From 2017 until now, it has paid 640,000 euros in fines and lawyers [fees] for grassroots militants, and €14.4 M in bail imposed by courts and administrative bodies. Aside from the disproportionality of the bails and fines, let's look at an example of unjustified abuse: the Solidarity Fund has had to cover not only €4.1M, demanded from the Catalan government by the Supreme Court for alleged embezzlement in the 2017 referendum, but also €6M demanded by a Spanish Court in Barcelona from

high-ranking officials for exactly the same concept!

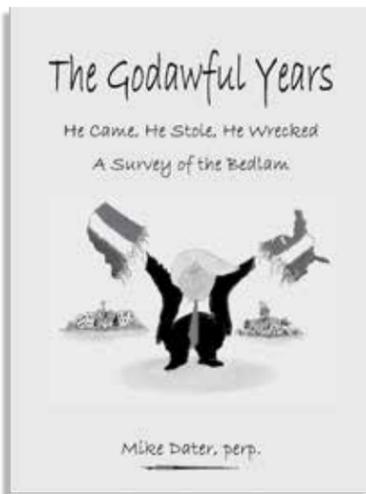
Almost simultaneously to the announcement by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez of the pardon for nine pro-independence leaders sentenced to long prison sentences,* an administrative body, the Court of Auditors, demanded bail of €5.4M from 34 former senior officials and workers of the Generalitat (Catalonia's Institutional Political System) related to the international promotion of Catalonia from 2011 to 2017. If they have not deposited these exorbitant bonds by 21st July, their properties, salaries and pensions will be seized. As Carles Puigdemont's lawyer explains,† "This is a dreadful and openly abusive action that only aims to generate damage, this time by affecting assets." Also, 33 Nobel Prize winners in economics criticise the Court of Auditors and support one of those being prosecuted, Andreu Mas-Colell, former Harvard professor and minister of economics in the Catalan government from 2010 to 2016.‡

In the face of this offensive against Catalan leaders and workers, the Catalan government has created a fund of €10M to guarantee these and future bails. In anticipation of the Spanish courts blocking this fund (which is likely because both the Spanish government and the opposition parties are considering taking the fund to court), the Solidarity Fund has been reactivated and, after only three days, has already collected 300,000 euros in donations from citizens and continues to grow.

* Read this article to find out about the Council of Europe's pressure on Pedro Sánchez to release the prisoners: <https://www.elnacional.cat/en/politics/council-europe-spain-catalan-release-independence-re>

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Maria M. Garayoa
 Barcelona, Catalonia
 Maria:
Americans could learn a thing or two about solidarity from Catalonians.
 The Editor

=====
Military Justice

To the Editor:
 In a July 7th report on the PBS Newshour the following statistics for sexual assault in the military were given. "Approximately 20,000 U.S. military members are sexually assaulted annually. But only 7,816 reported those cases, and only in 350 cases were perpetrators charged with a crime." The report added that 64 percent of those who reported assaults faced retaliation.

Clearly, the system is not working when only five percent of those accused of assault face charges and 64 percent of the victims face retaliation. One major problem is the victim has to report the assault to their commanding officer who, in most cases, knows and works with the accused. Another problem is officers have to get promotions every few years or are forced to leave the military. Anything bad that gets the attention of those above them can cost them their careers. Thus, they have an incentive to bury bad news like sexual assaults under their command as do those above them. In short, the victims command chain has a conflict in interest in these cases.

In civilian courts we do not allow

judges or attorneys with conflicts of interests with the anyone involved to try cases. We need to end this practice for sexual assault victims in the military as well.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand has been trying for a decade to get sexual assault cases out of the chain of command. She has bipartisan support for her bill including our two senators, but the male co-chairmen on her committee have blocked it from even coming to a vote. The time has come for Senators Jack Reed and James Inhofe to allow a vote on this issue.

Walter Hamilton
 Portsmouth, N.H.

Walter:
Reminds us of a line we first heard in uniform: "Military justice is to justice as military music is to music."

More than 50 years later that's still true. It's a disgrace.

Now, about those Army bases named after traitors... [Muffled noises are heard as the Editor is dragged from the newsroom with a hood over his head.]

=====
Teaching Critical Race Theory

To the Editor:
 The teaching of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in public schools has become a hot button in the culture war between conservatives and progressives. The debate has become more of a political than an educational issue. As a result, the conversation has been distorted by both sides who argue from dogma rather than fact. "Woke" Progressives are among the most vocal defenders of the CRT position but their defense is open to critique.

To engage in informed debate about CRT, it is necessary to understand its intellectual roots. It emerged from an older set of theories known simply as Critical Theory (CT). This school of thought emerged in Europe in

the 1920's as an extension of Marxism. Whereas Marxism is primarily concerned with economic outcomes within the context of class struggle between capitalists and workers, CT adopted and expanded the Marxist idea of domination and struggle to include various "oppressed" groups such as racial minorities and women. CT is taught in several American universities, usually found in Sociology departments or in schools of education.

CT theories adopt the Marxist view that all social structures must be analyzed and understood through the lens of domination and oppression. It makes the fundamental assumption that virtually all social institutions and power relationships are determined by the dominant class and are designed to maintain control over the oppressed (in CRT, whites are the dominant class and Blacks are the oppressed although recent work has included Latinos and Asians as oppressed classes). As a corollary, many CT theorists regard Enlightenment values such as rational analysis, objectivity, and science as social constructions of the dominant class that are used to maintain oppression rather than to discover truth. Truth can be determined only through subjective experience analyzed in relation to the instruments of social domination. Like Marxism, CT as practiced by most of its advocates is more ideology than Social Science. It offers a limited lens to understand history.

CT assumptions about social relations and structures are evident in many expressions of CRT. A prominent example is the 1619 Project, a series of articles accompanied by suggested school curricula. It was published by the *New York Times* in 2019 with the claim to place Black experience as a central element of American history. Increasing understanding of the Black role in history is laudable. Black history is part of American

history and should be taught without bias. Unfortunately, the Project's good intentions are marred both by historical inaccuracies and interpretations of events that are driven more by ideology than good historical practice. For example, Nikole Hannah-Jones, the creator of the Project, claimed that the Revolutionary War was fought to protect the institution of slavery in America. This contention was called out as inaccurate by several historians. It certainly would have puzzled the hearty New Englanders who carried out the Boston Tea Party and fired the first shots of the war at Lexington and Concord (full disclosure—the assertion was later withdrawn by the *Times* after the criticism of the historians).

According to Hannah-Jones, the "real" founding of America was 1619—the year that the first slaves were introduced to Virginia. American history since then has been a long string of insults to Black Americans, indicating that racism is part of white America's DNA. She and other authors of the Project view racism as a major if not the most important driver of American history. Attempts by whites to help reform racial inequities are considered to be weak and insincere. The inference is that the only way to bring about racial equity is by radically reforming white-dominated institutions.

These ideas come into sharper perspective when CRT's close relation to CT ideology is understood. If history is seen as a struggle between oppressor and oppressed, then all institutions are seen as part of a system of oppression. The result is a limited historical perspective where all outcomes are interpreted through the narrow squint of oppression and dominance. It is oblivious to the fact that society is a complex and dynamic system where a myriad of variables interact over time to generate ever-changing relationships. Social outcomes including racial relationships can never be fully explained by any limited ideology.

There is no doubt that racism has been and is a major cause of inequality for American Blacks. It is simplistic to state, however, that it is the only

cause of the inequalities that characterize the Black condition. In order to move toward solutions to the complex problems of inequality, a common understanding of the causes of the problem needs to be reached. In history education, knowledge must be crafted through good faith dialogue based on a process of objective analysis. Learning will not be achieved through dueling dogmas. Neither the triumphalist narratives of the right nor the limited ideology of the left will produce common understanding.

Robert D. Russell, Ph.D.
 Harrisburg, Pa.

Robert:
Bereft as we are of academic credentials, we're not equipped to debate who's taught what in grad school.

After knocking around this country for a lifetime, though, we can say this with confidence: them that has, gets.

Some people like to talk up a supposed meritocracy. Through direct observation, we've come to believe that the pre-eminent merit remains unchanged: the magical ability of certain fertilized eggs to select the right [white] parents.

The Editor

=====
Sununu Signs Memory Hole Into Law

Dear Sir:
 There has been a great deal of debate and confusion regarding the prohibition of teaching of so-called "divisive concepts" by schools, state agencies and state contractors. The "divisive concepts" teaching prohibition was included in the budget trailer bill (HB 2) signed by Governor Sununu. In an attempt to clarify and provide guidance to educators, state agencies and contractors, Frank Edelblut, Commissioner Department of Education, Ahni Malachi, Executive Director Commission for Human Rights, and John Farnella, Attorney General, recently issued guidance on how to implement this new "Anti-discrimination" law. The guidance explains what schools, public employers and government programs are prohibited from teaching, training and advocating. In

Mash Notes, Hate Mail, &c.
 to page six

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Hope Lies in Our Entanglements

by Jean Stimmell

For most of human evolution, the cosmic forces of the universe were magical, beyond our feeble understanding. We were humble and kept our heads down, acutely aware that we were the lowest denominator in a vast galactic mystery. Unfortunately, over the last few hundred years, we humans have become smug and arrogant, thinking we are lords and masters of Planet Earth, which will be our downfall because of the climate crisis we are causing. Today I want to write about four entanglements that give me hope about how we might regain that sense of awe while avoiding environmental doom.

Entanglement #1: Last June the journal *Nature* announced that quantum entanglement had been proven: That's the theory that once two objects or particles have interacted with one another, they will be forever joined. From that point forth, whatever happens to one will instantly happen to the other, even if one has traveled to the other side of the universe.¹

To me, this a paradigm-shifting event in the history of science, as influential as discovering gravity or that the earth is round—but, most important, because it reintroduces enchantment back into our small-minded and algorithm-driven world. Perhaps someday soon, we can see the world as it really is—as through the eyes of a child, a mystic, an indigenous person, or an artist.

As the poet Christian Wiman has

written: "If quantum entanglement is true, if related particles react in similar or opposite ways even when separated by tremendous distances, then it is obvious that the whole world is alive and communicating in ways we do not fully understand. And we are part of that life, part of that communication."²

Entanglement #2: Suzanne Simard, in her ground-breaking new book *Finding the Mother Tree*, introduces us to another example of entanglement: how trees communicate through a tangled underground fungal network. She explains how old mother trees connect all the forest trees together through a "jungle of threads and synapses and nodes," "communicating and responding to one another by emitting chemical signals. Chemicals identical to our own neurotransmitters."³ Simard sees entanglement everywhere: in a colony of ants, a grove of trees, and even ourselves: "Our own roots and systems interlace and tangle, grow into and away from one another and back again in a million subtle moments."⁴

Entanglement #3: In Robert Mac Farlane's fabulous new book, *A Deep Time Journey*, we learn that we can no longer view ourselves as a separate apex species, "but rather as an assemblage of entanglements of which we are messily apart. Our bodies are habitats for hundreds of species of which *Homo sapiens* is only one...we are collaborative compound organisms, ecological units consisting of trillions of bacteria, viruses and fungi that coordinate

the task of living together and sharing a common life."⁵

And in terms of diversity and a declaration of how little we know: Macfarlane relates a new scientific discovery of a "deep life ecosystem that extends down seven miles into the Earth's crust that is twice the volume of the world's oceans." It "dramatically exceeds the biomass of the entire human population."⁶

Entanglement #4: Donna Haraway, a philosopher and feminist scholar, sees our world as a tangled ball of yarn, made up of the innumerable threads of our "deep and entangled relationships with technology, beyond-human kin, and each other."⁷ While our future in terms of climate crisis is dire, she rejects the two most popular pundit refrains of either "a comic faith... that technology will somehow come to the rescue of its naughty but very clever children," or that "the game is over, it's too late, there's no sense trying to make anything better."⁸

Her approach is to pluck out one thread at a time and "make kin" with it by whole-heartedly listening and relating. She believes, "learning to stay with the trouble of living and dying together on a damaged earth" is a road map to more livable futures."⁹

Joanna Macy, a Buddhist writer and activist, embraces a similar approach, calling for a global wakening to band together to create a life-sustaining society. Macy invokes Active Hope as the secret sauce to stiffen our spines to face this crisis with resistance and creativity.



"Active Hope is not wishful thinking. Active Hope is not waiting to be rescued by some savior.

Active Hope is waking up to the beauty of life on whose behalf we can act.

"We belong to this world. The web of life is calling us forth at this time."¹⁰

Understanding that we are—each of us—a vital thread in our utterly entangled but achingly gorgeous world, makes me tingle: it gives me hope that we can commit to come together for the common good of all the inhabitants of our precious, blue planet.

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Postscript: As I step out of my office after writing this, I reflect on how none of what I said would be surprising to indigenous people, who already reside in this more-than-human world. As if in validation of that, I found a beautiful black feather by my door, a present from my neighbor, the trickster Raven.

1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/science/quantum-satellites-china-spying.html>

2 *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer*, by Christian Wiman p. 33

3 Simard, Suzanne. *Finding the Mother Tree* (p. 5). Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

4 *Ibid.* page 179

5 Macfarlane, Robert. *Underland: A Deep Time Journey* (pp. 103-104). W.W. Norton & Company. Kindle Edition.

6 <https://onbeing.org/programs/robert-macfarlane-the-worlds-beneath-our-feet/#transcript>

7 <https://forthewild.world/listen/donna-haraway-on-staying-with-the-trouble-131>

8 <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/670948/summary>

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Active Hope* by Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone

The Oracle Speaks

by Jim Hightower

Mega-investor Warren Buffett once held a big portfolio of daily and weekly newspapers, and he specialized in squeezing out competitors so each held a local monopoly. Then he'd chop staff and news content, letting him glean annual profit margins above 30 percent.

But alas for poor Warren, along came the internet, allowing people to root around for free to find lo-

cal information missing from his hollowed-out papers. They began losing readers, advertisers, and profits, so, in 2020, Buffett sold out his entire portfolio. But rather than concede that maybe his slash-and-burn, profit-maximization approach had produced inferior products, "The Oracle of Omaha" (as Wall Street had labeled him) blasted the whole idea of local newspapers as dinosaurs. They're "toast," he proclaimed. But wait your Oracleness, when

done right, local publications both chronicle and help shape a community's story. And that's a social benefit that's as valuable—and as marketable—as ever. It's not that people have given up on local news, but that corporate owned papers did—they're not local, not newsy, and not of, by, and for the workaday people in our communities.

For example, nearly every corporate daily publishes a business section, which mostly amounts to

yesterday's stock prices, corporate press releases, and syndicated filler. Does even one percent of the population read that stuff? Meanwhile, how about economic news of interest to the great majority of locals who're workaday families? Where's the regular section that digs into the area's wages, job losses and openings, workplace conditions, childcare availability, unionizing efforts, and other real-life issues that confront this majority on a daily basis?

The relevant indicator of the wellbeing of nearly every American family is not the Dow Jones Average (which newspapers cover obsessively), but the Doug Jones Average. How are Doug and Donna doing? That's news that would sell papers.

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