

The Fortnightly Rant

This Is Your Government on Stupid

Our paper goes to press this fortnight only a few hours before the U.S. House is scheduled to take a momentous vote: whether to permit the Treasury to pay such debts as the legislature has incurred already, or to refuse and plunge the world's economy into a chaotic maelstrom.

Vote "Yes" and the world goes on about its business. Vote "No" and you unleash chaos. For most people, this would seem to be a straightforward proposition and a fairly easy choice. We are dealing with Congress, though, so it's all a little more complicated.

For one thing, chaos can be quite entertaining. It is when it's vividly portrayed by characters based on cartoon figures, performing in Hollywood blockbusters. When it is unleashed in the real world, though, it tends to be less attractive.

All of this may seem too obvious to mention. The evidence suggests, though, that some in Congress—and some of their constituents—could use a little remedial instruction in how to make this vital distinction.

Our argument against voting in favor of chaos should not be misinterpreted. We are not saying that the world conducts its business in a manner that is above reproach. Far from it, in fact. We don't know a lot about this subject, but the more we learn the more appalled we become.

Average Americans—we include ourselves in this number—scuffle around at a very low altitude, economically speaking, rarely aware of the empyrean realms where the world's truly wealthy dwell. We are familiar with water, though.

Earth's hydrologic cycle manifests itself in familiar ways; oceans, tides, and currents wash all over the world. Money does, too, but nearly invisibly. We poor schnooks only get glimpses in Hollywood pictures. Some Bond

villain's yacht, for example, its colossal size emphasized by comparison to a vast host of others, spread like a blanketing across some sparkling Mediterranean harbor.

Fortunately, two fairly recent books, Oliver Bullough's *Moneyland*, published in 2019, and Tom Burgis's *Kleptopia*, in 2020, can serve as atlases for mere plebians. They show a global economy that looks more like Gotham City than most of us could ever have imagined. All over the world, nations are being plundered. Whole populations are impoverished by their rulers. Crooked bankers assist as these despots deplete their nations' treasuries, for a reasonable percentage.

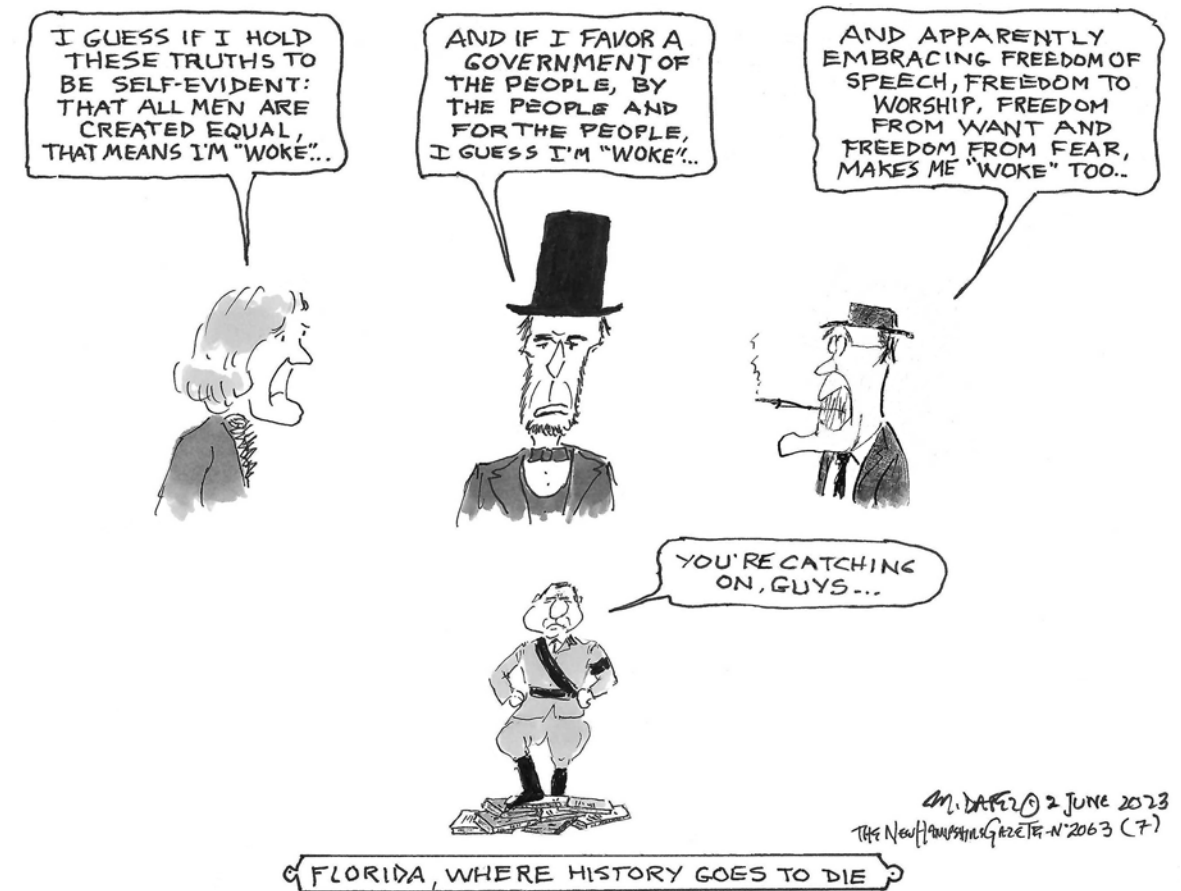
Something, surely, should be done. But what?

Two thousand years ago, Jesus is said to have stormed Herod's Temple in Jerusalem, tipping over the tables of the money changers, and driving them out with a scourge. That sounds pretty violent, coming from the Prince of Peace. We have not read the original Aramaic though, so who can tell?

Even a reasonable person, driven by moral indignation sparked by the gross inequities of today's global economy, might wish that such a solution could be used today. This is understandable, even in the absence of any guidance in the Bible regarding the consequences of that disruption on the local economy.

We see few signs, though, of anyone in Congress following the lead of his or her professed Lord, risking a little chaos to bring about righteousness. To the contrary, many Members argue that if we cannot have complete chaos, we must at least make things significantly worse.

We must hold true to certain principles, they say. A stand must be



taken. Also, a line must be drawn in the sand. In fact, all of the old, tried and true clichés must be dredged up from the sewer of rightly-discarded bad ideas, and repeated *ad nauseam*.

This is America, after all. Our appetite for zombie-based entertainment has survived the demise of the drive-in theatre, spilled out from the feeble confines of Hollywood, and taken up permanent residence in the District of Columbia.

For example, take the common trope that the national budget and your household checkbook are virtually indistinguishable. They are not. The two things bear no resemblance to each other. However, because our browbeaten corporate media have been so thoroughly trained to allow liars to endlessly repeat idiocies without challenge, this canard simply will not die. The implication of its immortality is clear. It's only a matter of time before some cretin decides that he's some

kind of Sovereign Householder, with the God-given right to crank out currency in his basement on an old mimeograph machine.

In the eyes of today's so-called conservatives—the faction formerly known as fascists—this is a momentous time during which heroic figures such as themselves must follow the time-honored precepts laid down by such thought leaders as the lizard-tongued William F. Buckley, who wrote, "A conservative is someone who stands athwart history, yelling Stop, at a time when no one is inclined to do so, or to have much patience with those who so urge it."

If Speaker McCarthy's confidence was not misplaced, the debt ceiling bill moves on to the Senate—that sacred chamber in which Rep. Preston Brooks provoked beyond measure by Sen. Charles Sumner's intemperate remarks which likened chattel slavery to a harlot—used his metal-headed cane to beat Sumner

nearly to death. One hesitates to think what Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene might do to Sen. Chuck Schumer, if she were aware of that precedent.

Come Monday, we should know if Congress has managed to just barely avert a possible global financial catastrophe of unprecedented proportions. If the news is good, it will still be bad.

For one thing, the worst politicians the country has to offer will have been taught that it's OK to put the rest of us through all this again.

For another, that same cohort will have gotten what they wanted in terms of national policy. The IRS will remain hamstrung, too short-handed to pursue the tax-dodging fatcats who keep their campaign coffers full. Meanwhile, food stamp recipients get new work requirements. The poor are always with us, and the Republicans are happy to keep it that way.

CPUSA Statement on the Removal of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's Historical Marker in New Hampshire:

If Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's life is worth hiding, it's worth knowing

In early May, the historical marker for Elizabeth Gurley Flynn at her birthplace in Concord, New Hampshire was taken down by Republican members of the city's executive council. So much for GOP objections to "cancel culture!"

Why is a woman whose life was dedicated to justice, human rights and free speech so threatening? The state's governor, Chris Sununu, has no problem with that. But we should all have a problem with it since Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, known as "the Rebel Girl," can help us answer basic questions about our world today. Why can women vote? Why are unions multi-racial and multi-national? Why are we still fighting for women's right to decide when to bear children? How do we defend people's rights to speak their minds

against powerful, moneyed forces? Why are we losing the right for children to educate themselves rather than work night shifts in the dirtiest jobs of the meat industry?

If Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's life is important enough to hide, then her life is important enough to know. Born in 1890 to Irish immigrant parents, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was an agitator who crossed the country to speak for the most marginalized people in the U.S. since she was fifteen years old. She was a founder of the American Civil Liberties Union for the rights of free speech. She was a member of the International Workers of the World that sought to organize unions for all workers of all races, all occupations, all genders and all nationalities. She joined the Communist Party of the United

States during the Great Depression in 1937 and continued to champion socialism as an answer to capitalism's greed and dispossession until she died in 1964.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was just one person of millions in the United States who have fought for the basic necessities of wellbeing: dignity, respect, autonomy, collectivity, equality alongside food, shelter and living wages. She was a vocal champion for all of these basic necessities. When we learn about Flynn's life, we learn about the 1912 Lawrence Massachusetts textile mill strike of young female immigrant workers and their ripple effects in an industry barely organized. Young women workers created International Women's Day celebrated on March 8th around the world. When we learn about Fly-

nn's life, we discover the origins of the first sit-down strike at the General Electric plant in Schenectady, New York in 1906. We learn about the mining workers' struggles that spanned the country from Tacoma, Washington, to Missoula, Montana and Duluth, Minnesota.

We must remember when she was arrested in 1951 under the notorious Smith Act—an Act that criminalized words. To speak for worker's rights became a crime. To agitate for an end to Jim Crow segregation of Black people's lives from housing, jobs and basic dignity became a crime. To share the values of equality for all people was not only suspect under the Smith Act, it demanded



The "Rebel Girl"
Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

We don't always publish statements from the Communist Party of the U.S.A., but when you're right, you're right. Besides, it's not as if either of the two dominant parties in our capitalist duopoly have been covering themselves in glory lately.

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imprisonment, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn served time for speaking up and speaking out. Gurley Flynn's speech at her Smith Act trial is considered one of the 100 best speeches of the 20th century.

But let's not stop with a marker for Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's life in Concord, New Hampshire. We need markers for the millions of people in the United States who fought for our basic right to live and to thrive. To erase the life of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn clouds our memories of our long, proud histories of struggle and the benefits those struggles have won. To forget Flynn makes vulnerable the very rights we depend upon to strengthen, expand and recover our shared wellbeing today.

In 1940 Gurley-Flynn was removed from the Board of the ACLU for her beliefs. The ACLU posthumously reinstated her after the labor leader's death. Can the good people of New Hampshire do less?

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**The Two Decades That Created
Our World's First Mass Middle Class**
*If we take on our rich,
we can recreate that success.*

by Sam Pizzigati
Amazing things can happen when societies realize they don't need the awesomely affluent.

What sort of amazing things? Take what happened in the United States between 1940 and 1960, as economists William Collins and Gregory Niemesh do in a just-published research paper on America's mid-century home ownership boom.

Over a mere 20-year span, the United States essentially birthed a "new middle class." The share of U.S. households owning their own homes, Collins and Niemesh note, jumped an "unprecedented" 20 percentage points. By 1960, most American families resided in housing they owned "for the first time since at least 1870"—for the first time, in effect, since before the Industrial Revolution.

This home ownership surge, the two economists posit, rested in large part on an equally unprecedented surge in worker earnings. Median annual incomes in the mid-20th century "nearly doubled" as Ameri-



cans realized wage gains "both large on average and widely spread across workers."

This "widespread and sustained increase in the level of income," Collins and Niemesh detail, "allowed more people to afford and select into owner-occupied housing than in previous generations."

What brought about that "widespread and sustained" income increase? That question lies beyond the scope of the new Collins-Niemesh paper. But not much mystery surrounds the answer. The years of the mid-20th century saw a vast expansion of America's trade union movement. The struggles of new unions—in major basic industries ranging from auto to steel—essentially forced the rich to begin sharing the wealth workers were creating.

This massive mid-century labor surge also changed the face of the American political landscape. Union-backed lawmakers put in place programs that helped average families on a wide variety of fronts, everything from making mortgages

affordable to expanding access to higher education.

And those union-backed lawmakers helped pay for those new programs by raising taxes on America's wealthiest. Between 1940 and 1960, the federal tax rate on income in the nation's top tax bracket consistently hovered around 90 percent.

That worker-friendly world of the mid-20th century has, of course, long since disappeared. Over the past half-century, we've witnessed an enormous redistribution—upwards—of the nation's income and wealth.

Back in 1982, in the early stages of that redistribution, *Forbes* began publishing an annual compilation of the nation's 400 grandest private fortunes. The initial *Forbes* 400 list included just 13 billionaires. Their

combined wealth: \$92 billion. Over the next four decades, *Forbes* notes, the combined net worth of America's richest 400 would rise to "a staggering \$4.5 trillion—making them nearly 50 times better off than their 1982 counterparts, far outpacing the consumer price index's near tripling."

Overall wealth in the United States, the Federal Reserve relates, now totals \$140 trillion. The bottom half of Americans hold just \$4 trillion of that.

The United States, adds the *New York Times* in a new analysis, is approaching an unprecedented "intergenerational transfer of wealth" that "will largely reinforce" this current record inequality. Households worth over \$5 million, the Boston-based Cerulli Associates financial research firm calculates,



Portsmouth held no Memorial Day Parade this year. That seems odd—until one considers what's happening at 11:00 a.m. tomorrow: the 400th Anniversary Parade. A Memorial Service was held, of course, on Monday, May 29th, at the Plains, site of the city's World War One memorial.

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make up just 1.5 percent of total U.S. households. Between now and 2045, this tiny share of the nation's households will account for 42.5 percent of expected wealth transfers.

Making that top-heavy transfer even worse: Under existing U.S. tax law, wealthy married couples can pass on to their heirs as much as \$26 million without paying a penny in federal estate tax.

Meanwhile, observes a top research exec at the Vanguard Group, tens of millions of American workers aging into their seventies can't afford to retire. "All but the most wealthy" among us, Vanguard's Fiona Greig tells the *New York Times* reporter Talmon Joseph Smith, appear to be—to some degree—financially unprepared for retirement.

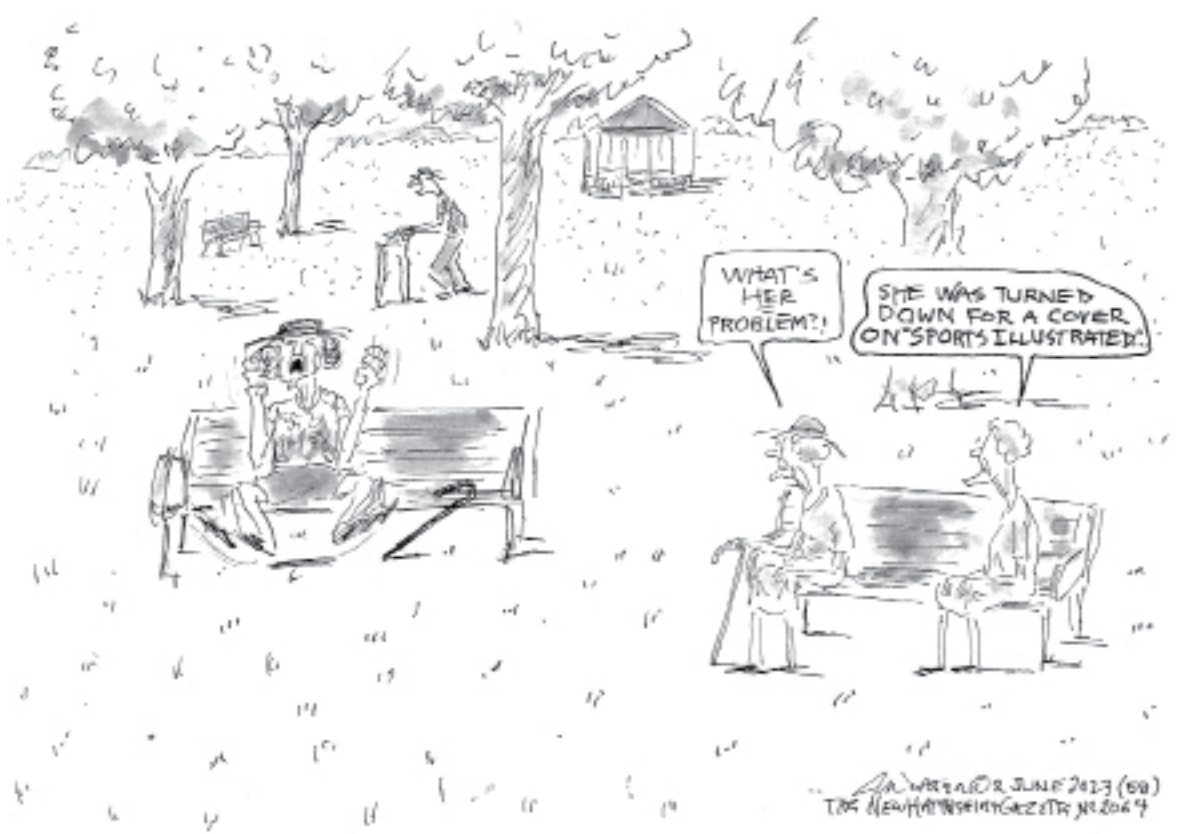
Smith's conclusion? The headline over his economic preview published earlier this week tells it all: "The Greatest Wealth Transfer in History Is Here, With Familiar (Rich) Winners."

But our upcoming transfer of

generational wealth doesn't have to play out that way. The vast 1940-to-1960 expansion of America's middle class, we need to keep in mind, didn't just happen. Advocates for greater equality made it happen. Back before the Great Depression, those advocates confronted a maldistribution of income and wealth just as severe as the maldistribution we confront today. They battled for greater equity, and their success in that battle held up for a generation.

The challenge we confront today? We need to do more than create a much more equitable distribution of income and wealth. We need to create a much more equitable distribution of income and wealth that can last.

Sam Pizzigati co-edits *Inequality.org*. His latest books include *The Case for a Maximum Wage* and *The Rich Don't Always Win: The Forgotten Triumph over Plutocracy that Created the American Middle Class, 1900-1970*. Twitter: @Too_Much_Online.



Remembering "Moby Bank"

As we noted in the caption of the photo at left, the removal of the utility wires obscuring the façade of the Brick Market got us to thinking about an earlier, less-successful architectural adventure which we used to call Moby Bank.

Unique in a city otherwise filled with elegant colonial- and federal-style buildings, Moby Bank had a style all its own. Composed as it was of two dissimilar buildings with a small connecting passage between them, the term "asymmetrical freak-show" seems to cover it.

Located on the 300 block of State Street, one building had two stories and sat firmly on the ground—where proper buildings belong. The other building had but a single story, jacked up on concrete stilts perhaps 15 feet high. The two were joined via an overhead corridor about the width of a generous sidewalk. As if these features had not suffered enough indignities already, the whole shebang was sheathed in semi-glossy white brick.

The ungainly layout was pre-

sumably arrived at in order to allow space for parking underneath. If so, that extremely modest goal was achieved—at the cost of creating an awful eyecore.

Our best guess is that this travesty went up in the 1950s or 1960s, when the air was full of the exhaust from V-8s engines burning leaded gas. Oh, the good old days....

Mercifully, the site was finally made presentable again in December, 2003. The elevated portion of the abomination was knocked down. No loss there, except for the opportunity for it to have served as a set for a Grade-Z science fiction movie about an alien invasion. That part of the site was then vastly improved by turning it into an ordinary parking lot. The slightly less homely part remains, camouflaged with a veneer of Standard, inoffensive red brick.

Washington's \$849 Million Capital Gains Windfall Shows "Taxing the Rich Is a Really Good Idea" by Brett Wilkins

Proponents of progressive taxation last Friday pointed to data

showing Washington state stands poised to reap \$849 million in revenue during the first year of its capital gains tax as proof that taxing the rich works—and could serve as a template for federal legislation.

The *Seattle Times* reports that when Washington state lawmakers passed this fiscal year's budget, they anticipated collecting \$248 million in revenue from the seven percent tax on the sale or exchange of stocks, bonds, and certain other assets above \$250,000.

However, the legislators were pleasantly surprised when figures showed the state has collected over \$600 million more than that.

While the amount collected could change after around 2,500 taxpayers who applied for extensions file their returns, progressives welcomed the windfall that will fund public schools, early childhood education, and building and repairing schools across the state.

"Hey, hey! What we knew would

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What's missing in this photograph? Nothing whatsoever, argues our Wandering Photographer, who has been railing against wires on poles since Samuel F.B. Morse invented the telegraph. Burying the utilities along this stretch of Daniel Street no doubt prolonged the obstruction of traffic, but it was worth it in our view. (Easy for us to say, of course—we didn't have to pay what had to have been staggering construction costs.) Now passersby can get an unobstructed view of the Brick Market—the most daring new building erected in Portsmouth for some decades. Its closest competition was probably Moby Bank. That's hardly a fair comparison, though. "Remembering Moby Bank," elsewhere on this page, explains.

Murph's Fortnightly Quote

"Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice."

— Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

"Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened."

— Winston Churchill

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**Celebrating
“the Sainted Elizabeth Gurley Flynn”**
To the Editor:

No surprise that the N.H. Republicans clutched their pearls and screamed like banshees on the honoring of a radical woman. This is not a new phenomenon on the part of Republicans. Recall when Newt Gingrich became Speaker of the House in 1995, he had the mural by Diego Rivera removed, as it portrayed a movement of the common people. To their eternal discredit, when back in power, the Democrats did not restore it. The former Maine Governor had WPA murals reflecting similar sentiments painted over and this seems to be the case in other states as well.

Cancel Culture has been a major tool of Conservatives for generations, whether hiring Pinkerton thugs to suppress demonstrations or banning books like *Robin Hood* and blacklisting radicals throughout the industrial and agricultural revolutions and teachers during the McCarthy era. Witness the similarities today in legislation against teaching history or accommodating people with differences. What a parcel of snowflakes.

As to the sainted Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, perhaps enlightened citizens of N.H. could designate an EGF Day or even call March EGF Women's History Month.

Jim Tartari
Wellesley, Mass.
Jim:

What an excellent suggestion. Why not? If we declare it, perhaps people will celebrate. [Clears throat...]

In honor of The Rebel Girl's 133rd Birthday, the Nation's Oldest Newspaper™ declares Monday, August 7, 2023 to be Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Day.

Let's see the Governor try to veto that.
The Editor

**Yet Another Diatribe Against
Godless Multi-Familyism**
To the Editor:

A recent article in the *CT Examiner* characterized the issue perfectly: "... at the behest of paid lobbyists and 'hive minded' salaried pro-development advocates, there is a strong and powerful effort to usurp the authority of your local planning and zoning commission. Several Bills under serious discussion in Hartford seek to destroy local decision-making and replace it with top down 'as of right' development, thereby shredding any notion of local control."

This problem, currently evident in New Hampshire, was inspired by the UN's idea we should live in 'human settlements' without cars, no more building on single lots, and current suburban areas need to be forcibly integrated to achieve economic and racial 'equity.'

Libertarians claim it's about the 'right' to do as they wish with their property. Nonsense! If you don't like zoning, move to Dalton or Grafton where the residents have voted *not* to have it. But if you buy in a town already organized by commercial, multi-use and single family, don't expect a single family-zoned neighborhood to be forced to allow an apartment building. Let's face it, this is nothing but social engineering by central planners at the state and federal levels. Libertarians need to face up to what it is they are actually supporting.

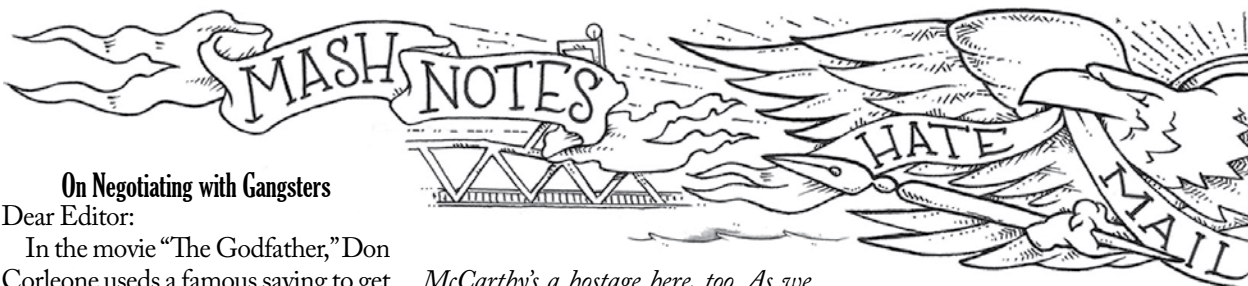
Do voters know that [the] defeated HB44 bill would have desecrated many single family neighborhoods in N.H. towns? They will keep trying. And we will keep educating and opposing.

Jane Aitken
Bedford, N.H.
Found [sic], Bedford Residents Assn.

Jane:
Let's begin by clarifying a term. What you are quoting here is not an article. It is a letter to the editor. The terms are not interchangeable. At least, not while we edit this old rag.

There's a fine line—particularly here in New Hampshire—between respecting existing local control of land use regulations and xenophobia. Are you sure you're on the right side?

We'll probably never know, unless Bedford were to surprise us and vote to loosen regs on its own.
The Editor



On Negotiating with Gangsters
Dear Editor:

In the movie "The Godfather," Don Corleone uses a famous saying to get what he wanted from his adversaries; "Make him an offer he can't refuse." In the discussions to resolve the pending debt ceiling disaster, I suggest that President Biden use the opposite approach with Speaker McCarthy: Make him a reasonable offer he can't accept.

President Biden could offer McCarthy a compromise where he would agree to existing spending cuts with the provision that for every dollar cut from spending, McCarthy would agree to raise taxes on the wealthy and corporations by one dollar.

This is a reasonable proposal that would accomplish two goals; resolve the debt ceiling crisis, and lower the budget deficit and debt. I think the majority of Americans would see this compromise as fair and would support it. Unfortunately, Speaker McCarthy would not be hard pressed to accept such a reasonable proposal because he has allowed a very small extreme right-wing group of his caucus to take control over his ability to govern.

This proposal would be a win-win for President Biden and the nation. On the chance that McCarthy accepts the proposal the two goals would be achieved, and the tax increase would be owned by both parties. However, if McCarthy refuses to accept this proposal, the Republicans would be correctly seen as uncompromising obstructionists and be blamed for the devastation caused by a default. The only other option available to Biden is to invoke the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, which may or may not be legally possible. Our financial and national security are at stake.

Rich DiPentima, LTC, USAFR, Ret.
Portsmouth, N.H.
Rich:
A creative approach, but, as you say,

McCarthy's a hostage here, too. As we write this response, the entire matter is up in the air. The global economy is in the hands of a bunch of goobers who, in the words of our 36th President, "wouldn't know how to pour piss out of a boot if the instructions were printed on the heel."

Kind of makes you wonder if the much-vaunted Constitution is everything it's cracked up to be.
The Editor

**New UN Condemnation Against Spain
For Repression Of
Catalan Independence Movement**
To the Editor:

On May 18, 2023, the UN Human Rights Committee condemned Spain for violating the political rights of Catalan President Carles Puigdemont when it suspended him as a deputy in 2018.

On October 1, 2017, Puigdemont's government had held a referendum on Catalonia's self-determination that received the attack of 10,000 Spanish police officers against voters. Despite the aggression, the referendum was held and had a result that, in the face of the Spanish government's refusal to negotiate, led the Catalan Parliament to declare independence, but the people were not urged to defend it to avoid a bloodbath. The Spanish government reacted by illegally dismissing the Catalan government and imposing elections. The pro-independence parties won them and the Catalan Parliament decided to invest Puigdemont, who was in exile in Belgium to avoid being unjustly imprisoned, as were other members of his government, as President. But the Spanish Justice prevented his telematic investiture and suspended Puigdemont and other deputies.

The UN sentence condemns Spain for having violated Puigdemont's right to exercise as a political representa-

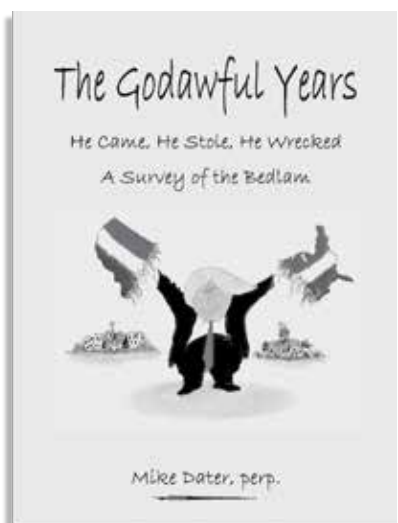
tive, which constitutes "the essence of democratic government," and for also violating the right of the citizens who had voted for him. In order not to humiliate Spain, the sentence has wanted to give him the reason in something and has not condemned the Spanish demand that Puigdemont had to be present at the investiture. [Note: We find the preceding sentence confusing. We have chosen not to tamper with it, though, and rely upon the context to get the general sense of it. — The Ed.] It is true that there is no right to be invested telematically, but it was the solution that the Catalan Parliament had found in the face of the evidence that he would be unjustly imprisoned if he returned to Barcelona, something that the sentence also recognizes.

The Committee gives Spain 180 days to take the necessary measures and disseminate the sentence. At the moment we have been able to observe that the Spanish press was hiding the news and that, from the Spanish government, the vice-president Nadia Calviño has rushed to lie, assuring that the sentence demands that Puigdemont must return to be judged before the Spanish Justice.

Precisely, on January 31, 2023, the EU Court of Justice ruled that a request for extradition of an exile can be rejected if the requested person belongs to an "objectively identifiable group" of persons whose rights are at risk of being violated. This paves the way for the judgments of the European Justice that will be published shortly where, most probably, they will conclude that the Spanish Justice has a systemic failure with respect to the "objectively identifiable group" formed by the Catalan pro-independence supporters.

Despite the fact that the political power of the EU looks the other way,

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a compendium of drawings by Mike Dater most of which first appeared in *The New Hampshire Gazette*
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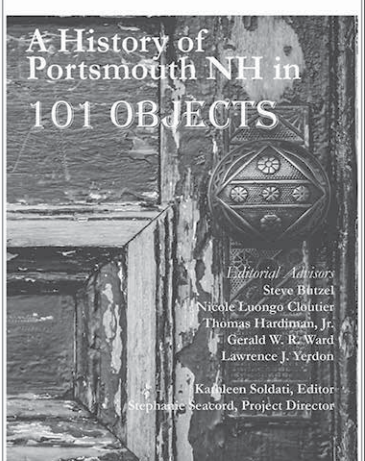
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the European Justice is revealing that there is a situation totally unworthy of the EU regarding how Spain faces, with antidemocratic methods, the problem with Catalonia. Spain has sent police to repress peaceful voters, abuses judicially suspending deputies and preventing free debate in the Parliament of Catalonia, catalogs non-violent protests as acts of rebellion and terrorism, imprisons politicians and peaceful activists, invents accusations through secret police groups that carry out illegal activities (case “Operation Catalonia”), spies illegally with Pegasus politicians, activists and lawyers (case “Catalan Gate”), dehumanizes the independence supporters using the media as a propaganda tool, ...

The European political power proposes that we solve this conflict by negotiating with Spain, but if these people suffered the abuses they are inflicting on us, they would understand that there is no basis for fair play that would allow real negotiations.

This abusive praxis comes from the bad faith rooted in Spain since its modern conformation (in 1714), when it chose to politically eliminate Catalonia and any trait of differentiated identity, with the sole purpose of keeping it subdued and draining it economically. That is why the military Baldomero Espartero in 1847, after bombarding Barcelona to quell a revolt, declared: “For the good of Spain, it is necessary to bombard Barcelona every 50 years,” something that has been happening regularly. It is not a conjunctural problem, it is a problem of origin. That is why we want our freedom and we will get it with or without the help of the EU.

UN Resolution
https://www.elnacional.cat/en/politics/united-nations-condemns-spain-breaching-rights-catalan-puigdemont_1028091_102.html

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Jordi Oriola Folch
Barcelona, Catalonia
Jordi:
We continue to follow this matter with considerable interest. Thank you for keeping us informed.
The Editor

Hey, Get Your Fresh-Picked, Low-Hanging Cherries Right Here

To the Editor:
The House of Representatives voted to raise the debt limit to address the bloated spending bill Democrats passed last December that exceeds our current legal debt limit. Our nation won't default on our debt unless Senate Democrats and President Biden reject this bill and won't negotiate something else.

The Feds collect about \$350 billion monthly. That's more than enough to pay for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans benefits, similar benefits, and interest on our debt, unless President Biden chooses to intentionally harm senior citizens, Veterans, poor people, and our country.

Months ago Speaker McCarthy requested meetings to avoid a debt crisis. Democrats refused to discuss a mutually acceptable debt limit increase plan

to deal with the spending problem they caused.

The Debt Limit was increased three times under Trump, but only after Democrat demands to increase spending were addressed.

The House bill makes minor (too minor IMHO) reductions in future spending by cutting unnecessary items.

It removes funding Democrats provided to double the IRS to focus more on middle and lower income people who can't afford high-priced tax advisors.

It removes funding from various pork projects. Wealthy families (up to \$300,000) shouldn't get \$7,500 subsidies for electric cars. The Federal Government shouldn't fund city parks or make 87 percent of taxpayers, mostly without college degrees, pay off student loans of typically more wealthy college graduates.

The House bill cuts spending to the 2022 level which was itself inflated due to the now finally ended pandemic.

Our nation's \$31.4 trillion debt already threatens our nation's existence and the freedoms and prosperity of future Americans.

The House bill increases the debt limit to address the Democrat caused problem. Will the Democrats create a debt crisis just to reward their supporters? Maybe, we'll see.

Don Ewing
Meredith, N.H.
Don:
We'd like to have a word with your op-tometrist; something tells us your vision is somewhat skewed.

Relatively inconsequential budget items prioritized by Democrats loom as huge threats.

Meanwhile enormous drains on the Treasury—tax cuts heaped on tax cuts—are apparently invisible.

Also, and pertinent to that latter point, either your gullibility is acting up again, or you're trolling us. Do you expect us to believe that you believe your Republican

History Repeats Itself

*But sooth is seyð, go sithen many yeres,
That “feeld hath eyen and the woode hath eres.”*
– Geoffrey Chaucer, “The Knight’s Tale”

The old saying goes that fields have eyes and forests ears; no secrets could be kept for long in olden times: not murders, robberies, infidelities, what have you. All came to light eventually, justice finally for the guilty, balance restored.

Would that it were so in Chaucer’s day or in our own. Where should I begin? Injustice is a fact of life. Ask George Floyd, Emmett Till, Joe Hill, Little Turtle, or Rebecca Nurse. The list is endless, and keeps growing.

What to do? Give up? Play dead? I wish I had a good answer. Whenever students used to say, “That’s not fair,” I’d ask them just what planet they imagined they were living on. But that’s not fair. I owe them something more than cynicism.

Still, they’ll find out soon enough that privilege will, like dukes and earls, rape peasant girls and get away with it, the poor man hanged for stealing bread to feed his starving kids. Ever was it so, and ever shall be. Broken-hearted world without end. Amen.

– W.D. Ehrhart

cronies, who obviously want to gut the IRS, are looking out for the little guy?

A full 25 percent of the national debt was created during The Former Guy’s administration. Where were your concerns then?

The Editor

Alas, Oliver...

To the editor,
Because someone couldn't be bothered to respect the speed limit on Newcastle Avenue, an entire neighborhood that was fond of him and someone who loved him dearly are without the companionship of a cat who, in the time allotted him, likely

crossed that road safely a few thousand times. Rest in peace, Oliver.

John Simon
Portsmouth, N.H.
Dear John,

In your subject line, you raised the question of whether we publish “letters like this one”. Never having received such a letter before, we have no precedent on which to rely. We are left to judge this one on its own merits.

There is, however, an underlying principle which is relevant here. We do not feign impartiality when it comes to cats.

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

Davies
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What do we choose to remember with memorial markers, buildings and community projects?

Origins Story

In 1623, David Thomson settled at Odiorne Point. 2023 celebrates 400th Anniversary

To learn more about memorials and what else we choose to remember go to PortsmouthGenome.org Join the conversation.
A Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum project.

HUD-VASH HELPS VETERANS GET AND STAY HOUSED. YOU CAN HELP, TOO.

HUD-VASH is a partnership between the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the VA’s Supportive Housing unit. It helps homeless Veterans with housing, employment, recovery (both mental health and substance abuse) and independent living.

HUD-VASH is no longer accepting donations of used furniture, &c. The Homeland Heroes Foundation in Salem, N.H. does: homelandheroesfoundation.org.

HUD-VASH does have a dedicated fund for purchasing new items veterans may need. Donations to that fund may be sent to The VA Medical Center, 718 Smyth Rd., Manchester, N.H. 03104-7007. HUD-VASH should be included on the subject line. Every penny will go into home goods for veterans.

For more information, contact:
VA Supportive Housing Program Manager
(603) 624-4366 X6883

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The Alleged News®
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happen: Make the wealthiest pay their fair share and it finances investments in education, transportation, and more,” tweeted Congressional Progressive Caucus Chair Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.).

Jayapal touted federal legislation she introduced with Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) in 2021—the Ultra-Millionaire Tax Act—that would levy a two percent annual tax on the net worth of households and trusts above \$50 million, plus a one percent annual surtax on billionaires.

An analysis by University of California, Berkeley economists Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman found that the legislation would bring in at least \$3 trillion in revenue over 10 years without raising taxes on 99.95 percent of American households worth less than \$50 million.

Last month, Warren, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), and Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-Calif.) introduced the For the 99.5 Percent Act, which would impose a 45 percent tax on estates worth between \$3.5 million and \$10 million, a 50 percent tax on estates worth between \$10 million and \$50 million, a 55 percent tax on estates worth between \$50 million and \$1 billion, and a 65 percent tax on estates valued at over \$1 billion.

Meanwhile, congressional Republicans are trying to repeal the estate tax entirely—and pass other tax policies to serve the rich.

Back at the state level, California, New York, Illinois, Maryland, Connecticut, and Hawaii have also introduced wealth tax bills this year, while Washington’s law was upheld by that state’s Supreme Court in March.

“If the federal government won’t act,” California Assemblymember Alex Lee (D-24) said while intro-

ducing a wealth tax bill in January, “we the states will.”

Brett Wilkins is a staff writer for Common Dreams. This work is licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). Feel free to republish and share widely.

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How the For-Profit/Nonprofit Model is Bolstering Coverage at The Berkshire Eagle
By Dan Kennedy

One of the more interesting business models for local news that Ellen Clegg and I have encountered in our work is what you might call the hybrid for-profit/nonprofit. For-profit organizations such as *The Mendocino Voice* in Northern California, *The Colorado Sun*, the *Storm Lake Times Pilot* in Iowa and *The Provincetown Independent* have either set up nonprofit arms or are working with existing nonprofits to raise tax-exempt money that can be used to support certain types of public interest jour-

nalism.

This past Monday, Fredric Rutberg explained how that model is working at *The Berkshire Eagle*, the Pittsfield, Massachusetts-based paper that he and several other business leaders rescued from the hedge fund Alden Global Capital back in 2016. A retired judge, Rutberg is now publisher and president of the *Eagle*. He spoke at the spring conference of the NorthEast Association of Communication Executives, held in Meredith, New Hampshire.

After Rutberg and his partners acquired the *Eagle*, he said, they considered—and rejected—the nonprofit model. Among other things, they wanted to maintain the paper’s editorial voice, and nonprofits aren’t allowed to endorse political candidates or specific pieces of legislation.

“Our editorial page is very important to us,” he said. “We were very proud to be among the first five or six papers in the country na-

tionally to endorse Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump.” And though he conceded the impact of that endorsement was “marginal,” the paper’s editorial voice really matters when it comes to candidates for local office. “We think we have something to say,” he said. “We don’t want to give that up.”

But with advertising on the wane, the paper faced a dilemma—especially when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, wiping out the *Eagle*’s nascent events business. Just before COVID, the paper raised four times the \$10,000 it asked for in order to hire a Report for America corps member to cover the Statehouse. With that in mind as “proof of concept,” the *Eagle* set about looking for a more comprehensive way of seeking donations to bolster its news coverage.

What it hit upon was the Berkshire Eagle Local Journalism Fund,
to next page

Mash Notes, Hate Mail, &c.
from page five

We are pro-cat.

Dogs tend to indiscriminately fawn over their owners, in a way that, it seems to us, implies a certain craven neediness amongst their so-called owners.

Cats, on the other hand, through their aloofness, impose upon their human associates an awareness of their autonomy—allowing for certain dietary needs, &c., of course. Thus they embody, on a small scale, all the mysteries of the universe.

[Fish, we would argue, encased in their aqueous dungeons, are likely oblivious to their supposed owners’ existence. In this manner they provide an object lesson re: the universe’s indifference to our existence.]

So, yes, we will publish this letter—not just because we are pro-cat, but because the community has suffered a loss which merits recognition.

We never met Oliver, but we would have liked to. We regret that now we never shall.

Our sincere condolences to you, and to

the neighborhood.
The Editor

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What Do Republicans Really Care About?
To the Editor:

You can see which days members of the U.S. House of Representatives are scheduled to be in Washington, D.C. by looking at their Congressional calendar, which is posted by the House Majority Leader. This year they are scheduled to work 113 days in D.C. They take off all of August. There are approximately 260 weekdays in a year. Ten of them are Federal holidays. They are at work less than half the year and you, the taxpayer, pay to fly them home after any week they work.

I bring this up because the House Republicans threatened to make the country default on its debts if President Biden did not agree to kick the poor off the food stamp program if they did not work at least 80 hours in a month.

Eight hours a day times 113 days is 904 hours. Eighty hours a month times 12 months is 960 hours. The GOP is insisting the poor work

more than they do.

If the GOP really cared about deficits, they would fire half of Congress and tell those remaining to work a full year for a full paycheck and not insist on starving the poor.

Walter Hamilton
Portsmouth N.H.
Walter:
“If the GOP really cared about deficits...”

What, we wonder, does the GOP really care about?

If they cared about deficits they’d rescind some tax cuts. Reagan’s, Bush’s, Trump’s—lord knows there are plenty to choose from.

If they cared about children’s vulnerability to sexual predators, they’d sure as hell be keeping a closer eye on each other—not to mention their preachers.

If they cared about their own constituents being shot, they’d tighten up regulations—as their constituents want them to do.

If they cared about the truth, they’d shut their yaps for a while.

If they cared about the country, they’d resign.

This is not to say that Republicans are completely nihilistic, though. There is only thing we can be sure they care about, and that is themselves.

The Editor

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to next page

The Perennial Matter of the U.S.S. Liberty
Dear Editor:

Thank you for your comments on the *U.S.S. Liberty*, and for the followup...

Yes, the Israelis always claimed the attack on the USS Liberty was a case of “mistaken identity,” believing *Liberty* was the *El Qusier* (an Egyptian freighter) despite the fact (facts—those irksome, pesky, ever-present little devils) *Liberty* was flying a 13-foot long U.S. Flag (the holiday colors), the ship’s designation (GTR-5) was clearly printed on both sides of her bow, and *U.S.S. Liberty* was clearly printed across her stern. Also, the *El Qusier* was one-quarter the displacement of and looked nothing like the *Liberty*.

Fighter pilots are well-trained in ship identification. They have to be for obvious reasons. The Israelis lied, and they (and the United States) knew they lied and America (wrongly) has always accepted that lie.

Approximately a year ago a reporter for Al Jazeera (Shireen Abu Akleh) was killed by Israeli military personnel as she covered an Israeli raid on Jenin, a West Bank Palestinian refugee camp. Then Israeli police brutally attacked the pallbearers carrying Abu Akleh’s casket. Israel said

it would investigate what happened but I have never been able to determine whether any investigation ever took place. History teaches us Israel has little interest in accountability.

David L. Snell
Franklin, N.C.

David:
Our policy is this: as long as the truth is being suppressed, the attempted sinking of the U.S.S. Liberty remains newsworthy.

Since our last issue was published, we have spent some time with the U.S.S. Liberty Veterans Association Documentation Center—the URL for which is ridiculously long; better to Google it. Briefly, based on what we’ve found there, our working hypothesis at this point is this: Moshe Dayan ordered the attack, intending to put the Liberty on the bottom. The Israeli higher-ups were presented with a fait almost-accomplish. Captain McGonagle and the crew performed a miracle—one which LBJ and the Pentagon found inconvenient. Maybe someday, if our workload eases up, we can present a more fleshed-out version.

As for the U.S. casting aspersions on Israel for lack of accountability, though, that’s a bridge too far. Who are we to cast the first stone?

The Editor

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to next page

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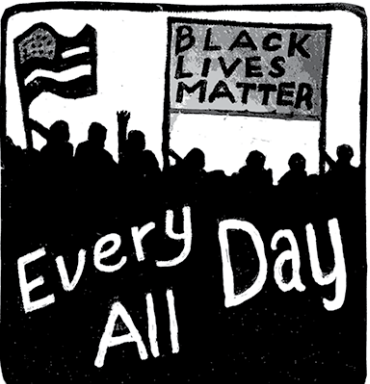
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A Hydrogen Revolution is Coming

Green Hydrogen (G-H2) will be key new player in our planet's Clean Energy Future.

It was a great disappointment for us to hear that New Hampshire opted out of the New England H2 research hub application for funding. This is a great time to explore the possibilities of using H2 energy. With N.H. not part of the New England H2 research hub team, will Massachusetts or Maine be chosen when the Gulf of Maine wind farm needs a mainland connection? What else will New Hampshire miss out on? Must our children, wanting to work in clean energy, leave our state for work? We think Governor Sununu and the N.H. Department of Energy should rethink their decision to sit out the Federal H2 research hub planning initiative. N.H. should find a way to participate in this forward-looking effort. Hopefully the University of New Hampshire and other academics will be involved.

The Federal government initiative included funding of \$3.6 billion to create six to 10 Clean H2 Research Hubs across the country to investigate the uses of H2 as an energy carrier. Unlike the rare earth ingredients needed for lithium-ion batteries, H2 is abundant worldwide. G(Green)-H2 can be produced and used in a variety of ways. Hard-to-decarbonize areas of the economy, such as industrial use, railroad systems, the airline industry, and large transport trucks currently cannot economically benefit from Li-ion battery systems. They are too heavy and take too long to recharge. To transition from our current fossil fuel economy, we must look for new

energy fuels and systems that are renewable (able to be used repeatedly), sustainable (easily produced and affordable in price) and clean (no greenhouse gas emissions, and without negative impacts to our environment).

Currently federal and state subsidies have been directed towards EV vehicles, solar PV panels and wind turbines for electricity generation. These are popular because we all are comfortable with using electricity daily. However, electricity is only approximately 30 percent of our energy usage. The other 70 percent includes industrial use (e.g., steel making), transportation, and heating needs.

The primary reason why G-H2 is such a good fuel is because it is very versatile. G-H2 can be derived from water using renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar. Worldwide, G-H2 generation has become much cheaper because of the lower cost of renewable energy, the lower cost of electrolysis to produce G-H2 and increasing demand for G-H2.

However, not all H2 molecules are created equal. Based on the way that H2 is produced, there are a variety of H2-colors (see *The Hydrogen Revolution*, by Marco Alvera). For example: Green H2 is produced using only renewable energy sources, Pink H2 is produced using nuclear energy, Grey H2 is produced from natural gas or coal while emitting CO2, Blue H2 is Grey H2 but with CO2 capture, Dark Green H2 is produced from biomethane with CO2 capture, and Turquoise H2



Hydrogen fueled Hyundai Elec City bus on the Jamsil Bridge in Seoul, South Korea. Photo by Youngjin. (CC BY-SA 3.0).

is produced from natural gas using pyrolysis. For a green and renewable energy future, the goal would be to only produce and use G-H2.

Unlike batteries that discharge their stored energy in just a matter of hours, G-H2 is mobile and can be compressed as a gas or made into ammonia and stored indefinitely in already existing, safe facilities. It packs enough punch to power hydrogen fuel cell cars, trucks, and trains. It can even power ships and eventually replace natural gas to heat our homes and buildings.

European and Japanese firms have already developed the machinery to make G-H2 and use it. If the U. does not quickly get involved in G-H2, our country could be playing 'catch-up' over the next few decades. Hybrid car technology was more quickly taken advantage of by Japan than the U.S.

Germany is already operating H2 fueled commuter trains. Italy

is already using large amounts for heating and industrial use. Toyota has been supporting a hydrogen fuel-cell vehicle fleet in California for the past five years. Toshiba has been operating the Fukushima H2 Energy Research Field for three years. It's powered by 1,620,000 square feet of solar panels that convert water into G-H2. The G-H2 is compressed and stored to power fuel cells that go online automatically to quickly generate electricity and balance out the natural fluctuations solar and wind systems cause in local power grids. For more information, contact us at: peter.somssich@gmail.com.

Let's get N.H. on the Green H2 train, before it leaves the station.

Hydrogen Advocates of N.H.
Kent Howard, Community Energy Activist, Author, Journalist
Peter Somssich, former State Representative, Science Technology & Energy Committee

==~==

Two Joes vs. the People of Appalachia

by Jim Hightower

If poohbahs of the national Democratic Party wonder why working-class families, which once formed the party's solid base of political support, have gone astray—they might ponder the awful message they're sending by constantly smooching Sen. Joe Manchin's flab-bay tail.

The multimillionaire, West Virginia coal baron and anti-democratic "Democrat" is demanding that a massively-polluting pipeline, named Mountain Valley, be rammed through rivers, watersheds, national parks, towns, farmlands, home-steads—and down the throats of the people of West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina. Why? Money. The senator's fossil fuel funders, who own the project, want the federal government to mandate construction of their corporate boondoggle.

For a decade, gutsy grassroots groups have rebelled and defeated these Wall Street profiteers, and the people of this Appalachian region are still adamantly opposed. But here comes Biden to rescue Manchin and his fossil fuelers with a dirty backroom deal overruling the will of the people. Proclaiming that he wants to advance America's conversion from fossil fuels to renewable energy, Biden is pushing a bill to make it easier and faster to get federal approval for new energy projects. Fine. But his bill specifically greases the skids for more fossil fuel projects. And guess which one is first in line for quick approval? Yes, Brother Joe Manchin's Mountain Valley Pipeline.

Continually pumping fracked gas across three states would produce a mess of leaks and spills, but the project would also emit some 40 million metric tons of planet warming gas a year—equivalent to the annual pollution of 10 coal plants. As the Natural Resources Defense Council puts it, "We won't build the clean energy economy of the future by doubling down on the dirty fuels of the past."

For information and action on this raw deal by the two Joes, connect with Appalachian Mountain Advocates: aprovoices.org.

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The Alleged News®

from page six

in partnership with the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. The nonprofit foundation, Rutberg explained, accepts donations to help the *Eagle* pay for coverage of education, health, economic development, and arts and culture. The *Eagle* held back from a public campaign during COVID, with Rutberg saying he thought that would be "impolitic" given that the pandemic had forced the paper to cut back the number of days it appears in print (from seven to five).

Last November, though, the *Eagle* launched its first public drive, raising nearly \$80,000 from the community

as well as a major gift of \$150,000. The *Eagle* is planning a second public drive this October and has established an endowment fund, as well, although Rutberg said that's gotten off to a slow start.

Following several cutbacks during COVID, the *Eagle* is expanding, Rutberg said. Though print circulation continues to shrink, paid digital circulation has risen from 2,700 pre-COVID to about 7,200 today. An arts reporter was hired recently, and the *Eagle* has started a quarterly magazine—*The B*.

Some of the largest for-profit papers in the country, including *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*, accept grant money to cover certain beats or publish journalism

produced by nonprofits like Pro-Publica. The *Philadelphia Inquirer*, a for-profit, is owned by a nonprofit, the Lenfest Institute, which helps pay for coverage at the *Inquirer* and other news outlets.

What makes smaller for-profits like the *Eagle* unique is that they're making use of nonprofit money to help pay for their journalism on an ongoing basis and not just for a few narrowly defined beats. After all, the four areas Rutberg identified comprise a substantial part of his paper's coverage.

Nonprofit journalism has emerged as a leading solution to the local news crisis. But it's important for there to be a viable for-profit alternative as well—even if they are

bolstered in part by nonprofit funding.

Dan Kennedy is a professor at Northeastern University's School of Journalism, specializing in opinion journalism and alternative business models for news. His website, *Media Nation*, at dankennedy.net, covers "the press, politics, technology, culture and other passions." *Media Nation* is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 United States License.

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"All successful bunko men come in time to believe the world, except for themselves, is populated with a race of human sheep who may be trusted to conduct themselves with true sheeplike docility." —Dashliel Hammett



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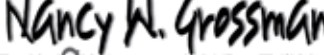
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