

The Fortnightly Rant

Moby Donald and the GOP

Well, here we are now. Sheesh. It's like life is just a never-ending process of trying to get used to things you never imagined could ever happen.

Eventually it will end, of course, but what the hell. We'll burn that bridge when we get to it. In the meantime, stuff—if the reader will kindly pardon the euphemism—is in fact happening. So, let's dig in. Who's got the manure fork? *

Former President, primary front-runner, presumptive Republican nominee, and Energizer Blowhard™ Donald J. Trump was charged with 37 felonies in Miami on Tuesday. Here's how Fox News treated the event:



In case that's hard to read—and because it warrants repeating—we'll describe the image: it's a screenshot taken from "Fox News Tonight," and brazenly cribbed by us from the *New York Times*. A split screen shows President Joe Biden behind a podium on the left, and former President Donald Trump on the right. Across the screen beneath them, the chyron reads, "Wannabe Dictator Speaks At The White House After Having His Political Rival Arrested."

"Fox News Tonight" is the name Fox News assigned to the time slot formerly occupied by Tucker Carlson. Our condolences to anyone who had hoped his firing might reduce the volume of that daily dose of will.

Unfortunately, the same reality-defiant attitude also prevails at

* Note to urban dwellers: We are not making up this term to suit our immediate purposes. A manure fork is a specialized pitchfork with extra tines set closely together.

the other, more hoity-toity end of Rupert Murdoch's quasi-journalistic schtick.

Last Saturday the Editorial Board of the *Wall Street Journal* called the Trump indictment "destructive," and asked, "Do prosecutors understand the forces they are unleashing?" Nice country you've got there. Too bad if anything should happen to it.

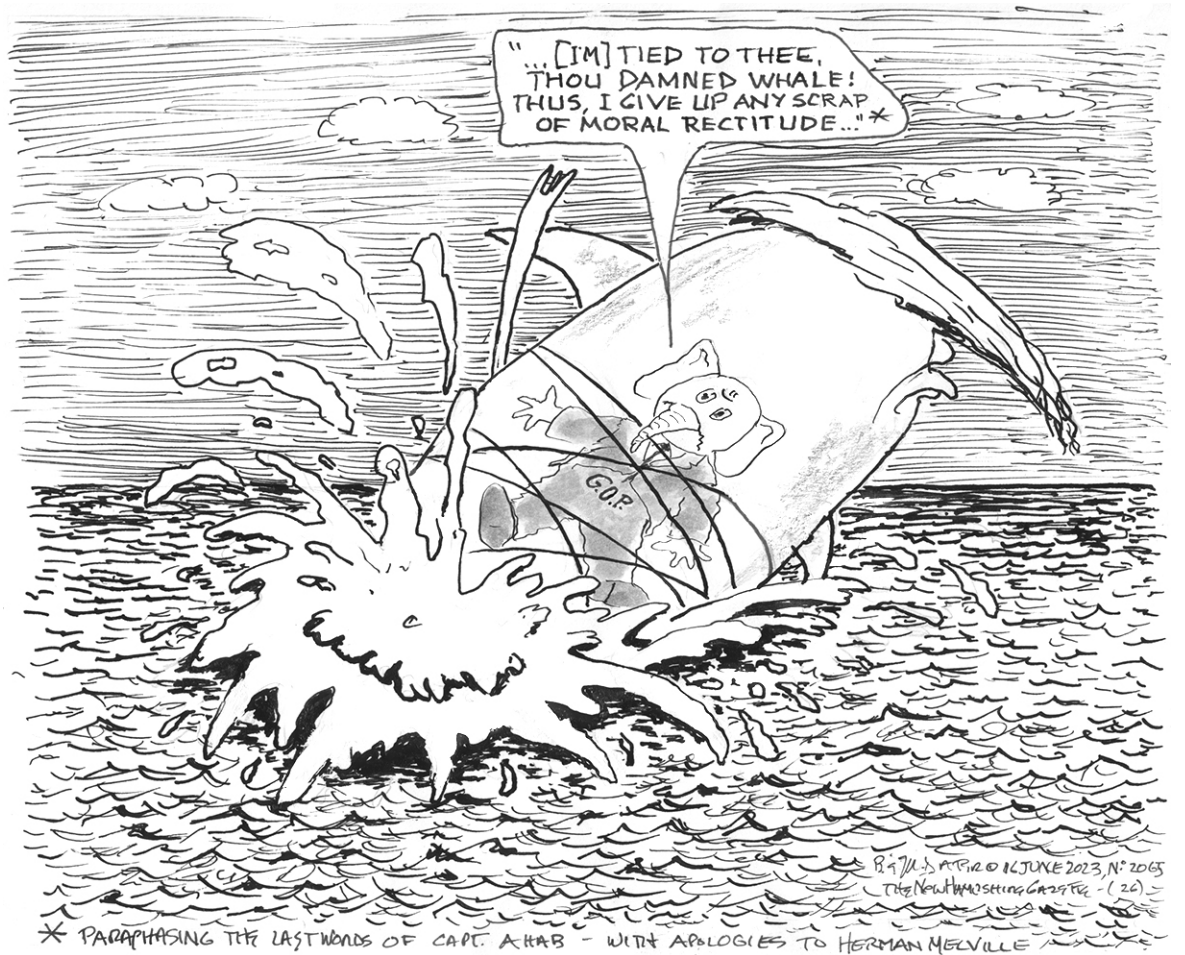
As we reiterated a few issues back, Ronald "Government is the Problem" Reagan and Roy Cohn invited the Murdoch propaganda machine to establish a beachhead on these shores. Now, decades later, the halls of Congress are awash with spillover from the toxic crap-valve opened by the now-dead hand of the Gipper.

A week ago House Speaker Kevin McCarthy told Fox News Digital, "This is going to disrupt this nation because it goes to the core of equal justice for all, which is not being seen today. And we're not going to stand for it."

So, the Legislature is going to interfere with the proceedings of the Justice Department, part of the Executive Branch? Sounds legit (insert sarcasm emoji).

"This is a very dark day in America when you think about what they're trying to indict President Trump on," McCarthy told Fox News Digital. "You've got a sitting president right now in the exact same situation. [Note: *This is not true.* – The Ed.] You have a former first lady, senator, secretary of state, that had the same situation [Note: *This is not true, either.* – the Ed.] that nothing was done to [Note: *Actually, the opposite is true. You have a former first lady, &c., &c. and a former president, who, whatever other manifold sins they undoubtedly committed, were hounded for years over nothing.* The Ed.]"

If McCarthy truly has such a skewed view of justice, he ought to pass a bill that would, once and for all, incorporate it into the U.S. Code.



Composer Frank Wilhoit set out the basic principles in March, 2018:

"There is no such thing as liberalism—or progressivism, etc.

"There is only conservatism. No other political philosophy actually exists; by the political analogue of Gresham's Law, conservatism has driven every other idea out of circulation.

"There might be, and should be, anti-conservatism; but it does not yet exist. What would it be? In order to answer that question, it is necessary and sufficient to characterize conservatism. Fortunately, this can be done very concisely.

"Conservatism consists of exactly one proposition, to wit:

"There must be in-groups whom the law protects but does not bind, alongside out-groups whom the law binds but does not protect.

"There is nothing more or else to it, and there never has been, in any place or time."

No modern Republican, though, could ever be that honest.

Wilhoit was arguing against, not for, this vision of conservatism. This is what he was for: "The law cannot protect anyone unless it binds everyone; and it cannot bind anyone unless it protects everyone."

What we have is all against all. Two days before his arraignment, Trump "ReTruthed" [re-posted] something a follower had put up on "Truth Social," his social media app. Its text read, in part, "This is not a game. This is war. ... Will you fight? Will you defend?"

This bellicose blather was superimposed over a photo showing Trump, flanked by medal-bedecked men in military uniforms, striding towards the camera across the playing field at an Army-Navy football game.

Ignoring the piquant irony of putting this bone-spurred chickenhawk forward as an exemplary warrior,

let's skip to the advertisement which immediately follows it.

That ad touts the Girsan † MT 14 T, a .380 caliber semi-automatic pistol with a Tip-Up Barrel™—"The perfect handgun for concealed carry, especially for people that may have issues using a standard pistol."

What would those issues be? Lacking the hand strength necessary to rack the slide back and chamber a round. In three photos labeled Lock, Load, and Fire, a pair of obviously geriatric hands demonstrate that even members of Fox News's demographic can do their part to rid the nation of traitors.

† Girsan is a Turkish private company. Beyond that we've been unable to learn who owns it. According to hurriyetdailynews.com, Turkey's presidential security personnel—which had previously used Newington, N.H.-made Sig Sauer weapons—switched to Girsan and other Turkish-made weapons in October, 2017—five months after President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's bodyguards kicked and beat nine protestors in Washington, D.C.

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The Golden Rule Sails Again – Visits Portsmouth Next Week

Albert Bigelow was commanding the destroyer escort *U.S.S. Dale W. Peterson* as it sailed into Pearl Harbor when he learned that Hiroshima had just been destroyed by an atomic bomb. He soon concluded that "morally, war is impossible," and resigned from the Naval Reserve a month before becoming eligible for a pension.

As time went on, Bigelow's convictions only deepened. In 1955, he and his wife Sylvia, by now members of the Religious Society of Friends, hosted two "Hiroshima Maidens"—young Japanese women disfigured by atomic bombs who had come to the U.S. for plastic surgery.

Using facts, logic, and argument, Bigelow and numerous colleagues tried again and again to slow the

nuclear arms race. Faced with official indifference, they looked for a new way forward. In January of 1958, they put their bodies where their hearts were. In 2010, Lawrence Wittner wrote about their plan for *Truthout*:

"...Bigelow and three other pacifists wrote to President Dwight Eisenhower of their plan to sail the *Golden Rule* into the U.S. nuclear testing zone in the Pacific. For years we have spoken and written of the suicidal military preparations of the Great Powers," they declared, "but our voices have been lost in the massive effort of those responsible for preparing this country for war. We mean to speak now with the weight of our whole lives."

After a difficult journey from San

Pedro, California, the *Golden Rule* arrived in Honolulu to find a federal court had issued an injunction barring the crew from proceeding any further. They went anyway.

"Overtaken by the U.S. Coast Guard on their journey to Enewetak, they were arrested, tried, convicted and placed on probation," Wittner wrote. "Undaunted, they set sail once more. ... Once again, their voyage was halted by U.S. authorities, and they were arrested, tried, convicted and—this time—given sixty-day sentences and imprisoned."

The *Golden Rule* never made it to the Enewetak Proving Ground, but it accomplished its mission by proxy.

As Wittner relates, Earle and Barbara Reynolds, accompanied by

their two children, sailed their own 50-foot yacht *Phoenix of Hiroshima* and reached the proving ground on July 1, 1958, announcing their presence by radiotelephone. Reynolds was tried, convicted, and sentenced to two years in prison.

"These events, which received considerable publicity, triggered a surge of activism," according to Wittner. "Picket lines sprang up around federal buildings and AEC offices all across the United States. In San Francisco, 432 residents—proclaiming that they were guilty of 'conspiring' with crew members—petitioned the U.S. attorney to take legal action against them. Reynolds, out on bail before a higher court ruled in his favor (and, implicitly, in favor of the crew of the *Golden Rule*),

gave a large number of talks on radio and television, as well as to college, high school and church audiences, on the dangers of nuclear testing."

We don't know if Bigelow's letter ever reached Eisenhower. We do know that 18 months after it was sent, public opinion had turned against nuclear testing. On August 31, 1959, during a televised conversation with Canadian Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, Ike said, "I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it."

After helping to spark a global movement, the *Golden Rule* slipped

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from page one

into obscurity. She sank twice, and was refloated. In 2015 she was re-launched, after thorough restoration, by members of Veterans for Peace. Since then she has sailed the West Coast, and voyaged to Hawaii.

Her visit to Portsmouth next week is part of its 2022 - 2023 Great Loop Tour: from Minneapolis to New Orleans, around Florida and up the East Coast. From here it will be Down East to the St. Lawrence, and on to the Great Lakes.

The festivities will begin with an official Mayor's Welcome at the Prescott Park "Free Speech Zone"* at 11:00 a.m. Thursday, June 22nd.

Visitors will be able to view the 39-foot gaff-rigged ketch and and talk with the crew between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th.

A Community Farewell will commence at 6:45 p.m. Saturday, June 24th, at the South Church, 292

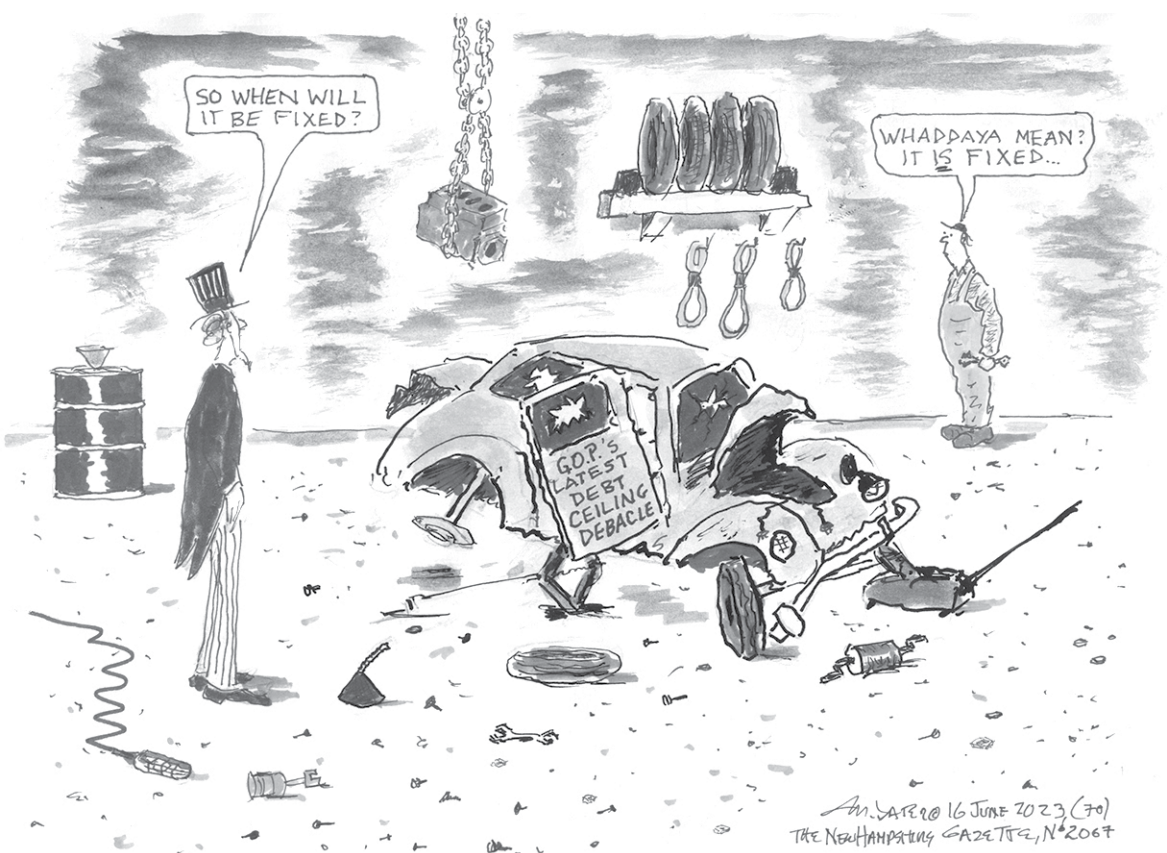
*For the record, we object to the term "Free Speech Zone." It implies that there are zones in which free speech may be prohibited. We use it in this instance because it occurs in the source material used to prepare this news item.

State Street. The Leftist Marching Band will kick things off with a half-hour of Early Bird Merriment. The event will be free; donations will be accepted.

Commissioners Mum in Response to Flynn Marker Petitioners
[Note: We received the following release on June 5th. We called Transportation Commissioner William Cass for comment on Monday, but he has not deigned to reply. — The Ed.]

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE—The initiators of a petition for a historical roadside marker at the Concord birthplace of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn say they have received no response to their latest call for the marker to be preserved and reinstalled.

"Following the removal and retirement of Historical Marker #278 for Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, we are writing to get your assurance that the marker's integrity will be protected and that it will not be defaced, destroyed or transferred out of the possession of the state of New Hampshire," Mary Lee Sargent and Arnie Alpert wrote in a letter they hand delivered on May 22nd to Sarah Stewart, Commissioner



Last Saturday was unique, since there can only ever be one Portsmouth N.H. 400 Grand Parade. Considering the local propensity for excellence in this art form, it goes without saying that the challenge was met. Here the Ancient Mariners Connecticut make effective use of a ship's cannon to induce flashbacks to the War of 1812.

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municipalities, agencies, organizations, or individuals in accord with a process outlined by the DHR.

In their May 22 letter, Sargent and Alpert also asked the commissioners to preserve all records of the Flynn marker's creation, installation, and removal, "including notes and minutes of meetings in which it was discussed and correspondence between state officials."

Arnie Alpert, of Canterbury, is the creator of the website, *NHRadicalHistory.org*. His "Active with the Activists" columns appear frequently in *InDepthNH.org*.

Mary Lee Sargent, of Bow, has decades of experience teaching American history at community colleges and universities in Illinois and New Hampshire.

Both Sargent and Alpert have decades of experience in movements related to labor, feminism, and protection of civil liberties.

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**Could We Actually End the CEO Defense Contractor Gravy Train?**  
by Sam Pizzigati

Could corporate CEOs anywhere in the universe have a deal much sweeter than U.S. defense contractor chiefs?

The CEO at CybeCys, Inc., a

Texas-based defense contractor, might quibble with that question. He isn't feeling all that much sweetness these days. Last month, federal prosecutors announced a deal that will have this CEO and CybeCys pay over \$283,000 in penalties and damages for cheating on two Covid-era federal loan programs.

The CybeCys CEO seems to have transferred hefty chunks of taxpayer dollars into his own personal investment accounts and used those dollars, prosecutors charge, to buy up "securities, exchange-traded funds, and cryptocurrency."

Federal officials brought all sorts of firepower to bear on this case. The U.S. attorney's office for the Eastern District of Virginia, the IRS criminal investigation office, and the Small Business Administration's office of inspector general all had a hand in bringing CybeCys and its CEO to justice.

Need any more assurance that the feds have corporate profiteering off defense contracts under eagle-eye control? How about this: In 2023, under the terms of the 10-year-old Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, no top exec at a U.S. defense contractor can directly pocket over \$619,000 in tax dollars.



Once again Market Square Day dared the weather to do as it might. Once again, Market Square Day got away with it. Masked against our contemporary plague, our would-be Brueghel ventured out. If he thinks he's getting combat pay, he's going to be disappointed.

Alas, both this \$619,000 annual CEO pay "cap" and the CybeCys penalties amount to nothing more than pure show. Federal defense contracting remains among the lushest of playgrounds for America's rich.

Just how lush a playground? The United States, the Peter G. Peterson Foundation detailed earlier this spring, last year spent more on defense than the next ten highest defense-spending nations combined. The federal budget deal just brokered by the White House and the House majority leader ups that defense spending 3.3 percent. Defense contractors will pocket about half the resulting \$886 billion.

A little perspective from Popular Information's Judd Legum: Just eight years ago, the national defense community had to somehow make do with over \$300 billion less.

But making do with "less" doesn't come easy to that community's corporate titans, folks like Dave Calhoun, the CEO at Boeing, the nation's second-largest defense contractor.

This past March, Boeing's annual

filings revealed that poor Calhoun had missed his initial CEO "performance" targets and would not be receiving the \$7-million bonus promised his way when the Boeing board hired him in 2020. Calhoun, as a result, had to be content with a mere \$22.5 million in 2022 compensation.

The Boeing board clearly agonized over the decision to dock Calhoun that \$7 million, so much so, notes *Seattle Times* aerospace reporter Dominic Gates, that board members earlier this year felt duty-bound to grant their CEO over the next three years an extra stack of shares—"not contingent on company performance"—worth some \$15 million at today's share value.

Investigators with the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the GAO, may have had incidents of executive excess just like that in mind when they concluded back in 2019 that the Department of Defense needed to "comprehensively assess" its contract financing arrangements, something the DoD hadn't done since 1985. This past April, the DoD released an analysis that attempted

to do just that.

"In aggregate," this new DoD analysis concludes, "the defense industry is financially healthy, and its financial health has improved over time." The nation's "traditional major defense contractors" are "out-performing" their commercial counterparts "in many key financial metrics."

But despite this "increased profit and cash flow," the DoD found, corporations with massive defense contracts have chosen "to reduce the overall share of revenue" they spend on R&D and capital assets. They've put their higher profits instead into "significantly increasing the share of revenue paid to shareholders in cash dividends and share buybacks." Those dividends and buybacks have jumped by an astounding 73 percent!

"Operating in the DoD environment," the DoD report deadpans, "has its advantages."

And defense contractor CEOs have been lining their pockets ac-

**The Alleged News®**  
to page six

**Murph's Fortnightly Quote**

*"If you can convince the lowest white man he's better than the best colored man, he won't notice you're picking his pocket. Hell, give him somebody to look down on, and he'll empty his pockets for you."*

— Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973)

*"It ain't what we don't know that bothers me so much, it's all the things we do know that ain't so."*

— Moses Abramovitz

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**Does Zoning Affect Racism and Poverty?**  
To the Editor:

Here is yet another attempt to link something that has absolutely no cause/effect.

Proponents of eradicating single family zoning are now claiming that your desire to live in a SF [single family] neighborhood is the reason for "segregation and exclusion" and "... associated with inadequate access to affordable housing and with the segregation of people by income, race and ethnicity..."

From an article on the website *Governing.com*, headlined, "Single-Family Zoning Linked With Income and Race Segregation":

"An analysis of zoning laws in Connecticut finds people in single-family areas are likelier to be white and have higher incomes than those in areas that allow more housing. The findings add to a growing recognition of how zoning is linked with segregation and exclusion."

Balderdash.

This movement to eradicate single family zoning is alive and well in New Hampshire, supported by your Republican Governor and so-called "libertarians," authors of the "Zoning Atlas" [*ZoningAtlas.org*]. Some even think HOA's should be illegal and it's their job to march in and destroy the agreements residents have made of their own free will.

It's all part of the great reset, AFFH, and Agenda 2030.

Drive a stake into it before it destroys the New Hampshire Advantage.

Jane Aitken  
Bedford, N.H.

Jane:  
Sorry. Your peremptory deployment of the archaic "balderdash" might impress the audience at a Bedford Planning Board meeting, but it cuts no mustard here.

The Home Owners Loan Corporation [HOLC], created in 1933, and the Federal Housing Act [FHA] the following year, made it possible for the first time for Americans to buy homes with 20- or 30-year mortgages. Provided they were white, of course.

The FHA covered the banks' risk.

How to minimize the risk to the FHA? That was the HOLC's job. It created color-coded "Residential Security Maps." Guess what? Neighborhoods that were predominantly occupied by whites were classified as "desirable." Less-desirable neighborhoods were color-coded yellow or red—hence the term, "redlining."

Can you say "Structural Racism?"  
The Editor

=====  
**Give Me Patriarchy, Or Give Me Death**  
To the Editor:

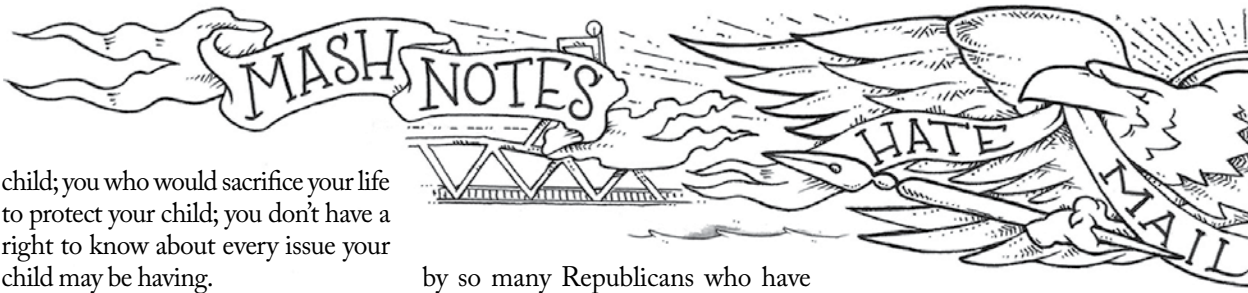
What do parents do when their child's behavior changes significantly? They wonder why. If there's a problem, they want to fix it.

Without an obvious explanation such as family, friend, pet, or growth-related problem, parents seek input from anyone they think might help, e.g., siblings, teachers, coaches, doctor. Parents assume that everyone will want to help fix your child's problem.

Unfortunately, that may not be true. New Hampshire Democrat [sic] legislators (Democrats) stopped a Parental Rights Law (SB272) that would require school employees to provide honest and complete responses to parents', except known abusive parents, inquiries.

Democrats decided that some people, i.e., school officials including teachers, can withhold information from parents, including about a student's gender confusion or inclinations. People who may barely know your child. People who often poorly do the job for which they were trained. People who may be introducing your child to sex or gender ideas for which he/she is not mature enough. People who may be confusing your child about his/her gender e.g., by asking your son/daughter if he/she is really a boy/girl. People who may be taking advantage of your child and telling your child to keep secrets from you. Democrats decided that these people can withhold information from you, your child's loving parents.

The Democrats who stopped the Parental Rights bill say that you who gave birth to this child, feed, clothe, protect, teach, encourage, and love this



child; you who would sacrifice your life to protect your child; you don't have a right to know about every issue your child may be having.

Did you vote for Democrats so they could make parents worry, watch their child suffer, and struggle to identify their child's problems while schools withhold the information parents need to help their child?

Don Ewing  
Meredith, N.H.  
Don:

*Rather than try to address the sum of all your fears simultaneously, we'll approach this methodically.*

*First, Republicans propose a law that requires teachers to rat out their kids.*

*This is actually impressive, in a depressing kind of way. We would not have guessed that anyone in the state GOP could read German well enough to crib from an East German law book.*

*The Stasi, it is said, had one secret policeman for every 166 East Germans. That's not good enough for our local branch of Authoritarians International, though. They'll see your one in 166 and raise it to one in 30.*

The Editor

=====  
**Bring Out the Bibles**

Dear Editor:

Yesterday the *New York Times* reported that Mark Meadows, one of the founding members of the Republican far-right Congressional Freedom Caucus, and former Chief of Staff for Trump, testified before a federal grand jury in the investigations led by Special Counsel Jack Smith. It is not known whether he testified about the January 6th insurrection or the documents taken from the White House when Trump left office. After the testimony, one of Meadow's lawyers stated that "Mr. Meadows has maintained a commitment to tell the truth where he has a legal obligation to do so."

That statement tells us all we need to know about the level of integrity, honesty and dedication to the truth held

by so many Republicans who have served and are currently serving in positions of leadership in our country. As such we cannot believe any statement coming from people like Meadows unless they would be in legal jeopardy for not telling the truth. Of course, this should not be a surprise since we were subjected to thousands of lies from Mr. Trump and his administration during his four years in office.

Americans deserve better than a level of honesty and integrity from our leaders than one that only applies if there would be legal consequences for not telling the truth. What amazes me is that a lawyer for Mr. Meadows actually came out and admitted that his client's commitment to honesty was only conditioned on a legal obligation. That sounds more like a lawyer for a mob boss than a former Congressman and Presidential Chief of Staff.

Rich DiPentima  
Portsmouth, N.H.

Rich:  
*Thanks for pointing this out. It truly is an astonishing confession. Of course, it's been lost in the overwhelming flood of bizarre, self-incriminating statements Republicans have been vomiting forth since...well, let's give Newt his due. Plenty of Republicans lied before him—the name Nixon rings a bell. Newt was a pioneer, though, in the art of sculpting a fictional reality from the ground up, one lie at a time.*

*Since we're now stuck in this mendacious metaverse, we propose that Republicans should never be quoted unless they've sworn an oath under penalty of perjury.*

The Editor

=====  
**The Truth About The Debt Ceiling "Crisis"**  
To the Editor:

Hey, what was this debt ceiling crisis really all about?

Was it about cutting spending? Nope. Reducing the deficit? Are you

kidding me? Was it because the Dems were wrecking the economy and piling up debt? Nope, wrong political party. How about protecting the wealthy? Bingo!

Some history.

Reagan—he cut taxes on the wealthy, producing some of the biggest peacetime deficits ever seen. Clinton got the economy back in order and left a surplus!

Bush immediately gave giant tax cuts to the (do I have to spell it out?) wealthy, and left the country in The Great Recession. In the process, **Bush tripled the national debt.**

Obama got the economy back in order, substantially reducing deficit spending. Then Trump massively cut taxes on the needy (just kidding) on the wealthy, raised the national debt by 40 percent! Nary a peep out of the Republicans.

And Biden? He actually reduced deficit spending.

So, what did the R's take off the negotiating table: no taxes on the wealthy or corporations, no closing of tax loopholes, reduced money for the IRS which was going to use that money to go after wealthy tax cheats. A move that is estimated will cost \$1 Trillion in tax revenues!

This whole debt ceiling crisis was to protect the wealthy from paying their fair share. That means the rest of us pay more.

So, if you want both higher taxes and larger deficits to pay for tax breaks for the wealthy and corporations, vote Republican!

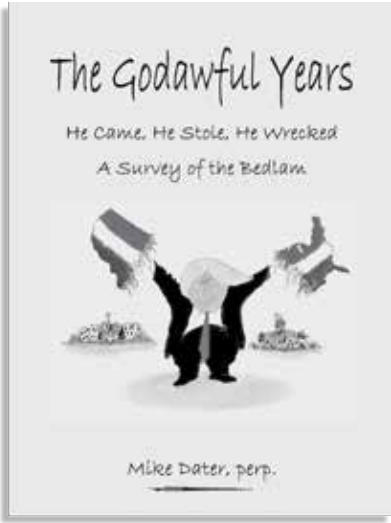
Michael Frandzel  
Portsmouth, N.H.

Michael:  
*You know who's really to blame here? The Democrats.*

*It's the bottom of the ninth—because in American politics, it's always the bottom*

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a compendium of drawings by Mike Dater most of which first appeared in  
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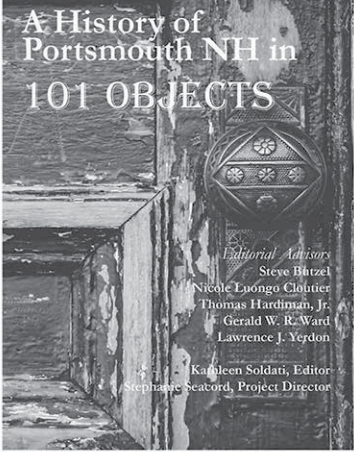
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of the ninth. There's a donkey at the plate. An elephant walks from the mound to home plate, a silver platter balanced on the end of its trunk. On that platter is a softball. The elephant stops, holds up the motionless softball, and waits for the donkey to swing.  
The donkey, of course, trips over his own feet and is called out by the ump.  
The Editor

Can We Handle the Truth?  
Dear Editor,  
America operates a culture of flattery.

We flatter ourselves that we are resilient, beautiful, intelligent, equitable, caring, powerful, spiritual, democratic, and the list goes on.  
Business flatters us endlessly because they want us to buy their products. Here's an ad I saw on TV recently: "The only thing stronger than us is you," (because you wear Depends).  
Politicians flatter us that we are great and heroic and unstoppable because they want our votes.  
Churches flatter us that we are the elect of God, so we will continue to fill the plate with donations.  
Even the Federal Reserve tries to flatter the people with its policies, regularly raising interest rates and saying that since we are so rational, we will slow down our borrowing and spending, and that will stop inflation. Nope, it won't and it doesn't.  
Americans are under the impression that we can become powerful and resilient merely by endlessly repeating those words in front of a mirror. Doesn't really work that way, does it? Imagination is not reality.  
What actually is in the minds, hearts, and hands of Americans is false pride, greed, lust, ignorance, jealousy, hate, dishonesty, delusion, gluttony,

sloth, anger, and the list goes on.  
That's not a list of religious sins. That is a secular and realistic indictment of our personal and national condition.  
Kimball Shinkoskey  
Woods Cross, Utah  
Kimball:  
Guilty as charged.  
The Editor

How To Elect Trump  
To the Editor:  
I am writing to urge you and your loyal readers (of which I have been one since 2004) to give serious consideration to the presidential candidacy of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
First, we need to get this out of the way: the "anti-vaccine" label is a corporate media smear; please don't fall for it. He has always said that he is in favor of safe vaccines, but we can never be sure of their safety or efficacy as long as our regulatory agencies are under the thumb of the pharmaceutical industry.  
If you suspend your judgment long enough to watch his Boston campaign launch speech (no teleprompters, speaking straight from the heart for two hours) you will see a man whose intelligence, compassion, courage, and integrity make every presidential candidate we've seen for the past 50 years look like a cardboard cutout of a real candidate. His priorities will make your heart sing: end regulatory capture, begin to dismantle the American empire, address the dismal state of American health, and most importantly, protect and restore our environment. This planet cannot afford another four years of corporate Democrats giving half-hearted lip service to the environment. As an environmental lawyer, Kennedy has spent his career fighting to protect the natural world from corporate polluters. Our planet needs him desperately.  
Many liberal Democratic candi-

dates, such as Bernie Sanders, have promised to get corporate money out of our government, but only Kennedy has the experience to actually do it. He has a thorough understanding of what he calls "the corrupt merger of state and corporate power" and pledges to end it. Imagine if the EPA actually protected the environment! With Kennedy in charge, that could happen. Like his uncle, but unlike every other president we've seen since then, Kennedy has the integrity and strength of character to stand up to the bureaucracy that will surround him as president.  
Lastly, Kennedy is the only conceivable candidate who can heal the divide between right and left that is tearing our country apart. He knows that our corporate rulers love this fighting, because it keeps us occupied while they continue to stripmine our country with impunity. He speaks in a way that has broad appeal to people on both sides of the political spectrum. He has a vastly greater chance of winning the general election than the almost universally disliked and/or pitied Biden.  
In short we haven't seen a candidate of his caliber since 1968. Please consider supporting him.  
Rachel Wakefield  
Farmington, N.H.  
Rachel:  
It is only by the application of nearly-superhuman restraint that we refrain from fulminating yet again about the anti-democratic idiocies of the American electoral system. Every four years the stakes get higher. This would be the case even if all we had nothing to worry about except carbon dioxide emissions. Add in some mass extinction, some forever chemicals, and pretty soon you're talking about real looming problems. If ever there were a time for a political system that functioned, this would be it. But nooo...  
Into this conundrum walks a guy with huge name recognition, a member, it could easily be argued, of the nation's most exalted political dynasty. And, in his wake, a baggage train of the sort that used to re-



The Portsmouth N.H. 400 Grand Parade was... well, it was grand, of course. It was grand in ways both large and small. The unabashed exuberance of these spectators is obvious. Less so, perhaps, due to the challenges inherent in black and white reproduction, is the tastefulness of the hamburger-themed hat.

quire a battalion of native bearers.  
We confess we have not made the herculean effort required to pierce the prevailing image which has been imposed on RFK Jr.—that of an anti-vax crank. We are only arguing that it would be a huge strategic error to expect millions of Americans to undertake that task.  
The Editor

Hold Him To His Word  
Dear Sir:  
August 18, 2016, Charlotte, North Carolina: "In my administration, I'm going to enforce all laws concerning the protection of classified information. No one will be above the law."  
Those were the words of then-candidate for President Donald Trump. Considering the recent 37-count indictment, including violations of the Espionage laws, obstructing an investigation, and sharing classified information with individuals without proper security clearances and who were not authorized to see such information, I would hope that Mr. Trump's 2016 statement would also apply to him.  
What many Trump supporters fail to understand is the actual process of obtaining an indictment, as well as the function and makeup of a grand jury.

Neither the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Attorney General, nor the President of the United States determine who and if someone is indicted for crimes. The DOJ, based on credible evidence of possible crimes initiates an investigation into whether crimes may have been committed. If such a determination is made a grand jury is established to hear all the evidence and facts gathered by the investigation and then the grand jury determines if the evidence is strong enough to charge an individual with a crime or crimes. A grand jury consists of average citizens selected at random from the community where the alleged crime or crimes took place. The members of the grand jury are not DOJ employees, or related to the government's investigation in any way. The grand jury that recently indicted Mr. Trump were all citizens selected from Southern Florida communities. It can take months or longer for a grand jury to hear all the evidence and make a determination as to whether an indictment is warranted. Anyone claiming that this process is a political witch hunt or an abuse of power by the DOJ, or that the Presi-

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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](http://PortsmouthGenome.org)  
Join the conversation.  
A Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum project.

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

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

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cordingly. In 2021, the most recent year with complete stats, the nation's top five weapons makers—Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, General Dynamics, and Northrop Grumman—grabbed over \$116 billion in Pentagon contracts and paid their top two dozen execs some \$287 million, Pentagon-watcher William Hartung noted this past December.

Taxpayers are generously subsidizing these more-than-ample paychecks, adds Hartung, the Center for International Policy arms program director. Corporate giants like Boeing and Raytheon depend on government contracts for about half the dollars they rake in. Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, and Northrop Grumman depend on those contracts for at least 70 percent.

"Huge CEO compensation," Hartung observes, "does nothing to advance the defense of the United States and everything to enrich a small number of individuals."

That huge CEO compensation has nowhere to go but up once the new budget deal brokered by the White House and the House majority leader kicks into effect. But even before this deal, the Institute for Policy Studies National Priorities Project calculates, the "milita-

rized portion" of the federal budget already accounted for 62 percent of all discretionary federal budget dollars.

We have precious little to show for this enormous expenditure of national treasure.

"The post-9/11 'war on terror,' for example, has cost more than \$8 trillion and contributed to a horrific death toll of 4.5 million people in affected regions," the National Priorities Project points out. "Meanwhile, a U.S. military budget that outpaces Russia's by more than 10 to 1 has failed to prevent or end the Russian war in Ukraine."

So what can we do? The National Priorities Project analysts, in their latest report, advance a variety of steps that begin with immediately reducing the national military budget by at least \$100 billion and reinvesting the savings in non-militarized discretionary priorities.

Progressive members of Congress, meanwhile, have also been pushing for a major change in contracting standards. Rep. Jan Schakowsky's "Patriotic Corporations Act" would give companies with modest pay gaps between their top execs and typical workers a leg up in the bidding for federal defense contracts.

Or we could go the FDR route. In the months right after Pearl Harbor, the nation needed a major boost in revenues to wage and win the new world war. President Roosevelt and

his New Dealers believed that those revenues should come first and foremost from the nation's most affluent.

At a time of "grave national danger," FDR told Congress in April 1942, "no American citizen ought to have a net income, after he has paid his taxes, of more than \$25,000 a year," about \$465,000 in today's dollars. Later that same year, a presidential executive order limited top corporate executive pay to \$25,000 after taxes, a move, Roosevelt pronounced, needed "to correct gross inequities and to provide for greater equality in contributing to the war effort."

Conservatives in Congress would eventually beat back that executive order, but FDR had, by that time, successfully recast the defense-revenue debate. The political battle would be fought on Roosevelt's terms—not on whether to tax the rich, but on how much. By the war's end, America's wealthy would be paying federal taxes on income over \$200,000 at a 94 percent rate.

That top rate would hover around 90 percent for the next two decades and help give birth, in the process, to the first mass middle class the world had ever seen. Miracles can happen.

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 Plutoc-

racy that Created the American Middle Class, 1900-1970. Twitter: @Too\_Much\_Online.

—==—

House Hearing Puts "GOP Tax Scam 2.0" in Spotlight

by Kenny Stancil

House Republicans are poised to advance regressive taxation measures that would increase the federal deficit just weeks after they nearly blew up the global economy over ostensible concerns about the U.S. government's debt, eliciting condemnation from Democratic lawmakers and progressive advocates.

The Republican-led House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing Tuesday to mark up the so-called American Families and Jobs Act (AFJA), which packages three bills: the Tax Cuts for Working Families Act, the Small Business Jobs Act, and the Build It in America Act.

This trio of bills—dubbed the "GOP Tax Scam 2.0" by the panel's ranking member, Rep. Richard Neal (D-Mass.)—would expand Trump-era tax cuts whose benefits flow overwhelmingly to corporations and the wealthy. In the wake of demanding—and winning—sharp reductions in anti-poverty spending along with other reactionary reforms during negotiations to raise the debt ceiling, the GOP-controlled House is now moving to starve the federal government of essential revenue.

"It didn't take long for the MAGA

majority's alleged debt 'concerns' to go right out the window in pursuit of more wasteful tax breaks for their billionaire donors and corporations that ship jobs overseas," Liz Zelnick, director of Economic Security & Corporate Power at Accountable.US, said in a statement.

"If the recent past is prologue, the MAGA majority will try to pay for their trillion-dollar corporate tax giveaway on the backs of average Americans, including devastating cuts aimed at seniors, veterans, and the food insecure," said Zelnick. "Once again, the MAGA House majority has only corporations and the wealthy in mind."

Zelnick's sentiment was echoed by Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee.

"This is the most ill-considered piece of legislation that I've witnessed in years in front of this committee," said Neal. "Just 10 days after our Republican colleagues were prepared to bring the nation to the brink of default... to the precipice, if not over the edge, they now come back with a tax cut."

"Apparently, the debt only matters if it's about spending, never about tax cuts," said Neal, who lamented "\$10 trillion of tax cuts" enacted in 2001, 2003, and 2017—years when Republicans held both chambers of

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dent has any influence in this matter, simply does not understand how the system operates.

Mr. Trump will have his opportunity in a court of law, before a jury of his peers, to refute the DOJ's evidence, provide witnesses that could support his claims of innocence, and present any evidence to support his claims of innocence. It will then be up to the trial jury to determine his innocence or guilt on any or all the counts he is charged with.

This is how the system works, and

just as Mr. Trump indicated in his 2016 statement, it should apply to anyone and everyone mishandling classified information, including Mr. Trump himself.

Rich DiPentima, LTC, USAF, Ret.

Portsmouth, N.H.

Rich:

As we write, the Miscreant-in-Chief is due in court to answer the 37 felonies. Perhaps he will surprise us all and say what he really thinks: "Your Honor, or whatever—didn't I appoint you? OK, then—Not Guilty. It's like Nixon said. If I did it, it wasn't illegal."

The Editor

Evidence of Questionable Upbringing

Dear Editor:

I heard Donald Trump's voice on BBC radio, saying, "They came for me, and they'll come for you." That's fear-mongering. What a way to control others! Of course if you break laws and it's found out—maybe because you left so many clues to your identity—"they" will come for you, "they" being the enforcers of law in our country of laws.

I sometimes wonder, you folks who support Trump—would you be undisturbed if your adult children or grandchildren compulsively broke laws? If so, what was your upbringing? You didn't have high expectations of them, of the kind of lives they'd lead? It'd been the same for you? Did no one care if you kept your nose clean or not? (Meaning

that instruction—"Please keep your nose clean and stay far away from the troublemakers.")

I really wish I could understand what motivates Trump's devoted followers who overlook his bad behaviors.

Lynn Rudmin Chong

Sanbornton, N.H.

Lynn:

How well the Editor remembers being asked, "Were you born in a barn?" Extended bouts of obstreperousness might elicit the command, "Go play in traffic." One common reply to impertinence was, "Walk east 'til your hat floats." It was a different world in those days.

It is a question for the ages: how did this nation—founded, as it was, by persons of such spotless character and piercing intellect that their names

must never be invoked except in tones of awe—produce an electorate gullible enough to put its highest office in such tiny hands?

To answer this question, we propose a Manhattan Project-scaled study of self-esteem. We suspect it may be a fifth elemental force, which deserves study alongside electromagnetism, gravitation, and those other two forces, the rather vaguely-named weak and strong interactions. Our working thesis is that an individual with a sufficient quantity of unwarranted self esteem might constitute a critical mass.

Just as a critical mass of an unstable radioactive element can cause a sustained nuclear chain reaction, so might a critical mass of unwarranted self-esteem cause a sustained chain reaction of uncontrolled dumbassery.

The Editor

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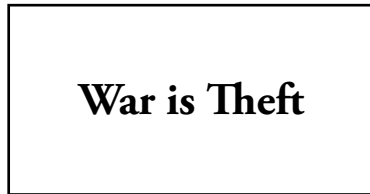
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# Happy Birthday, Henry the K

by W.D. Ehrhart

Henry Kissinger, the former U.S. National Security Advisor and Secretary of State, recently celebrated his 100th birthday. Marking the occasion, all sorts of public figures have been praising his long lifetime of accomplishments and contributions to our nation.

CNN's David Andelman noted enthusiastically that Kissinger is "still teaching us the value of *'Weltanschauung'*." Roughly translated, it means "how the world works," also known as "realpolitik," or "if you've got the power to do what you like, screw morality or justice or right and wrong; just freakin' do it" (my translation).

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach called Kissinger "a great statesman" and "political genius" as well as a "great sports enthusiast" (tennis, anyone?). The British Foreign Policy Office has called him "the wizard of the western world." Former *New York Times* editor Barry Gewen describes Kissinger as "a philosopher of international relations who [still] has much to teach us." Hillary Clinton calls him "a friend" whose counsel she often relied on.

I find myself wondering if these people are talking about the same Henry Kissinger I am. The man who helped engineer the overthrow of the legally elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende, arguing that the people of Chile had to be saved from their own irresponsibility,

and ushering in mass murder and decades of iron dictatorship.

The man who supported the 1971 genocidal war Pakistan waged against Bangladesh that resulted in anywhere from 300,000 to 3 million deaths (no one knows for sure). The man who green-lighted the 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor that killed at least 100,000 civilians. The man who backed the military coup in Argentina in 1976 that may have been more brutal and murderous than the one in Chile.

The man who willingly encouraged and supported the secret bombing of Cambodia that killed as many as 150,000 civilians and opened the door for the Khmer Rouge—a previously marginal and powerless organization—to take control of Cambodia, resulting in "the killing fields" of many thousands of additional innocent human beings.

The man who had the audacity and indecency to accept the Nobel Peace Prize in the wake of the 1973 Paris Peace Accords that supposedly ended the Vietnam War, but in fact ended nothing. (His co-winner was North Vietnam's Le Duc Tho, the only person ever to decline a Nobel Peace Prize, recognizing that the award was meaningless, and the war would—and did—go on for another two plus years.)

The man who bragged that "power is the ultimate aphrodisiac."

I'm tempted to argue that Henry the K is living proof that the good die young. But that doesn't really



Former U.S. Secretaries of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Henry Kissinger at the Atlantic Council Distinguished Leadership Awards ceremony, 2013. Photo (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).

hold up because Daniel Ellsberg has made it at least to 92, and he's certainly as good as they come.

Kissinger once—maybe more than once—described Ellsberg as "the most dangerous man in America." The magnitude of the irony of that assertion is beyond description.

But then, the irony that Kissinger not only remains unindicted, untried, and unconvicted as a war criminal, but is still widely respected and revered, is equally difficult to wrap one's mind around. (I rather imagine that those who respect and revere him fully embrace his "just try to stop us" approach to international relations along with an unshakable belief in American Exceptionalism.)

Not long ago, Ellsberg expressed to me some disappointment that Kissinger would outlive him. I replied at the time that there was still time for Henry the K to go first.

And there is still time, at least as of this writing, but the prospects aren't looking good.

I will be profoundly sad when Ellsberg finally shuffles off this mortal coil, as kind and decent and courageous a man as anyone I've ever known, a man who turned his back on power because he came to understand that such power was corrupt and dishonest and hypocritical and immoral, and he could no longer be a part of it.

Kissinger, on the other hand, embraced such power, reveled in it, basked in it, and still does to this day. I will not be sad to see the last of Heinz Alfred Kissinger.

~~~~~

W. D. Ehrhart is a retired Master Teacher of History & English, and author of a Vietnam War memoir trilogy published by McFarland & Co.

The Unreported News About Your "Newspaper"

by Jim Hightower

Why would your local newspaper not even mention an important local news story? Perhaps because it's a damning story about the conglomerate owner of the paper.

This month, hundreds of journalists working for major dailies in some two dozen cities across America joined in an extraordinary mass walkout from their jobs. They were protesting the rank greed, gross mismanagement, and abandonment of democratic duty by the owner of their papers. That owner is Gannett, a massive financial conglomerate that has grabbed control of more than 200 dailies in 43 states. This is a huge, multidimensional news story about news itself—but where was the coverage?

Big Story Number One: Unbeknownst to most people in these communities, they no longer have a local daily paper—control over everything from news content to price now belongs to beancounting strangers at Gannett headquarters hundreds of miles away.

Big Story Number Two: More fundamentally, control has moved from journalists to bankers. Gannett is owned by SoftBank, a Japanese hedge fund that has rapaciously looted American newsrooms to grab extravagant fees, salaries, and profits for its rich financial hucksters.

Big Story Number Three: The workaday hometown reporters, photographers, and others who actually produce Gannett's papers are making a gutsy stand against the profiteer, not just for themselves, but for the essential ideals of journalistic integrity and grassroots democracy.

Biggest Story of All: Gannett's 200+ papers cravenly joined in a concerted blanket cover-up of this momentous story, stifling the public they're supposed to serve and disrespecting the ethical stand of their own employees. Even Gannett's flagship paper *USA Today*—which regularly reports on other labor actions—took a dive on covering the journalistic malfeasance of its own overseer.

To fight hedge fund corporatization of journalism, local news, and democracy go to newsguild.org.

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Congress and the White House.

Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.) derided what he called the GOP's "tax scam 2.0" as one of the worst sequels in history.

"After months of some of you actually liking the idea of keeping other people hostage, some of you are back to the single issue that unites your party: Tax cuts for the well-off," Pascrell said in a message to Republicans on the panel. "It's far past time to retire" the argument that "tax cuts 'pay for themselves.' They just don't. You can't prove it."

Among other things, the AFJA would expand corporate and business tax breaks enacted in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) approved

by congressional Republicans and signed into law by then-President Donald Trump in 2017.

If the new proposal were to pass, the richest one percent of U.S. households would receive \$28.4 billion in tax cuts (an average of \$16,560) next year, compared with \$1.4 billion for the poorest 20 percent (\$40, on average), according to Steve Wamhoff, federal policy director at the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. Because foreign investors own a substantial share of stock in U.S. corporations, they would also receive \$23.8 billion next year under the legislation.

House Ways and Means Chair Jason Smith (R-Mo.) has claimed that the cost of the tax cuts would be offset through a repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act's clean

energy tax credits. But as Wamhoff explained in an analysis published earlier this week, deliberately hindering the nation's renewable energy transition would impose additional costs "in the form of greater climate damage."

Moreover, "the true costs are hidden by budget gimmicks," Wamhoff noted. "The most important budget gimmick is that the legislation enacts the biggest tax cuts for only two years even though its proponents plan to extend them in the future, making them, in effect, permanent."

According to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget: "The bill would cost \$80 billion over a decade with interest (\$19 billion before interest), including \$320 billion through the end of fiscal year (FY) 2025. The smaller 10-year cost is

driven by several factors but mainly by the fact that most of the bill's tax cuts expire at the end of 2025. We estimate that the plan would cost over \$1.1 trillion (\$950 billion without interest) through 2033 if these temporary tax cuts and extensions were made permanent."

The benefits of the 2017 TCJA "never trickled down," Americans for Tax Fairness tweeted. "Instead, the rich got richer and corporations made bigger profits. We should be repealing the Trump tax cuts, not making them permanent."

~~~~~

Kenny Stancil 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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