

The Fortnightly Rant

It's... Alive?

Finally, the 2024 First in the Nation™ Presidential Primary Election® is showing signs of... life?

The suspense is over; the date has been set: New Hampshire's favorite pastime, its quadrennial civic extravaganza, will come to a dramatic conclusion on Tuesday, January 23rd.

If it's alive, though, what's up with those neck bolts? In all seriousness, we should probably add an asterisk to the typographical fruit salad which traditionally encumbers our textual references to the presidential primary.

According to the Democratic National Committee, New Hampshire will not be holding a primary. Oh, we can do whatever we like of course, this being a free country. The DNC says our primary won't count, though, because Secretary of State David Scanlan set the date too early.

President Biden agrees with the DNC, naturally. It was his idea to let South Carolina hold the first primary. His, and Rep. James Clyburn's [D-S.C.]. Clyburn and his Palmetto State Democrats salvaged Biden's campaign after Bernie Sanders gave him a tremendous shellacking here in 2020. A politician afraid to reward his friends and punish his... non-supporters is in the wrong racket.

Scanlan had no choice but to act as he did. State law requires that our primary be held at least seven days before any other similar election. If he had failed, not only would he be derelict in his duty, he'd have to answer to the wrath of James R. Splaine, the Portsmouth legislator who wrote the law.

So, President Joseph Robinette Biden's name will not be printed on the ballot for this rogue primary which has been disavowed by the party's national bigwigs. Top state

Democrats, though, have launched a write-in campaign, for fear that one of the other 21 Democrats whose names do appear might out-poll the incumbent.

It's all a bit awkward, but hey—life's messy. Better to accept a little dissonance on the national/state axis than risk a repeat of 1968. Gene McCarthy finished seven points behind in our primary that year, but that was close enough to knock LBJ out of the race. His Veep, Hubert Humphrey, failed to prosper, even with George Wallace drawing 46 deep south electoral votes away from Richard Nixon. We shall refrain from cataloging the myriad horrors which ensued.

As the matter stands, New Hampshire delegates to the national convention appear to have about a 50/50 chance of casting a ballot. A situation this nebulous screams for one particular dark horse candidate—namely, Schrödinger's cat.

Not that there is any dearth of alternatives. Our old pal Vermin Supreme is running, that goes without saying. He's not likely to win, nor should he, but his position as the leading national figure on dental hygiene ought to earn him a spot at HHS. Paperboy Love Prince would deserve consideration for his first name alone, but the former carrier for the *Wall Street Journal* is at least four years shy of the age minimum. Speaking of first names, President R. Boddie, of Locust Grove, Ga. has a natural edge, but he's squandering that advantage with a lack of digital outreach.

Kidding aside, Dean Phillips and Marianne Williamson are the real threats to Biden in the primary. And not just Biden. Given the state of things at the moment, by doing well, they could doom life on Earth.



Either of these individuals, neither of whom stands a snowball's chance of winning the White House, could weaken Biden with a strong showing. Then throw in Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. as a third party candidate. Or Joe Bleeping Manchin.

For that matter, consider Joe Biden. Every time Benjamin Netanyahu bombs a hospital in Gaza, his support among young voters bleeds away.

A general election matchup between a lying, felonious sex pest and even a dull competent president ought to be a no brainer. Unfortunately, these days no brainers turn out to vote in droves.

Over on the other side of the Great Divide... well, where to even begin? The GOP's primary makes a goat rodeo look like Swan Lake at the Lincoln Center. More specifically, at the former New York State Theater at Lincoln Center.

That property, owned by the City of New York since 1965, was

re-branded in 2008. It is now, and will be until 2058, presuming it has not been reduced to rubble by some climate-induced catastrophe, known as the David H. Koch Theater. Koch purchased this supposed honor with a pledge to give the City \$100 million over a ten-year period.

Treating that figure as a lump sum, it amounted to one-fifth of one percent of the fossil fuel mogul's net worth when he died in 2019.

For all his money, David Koch is still dead. His equally-wealthy brother Charles is still kicking, though, and still purchasing things which are far beyond the wildest imagination of mere mortals: New Hampshire, South Carolina...

Not directly, of course. That would be vulgar. You might as well ask him to go door-to-door, badgering voters at home.

That's why the Koch bros created Americans for Prosperity [AfP]. This transparently fake "grass-roots" outfit enlists and trains suit-

ably-oriented volunteers to do the door-knocking. Such organization requires a well-paid national cadre, which Koch and a myriad of dark-money donors are happy to support.

As we have seen, when David Koch threw \$100 million at the City of New York, it had about the same effect on his net worth as a night at the movies does for an average working family.

In that case, Ol'Dave got ten years to sit in whatever seat he pleased, glorying in his own spectacular munificence.

Now, surviving brother Charles is putting his AfP meat-bots to work for Nikki Haley. In this case, though, it's not a gift, it's an investment. Compliant politicians provide a better return than fossil fuels, precious metals, or high-end art.

Haley recently pledged to do away with the Affordable Care Act. It'll be tough on the meat-bots, but Chuckie don't care.

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Americans Are Bankrolling Israel's Unfolding Genocide in Gaza

by Sonali Kolhatkar

Americans are funding a genocide and no one asked our permission.

We are being dragged, unwillingly, into a war that is decimating a people. We are being forced to become involuntary accomplices to mass slaughter.

Palestinians, on the basis of their legal right against being wiped out, have filed a major lawsuit against President Joe Biden's administration for funding Israel's ongoing pogrom in Gaza, one that has killed more than 11,000 people, including 4,700 children. Represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), the plaintiffs include Palestinians who have collectively lost at least 116 family members to U.S.-funded Israeli military attacks.

The U.S. has sent Israel a total of about \$317 billion in inflation-ad-

justed tax-payer money, which amounts to more than \$4 billion annually. Almost all that funding has gone toward the Israeli military. Israel is the largest recipient of American foreign aid, receiving more money than what we give to far larger, far poorer nations, ones that have a far greater post-colonial claim to Western aid.

Now, the U.S. Congress and the Biden administration want to give even more of our tax dollars to Israel, specifically to continue bankrolling the unfolding genocide. They are quibbling over the political strings attached to the aid but are united in their desire to send the supplemental funds.

But, according to CCR, "The United States has a duty under Article 1 of the Genocide Convention to prevent and punish acts of genocide, an obligation the U.S. Congress made law in 1988." It's not just the

number of dead Palestinians that ought to result in a withholding of U.S. aid but the fact that Israeli officials have been overt about their genocidal aspirations.

The lawsuit offers evidence of how various Israeli politicians have referred to Palestinians with dehumanizing language such as Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who promised that the "human animals" in Gaza would suffer the consequences of his order for "a complete siege on the Gaza Strip," resulting in "no electricity, no food, no fuel."

Days into Israel's bombing campaign, United Nations Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese warned on October 14, 2023, of a grave danger of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, saying, "The international community has the responsibility to prevent and protect populations from atrocity crimes." Referring to the first great displacement that Pal-

estinians suffered, Albanese added, "There is a grave danger that what we are witnessing may be a repeat of the 1948 Nakba, and the 1967 Naksa, yet on a larger scale."

At the time Albanese made the warning, Israel had killed 1,900 Palestinians.

A month later, on November 13th, Israel's Agriculture Minister Avi Dichter described his nation's bombing campaign with a concise phrase, worthy of an operational name for planned genocide: "Gaza Nakba 2023. That's how it'll end."

By then the official death toll of Palestinians was more than 11,000. United Nations experts warned that "the Palestinian people are at grave risk of genocide," and, added, "Israel's allies also bear responsibility and must act now to prevent its disastrous course of action."

One journalist named Chris McGreal, wrote in *The Guardian*,

"I covered the Rwandan genocide as a reporter. The language spilling out of Israel after the butchery of the Hamas attacks is eerily familiar." McGreal also correctly called out U.S. elected officials such as Senator Lindsey Graham for picking up the pitchfork and joining the violent mob. "We are in a religious war here. I'm with Israel. Do whatever the hell you have to do to defend yourself. Level the place," said Graham.

It's a simple calculus: Israeli officials promise to wipe out people who they view as less than human, with the full blessing and financial might of the U.S. The predictable outcome is a fulfillment of their promises, one that is happening in real-time. Not only are politicians responsible for Palestinian genocide, but so too is the media for uncritically reporting

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on the explicit goals and desires of genocidal maniacs.

Why shouldn't we believe leaders when they tell us exactly who they are and what they intend to do? History is replete with naïve denials of stated intentions to violate human decency even as crimes unfold in plain sight. Recall that when Donald Trump told the nation in 2015 that he would launch a white supremacist presidential bid media outlets refused to call him a racist until several years later after the damage was done and he was in the White House. Hate crimes surged against Black people, Latinos, Muslims, and Jews. It wasn't until the summer of 2019 that media outlets finally decided it was okay to label him a racist—that too after much hand-wringing. About a year and a half later, Trump mobilized an attack on the U.S. Capitol in January 2021 in what legal experts describe as an "insurrection" by a majority white mob. Trump told us who he was. Mainstream media outlets refused to believe him until it was too late.

We're seeing a familiar hand-wringing today. Take the *New*

York Times's insistence on using euphemisms like "extremist," "incendiary," and "inflammatory" to avoid describing Israeli officials' language and the Israeli military's actions as genocidal.

This type of discussion dilutes an understanding of Israel's stated goal by attempting to grapple with the technical definition of genocide. For example, Omer Bartov, a professor of Holocaust and genocide studies at Brown University wrote in a November 10th *New York Times* op-ed that, "I believe that there is no proof that genocide is currently taking place in Gaza." Still, Bartov admits that his "greatest concern watching the Israel-Gaza war unfold is that there is genocidal intent, which can easily tip into genocidal action." (Notice how he doesn't say "Israel has genocidal intent"—a common use of the passive voice to dilute blame.)

Countering this concern in comments to Vox, Raz Segal, an associate professor of Holocaust and genocide studies at Stockton University asked, "How many Palestinians need to die for these statements [by Israeli officials] to be recognized as what they are?"

It is the job of journalists to warn against abuse, exploitation, and



corruption, and to shine a light on power so that an informed citizenry can decide on the course of its government. Many journalists are indeed speaking out against side-stepping the responsibility to report on genocide. More than a thousand have signed on to a letter saying they "hold Western newsrooms accountable for dehumanizing rhetoric that has served to justify ethnic cleansing of Palestinians."

That ethnic cleansing is in full force. CCR's lawsuit is seeking an injunction to immediately block U.S. tax dollars from supporting Israel's war in a concrete effort to block the genocide, or at least wash the stain of Palestinian blood off American hands. Meanwhile, public support for U.S. aid to Israel has dropped, with more Americans now opposed to the military assistance than supporting it according to a Reuters-Ipsos poll. Nearly 70 percent support a ceasefire.

International leaders, government offices, and media institutions, often ignore or deny genocides as they are unfolding, express regret after it's too late, and then make promises of "Never again." When warning signs of the next genocide arise, the cycle repeats. It's up to us to stop it and we have that chance right now.

Sonali Kolhatkar is an award-winning multimedia journalist. She is the founder, host, and executive producer of "Rising Up With Sonali," a weekly television and radio show that airs on Free Speech TV and Pacifica stations. Her most recent book is Rising Up: The Power of Narrative in Pursuing Racial Justice (City Lights Books, 2023). This article was produced by Economy for All, a project of the Independent Media Institute.

House GOP to Hold Hearing on Social Security 'Death Panel'

by Jake Johnson
The Republican-controlled House Budget Committee convened a hearing Wednesday to examine legislation that would establish a so-called fiscal commission for the U.S. debt, a proposal that critics have called a Trojan horse for Social Security and Medicare cuts.

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.), a longtime proponent of Social Security cuts, described such a commission as one of his top priorities after winning the gavel last month, and right-wing organizations such as the Koch-connected group FreedomWorks have endorsed the idea.

A fiscal commission of the kind backed by congressional Republi-

cans and some conservative Democrats—including Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.)—would be tasked with analyzing Social Security, Medicare, and other U.S. trust fund programs and developing policy recommendations ostensibly aimed at improving the programs' finances. The policy proposals would then be put on a fast track in both the House and Senate.

Social Security Works and other progressive organizations have stressed that Social Security does not add to the federal debt and warned against the growing push for a fiscal commission.

"That's code for a death panel designed to cut Social Security and Medicare behind closed doors," Social Security Works wrote in a social media post on Monday in response to the impending hearing.

"MAGA Mike Johnson and his fellow Republicans desperately want this commission to give bipartisan cover to benefit cuts," the group added. "Democrats must stand united against it."

The House Budget Committee's Wednesday hearing will feature testimony from Manchin and Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah), who earlier this month teamed up to introduce legislation that would establish a



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16-member bipartisan, bicameral fiscal commission comprised of 12 elected officials and four outside experts.

Manchin and Romney have both said they're not running for reelection next year.

Alex Lawson, executive director of Social Security Works, called Manchin and Romney "cowards" who are "quitting and heading out of town, but want to set up a closed-door commission to cut Social Security and Medicare on the way out the door."

According to a legislative summary released by Manchin's office, the commission would "produce a report and propose a package of legislative solutions to improve the long-term fiscal condition of the federal government, stabilize the ratio of public debt to GDP within a 15-year period, and improve solvency of federal trust funds over a 75-year period."

"If the commission approves proposed legislative language, it would receive expedited consideration in both chambers," the summary continues. "While 60 votes would be required to invoke cloture prior to final passage in the Senate, only a simple majority would be needed for

the motion to proceed, which would be privileged."

Manchin and Romney's bill is one of three pieces of legislation that the House Budget Committee discussed during Wednesday's hearing. The committee is chaired by Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-Texas), a fiscal commission supporter and member of a Republican panel that called for raising the Social Security retirement age earlier this year.

Progressive lawmakers and organizations have argued that instead of cutting benefits, Congress could ensure Social Security is fully funded for the next seven-plus decades and expand benefits by lifting the payroll tax cap that allows the rich to avoid taxes on annual income over roughly \$160,000.

"All of the options for eliminating Social Security's projected shortfall, manageable in size and still a decade away, are fully understood," more than 100 advocacy groups wrote in a letter to members of Congress earlier this month. "The only reason to make changes to Social Security via a closed-door commission is to cut already modest earned benefits—something the American people overwhelmingly oppose—while



avoiding political accountability.

Jake Johnson is a senior editor and 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.

Corporate America Just Threw A Party Celebrating Tax Cuts For The Ultrarich

After narrowly avoiding a shutdown for the second time in less than two months, lawmakers went home to enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday without making sustained investments in the critical programs that empower millions of American families and enable our economy to thrive.

Programs that provide nutritional assistance to women and children or offer housing assistance will face multiple funding cliffs early in the new year because extremists in Congress are only interested in advancing the economic interests of the very rich—and partying with them.

Just hours after avoiding a shutdown, tax policy wonks, lawmakers, and staff, polished their shoes,

pressed their tuxedos, and attended "Tax Prom," an annual fundraiser to support the anti-tax Tax Foundation. The organization is a classic D.C. deficit squawk: it flies its Wall Street coop when big corporations want tax cuts, and screeches when it's time to invest in the rest of us.

For instance, the organization advocated for Presidents George W. Bush's and Donald Trump's tax cut packages, both of which were disproportionately skewed toward the very rich and large corporations, but lowered overall revenue to just 16.5 percent of GDP in fiscal year 2023 and caused the national deficit to grow.

On May 17th of this year, Scott Hodge, the organization's President Emeritus, seized on the growing debt to warn the Senate Budget Committee that "the only sustainable solution to stabilize the debt" isn't increasing revenue or ensuring the wealthiest among us pay their fair share in taxes—it's "controlling spending." In other words: cut Medicare, Social Security, and other critical programs working Americans rely on.

Sounds familiar, right?

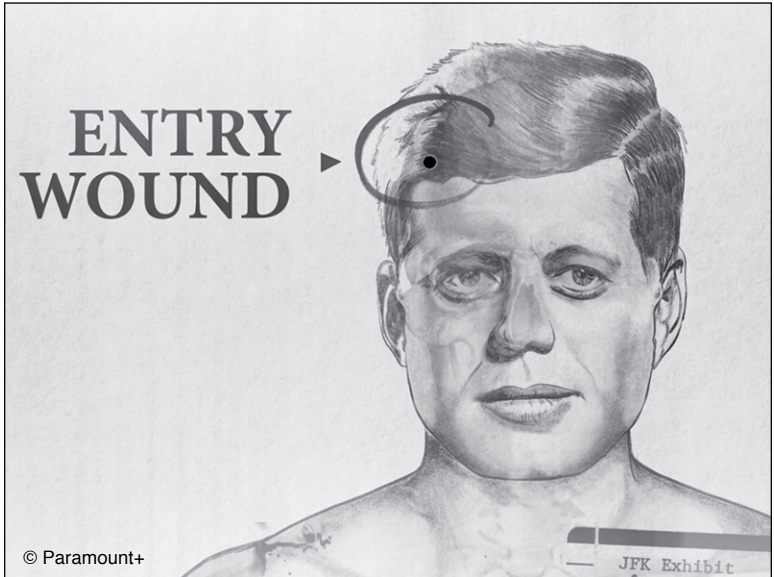
And while it's no surprise to see conservative economic luminaries and corporate sponsors from big oil, pharma, and the tax prep industry attending and funding the annual celebration, the Foundation's ability to attract support from more progressive voices is more alarming.

In past years, the Foundation has honored Senate Finance Chairman Ron Wyden, former Senator Max Baucus, and Rep. Richard Neal. In 2023, it bestowed its distinguished service award on Sen. Maggie Hassan—the first time the Foundation celebrated an elected Democrat for "their efforts to advance sound tax policy" since 2016.

That may not be coincidental, since deficit squawks are building momentum for a new round of policies that benefit the ultrarich.

It comes at a time when our economy, powered by the administration's hard-fought public investments, continues its record-breaking recovery. Real economic growth was at 4.9 percent last quarter, unemployment is below 4 percent for the

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Sixty years after CBS's Walter Cronkite removed his black-framed glasses and reported that the President had been shot, the streaming service Paramount+, formerly known as CBS All Access, reports where exactly he was hit. At this rate, we'll finally have all the relevant facts about JFK's assassination during the third presidential term of Jared Kushner's grandson.

Murph's Fortnightly Quote

"Tell people there's an invisible man in the sky who created the universe, and the vast majority will believe you. Tell them the paint is wet, and they have to touch it to be sure."

— George Carlin (1937-2008)

"However stupid a fool's words may be, they are sometimes enough to confound an intelligent man."

— Nikolai Gogol

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Hell—Mandatory? Or Optional?
Dear Editor:

There is a saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Unfortunately, the Republicans led by Donald Trump are leading America to hell on a road paved with their evil Fascist intentions, and they are openly and blazingly advertising them.

In a recent speech in New Hampshire, Trump stated that he plans to “Root out the Communists, Marxists, Racists and Radical left Thugs that live like vermin within the confines of our country.” He followed this up with “We will throw off the sick political class that hates our country, we will rout the Fake News Media.”

Mike Davis, a leading candidate to be Trump’s next Attorney General, stated that he would “unleash hell on Washington, D.C. We’re going to put kids in cages. It’s gonna be glorious. We’re gonna detain a lot of people in the D.C. gulag and Gitmo.”

And even more ominous, if that is possible, is the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025 manifesto whose objectives, as reported by the *New Hampshire Gazette*, include, “tearing down the wall between church and state, eliminating the IRS, gutting Social Security, [and] tightening voting restrictions...to create an explicitly reactionary state.”

Getting to hell on a road paved by either good or evil intentions still puts you in hell. However, when those evil intentions are advertised in advance, we have the opportunity to reject that road, and work together to translate good intentions into real policies for the common good. We may not create a utopia, but what we can create will be a great improvement over hell.

Rich DiPentima
Portsmouth, N.H.
Rich:

Your letter tempts us to put on our crank cap and lament the passing of the good old days. At least Newt Gingrich and his generation of wingnuts had the decency to lie to us. Their savage and draconian policies would usher in a better life for all!

Nowadays they’re just promising to be savage and draconian. The Gingrich Generation did its work so well, though,

that in the present judged-up, gerrymandered environment, this current crop of goons may succeed.

The Editor

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Gov. Plays Dodge ‘Em with School Funding
To the Editor:

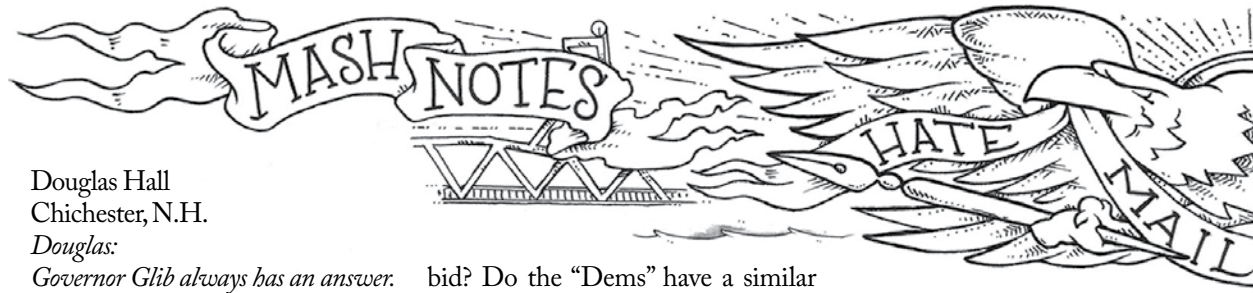
On November 20th, the Superior Court again ruled that New Hampshire does not provide sufficient funds to school districts to ensure that all students have the opportunity for an adequate education as required by the state’s constitution. It also ruled that the administration of the Statewide Education Property Tax (SWEPT) does not meet the constitutional requirement that all taxes for a state purpose be equal in rate throughout the state.

Governor Sununu’s response to this was to state “New Hampshire currently spends among the most per capita on public education than nearly any other state.”

The Governor is correct. But that is not the issue. The plaintiffs in both court cases could concede that. The Governor did not address the fact that the State itself funds its schools at a lower rate than any other state. In doing so, it pushes the burden onto real estate owners to fund 70 percent of the total, resulting in highly unequal property tax rates among the towns.

The question that Governor Sununu and all candidates for governor should be asked is “How will you ensure that students in every zip code in New Hampshire receive an adequate education that is funded only by taxes with equal rates throughout the state?”

Governor Sununu also commented “Today’s decision is deeply concerning and an overreach into a decades-long precedent appropriately placed in the hands of our elected representatives in Concord.” The plaintiffs have sought relief from the court because no “decades-long precedent” can trump the state’s constitution. The constitution appropriately places constraints on what elected representatives can and cannot do and they have chosen not to comply with those constraints. That is very scary.



Douglas Hall
Chichester, N.H.
Douglas:

Governor Glib always has an answer. In this case, as in so many others, his answer does not address the question.

Spending the most per capita on public education could easily be seen as a sign of failure. Look at U.S. healthcare. Our spending is off the charts. Our outcomes, though, are dismal.

Like the Governor, we, too, have an answer: an income tax. Adequate school funding, property tax relief, and a reduction in economic inequality.

The Editor

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A Republican Surprise Party?
To the Editor:

What if the Godzilla-of-Mar-A-Lago’s Revenge Tour fails to launch because he’s disqualified, flips out, or lands in the pokey? Should that happen, none of the political pan scrapings currently vying for his frontrunner slot would stand a prayer in the general election. Joe Biden would win.

Unless....

What if the Republicans held a brokered convention and allowed a new face to emerge. Suppose that face is young, familiar, wildly popular with the MAGA base—a proven crowd pleaser with sky-high TV ratings? And let’s say he’s smart, articulate, ultra-conservative, Wonder Bread white, schooled in the art of rhetorical deception, and happily married to his high school sweetheart? And, what if he’s searching for a new gig after being unceremoniously sacked by his former employer while at the pinnacle of his broadcasting career?

Yes, it’s Tucker Carlson! And even though he professes to loath politics and politicians, many believe he views the Presidency as his last-ditch opportunity to advance his career and save America from the scourge of freeloading liberal scum.

The question is, how would the Democratic Party counter a Carlson

bid? Do the “Dems” have a similar rabbit to pull out of their hat? Food for thought as the Democratic Convention approaches.

Rick Littlefield
Barrington, N.H.
Rick:

This possibility, though utterly revolting, may not be all that far-fetched. Carlson already has a leg up. The big guy announced last month that he “like[s] Tucker a lot,” and would consider him as a running mate.

This may seem strange, since Carlson is known to have written, in a text message about Trump, “I hate him passionately.” The apparent dissonance here can best be resolved by remembering that neither of these charlatans has even a nodding acquaintance with the truth.

The Editor

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Will Decency Do the Job?
To the Editor:

Barring some catastrophic health or legal event, the voters in the 2024 election will be choosing between two elderly men for president of the United States. Though both are at an advanced age their characters, ethics, and motivations are very different.

Biden is a decent man—mature, responsible, wise, and with a lifetime of public service. He is managing his job as president with a steady hand and within the parameters of a democracy. He has guided the U.S. economic recovery after the devastation of the coronavirus pandemic to a 4.9 percent growth rate in the last quarter, with record low unemployment and dramatic wage gains. His Inflation Reduction Act has created more than 170,000 clean energy jobs.

Trump appears to be functioning at a level somewhere between that of a grade school playground bully and that of a spoiled, whiny adolescent. Being the subject of four indictments with a

total of 91 felony charges, his focus is on staying out of jail. He has called for termination of the constitution and, if elected, has promised to use the Justice Department to get revenge on his enemies. He would replace competent career employees in government with hacks who are loyal to him rather than the constitution so that he can “do whatever I want as president.”

Our county’s future depends on responsible voters making the right choice.

Cynthia Muse
Rye, N.H.
Cynthia:

You are right, of course. It will be necessary for responsible voters to make the right choice if we are to avoid an utter catastrophe.

That may not be sufficient, though. We do not live in an abstract world where the will of the electoral majority automatically carries the day.

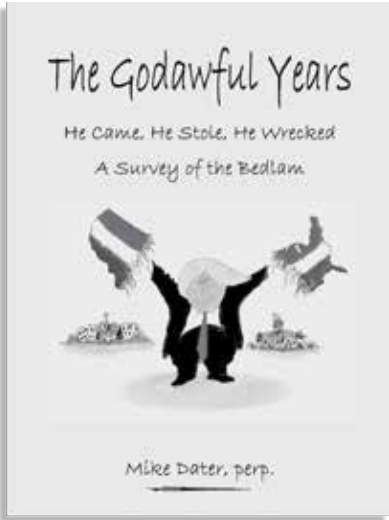
The Editor

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That Famous First Casualty
To the Editor:

“In war, the first casualty is truth” is a quote generally attributed to Aeschylus. A corollary is that in war, rationality is driven out by ideology and dogma. The Israel-Hamas conflict and the war of words in the U.S. between pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian groups exemplifies the truth of these statements.

Some pro-Palestinian advocacy groups speaking from university campuses have praised the Hamas attack that killed 1200 Israeli citizens as warranted resistance against a hated oppressor. Others justified the attackers as anti-colonial “freedom fighters” and brave Jihadis. These views are a manifestation of the identity-based ideology prevalent on many college campuses known as postcolonialism.

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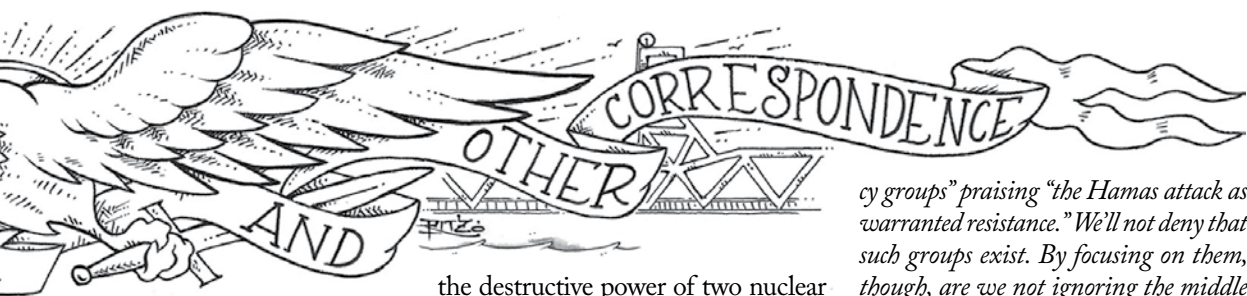
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Advocates of this view interpret the events in Gaza in terms of a struggle between oppressed Palestinians and their colonial Israeli oppressors. Although spurred by a desire for social justice, Postcolonialism is a narrowly dualistic philosophy that defines Israelis as evil and Palestinians as good. It admits no complexity nor nuance and consequently denies the humanity of the murdered Israelis. Let's be clear. A slaughter of innocents is not praiseworthy. The Oct. 7th attack was not carried out by brave freedom fighters nor selfless Jihadis. Unsuspecting civilian victims were indiscriminately cut down, women were raped then shot and innocent children were murdered. The attackers were brutal butchers who showed no mercy to helpless victims. Their mission was extermination not liberation. It is disturbing that the pampered professors and students at elite universities who praised the Hamas attack are so wrapped in a simplistic ideology that they cannot share a common humanity with massacred innocents.

Supporters of Israel are not immune to dogmatic interpretations. Many fall back on Cold War rhetoric contending that the U.S. needs to support Israel because it is an outpost of Western democracy among the autocratic regimes of the Middle East. This position, of course, ignores that Israel provides the full panel of civil rights only to its Jewish citizens. Muslim Palestinians are denied many basic rights and are treated as an underclass. In this regard, Israel resembles a theocracy as much as a Westernized democracy. The massive military response to the Hamas attack has been defended as Israel's right to defend itself. Yet, it has been estimated that the Israeli air force has dropped so many bombs on Gaza City that their firepower exceeds

the destructive power of two nuclear weapons. Much of Gaza City has been reduced to rubble. Over 11,000 innocent Gazan civilians have been killed, many of them children. Is this a reasonable price of self-defense? The IDF makes the ludicrous claim that they do not target civilians, but they know full well that the toll of the warfare they are conducting includes civilian carnage (collateral damage in the euphemism of modern warfare). Are the lives of innocent Gazans worth so much less than the lives of innocent Israelis?

Let's clear away the sophistries of both sides and recognize that a human tragedy is being played out in Gaza. It is a repetitive chapter in the saga of ancient atavistic hatred between tribes that has been a part of Middle Eastern history for thousands of years. Modern political and religious ideologies provide no reasonable justification for the inhumane actions of both sides. For many Israelis, the conflict is Joshua razing Jericho using modern tanks rather than Shofars. It is the IDF following an Old Testament imperative to exterminate the Canaanites to preserve the purity of Israelites. For the Palestinians, it is the defense of a sacred land unjustly taken from them by an ancient, hated invader. Neither muddled modern ideology nor religious mythology are adequate for either explaining or resolving these timeless conflicts. I opened this letter with a quote from Aeschylus. I close with lyrics written by 60's peace activist Pete Seeger. "Oh, when will you ever learn? Oh, when will you ever learn?"

Robert D. Russell
Harrisburg, Pa.
Robert:
You have brought up many a thorny issue here. These are bloody times, so let's grab a few.
You write of "pro-Palestinian advoca-

cy groups" praising "the Hamas attack as warranted resistance." We'll not deny that such groups exist. By focusing on them, though, are we not ignoring the middle ground occupied by those who abhor both the Hamas attack and illegal Israeli settlements? The side with power sets the terms—and condemns the powerless when they resist.

Speaking of the powerless, what of the Israelis who oppose the settlements? It seems to us there is a striking parallel here: both Israel and the U.S.—its No. 1 sponsor—have largely been driven for forty years by an increasingly demented right wing ideology. Perhaps it's no coincidence that both Netanyahu and Trump are corrupt bullies, dictators desperately hoping to avoid conviction.

Now that we're all scratched up and bloody, let's pick some nits. You suggest Aeschylus as the source of that memorable phrase. We checked it out. Nothing personal, that's our job.

According to QuoteInvestigator.com [QI], whom we hold as authoritative, your Greek pal wrote, "God is not averse to deceit in a just cause." It seems to us that the "just cause" stipulation would render the aphorism inapplicable in many recent cases.

The earliest use QI could find was in July, 1915. The San Diego [Calif.] Union quoted Ethel Annakin, the wife of the British politician Philip Snowden, saying "Someone has said that 'truth is the first casualty of warfare....'"

The most accurate use of the expression can be found on a t-shirt: "The first casualty of war is truth. The rest are mostly civilians."

The Editor

=====
Get Out the Ouija Board
Dear Editor:

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States (ratified in 1868, shortly after the Civil War) was intended to be an authoritative definition of what it means to be a citizen of the United States and to guarantee equal treatment to all per-

sons under the law by requiring the states to abide by the Bill of Rights. Ironically, it wasn't until nearly 100 years later (in the 1960's) that most of the civil liberties outlined in the Bill of Rights were applied to the states.

The XIV Amendment has been contentious from the beginning. The first conflict occurred in 1896 when the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision asserted that "equal but separate accommodations" for blacks on railroad cars did not violate the "equal protection under the laws" clause. By defending the constitutionality of racial segregation, the Court paved the way for the repressive Jim Crow laws of the south.

Then there was *Gideon v. Wainwright* in 1963, having to do with "due process." Then, in 1996, in the *United States v. Virginia*, policies regarding women serving in the military were changed. Remaining unresolved, however, a woman's right to register for Selective Service.

Presently another constitutional crisis looms large on the framework of U.S. law and order in regard to the far-reaching XIV Amendment, which states very clearly in Section 3: "No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any state, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any state, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or gives aid or comfort to the enemies thereof."

This is the "Disqualification Clause" and, as Judge Sarah Wallace has ruled former President Donald Trump guilty of insurrection, in that he actively primed the anger of his supporters on January 6th, 2021 with the clear intent to incite political violence, and specifically directed that brute force at the Capital of the United States with the transparent and precise intent to overturn an election he knew he'd lost.

That act renders Donald Trump explicitly ineligible to hold office under the XIV Amendment.

However, even though the XIV Amendment appears crystal-clear, indisputably plain and the disqualifying clause seemingly specifically written to prevent men like Donald Trump from gaining power and dominance in a democratic form of government, a glitch exists (according to Judge Wallace) having to do with Trump being a former president.

We should view Donald Trump, not as a former president but in a simpler form as an ordinary citizen, a voter, an "elector," like you, like me. As such, under the conditions set forth in the XIV Amendment Section 3, Donald John Trump (an insurrectionist) is unqualified to hold any public office.

David L. Snell
Franklin, N.C.
David:
Should anyone happen to ask, we'll happily inform them as to how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.
However, we are not even going to pretend we understand a ruling which held that President Trump took part in an insurrection but would not have been "an officer of the government" in the eyes of the framers of the 14th Amendment.
The Editor

=====
Presidential Descendants' Crime Wave
Dear Editor:

A recent headline reads: "Ivanka Denies Knowing About Documents." Once Presidents were so young their kids were kids. George W. Bush's and Laura's twin daughters—one more than the other—did naughty teen stuff, escaping security details. Preteen Chelsea Clinton yawned at on-stage ballet. A camera caught it. Now, elderly Donald Trump has adult kids answering in court to shady financial dealings, with a preponderance of evidence. (All non-Fox coverage of Republicans' efforts to destroy Pres. Biden, via his son, ends with "no evidence has emerged to prove...")

Our world heats up, smokes with

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

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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.

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VA Supportive Housing Program Manager
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from page five

fires, runs out of potable water, sees species diminish and die. (Lobster lovers—be concerned.) So welcome, then, new candidates on the scene, raising climate change / global warming and homelessness as problems to solve. A world at war is a huge challenge.

I'm a grandmother with a family I want to have a chance, aware of our world's families, whatever continent or skin color or religion, deserving their chance. Be responsible, adults, sent to Washington to work for the people, and sweat over real problems! Of-age citizens, be sure to vote, lest we slip into not-a-democracy.

Lynn Rudmin Chong
Sanbornton, N.H.

Lynn:

This so-called issue began when a blind computer repairman told noted drunkard Rudy Giuliani that he thinks it was Hunter Biden who dropped off the laptop in question...

Obviously this country learned nothing from Whitewater. That farce began with a real estate venture that went bust. By the time it was over,



Bill & Hill were behind a death squad. Except there was no evidence, and there were no convictions.

Meanwhile, Citizens for Responsibility & Ethics in Washington—an entirely reputable outfit—says that in 2017, the "Department of Justice reversed decades of precedent to grant President Trump's wish to have his children work in the White House. While taking on enormous responsibilities that they were unqualified to carry out, and debasing their positions with constant ethics scandals, they likely made hundreds of millions of dollars from questionable sources."

That convenient ruling was issued the Friday before the inauguration. Once ensconced, Jared and Ivanka raked in between \$172 million and \$640 million in outside income while working in the White House, according to an analysis of financial disclosures by CREW. And that doesn't even get into a \$2 billion investment from the Saudis.

Once again, Wilboit's Law proves useful: "Conservatism consists of exact-

ly 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."

The Editor

Oligarchy or Democracy?

Dear Editor:

John Adams wrote in his *A Defence of the Constitution of the United States* in 1787: "In every society known to man, an aristocracy has risen up in the course of time, consisting of a few rich and honorable families who have united with each other against both the people and the first magistrate." Adams' skepticism about the stability of direct democracies led him to join in the effort to create a republic with protections against the excesses of the citizenry as well as their political leaders: three branches of government, a bicameral and representational Congress, a free press, etc. But, as the above quotation suggests,

he feared most the capture of our republic by an oligarchy.

That same year in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, Adams wrote, "You are afraid of the one, I, of the few." It was not monarchy our democracy has to fear, he was telling Jefferson, so much as oligarchy. (Adams didn't live to witness our American mega-corporations, who are now, according to SCOTUS, "people" who are free to hire more lobbyists than we have senators and congressmen, or surely, Adams would have mentioned them as well).

Have we arrived at our oligarchic crisis? Or has the crisis passed: is the entrenched system of our political institutions no longer willing or capable of dismantling the American oligarchy? Can a single presidential candidate once in office successfully instigate the dismantling? We and the representatives we keep electing seem to have been so concerned with the welfare of the rich that it is hard to imagine our turn-

ing around at this late date and resetting a just balance. I'm a skeptic about our potential to begin to reset the balance toward dismantling the oligarchy, probably a project of 25 or more years of creative and brilliant work. But I hope the next decade or so (starting in November of 2024) proves me wrong.

'Umble Servant,
Bob Begiebing
Newfields, N.H.

Bob:

"We and the representatives we keep electing seem..." Yes, exactly.

Today's oligarchy carefully provides abundant distractions as an essential part of a much grander propaganda regime. We're talking about think tanks, astroturf, and the like. By thus creating an elaborate charade—and relying on the political inertia of an overworked working class—the oligarchy does seem to have the upper hand.

Germany's industrialists thought they could control Hitler. What this bunch of mugs believes, we have no idea.

We'll see how it all shakes out next November.

The Editor

The Alleged News®

from page three

20th straight month, and workers are banding together and demanding more, leading to strong wage growth and a wave of union organizing.

Deficit squawks, meanwhile, are loudly—and predictably—trying their best to turn back this economic progress by proposing significant cuts to the social programs that help power our economy and by constantly bringing the government to the brink of shutdown. They're also ringing the alarm about the nation's growing level of debt and calling for a bipartisan fiscal commission to address the so-called crisis.

Deficit squawks seek to reverse the progress we've made investing in workers, families, and the economy in order to invest in the wealthiest Americans and large corporations.

It's clear deficit squawks are stuck in the past, advocating for economic policies that are as unpopular and out of date as pale blue ruffle suits. Elected officials committed to building a modern economy that works for all of us should leave Tax Prom in the past.

Igor Volsky is the director of Stop Deficit Squawks, a project dedicated to exposing organizations dedicated to protecting wealthy and huge corporations while dismantling vital and popular programs like Social Security and Medicare. This work is licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). Feel free to republish and share widely.

Thankfulness Buried in the Rubble
by Robert C. Koehler

Much as I love Thanksgiving—seeing my family... oh the turkey, oh the cranberry sauce—I feel like

maybe a bomb fragment has hit the "thanks" part.

I find myself struggling to let a sense of thankfulness flow, because when I do—and doing so has always been a crucial part of the holiday—suddenly my gratitude for the blessings of my life starts to feel more like luck and, even worse, privilege. Yeah, how nice. I'm thankful for the books in my library. I'm thankful for the air I breathe, for my daughter, my sister, my nieces and nephews and all the friendship, all the love, that fortifies my life. But then...

As I give thanks to the walls of my house, as I kiss the computer at which I sit, I hear bombs flying and suddenly I can envision all of it... all of it, all of it... being taken from me in an instant. I envision digging for a child in the rubble.

Yes, this current war that is saturating the media—Israel's assault on Gaza, funded by the United States, emerging from seven and a half decades of Israeli occupation of Palestine—has entered my consciousness in a way I can't seem to ignore. It's only one of several hellish wars fes-

tering on Planet Earth right now, but I can't stop hearing the Israeli defense minister seeming to explain all of them: "We are fighting human animals."

And once again, genocide is just and righteous and necessary. And history's soul cracks open. The story of Thanksgiving is two cultures embracing and sharing a feast of life. But then one of the cultures stole the continent. As *New York Times* reporter Maya Salam wrote some years ago: "Thanksgiving facts and Thanksgiving myths have blended together for years like so much gravy and mashed potatoes, and separating them is just as complicated."

Yeah, stir in the genocide. Stir in the slavery. The holiday starts renaming itself: Thankstaking.

Here's a frequently left-out fragment of the Thanksgiving story. It's the story of Tisquantum, also known as Squanto, a member of the Wampanoag tribe in the 1600s. He's known to be the Pilgrims' rescuer who, after half the Pilgrim settlers had died during a harsh winter, taught those who were left some

necessary survival skills, including how to catch eel and grow corn.

But, according to *Potawatomi.org*, Tisquantum's story is "less innocent than the narrative that he assisted the Pilgrims with teaching them how to grow crops and take advantage of North America's bounties."

What's generally not mentioned in the classroom is that six years before the Mayflower arrived, in what is now known as Massachusetts, a slave-trader had captured Tisquantum, along with a group of Native Americans, who were taken as captives to Europe. Tisquantum eventually wound up escaping and made his way to England where he learned English. He returned to the American continent in 1619.

As the Potawatomi site explains:

"While Tisquantum was overseas, New England's Indigenous experienced a monumental death rate, with some communities losing nearly every tribal member to the decimating effects of European diseases.

"Upon returning to North American and his village of Patuset, Tisquantum found only piles of bones

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A Poet in Palestine

By W.D. Ehrhart

Back in the spring of 2022, I wrote an essay titled “A Farewell to Arms” about a young Palestinian poet named Mosab Abu Toha who had just published a book called *Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear* (City Lights, 2022).

Mosab is a remarkable young man. Still in his very early 30s, he is married and the father of three children. He was a visiting poet at Harvard University in 2019-20 (during which time his youngest son was born, thus making Mostafa a U.S. citizen); founded the Edward Said Library, the first English-language public library in Gaza; and earned an MFA from Syracuse University just this year.

His collection of poems has won a Palestine Book Award and an American Book Award, and he was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. His poems and prose have been widely published in the *New Yorker*, *New York Times*, *Nation*, *Progressive*, *Atlantic* and elsewhere.

I first became aware of him and his writing through our mutual friend Professor Ammiel Alcalay of the CUNY Graduate Center and Queens College, a first-generation American and Sephardic Jew, and a specialist in Middle Eastern languages.

Alcalay has been in regular contact with Abu Toha since the events of October 7th, and has shared with me some of those communications,

which have been disturbing to say the least. In late October, his home was completely destroyed, and he and his family were forced to take refuge in a school in the Jabaliya refugee camp.

“I’m so heartbroken, so heartbroken, so heartbroken,” he wrote on October 29th. “One of my students got killed, along with his father, grandfather, and grandmother. Wadee, my handsome, polite, and clever student doesn’t deserve this. Nor the many thousands of Gazans. This is so cruel. We cannot bear to watch more lives ended.”

“Still alive,” he wrote on November 8th, “Just yesterday my three-year-old son, Mostafa, my brother-in-law Ahmad, and I survived death by chance. I was on my bike while Mostafa and Ahmad on another bike were returning to our shelter school when two bombs fell on a house just a hundred meters away. Rubble fell on us like a shower of rain. Mostafa and Ahmad were just ahead of me. I started biking madly in the street looking for them and crying. Thankfully they made it safe to school before me. This needs to stop!!!”

“We don’t have any access to food or clean water,” he wrote on November 16th. “Winter is coming and we don’t have enough clothes. Kids are suffering. We are suffering. The army is now at Al-Shifa Hospital. More death, more destruction. Who can stop this? Please stop it now.”

Then a few days later, Ammiel sent me this: “I’m Mosab’s brother.

The army took Mosab when he arrived at the checkpoint leaving the north headed south to where the [Israeli] army had ordered [civilians] to move. His wife & children entered the south, but the army arrested my brother and we know nothing about him.”

“...Mosab was taken with some 200 others, forced [at gunpoint] to give up his 3-year-old child he was holding.’ For several suspenseful days, no one knew anything else.”

“My understanding,” Ammiel added, “Is that Mosab and his family were heading to Rafah in order to leave, having been cleared to do so by the U.S. Embassy. Mosab was taken with some 200 others, forced [at gunpoint] to give up his 3-year-old child he was holding.” For several suspenseful days, no one knew anything else.

Today Ammiel wrote, “Mosab was released yesterday. He’d been taken with about 200 others, men & women, to a prison in the Negev, beaten & “questioned,” &, my understanding is that he was then re-united with family (after the poor youngest, of course, was traumatized by having had to be handed over by Mosab to his wife as soldiers fired a few shots (“for fun,” I guess) & took him away. So I’m not sure where they were re-united, in central Gaza, I think. My hunch is that they would try & wait for a ceasefire/truce deal before trying to move toward Rafah where, to my understanding, they

planned to exit to Egypt. But, of course, any of these things can turn on a dime at any second, given the utter terror being unleashed from the air, artillery, roving bands of soldiers picking people up, lack of food, water, clothing, shelter, etc.”

My own guess is that Mosab was released because of pressure from major media outlets like the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker*, and organizations like PEN America. Mosab is a bright and rising star in the literary world, a public figure. He has a following, and strong advocates.

One can only wonder what will be the fate of the other 199 people who were rounded up with Mosab, and who do not have an international following. And the thousands of others like them.

Postscript: On November 24th, Mosab wrote, “I’m safe but I still have severe pain in my nose and teeth after being beaten by the Israeli army last Sunday. I gave them all my family’s passports, including my American son’s passport but they didn’t return anything to me. Also my clothes and my children’s were taken and not returned to me. No wallet, no money, no credit cards. Everything was confiscated. I’m in pain.” That is the latest news I’ve been able to find.

—==—

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

Voters Reject the Illiberal Bigotry of Moms 4 Liberty

by Jim Hightower

In one of their satirical songs, the Austin Lounge Lizards lampooned the ridiculous bigotry of some Christian factions, singing: “Jesus loves me. But he can’t stand you.”

That could be the bellicose anthem of a quasi-religious Republican front group with a very sweet-sounding name: “Moms for Liberty.” Far from sweet, however, these moms are funded by rich Republicans to be ground troops in the party’s culture wars—essentially an anti-liberty campaign against people, books, teachers, and ideas they don’t like. In the last few years, squads of these moms have turned into political hate groups, persecuting small town school board members by baselessly accusing them of conspiring to indoctrinate children with pornography, hatred of white people, and “liberal” thinking.

Having stirred up dust devils of division and fear, the momsters ran candidates in local board elections this fall, hoping to take over public schools. But they miscalculated on an essential political reality: Most Americans are not right-wingers, bigots, or Christian Nationalists. The group had counted on surprising voters in what are usually low visibility/low-turnout races, but the extremists were the ones surprised by an aggressive voter pushback against their scheme.

Indeed, various surveys show that the GOP’s mom-wing lost about 80 percent of its races across the country, even in major swing states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. For example, in the very conservative school district of Pennridge, Pennsylvania, where a far-right majority of the board was attempting to impose a national model of a politically-driven educational system, five Republican incumbents were up for re-election. All five were swept out, turning the Pennridge school board blue for the first time in years!

To help push back against right-wing politicizers of your school district, contact Campaign for Our Shared Future: CampaignSharedFuture.org.

—==—

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The Alleged News®

from page six

of his fellow tribesmen killed by the plagues. He realized he was the sole survivor of his village. The illness spread so quickly that many local tribes never had time to bury their dead.

“Where Tisquantum’s village once thrived, the Pilgrims established Plymouth Plantation.”

Tisquantum—escaped slave, sole survivor (because of his capture) of a village wiped out by a plague bequeathed by the Europeans—helped the newcomers learn how to live in their new land. In 1621, the Pilgrims celebrated their successful harvest that year, along with the Wampanoag, who apparently considered themselves allies of the new arrivals. But they weren’t. Instead,

genocide ensued.

Wamsutta (Frank) James, a founder of the movement declaring Thanksgiving to be a National Day of Mourning for Native Americans, said in a 1970 speech: “We, the Wampanoag, welcomed you, the white man, with open arms, little knowing that it was the beginning of the end.”

All of which leads me back to the present moment, more or less. A day of thanks? A day of atonement?

As much as the human race has accomplished in the past several hundred thousand years, its evolution hasn’t yet created global social sanity. Despite cries of outrage from the political margins, geopolitical civilization essentially remains organized around the principle of war and conquest: Fragments of humanity are still trying to destroy

one another. We’re at a point where our destructive power is so great that we’re on the brink of global suicide.

Sorry to bring this up just as the turkey’s being served. So let me try to find my way back into a spirit of thankfulness, as much as I can muster in the shadow of looming genocide. I am thankful that Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley recently doubled the number of U.S. senators calling for an Israeli ceasefire in the war—from one (Dick Durbin of Illinois) to two. Merkley said:

“Most importantly, the Israeli people and the Palestinian people must find leaders determined to partner with each other and the world to replace the cycle of hate and violence with both a long-term vision for security, peace and prosperity featuring two states for two peoples, and immediate, concrete

steps toward that goal.”

The “thanks” feel small, but the hope is enormous.

—==—

Robert Koehler (koehlercw@gmail.com), syndicated by PeaceVoice, is a Chicago award-winning journalist and editor. He is the author of *Courage Grows Strong at the Wound*.

—==—

“Neoliberalism as economic theory was always an absurdity. It had as much validity as past ruling ideologies such as the divine right of kings and fascism’s belief in the Übermensch. None of its vaunted promises were even remotely possible. ... But economic rationality was never the point. The point was the restoration of class power.”

—Chris Hedges

—==—



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ADMIRAL FOWLE’S PISCATAQUA RIVER TIDAL GUIDE (NOT FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES)

Portsmouth, arguably the first town in this country not founded by religious extremists, is bounded on the north and east by the Piscataqua River, the second, third, or fourth fastest-flowing navigable river in the country, depending on

whom you choose to believe. The Piscataqua’s ferocious current is caused by the tide, which, in turn, is caused by the moon. The other player is a vast sunken valley — Great Bay — about ten miles upriver. Twice a day, the moon

drags about seventeen billion gallons of seawater — enough to fill 2,125,000 tanker trucks — up the river and into Great Bay. This creates a roving hydraulic conflict, as incoming sea and the outgoing river collide. The skirmish line

moves from the mouth of the river, up past New Castle, around the bend by the old Naval Prison, under Memorial Bridge, past the tugboats, and on into Great Bay. This can best be seen when the tide is rising.

Twice a day, too, the moon lets all that water go. All the seawater that just fought its way upstream goes back home to the ocean. This is when the Piscataqua earns its title for xth fastest current. Look for the red buoy, at the upstream end of

Badger’s Island, bobbing around in the current. It weighs several tons, and it bobs and bounces in the current like a cork. The river also has its placid moments, around high and low tides. When the river rests, its tugboats

and bridges work their hardest. Ships coming in laden with coal, oil, and salt do so at high tide, for more clearance under their keels. They leave empty, riding high in the water, at low tide, to squeeze under Memorial Bridge.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3	MONDAY, DECEMBER 4	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5	WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6	THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7	FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8	SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9
<p>2013—In Londonderry, N.H., failed Senate nominee Scott Brown says “I don’t think I ever said I was thinking about running for president,” 16 weeks after telling the <i>Boston Herald</i> he was thinking about running for president.</p> <p>2004—George W.[MD] Bush nominates Bernard Kerik (later to be known as Federal Inmate 84888-054) to be Secretary of Homeland Security.</p> <p>1996—A New York company making Medals of Honor is fined \$80,000 for selling 300 bootleg copies.</p> <p>1983—U.S. Information Agency head Charles Z. Wick says Margaret Thatcher opposed the invasion of Grenada because she’s a woman.</p> <p>1980—Secretary of State Al Haig says four Maryknoll nuns recently murdered by Salvadoran death squads may have been gun-runners.</p> <p>1979—Fans stamped at a Who concert in Cincinnati, 11 die.</p> <p>1969—Protesters destroy files at eight N.Y. draft boards.</p> <p>1966—The AEC explodes a .38 kiloton A-bomb 10 miles west of Purvis, Miss., inside an underground cavity created by a 5 kiloton A-bomb blast conducted two years earlier.</p> <p>1964—In Berkeley, 600 police arrest 800 protesters; 900 faculty members call for amnesty.</p> <p>1888—“The citizen ... is trampled ... beneath an iron heel. Corporations ... are fast becoming the people’s masters,” noted Commie Grover Cleveland warns in his State of the Union.</p>	<p>2016—To free the fictitious child sex slaves of the Democrat Party, Edgar Welch shoots up Comet Ping Pong in Washington D.C. with a real gun.</p> <p>1993—R.I.P. Frank Zappa.</p> <p>1982—Returning from a trip to Latin America, President Reagan says, “I learned a lot. You’d be surprised. They’re all individual countries.”</p> <p>1981—President Reagan OK’s CIA spying on U.S. citizens.</p> <p>1979—French commandos “convert to Islam,” then help the Saudi military drive rebels from Grand Mosque. The indiscriminate killing by these infidels enrages Osama bin Laden; the CIA concludes the episode is not a sign of widespread Islamic radicalism.</p> <p>1969—Chicago cops, aided by the CIA, murder Black Panther security guard Mark Clark, then assassinate Fred Hampton, who’s been drugged.</p> <p>1952—A “Great Smog” so thick moviegoers couldn’t see the screen descends on London. It lasts all winter and kills about 12,000.</p> <p>1950—In <i>Feres v. U.S.</i>, the Supreme Court rules that servicemembers can’t sue the U.S. for injuries.</p> <p>1947—On orders from genial ol’ Ike, the Attorney General publishes a list of 51 “subversive organizations.”</p> <p>1837—In the Arkansas State House, Speaker John Wilson and Joseph Anthony debate wolf bounties with the aid of Bowie knives. Wilson, the winner, is later acquitted of murder.</p>	<p>2013—Scott Brown, in N.H., says he’s been helping Republicans “raise awareness as to the issues...here in Massachusetts.”</p> <p>2002—At a party on Strom Thurmond’s 100th birthday, GOP Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott expresses regret over desegregation.</p> <p>2001—A B-52, sent the wrong co-ordinates, bombs U.S. Special Forces in Afghanistan, killing three.</p> <p>1996—Federal Reserve Chair Greenspan warns: “irrational exuberance” may have inflated stock prices.</p> <p>1994—The GOP rams Speaker Gingrich down the House’s throat.</p> <p>1988—A Grand Jury in N.C. indicts “holy” man Jim Bakker on charges of fraud and conspiracy.</p> <p>1965—An A-4 Skyhawk accidentally rolls off the USS <i>Ticonderoga</i> near Japan. Plane, pilot, and one-megaton B43 are still missing.</p> <p>1960—The Supreme Court rules that restaurants in interstate bus stations can’t be segregated anymore.</p> <p>1955—The CIO, red-baited into irrelevancy anyway, merges with the AFL.</p> <p>1955—“Uppity Negroes” in Montgomery, Ala., boycott the municipal mass transit system.</p> <p>1945—Navy Flight 19, five Avengers and 14 men, vanishes off Ft. Lauderdale. During the search for them, 13 more aviators disappear.</p> <p>1894—Alabama repeals its child labor laws in a bid to entice a Massachusetts textile corporation. It works.</p>	<p>1967—Chaplain Angelo “Charlie” Liteky carries 23 wounded men to safety in Vietnam despite intense hostile fire. For his bravery he is given the Medal of Honor, which he returns in 1986 to protest U.S. foreign policy.</p> <p>1962—Speaking to journalists at the Deadline Club in New York City, Pentagon spokesman Arthur Sylvester says “It’s [the] government’s right, if necessary, to lie to save itself when it’s going up into a nuclear war.”</p> <p>1951—The National Association of Broadcasters adopts a Code of [Cowardly and Obsequious] Conduct.</p> <p>1937—The Supreme Court rules poll taxes Constitutional—why should Blacks and poor whites get to vote?</p> <p>1933—Federal judge John M. Woolsey rules that Joyce’s <i>Ulysses</i> is not obscene and therefore may be imported.</p> <p>1928—In Cienega, Colombia, soldiers with machine guns open fire on workers striking against United Fruit Co. At least 47, and possibly several thousand, workers die.</p> <p>1918—The U.S. War Department ceases shackling conscientious objectors to the walls of solitary cells.</p> <p>1917—The largest pre-A-Bomb explosion occurs in Halifax when a munitions ship explodes: 1,600 die; and windows break 40 miles away.</p> <p>1865—Georgia ratifies the Thirteenth Amendment, thus making slavery illegal—leaving a loophole for exploitable prisoners, though.</p> <p>342—RIP Saint Nick.</p>	<p>2006—The “Justice” Department fires eight prosecutors for failing to persecute enough Democrats.</p> <p>1997—Six skydivers leap from a plane over the South Pole. Three of them die when their chutes fail to open.</p> <p>1995—France is virtually paralyzed when 1.75 million workers protest global exploitation.</p> <p>1993—The Department of Energy admits it conducted more than 200 secret weapons tests.</p> <p>1987—A disgruntled ex-employee shoots a Southwest Airlines pilot and co-pilot. The plane breaks up while diving at Mach 1.2, killing all aboard.</p> <p>1985—Their warnings overruled by Ronald Reagan—selling arms to Iran and giving the profits to assassins is illegal—Cap Weinberger and George Schultz joke about jail visiting hours.</p> <p>1970—R.I.P. legendary cartoonist Rube Goldberg, from whose work the <i>Gazette</i> cribbed its business plan.</p> <p>1964—Japan bestows the Order of the Rising Sun on Gen. Curtis LeMay, whose fire-bombing of that nation during WW II probably killed half a million Japanese.</p> <p>1961—At Peterson Field, Colo., MPs hold civilians at gunpoint as CIA-trained Tibetan commandos are smuggled aboard a C-124.</p> <p>1941—Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.</p> <p>1874—Angered by a Black sheriff’s election, whites in Vicksburg, Miss. begin a month-long slaughter of 150-300 Black men, women, and children.</p>	<p>2006—Congress votes to destroy the U.S. Postal Service by making it pre-fund pensions for 50 years.</p> <p>2004—Sec. of Defenselessness Donald Rumsfeld tells disgruntled soldiers to quit bitching and go to war with the unarmored vehicles he gave them.</p> <p>1993—Bill Clinton signs NAFTA, shipping umpteen jobs elsewhere.</p> <p>1982—To jumpstart a national dialogue on banning nuclear weapons, Norman D. Mayer, 66, threatens to blow up the Washington Monument with a dynamite-laden van. After ten hours, police shoot him dead.</p> <p>1976—A prop on the set of “The Six Million Dollar Man” is found to be the mummified remains of Elmer McCurdy, born in Maine in 1880, hanged in Oklahoma in 1911.</p> <p>1972—United Flight 553 crashes in Chicago killing 45 people including E. Howard Hunt’s wife Dorothy, who was carrying \$10,000 in \$100 bills.</p> <p>1953—Good ol’ Ike announces Atoms for Peace, leading to an Iranian nuclear program four years later.</p> <p>1864—Pope Pius IX denounces liberalism, socialism, & rationalism.</p> <p>1854—Pope Pius IX proclaims <i>Ineffabilis Deus</i>, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.</p> <p>1793—Madame du Barry is guillotined for aiding emigrés. Her enslaved servant Zamor blew the whistle.</p> <p>1596—Nine suspected crypto-Jews are tortured and burned at the stake by the Mexican Inquisition.</p>	<p>2019—Leaked documents reveal that officials lied about the war in Afghanistan. Some profess to be shocked.</p> <p>2008—The Governor of Illinois, Democrat Rod Blagojevich, is arrested for attempting to sell a Senate seat.</p> <p>1983—Ed “Meese is a Pig” Meese says people go to soup kitchens because it’s “easier than paying.”</p> <p>1970—Because he’s talking to General Al Haig, Henry Kissinger keeps it simple: “Kill anything that moves.”</p> <p>1966—“We are in a much stronger position than two years ago. [Commies] will not be able to succeed [in Vietnam],” says Sec. of State Rusk.</p> <p>1960—Its pilot asleep, a B-52 rolls into a dive over N.Y. state. Fearing a crash, the navigator ejects. That awakens the pilot, who orders “Bail out!” The crewless, nukeless plane flies 100 miles before crashing near Barre, Vt.</p> <p>1958—Robert Welch Jr. founds the John Birch Society, which goes on to label Dwight Eisenhower a Commie.</p> <p>1950—General D. “Dugout Doug” MacArthur proposes detonating 26 A-bombs to create an impenetrable barrier across the Korean peninsula.</p> <p>1949—Two of the Hollywood Ten, in prison, get company: ex-HUAC honcho J. Parnell Thomas [R-N.J.], convicted for padding Congressional payrolls and pocketing the cash.</p> <p>1864—Hundreds of freedmen are drowned or enslaved after Union Gen. Jefferson C. Davis orders them abandoned at Emerson Creek, Ga.</p>
3:15 3:20	4:08 4:15	5:02 5:12	5:54 6:09	6:43 7:04	7:29 7:55	8:11 8:43
9:02 9:43	9:58 10:34	10:56 11:26	11:54	12:16 12:50	1:04 1:41	1:49 2:28
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10	MONDAY, DECEMBER 11	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12	WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13	THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14	FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15	SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

2011—The gundalow *Piscataqua* is launched on the eponymous river.

2004—Gary Webb, who exposed the CIA-Contra drug connection, dies from two gunshots in the face. The coroner calls it suicide.

1998—House Judiciary Committee debates impeaching Pres. Clinton for lying about his lewd behavior.

1992—Sen. Bob Packwood (Lecher-Ore.) apologizes for being a serial groper but refuses to resign.

1976—In a memo to President-elect Carter, pollster Pat Caddell makes the case for a “permanent campaign.”

1971—The Senate, buying Wm. Rehnquist’s lie disavowing a letter supporting racial segregation, confirms him for the Supreme Court.

1967—Trying to lower the cost of natural gas, the U.S. government explodes an A-bomb in N.M.

1966—U.S. jets bomb Marines in Vietnam; 17 Marines and Navy medics are euphemized as “friendly fire.”

1943—A year after learning the facts, the Polish government-in-exile reveals to the world that Nazis are “exterminating” Jews. The world shrugs.

1937—G.P. Thompson gets the Nobel for Physics for proving electrons are waves. His dad won it in 1906 for demonstrating that they’re particles.

1789—Moses Brown hires Samuel Slater, a Briton, to build the first U.S. textile mill, in Pawtucket. By poaching British technology and exploiting children, Brown becomes filthy rich.

2006—President George W.[MD] Bush, on national TV, denies having ever been “a knee-walking drunk.”

2000—The Supreme Court hears *Bush v. Gore*.

1998—President Clinton begs forgiveness for his sins. Instead he gets three Articles of Impeachment.

1985—Veep George H.[H.]W. Bush, at a Manchester, N.H., dinner honoring the late William Loeb, reads aloud Loeb’s most scurrilous attacks against him.

1981—Soldiers of the U.S.-backed Salvadoran government murder 900 villagers at El Mozote.

1964—As Ernesto “Che” Guevara speaks at the United Nations, a 3.5 inch rocket launched from Queens falls harmlessly into the East River.

1960—Seeing at the last minute that JFK has his wife and kids with him, Belmont, N.H. resident Richard Pavlick defers his plan to crash into the President-elect’s car with his dynamite-laden Buick.

1951—A few days after slipshod coal dust removal techniques are approved by state inspectors, the New Orient mine in West Frankfort, Ill., blows up, killing 119 miners.

1917—Guilty of fighting back when Houston cops rioted in August, 13 Black soldiers are hanged in unison.

1838—The U.S. House of Representatives passes Rep. Charles Atherton’s (D-N.H.) “gag rule” prohibiting discussion of slavery.

2006—The *Portsmouth Herald* misquotes Sen. Barack Obama [D-Ill.], who, the day before, in Portsmouth, did *not* say, “The moral arc of the universe bends at the elbow of justice.”

2005—“I think we are welcomed [in Iraq],” says George W.[MD] Bush, “but it was not a peaceful welcome.”

2000—The Supreme Court selects George W.[MD] Bush to be #43.

1995—A Flag Protection Amendment fails by three votes in the Senate.

1994—Freshmen Reps. of the new GOP majority fête Rush Limbaugh and make him an honorary Member at a raucous Heritage Foundation shindig.

1985—Arrow Air Flight 1285 crashes at Gander, killing 248 U.S. paratroopers and eight crew. Islamic Jihad claims credit, which a sketchy U.S. investigation attempts to deny.

1984—Eight minutes after the end of his first execution, Alpha Otis Stephens keeps breathing and moving. So, Georgia electrocutes him again.

1983—“New Trends in Missiles,” a Boston trade show, draws an anarchist’s entry; 1,000 cockroaches symbolize the only winners of nuclear war.

1983—Nancy Reagan sits on Mr. T’s lap and kisses him on the scalp.

1950—Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Bushmills) gives columnist Drew Pearson a kick in the groin.

1942—The *Queen Mary*, carrying 11,339 GIs and crew, rolls 52” when hit by a rogue wave up to 90 feet high; 55” and she would have capsized.

2009—Sen. Joe Lieberman [I-Conn.] nixes a Medicare public option.

2003—U.S. troops drag Saddam Hussein out of a hole in the ground, so final victory in Iraq must be imminent. U.S. death toll so far: 547.

2000—Al Gore decides he’d rather be righteous than be president.

1988—In Texas, Ray Landry’s death is delayed 14 minutes when a tube falls from his arm and lethal chemicals spray across the room.

1978—An eager public finally gets its first Susan B. Anthony dollars.

1974—Defecting oceanographer Slava Kurilov leaps from a Soviet cruise ship, swims for three days, and reaches the Philippines safely.

1966—20th Century-Fox pays Governor Reagan \$2 million for 290 acres in Malibu worth about \$200K.

1954—Because he sold a house in a white Louisville neighborhood to a Black man, journalist Carl Braden is convicted of sedition.

1951—J. Edgar Hoover spooks Harry S Truman into purging “disloyal” government workers.

1932—In the U.S. House, sporting goods store clerk Martin Kemmerer brandishes a .38 and demands the floor. Rep. Melvin Maas (R-Minn.) talks him into dropping the gun.

1864—Paraguay declares war on Brazil; its population is soon halved.

1774—Paul Revere rides to Portsmouth to say imports of powder and arms have been banned.

2020—AG Bill Barr quits, the first Covid vaccines are administered, the Electoral College elects Biden President, and Dolt #45 claims he won.

2012—N.H.-born Adam Lanza shoots his gun-enthusiast mother, six other adults, and 20 kids at a Newtown, Conn. school.

2008—“This is a farewell kiss from the Iraqi people, you dog,” yells Muntadhar al-Zaidi, as he flings his shoe at George W.[MD] Bush.

2005—George W.[MD] Bush blames his Iraq War on “faulty intelligence.” He doesn’t say whose.

1987—Chrysler admits it sold thousands of used cars as new ones.

1986—Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager begin a nine-day, non-stop, around-the-world flight.

1981—Defending his taxpayer-funded cocktail parties at the Lee Mansion, Interior Sec. James Watts says “Mr. Reagan has the White House. I have Arlington [National Cemetery].”

1973—The President of the U.S.—“Tricky Dick”—personally thanks the leader of the U.S. branch of Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s cult for his support.

1972—The last men on the moon leave.

1942—A German priest writes Pope Pius XII a letter: Nazis are killing up to 6,000 Poles and Jews per day in “SS-furnaces” at Belzec, Poland.

1774—Local militiamen seize powder and arms from Fort William and Mary, near Portsmouth. It comes in handy six months later at Bunker Hill.

2000—Sen. Phil Gramm gives Enron the energy futures deregulation it wants, hidden in an appropriations bill. One year later Enron is bankrupt.

1997—Paula Jones’ lawyers maneuver Bill Clinton into signing a legal document claiming he’d not had sex with government workers.

1986—Bill Casey, CIA director, suffers a handy seizure, preventing him from testifying about Iran/Contra.

1983—Ed Meese denies Ebenezer Scrooge exploited Bob Cratchit.

1969—The Mormon Church reaffirms its “no Black priests” policy.

1967—A 2.5 mm-deep defect in a part collapses the 39 year-old Silver Bridge over the Ohio River, killing 46.

1960—Police in Palm Beach arrest N.H. resident Richard Pavlick before he can kill John F. Kennedy with his Buick full of dynamite.

1922—Harvard’s President defends its policy of banning Black students from dining rooms and residences.

1890—Sitting Bull’s home at Standing Rock is raided by 39 Indian Agency police. Sitting Bull and seven allies are killed, as are eight cops.

1873—Erie County, N.Y. Sheriff [and future U.S. President] Stephen Grover Cleveland rapes and impregnates Maria Halpin, whom he’d been dating. He has mother and child put into asylums: lunatic and orphan, respectively.

1814—The Federalists begin their Hartford Convention; their secrecy, sedition, and bad timing doom them.

2005—*The New York Times* reports that the NSA has been tapping U.S. telephones without a warrant.

2001—U.S. troops at Tora Bora ask for help catching Osama bin Laden. Donald Rumsfeld denies their request; bin Laden walks away.

1988—Bush #41 nominates notoriously boozy womanizer Sen. John Tower [R-Texas] to run the Department of Defense. His confirmation hearings do not go well.

1988—Perennial Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche—Rochester, N.H.’s most famous native—is convicted of tax and mail fraud.

1973—Protestors celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Boston Tea Party by hanging Richard Nixon in effigy.

1970—Big Milk offers Nixon a \$2 million “campaign contribution” if he’ll cut milk imports. A fortnight later Nixon imposes milk import quotas.

1965—Gen. Westmoreland, already commanding 200,000 men in Vietnam, asks for another 243,000.

1960—Two airliners collide over Manhattan killing a total of 134.

1950—Spooked by Commies, Harry S Truman proclaims a national emergency. It stays in effect until 1976.

1835—A two-day fire destroys 674 buildings in New York, bankrupting insurance companies and kicking off the Depression of 1837.

1773—“Sons of Liberty” disguised as Mohawks dump 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor.

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