

The Fortnightly Rant

On Great Men and History

Henry Alfred Kissinger died on November 29th. On that, we can all agree.

Well, perhaps we're being overly optimistic.

To be clear, we're not saying *we* think that Henry the K is still alive somewhere, maintained in some quasi-lifelike state by a cabal of mad scientists.

We're just saying that considering present circumstances, it's possible—even probable—that *someone* in this great nation of ours is convinced that the original Doctor Strangelove is currently hooked up to a maze of tubes and cables and still breathing. Or burling in a jar, "Futurama"-style.

If anyone actually does believe that scenario it's ironic, since Kissinger did so much damage not just to the world—innumerable deaths, bomblets exploding to this day—but to our ability to accurately perceive the world.

The assassination of John F. Kennedy broke something in America, but our ship of state really foundered in Vietnam. And the damage extended well beyond the division between the hawks and the doves. American foreign policy at the time was dominated by the so-called domino theory: we must fight the Viet Cong in 'Nam's Central Highlands, lest Charlie, in his pajamas and sandals, ambush us on the streets of San Diego.

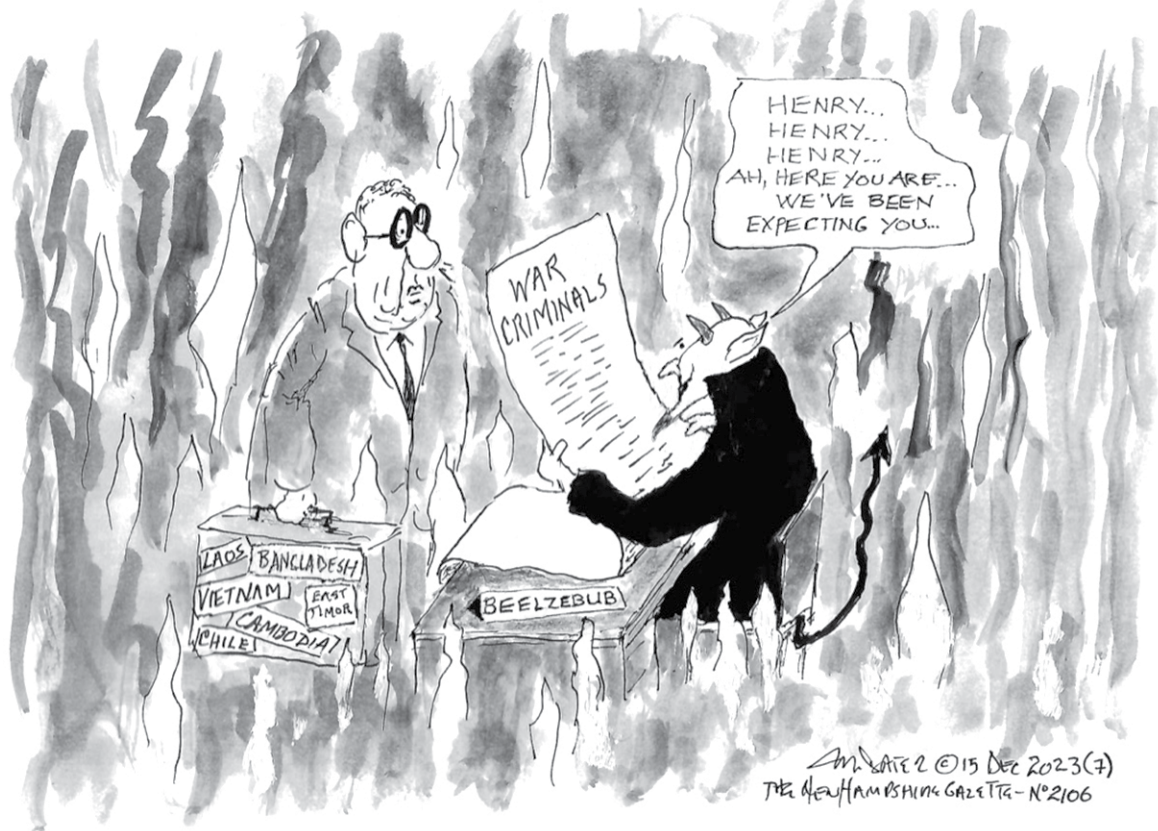
The war did have a domino effect, just not the one we were warned about. The cost of the war blew up the budget. Bye bye to the uplift of Johnson's Great Society, welcome to persistent wealth and income inequality. So long, 1944 Bretton Woods Agreement and the relatively stable global economy which it

enabled, say hello to chaos.

Kissinger's role was central in bringing this all about. His audacity and duplicity were such that even Shakespeare might not have dared to create him. Wikipedia has the receipts:

In August 1968, Kissinger wrote to Harriman, who was leading the American delegation at the Paris peace talks: "My dear Averell... I am through with Republican politics. The party is hopeless and unfit to govern." On 17 September 1968, Kissinger arrived in Paris and served as an unofficial consultant to the American delegation. At the time, Kissinger spoke of his disgust with the Republican candidate, Richard

Nixon, saying: "Three days of the week I think I'll vote for Hubert. The other days I think I won't vote at all." But at the same time, Kissinger was in contact with the Nixon campaign and began to share information about the progress of the peace talks. Kissinger began to call Richard Allen, Nixon's foreign policy adviser, from a public telephone booth, offering information in exchange for which he wanted a senior position if Nixon won the election. On 12 October 1968, Kissinger told Allen that Harriman had "broken open the champagne" because he persuaded Johnson to order a bombing halt of North Vietnam. Allen called John Mitchell, Nixon's campaign manager, who agreed that this was most important information. As a reward, Mitchell told Allen that Kissinger would receive the senior post he craved, with Allen saying the office of National Security Adviser would suit Kissinger the best. At the same time, Kissinger was in contact with the Democratic candidate, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, lobbying for a senior post if Humphrey won the election."



Historian Robert Dallek and CIA analyst William Bundy have argued that the failure of the Paris peace talks in 1968 could not be attributed to Kissinger alone. Perhaps that's so, but not for lack of trying.

Kissinger certainly achieved his primary objective: a powerful job in the White House. Nixon, his boss, had campaigned on a "secret plan to end the war." In practice, that plan was to keep killing as many Vietnamese as possible—and as many Americans as necessary in the process—until it was time to get re-elected. Then he could run as the man who had finally brought peace to whatever might be left of Vietnam.

None of this seemed to trouble his National Security Advisor/Secretary of State. In fact, hardly anything seems to have ever troubled Kissinger.

On April 6, 1971, as our allies in West Pakistan were slaughtering

Bengalis in East Pakistan, the U.S. Consul General there cabled Washington: "Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities. Our government has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens while at the same time bending over backwards to placate the West Pak[istan] dominated government and to lessen any deservedly negative international public relations impact against them. Our government has evidenced what many will consider moral bankruptcy.... Private Americans have expressed disgust. We, as professional civil servants, express our dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interests here can be defined and our policies redirected in order to salvage our nation's position as a moral leader of the free world."

It's been called "the most strongly worded expression of dissent in the

history of the U.S. Foreign Service," but it had no effect on Kissinger and Nixon. They were scheming to use West Pakistan in their rapprochement with China, so they did nothing to intervene. By year's end between 300,000 and 3,000,000 Bengalis had been murdered.

A Sunday edition of the *New York Times* might be sufficient to catalog the myriad crimes of Henry Kissinger. We are not that newspaper. On the occasion of announcing his demise, the above must suffice.

We will only add this final irony: he lived to see his status as the Master of Lies surpassed—indeed, transcended—though his overinflated self-regard probably prevented him from seeing the resemblance.

Once again, Marx has been proven more or less right: the seemingly-interminable reign of Kissinger's influence was tragic. The ongoing threat of Trump is tragic, too—but also a farce.

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Dubai Is a Fitting Host for the Climate Circus

By Sonali Kolhatkar

In January 2023, nearly a year before the latest United Nations climate conference began, there was deep concern and alarm over the head of one of the world's largest oil companies being appointed president of the COP28 summit. The climate talks taking place in December 2023 were hosted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and overseen by Sultan Al Jaber, a man who happens to be in charge of the UAE's national oil company Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. It's a fitting illustration of an old idiom that the fox is in charge of the hen house.

Al Jaber's appointment was such a clear conflict of interest that a group of United States lawmakers, including House Representatives Barbara Lee, Rashida Tlaib, and Jamaal Bowman, and Senators Bernie

Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, sent a scathing letter on January 26th denouncing it. "Having a fossil fuel champion in charge of the world's most important climate negotiations would be like having the CEO of a cigarette conglomerate in charge of global tobacco policy," wrote the lawmakers.

Their warning fell on deaf ears and yet their fears proved to be correct months later when *The Guardian* newspaper published Al Jaber's revealing remarks made at a November 2023 online climate meeting. Climate justice leader and former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, rightly pointed out that the climate crisis was hurting women and children, and that Al Jaber had the power to do something about it. The oil company head angrily retorted that her comments were "alarmist," and asserted that, "There is no sci-

ence out there, or no scenario out there, that says that the phase-out of fossil fuel is what's going to achieve 1.5C."

He went on to say, "Show me the roadmap for a phase-out of fossil fuel that will allow for sustainable socioeconomic development, unless you want to take the world back into caves." Sounding defensive and cornered, Al Jaber added, "Show me the solutions. Stop the pointing of fingers. Stop it."

Adding (fossil) fuel to the fire, the BBC published an exposé days before COP28 began revealing that "The United Arab Emirates planned to use its role as the host of UN climate talks as an opportunity to strike oil and gas deals." UAE authorities did not deny the reports and instead responded with shocking hubris that "private meetings are private."

Such shenanigans reveal the futility of relying on the UN's annual COP meetings to phase out fossil fuels in order to stave off catastrophic climate change. Whereas earlier COP meetings fixated on the goal of "net zero emissions"—a phrase that climate activists rightly denounced as greenwashing and propaganda—the favorite phrase at this year's COP28 appeared to be a "phase down" of fossil fuels.

The idea is that oil and gas producers may consider, someday in the far future, to start producing fewer fossil fuels than they do now. "Phase down" is a clever dilution of "phase out." It is a sleight of hand intended to assuage concern over the warming climate all while remaining on a path to climate destruction.

The first draft of the COP28 agreement spelled out the two terms as interchangeable, referring to a

"phasedown/out." Al Jaber reflected this equation of two different words even as he sought to maintain his credentials as head of COP28, saying that he has maintained "over and over that the phase-down and the phase-out of fossil fuel is inevitable."

That Al Jaber would engage in trickery to protect fossil fuels is hardly surprising given his role as head of the Abu Dhabi-based oil firm. In his leaked remarks to Robinson, he proclaimed that phasing out oil and gas was not feasible, "unless you want to take the world back into caves."

But it is precisely the continued use of fossil fuels that may take us back to the stone age. We may all be living in caves someday, seeking high ground from the rising waters

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from page one

of the warming oceans, all while Al Jaber and his ilk are ensconced in the luxury bunkers of the wealthy.

It is an image that reflects the reality of Dubai, a gleaming, futuristic city where the Emirates pays lip service to climate progress as host of COP28, while simultaneously conspiring to secure oil and gas deals on the side. It's a city that is defined by yet another idiom: trying to have your cake and eat it too.

I know, because I was born and raised in Dubai, a child of Indians who emigrated in 1970 to a land known as the Trucial Sheikdoms—one year before they formally emerged as a single sovereign nation called the United Arab Emirates. My parents' tenure in the UAE was older than the nation itself and while they toiled for more than 50 years as part of an immigrant workforce that

outnumbers Emiratis 9 to 1, they were never afforded citizenship, as were none of their three children born there.

The Emirates, with the blessing of its former colonial master Britain, and its newer imperial partners, the U.S. and Israel, has presided over an oil-funded project fueled by exploited immigrant labor to emerge as one of the most important trading hubs in the world: a seductive tourist trap dotted by massive shopping malls and billboards beneath which teeming labor camps invisibly keep the wheels of capitalism turning. It touts a liberalism that allows women to work, drive, and even hold limited leadership, all while suppressing the rights of low-wage female domestic workers. It pledges sustainability while marketing itself to global investors.

It is hypocrisy manifested; a pretty façade of a promising future built on an age-old model of serfdom, a na-



Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley, under the tent, addresses nearly 100 citizens sheltering from a cold rain under overlapping umbrellas. They came together on Sunday, December 3rd to show support for Mamadou Dembele, and attest to the burden of persistent racism. Judging from Ian Lenahan's account in the Portsmouth Herald, it appears that Dembele, a Vice President at Bangor Savings Bank, who is Black, was accosted by a small mob near Gilley's Diner on Fleet Street on the night before Thanksgiving. He was then attacked and injured by a lone individual. His suspected assailant, a stranger to Dembele, is white. He is also a former employee of the Portsmouth Police Department. To avoid a conflict of interest, the criminal investigation is being handled by the State Police. The Attorney General's Civil Rights Unit is also investigating.

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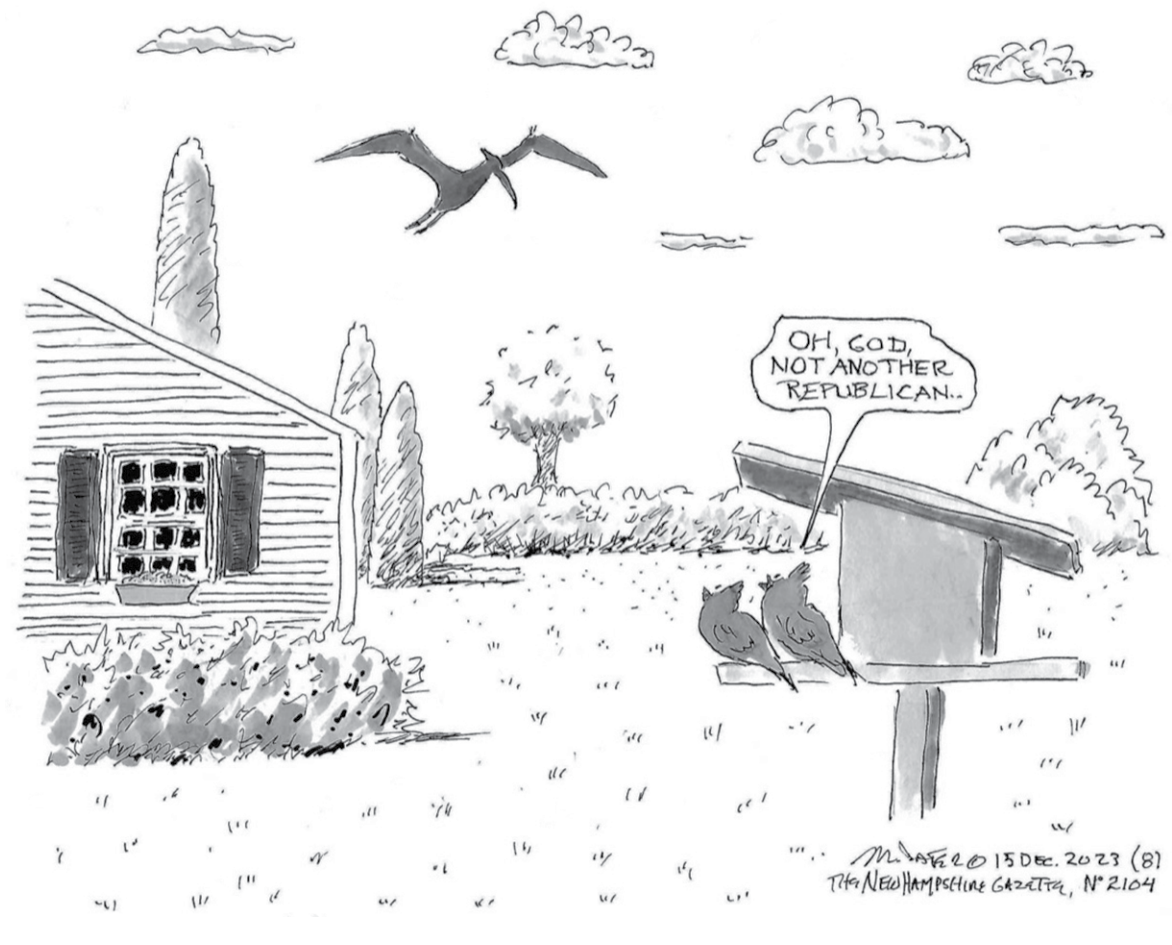
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tion that celebrates the freedom to consume, but clamps down on the freedom to speak. In other words, it is a capitalist's wet dream. What better place for fossil fuel promoters to pretend they care about the future of the planet?

The COP meetings have been a disastrous distraction from the urgent need to end fossil fuel production and consumption. Even Christiana Figueres, former executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, who is considered the architect of the 2015 Paris climate accord, is so disgusted by the state of proceedings that she called the COP "a circus."

Having Dubai host the largest annual international climate gathering is a desperate bid by a dying industry to maintain relevance. Energy forecasting predictions point to a grim future for petrostates like the UAE. It's no wonder Al Jaber has publicly tied himself into knots of contradictions. His nation's future depends on the continued flow of oil and gas, while our world's future depends on an immediate termination of the poisonous fuels.

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.

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**Voters Say Big Oil Should Pay for Climate Damage**

by Brett Wilkins

As yet another United Nations Climate Change Conference winds down without a meaningful agreement on phasing out fossil fuels, polling released Tuesday by Data for Progress revealed strong bipartisan support among U.S. voters for legislation forcing oil and gas companies to pay for their role in fueling the planetary emergency.

The survey of 1,279 U.S. voters, conducted November 3-6, found that around two-thirds of all likely voters support such legislation, a +40-point net margin. Among Democrats, support for the pro-

posed bill is 88 percent, while 61 percent of Independent and 46 percent of Republicans either strongly or somewhat back the proposal.

Asked if they were more or less likely to support elected officials who prioritize making Big Oil pay for its climate pollution, 64 percent of overall respondents, 89 percent of Democrats, and 58 percent of Independents answered "more likely." Republicans were the only group whose members were less likely to back officials who would make oil and gas companies pay for their pollution.

"In a resounding call for accountability, two-thirds of the American people support legislation demanding industry titans like Exxon and Shell shoulder their fair share of the climate damages inflicted by fossil fuels," Fossil Free Media communications director Cassidy DiPaola said in a statement.

"With COP spotlighting the towering price tag of climate change, voters resoundingly endorse fossil fuel companies contributing their fair share to address a crisis they helped manufacture and still refuse to help fix," she added, referencing the U.N. summit.



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The poll follows the September launch of the “Make Polluters Pay” campaign, a public relations blitz meant to drum up public support for suing fossil fuel corporations—which knew that their products caused climate change decades before publicly saying so.

That month, California joined dozens of states and municipalities that have targeted fossil fuel giants in court, suing five fossil fuel giants—ExxonMobil, Shell, BP, ConocoPhillips, and Chevron—over their decadeslong effort to deceive the public about their products’ role in fueling global heating.

The new survey’s findings also came as so-called “loss and damage”—the harm caused by anthropogenic climate change—features prominently at COP28. However, climate campaigners were once again disappointed as the United States and other top polluters failed to make meaningful contributions to the fund.

The rich nations most responsible

for the climate catastrophe pledged just \$700 million among them, the equivalent of under 0.2 percent of the irreversible losses Global South countries suffer each year during the worsening planetary crisis. The United States pledged a paltry \$17.5 million.

“Every year, we travel across oceans to come to these negotiations and we continue to get only drops of ambition,” Drue Slatter, a Fijian climate campaigner attending COP28, wrote in an opinion piece published Tuesday by Common Dreams.

“Facing the catastrophic effects of extreme weather at home and watching the slow progress of the negotiations, it was hard not to be pessimistic before we even arrived at COP28,” Slatter added. “But the point is that we can’t afford not to be here, we can’t afford to stop fighting because what’s at stake is our very survival.”

Brett Wilkins is a staff writer for



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

### GOP Backs Boebert’s Plan: Make Taxpayers Foot the Bill for Big Oil

Fossil fuel industry-funded Republicans on the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee voted Wednesday to advance Rep. Lauren Boebert’s bill that would saddle taxpayers with the massive cost of cleaning up oil and gas wells on federal lands.

“Corporations awarded a lease to drill on federal land must post a bond. If the leasing corporation abandons an exploration site, goes bankrupt, or fails to plug a well securely, the posted bond covers the cost of doing so,” Public Citizen explained this week in a statement opposing the proposal.

The Colorado Republican’s Restoring American Energy Dominance Act (H.R. 6009) would block a proposed rule from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) revising

federal regulations “to update the fees, rents, royalties, and bonding requirements related to oil and gas leasing, development, and production” in line with the Inflation Reduction Act signed by President Joe Biden last year.

Based on a BLM review of the costs to plug orphaned wells, the rule—strongly opposed by polluting oil and gas companies—would raise the minimum lease bond amount to \$150,000 and the minimum statewide bond to \$500,000. It would also end the use of nationwide bonds.

“Without these crucial protections, the oil and gas industry could stick taxpayers with a massive bill of between \$2.9 billion and \$17.7 billion,” Public Citizen’s Alan Zibel warned in a report published Tuesday in anticipation of the House committee vote.

“We already allow far too much climate-destroying fossil fuel drilling on public lands in Western states,” Zibel added in a statement Wednesday. “The least we can do is ensure taxpayers don’t get stuck sub-

sidizing the fossil fuel industry’s cost of doing business.”

“Even as U.S. fossil fuel production soars to record levels,” he said, “Republicans are doing the bidding of fossil fuel lobbyists by trying to block modest, sensible efforts to reduce blatant, long-standing giveaways in the system for leasing public lands for oil and gas production.”

In the leadup to the vote, *Accountable.US* highlighted that the “Big Oil-backed, far-right extremists” on the Republican-led committee have taken at least \$3.8 million in campaign contributions from the oil and gas industry during their political careers.

Rep. Garret Graves (R-La.) leads the pack with \$850,945, followed by committee Chair Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) at \$416,575, based on the group’s analysis of *OpenSecrets* data. Boebert, who is only in her second term, ranks sixth, with \$121,150.

“Rep. Boebert is plainly on the side of the oil and gas compa-

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It may have been superfluous, arriving as it did amid the usual rigamarole, but the car shown here, which parked in Market Square on the afternoon of Saturday, December 9th, certainly must have dispelled any lingering uncertainties as to the season. Its highly appropriate red paint is nearly obscured by garlands of tinsel, silver bells, a nativity scene, a lantern, a sled, a wreath, a toy train on tracks, a snow globe, several snowmen, large and small, a number of nutcrackers in uniform, penguins, wrapped presents, and various Christmas lights and ornaments. Also on hand: Mickie and Minnie Mouse, Snoopy, and, splayed out on the hood as if he’s been hit from behind while jaywalking, Jack Skellington in a Santa Claus costume.

**Murph’s Fortnightly Quote**

“Once you’ve been to Cambodia, you’ll never stop wanting to beat Henry Kissinger to death with your bare hands.”

— Anthony Bourdain

“There is much talk about returning to normal, but our normal wasn’t something to aspire to. As a country, as a society, there was, and is, much that remains broken.”

john@wordpraxis.com

— Mary L. Trump, *The Reckoning*

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**Remembering Governor Voldemort**  
To the Editor:

A 6th housing forum was held at St Anselm's on December 8, 2023.

The Free State Project is supposed to stand for freedom. So why would they want to impose draconian zoning changes on our towns?

Jason Sorens is the founder of the Free State Project and part of the "Center for Ethics in Society" at St. Anselm's. In partnership with New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority and the N.H. Office of Planning and Development, this group was the creator of the "Zoning Atlas," a tool that helps target towns that do not favor high density construction. Why would a supposedly Catholic college engage in such nonsense? Why would FSP members support such socialistic views?

Frankly there are too many non-governmental, unelected government groups that team up with special interest groups such as this one. These groups are then allowed to set policy, and yet, nobody voted for them!

Governor Sununu, who is also sold on this mission, has even praised Sorens' work.

What is so disturbing is that anyone thinks we need to destroy single family zoning, or even advocate challenging the boundaries set up by HOAs, despite the fact that people who have purchased homes in those communities were fully aware of what living in an HOA would entail.

There are plenty of commercial buildings that can be converted into apartments without invading established neighborhoods where people have bought homes, expecting the zoning wouldn't change.

No wonder people are beginning to look unfavorably on the FSP. We must stay vigilant on this issue.

Jane Aitken  
Bedford, N.H.  
Jane:

Thank you very much for writing. Your letter sent us down a most entertaining rabbit hole. It also sent us back twenty years, to a much simpler time. That certainly was a refreshing respite. Now we're back, shaking our heads, and asking,

as Dorothy Parker did a century ago, "What fresh hell is this?"

An AP story, datelined Sunday, November 2, 2003, began, "Gov. Craig Benson welcomed members of the Free State Project to New Hampshire on Saturday, saying he was excited about their plans to move to the state and promote their agenda of smaller government. 'We'd love to have you,' Benson told several Free Staters at the annual convention of the state Libertarian Party, held at the Highlander Inn. 'We don't have to agree on everything to make things happen. What we have to agree on is that we're going to leave things better than we found them,' he said."

"[W]e're going to leave things better than we found them..." As letter writer and editor, Jane, we seem irreconcilably opposed on the question of the supposedly sacred inviolability of single-family zoning. So be it. But surely we can agree that this sentence fragment from Gov. Benson, about the Free State Project, contains perhaps the highest level of irony ever seen in these pages.

For the record, a 2022 Suffolk University/Boston Globe survey of 500 Granite Staters found that 256 had never heard of the Free State Project. Among those who had, 67 had no opinion one way or the other. That left 177. Of those 177 who are aware of the FSP, just 49 had a favorable opinion, while 128 had an unfavorable opinion. That's a ratio of 2.6 to 1 against.

The late and much lamented blogger Susan the Bruce called Benson "The Voldemort of the NHGOP"—he who must not be named. The one-term governor certainly earned that moniker, and not just because he welcomed the FSP. His two years in office mortified many Republicans. Of course, this was back in the day when some of them still had the capacity to feel shame.

Also, let us not forget, four months into his term the Old Man came down from the Mountain. Long-time readers will recall Vermin Supreme's interview with John McCain, in which he asserted that Bush #43's campaign manager blew it up out of spite over his master's poor showing here. Karl Rove may have pushed the plunger on the blasting machine, but the Old Man fell on Benson's watch.

You are shocked, as is your right, that



the State would work with Sorens, and that Sorens would work on a "socialistic" zoning project.

We are shocked that the Zoning Atlas was put together using a how-to guide promulgated by the Social Science Research Network [SSRN]. SSRN was co-founded by Michael C. Jensen. If Wikipedia is to be believed—and in this case we do believe it—Jensen provided much of the theory used to justify paying CEOs with stock options. In retrospect, that seems akin to treating Covid by drinking bleach.

The Editor

**'Tis the Season to Get Right With the Planet**  
To the Editor:

We are told that the Holiday Season in the U.S.A. is about giving. Is it really? Or is it more about spending to keep the wheels of commerce rolling for the rich ruling elite?

Considering that most people go into debt each year for the holiday season—meaning they spend more than they can afford—I would say the season is more about spending than giving. What if we didn't spend money on obligatory gifts and instead, spent it on experiences that bring people together? What if we took the time we carved out to go shopping and instead, spent that time with those that are lonely or rejuvenate ourselves by spending time with Nature? When we are refreshed, we have more to offer others.

The New Hampshire Community Rights Network (NHCRN) works to raise awareness and drive systemic change by offering education and information on living in right relationship with one another and with Nature. We cannot have right relationship without spending time with another. Reach out at [info@nhcommunityrights.org](mailto:info@nhcommunityrights.org) or visit [www.nhcommunityrights.org](http://www.nhcommunityrights.org) if you would like to learn more.

Michelle Beatty  
NHCRN President

Michelle:  
Thank you for a seasonal reminder we can wholeheartedly endorse.  
The Editor

**The Bloody Hands of Editors**  
Dear Editor,

A recent *New York Times* article presented "three entities most responsible" for the high civilian death toll in Gaza. ("The Morning," December 7, 2023)

The report explained the roles of Israel, Hamas, and Egypt without the faintest breath of concern about the contributory role of the United States, which any concerned college student can plainly see is immense.

America provides Israel several billions a year in military hardware and Biden green-lights Netanyahu by refusing to place any conditions on its use.

The *Times* apparently believes it is more important to blindly serve as Biden's devil's advocate than to do anything to upset his chances in 2024.

This kind of anti-civic thinking turns newspaper editors into war propaganda champions and makes of them another important entity responsible for the civilian death toll.

Kimball Shinkoskey  
Woods Cross, Utah  
Kimball:

If we could play the devil's advocate for a moment, we'd like to point out that there's nothing new about newspaper editors howling for warfare and bloodshed.

Back in our younger days, the language in this and other newspapers was generally more elevated and civil—but the Revolution didn't exactly come out of nowhere.

Some newspapers were notably uncivil leading up to the Civil War. Rightly or wrongly, the Spanish-American War is largely attributed to William Randolph Hearst.

The Iraq War could never have happened without the timid acquiescence of myriad editorial dimwits.

We, on the other hand, have a default position of opposing wars. The one exception might be if Canadians swooped in to occupy our sugar bushes.

The Editor

**Counting Down from 402**

Dear Sir:

In an interview this week with Donald Trump regarding his plans if he were reelected president, Sean Hannity asked him "You are promising America tonight you would never abuse power as retribution against anybody?" Trump's response was, "Except for Day One."

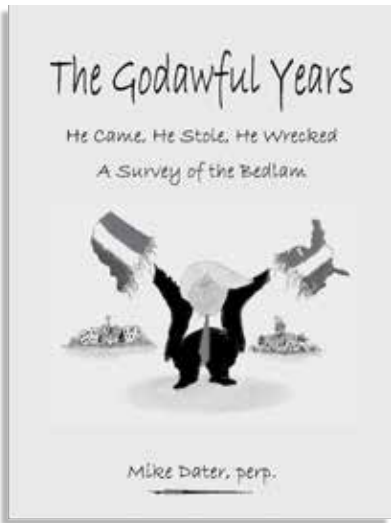
So, Mr. Trump has publicly stated that he would abuse his power, violate his oath, and go after all those he considers his enemies. On the first day of his second term.

Unfortunately, Trump would only need one day to put his authoritarian plan into action.

Consider the immense damage he could do in just one day. For starters he could sign a slew of executive orders that had been prepared before taking office. These executive orders could involve all sorts of illegal and/or unconstitutional actions to solidify his power and control. He could declare martial law or even invoke the insurrectionist act to begin a purge of the government and to take control of the entire executive branch. He could appoint his zealot friends as acting cabinet secretaries of all executive departments who would follow his illegal orders. No need to wait for Senate confirmation. God knows what else he has planned. This is what other dictators have done to secure unlimited power throughout history, and it can happen here.

One day is all that Trump would

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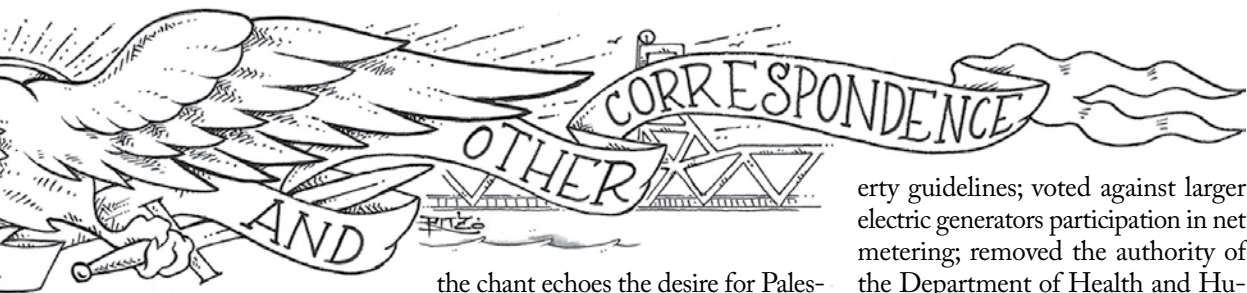
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need to fulfill what he and his fellow conspirators have already stated publicly. Failure to take his promises and threats seriously would be a grave mistake. Unfortunately, most Republicans are still too fearful of Trump to speak out and he still remains the leading potential Republican Presidential candidate. If we fail to stop Trump now or in November, we may never get another chance. This is not a drill; our democracy is at grave risk.

Rich DiPentima  
Portsmouth, N.H.  
*Rich:*  
*You're absolutely right.*  
*We may have only 402 more days to enjoy the freedoms and protections of the U.S. Constitution as we know it.*  
*If we were broadcasting the news from a TV studio, our set would have as its backdrop an enormous Countdown Clock to January 20, 2025.*  
*The Editor*

=====  
**Recognize The Humanity of Both Peoples**  
To the Editor:  
Some New Hampshire residents have stated that " Hamas wants an extermination." There is widespread disagreement over the meaning of "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free."

Such citizens have criticized Rep. Rashida Tlaib, a Palestinian-American, for using that phrase. Tlaib justified the slogan: "From the river to the sea is an aspirational call for freedom, human rights, and peaceful coexistence, not death, destruction or hate." Yousef Munayyer, head of the Palestine/Israel Program commented: "There isn't a square inch of the land between the river and the sea where Palestinians have freedom, justice, and equality, and it has never been more important to emphasize this than right now." To many across the globe,

the chant echoes the desire for Palestinians' freedom from oppression. If one examines the original platform of Netanyahu's Likud Party, it said that between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, "there will only be Israeli sovereignty." So much for the "two state solution." And with over 600,000 illegal Jewish "settlers" living in the West Bank mainly on stolen Palestinian land, the "two state" idea is a fairy-tale.

During my five trips to Israel and to Palestine, the Israelis I met disliked Netanyahu, and the Palestinians I met said they didn't hate Jews, but they hated the brutal occupation. Both Israelis and Palestinians should be able to live in a state where all its citizens may live in dignity, equality, and freedom with guaranteed human rights. Finally, let us recognize the humanity of both peoples.

Will Thomas  
Auburn, N.H.  
*Will:*  
*Thank you for this eye-witness account. We lament the general tendency, in media framing of this issue, to overlook the fact that Palestinians are human beings.*  
*The Editor*

=====  
**Shady Leadership Permitted Bad Votes**  
To the Editor,  
The fact that the Republican leadership in New Hampshire knew about Representative Troy Merner's move before the start of the legislative season is so frustrating. This representative voted with the Republican party 95 percent of the time. He voted against the greenhouse gas emission reduction goal, to net zero by 2050; voted for penalties for health care providers who violate the state ban on abortion after 24 weeks; voted to increase the household income limit for Education Freedom Accounts from 300 percent to 350 percent of federal pov-

erty guidelines; voted against larger electric generators participation in net metering; removed the authority of the Department of Health and Human Services to require vaccinations; voted against 30-day to 6 month notice period before a rent increase; voted against raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour; voted against expanding background checks for firearms; voted against mail-in voting; voted against State-run marijuana legalization with state-run stores, or home growing or private stores; voted against local zoning changes for housing development, and the list goes on. (per Citizens Count) Troy Merner says he was encouraged to stay on in the position by the Republican leadership, according to recent reporting. The leadership in the House is just as much at fault as Troy because of their need for power and lack of respect for the North Country.

We already have fewer representatives than we used to; having such a puppet under fraudulent circumstances takes the cake.  
Kathleen Kelley  
Randolph, N.H.  
*Kathleen:*  
*Thanks for digging into the consequences of this shameful and undemocratic incident.*  
*Unfortunately, we expected no better from the House leadership.*  
*The Editor*

=====  
**Republicans Are the Death Panel**  
Dear Editor,  
A recent United Nations report documents 10,000 Ukrainian civilian deaths due to Russia's aggressive war. That number is dwarfed by an estimated 15,000 Palestinian civilians killed in Israel's military response to Hamas' 1,200 murders October 7th. How then should we characterize the deaths of nearly 319,000 American civilians by what Brown University medical researchers call "Covid-19 vaccine-preventable deaths?" This dev-

astating number is higher than a previous estimate by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and Harvard School of Public Health, that 232,000 American deaths could have been prevented had the deceased been vaccinated.

"All of this comes down to trust—whether the political leadership creates a climate of trust in public health agencies' efforts, in the science," says Dr. Thomas Tsai, co-author of Harvard's analysis.  
This deadly legacy is the crime for which Donald Trump's anti-vaccine, anti-mask, anti-science harangues must disqualify him from holding public office ever again.

Bruce Joffe  
Piedmont, Calif.  
*Bruce:*  
*Every fortnight we intend to harp on this issue. We nearly always forget. Thank you for making up for [one of] our deficiencies.*  
*We agree that this instance of appalling judgment should be reason enough to dissuade any thinking person from voting for this buffoon.*  
*Actual disqualification, though? That's a different question. Defining and quantifying appallingly bad judgment seems like a dangerous enterprise.*  
*The Editor*

=====  
**Spain's Government's Impressive About-Turn: Democratic Horizon For Catalonia?**  
To the Editor:

Today's Spanish nationalism was heavily influenced by General Franco's forty years of dictatorship. Due to international pressure, fascism agreed to move towards a more or less democratic system and was therefore not defeated and eradicated as in Germany or Italy. In Spain, fascism persisted, more or less disguised, at the base of the army, the police, big business, the Popular Party (the PP was founded by seven of Franco's ministers), the media and the judiciary.

This overwhelming domination by the heirs of the regime caused even the most open or left-wing sectors to drift towards a supremacist nationalism that excluded those who were different and tended towards aggressiveness. And it was further accentuated by

the confrontation against the armed struggle of Basque independence, in which all means were used to win at any cost for the sake of the sacred unity of Spain. And they have treated the peaceful and democratic Catalan independence movement equally, legitimising the use of all the tools of the state (police, secret services, media and judicial system) to destroy the supposed enemy.

The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE, which had supported the PP's outrages, continued the dirty war when it governed from 2018. At the same time, far-right politicians within the PP created their own party VOX, against feminism, immigrants and the Catalans and Basques. In its beginnings, the PSOE demanded that VOX be in the televised debates with the intention of damaging the PP electorally, although it was not appropriate because they were an extra-parliamentary force. In the short term the PP lost votes at the expense of VOX, but then the beast became big and now everyone is regretting it.

In the 2023 elections, the PP won but could not form a government, while the PSOE's Sánchez could form a government if he got the support of Junts, the pro-independence party of Carles Puigdemont, exiled in Belgium and whom the PSOE had vilified to dehumanising extremes. Now that they need his support, Puigdemont has demanded a "historic agreement" to democratically resolve the Catalonia-Spain conflict, foreseeably with a referendum. Puigdemont has set the following conditions: an end to the dirty war, the removal of independence from Europol's terrorist list, an amnesty for all those persecuted by the "lawfare" (judicial dirty war) carried out by the Spanish justice system, and negotiations in Switzerland with international mediation.

Sánchez has accepted everything, because he wants to stay in power, but also because it was reasonable and it was the opportunity to put an end to the orgy of repression that had become

*Mash Notes, Hate Mail, &c.*  
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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

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*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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unsustainable. This abuse by the state could no longer be sustained, because independence has been winning elections, because Spain has been condemned by the Council of Europe and the United Nations, and because the lawsuits that the Catalan independence movement has brought against Spain before the European courts are about to come to light.

From now on, Sánchez has the difficult task of explaining why he is amnestying the Catalan independence movement if, until now, he said that they were criminals who could not be negotiated with. The right wing is right to criticise him for having made a U-turn out of a lust for power and because the PSOE governs almost nowhere and, to maintain the party, it needs the economic income allowed by the central government. We shall see if Sánchez's personal need can help find a democratic solution to the eternal Spain-Catalonia problem.

At the moment, there are people demonstrating in the streets against stopping the judicial prosecution of Catalan "coup perpetrators." The PP will try to make Sánchez pay a price for separating himself from nationalist postulates and VOX accuses Sánchez of being a coup leader, a dictator and compares him to Hitler. Protesters make fascist proclamations and call for the death of Sánchez and Puigdemont. From the army, some fifty retired military officers have called for a coup d'état to save the homeland and



nobody has said anything to them. And the judges have also protested against the allusion to "lawfare" because they say it undermines the separation of powers. They have even demonstrated in their robes, violating the principle of non-participation in politics and, worst of all, they are forcing the judicial machinery to convict the maximum number of people before the amnesty and they are raising the charges to terrorism so that they cannot benefit from the amnesty.

The amnesty law is being processed, but the fact is that in Spain there has never been a problem with the laws, nor with the ordinary justice system comparable to that of Europe, but rather the problem is with the high judges when they have to judge Catalan pro-independence supporters, because then they use justice for political ends to harm their enemy.

In any case, the facts show a powerful Catalan independence movement that has managed to force the Spanish state to contradict itself and accept an amnesty that all state powers described as impossible until four months ago. We shall see how events evolve.

Jordi Oriola Folch  
Barcelona, Catalonia

Jordi:

Yes, indeed, we shall see. And, judging from this and your earlier dispatches, we will be able to comprehend, thanks to the clarity you provide.

The Editor

### Does Hate Have a Home in N.H.?

To the Editor:

On Sunday, December third at 1:00 p.m., a demonstration in support of Mamadou Dembele, the victim of a hate crime in Portsmouth on November 22nd, was held at the African Burial Ground Monument. It was a rainy day with several dozen supporters turning up to listen to the words of leadership address the attack on a fellow member of the community. They had inspirational messages of persistence, community, and support. They expressed their love of New Hampshire and its people and shared their pain of constantly being on guard for incidents like Mr. Dembele's horrible attack.

Significantly less inspiring was the distinct absence of New Hampshire's white leaders. Assistant Attorney General Sean Locke sent a letter that was read by Manchester NAACP president James McKim that had the generic condolences and platitudes of "hate having no home here," and one white faith leader was called to speak and hit the nail on the head. White people shy away and stand in the back of the room when these all-too-common events transpire.

New Hampshire is 92 percent white per the latest census. Almost all our state leaders and law enforcement officers are white. Yet no law enforcement or state leaders were present to show the community that

hate indeed has no home in New Hampshire.

With the global rise of white supremacy and the increase in activity of Neo-Nazi groups that attacked residents in Concord in June of this year, and the rumors that a former police officer was the one who conducted the attack on Mr. Dembele, I'd like to think that our leaders would want to get on top of a high visibility incident like this one and prove to the public that this will not be tolerated.

As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "...We will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." Perception is reality and the perception indeed is, Hate has a home in New Hampshire. Prove to your residents otherwise.

Curtis Register  
Durham, N.H.

Curtis:

While we would quibble with your estimate of "several dozen supporters"—our direct, on-scene estimate was just shy of 100, not bad for such a wet, raw day—we agree that white leaders were conspicuous in their absence.

The Editor

====

### One Revolution Was Enough

Dear Editor,

There are three reasons former president Trump must not be on the ballot in any state devoted to rule of law.

First, no person found liable for large-scale business fraud should

be trusted in public office, where the societal stakes are even higher than in private business, and the consequences of misbehavior are even more dire.

Second, no person convicted of felony crime should be allowed to vote, let alone run for office, otherwise the sacred civil rights of all upstanding Americans will be diminished and stained. America must prepare for Trump's pre-election conviction of crime by enacting explicit laws to bar felons from holding positions of public trust until well after they have served their time.

Third, no person who engages in, or gives aid and comfort to an insurrection or rebellion should be allowed to take the reins of any government institution. The only exception must be a case where his or her party writes a new constitutional law that the people of the land overwhelmingly agree to support, as was the case with our founding fathers and mothers.

Kimball Shinkoskey  
Woods Cross, Utah

Kimball:

We have indeed come to a sorry state when it seems necessary to explicitly bar crooks and insurrectionists from public office.

The Editor

====

"By second or third grade, I was doing my own thing. I still resent being told what to do in any way, shape, or form. I'm sure it's clinical."

—Maya Lin

American designer and sculptor

====

### The Alleged News®

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nies that don't want to be held accountable for exploiting hard-working taxpayers," *Accountable.US* spokesperson Chris Marshall said Wednesday. "The American public can't afford to suffer from this broken, polluting system any longer."

Thanks to the panel's party-line vote, H.R. 6009 now moves to the House floor. It faces far better odds

of passing the GOP-controlled lower chamber than the divided Senate—but even if the bill got through Congress, Biden could veto it.

While Biden—who is seeking reelection next year—campaigns on being a "climate president," he has come under fire from campaigners and frontline communities for continuing fossil fuel lease sales for public lands and waters, greenlighting the Willow oil project and Moun-

tain Valley Pipeline, and blowing off COP28, the ongoing United Nations climate summit taking place in Dubai.

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Jessica Corbett 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.

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'Disastrous': U.S. Vetoes Cease-Fire Resolution at UN Security Council  
by Julia Conley

As the United Nations humanitarian chief warned that aid work-

ers in Gaza are "hanging on by our fingertips" as they try to mitigate an "untenable" disaster, and with Americans' support for Israel's U.S.-backed bombardment of the enclave eroding, the United States on Friday vetoed a resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire at the U.N. Security Council.

U.S. Envoy to the U.N. Robert Wood told members of the council that a cease-fire would "only plant the seeds for the next war."

Thirteen member-countries voted in favor of the cease-fire resolution, which was introduced after U.N. Secretary-General António Gu-

terres took the rare step of invoking Article 99 of the U.N. Charter, warning that Israel's slaughter of at least 17,487 Palestinians in just two months "may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."

The U.K. abstained from voting on the resolution, saying it did not take into account that Hamas committed acts of terrorism when it attacked Israel on October 7.

Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian U.N. envoy, called the veto "disastrous."

"The Security Council was again prevented from rising to this mo-

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# I Pledge Allegiance...

by W.D. Ehrhart

Way back in 2006, a few years after the 9/11 attacks, I was teaching at the Haverford School for Boys. Our *a cappella* choir, the Notables, was hosting a companion choir from a school in Denmark, and each choir member hosted a Danish boy. One morning, one of my students told me this story: He and his Danish guest were driving to school when the Danish boy asked Neal if the day was some sort of holiday. Neal replied that it wasn't. The Danish boy asked, "So why are there so many American flags all over the place?"

The American flag has always been a revered symbol, certainly in my lifetime. Back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the issue of flag-burning was all the rage with efforts by presidents and representatives to make flag-burning unconstitutional and a criminal offense.

Nevermind that most Americans never saw, have never seen, and will never see an American flag burned. I mean in person. Not just a video rerun, which can be broadcast and rebroadcast over and over and over again, leaving the impression that American flags get burned all the time, which is simply not true.

I can certainly understand the iconic and inspirational value of raising the Stars & Stripes at the top of Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima in February 1945. That image, particular to the U.S. Marine Corps but sculpted in larger-than-life-size bronze, graces Arlington National Cemetery.

But since 9/11, the fetishization of our flag has become epidemic, ridiculous, even comedic. In the wake of

9/11, for instance, the state of Pennsylvania enacted a law requiring that the American flag be displayed in every classroom of every public, private, and parochial school in the state. I haven't checked, but I'll bet Pennsylvania isn't the only state to pass such a law.

And I'll bet dollars to donuts that you can't find a politician wearing a suit who isn't sporting an American flag lapel pin. Or a car dealership that isn't flying an American flag so large it takes gale force winds to make it fly, which is especially delicious when the cars on sale are Japanese, Korean, and German.

It has become *pro forma* now that every National Football League game begin with a couple of hundred people dragging out an American flag big enough to cover the entire playing field, frantically waving their arms to make the flag appear to be rippling in the breeze. The flag ripplers are as often as not active duty military personnel, veterans, police officers, firefighters, or emergency medical technicians.

The players themselves now have little American flags affixed to the back of their helmets so that, in the course of watching a game, one is reminded hundreds and hundreds of times that football is an American sport and we live in the United States of America. The same is true of many if not all college football teams, and high school teams as well.

Every NASCAR race begins with a Color Guard and presentation of the Colors. When one of my nieces was a high school senior, the school posed her in front of an American flag backdrop for her graduation photo. And this was a

Quaker school. The cheeseburger I ordered recently at a restaurant came with a little American flag stuck in it and "W.D." written on it in black ink. It thought it was in honor of me since my initials are W. D. for William Daniel, but it turned out to mean "Well Done." During the major league baseball playoffs, the Philadelphia Phillies' Alec Bohm was wearing an American flag headband, on which he was clearly sweating profusely.

Nazi Germany made a fetish out of its Swastika flag. Watch any Nazi propaganda film—I suggest Leni Riefenstahl's "Triumph of the Will"—it will send chills down your spine. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea—Kim Jong Un's North Korea—likes to "show the flag." So did the Ku Klux Klan when it marched in the streets of Washington, D.C., back in the 1920s.

I don't know of any other country in the world that makes such a big deal out of their national flag, that demands you see it a dozen or forty or seventy or a hundred times a day lest you forget what country you live in.

All of which is especially ironic because today's United States of America is about as disunited as it has been since the decades leading up to our Civil War. Many of the insurrectionists who stormed the Capitol on January 6th, 2021, were carrying American flags, some of them emblazoned with images of the 45th president, or AR-15s, or both. The Proud Boys regularly wear or carry American flags. You can find photos of Proud Boys wearing American flag bandanas to hide their faces.

In an essay called "Flag-Burning" that appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on October 25th, 1989, I wrote that when the substance of freedom is subverted by a hypocritical genuflection to the symbols of freedom, we're all in a whole lot of trouble.

A quarter of a century later, we find ourselves living in a country where mass murder has become routine; legislators send Christmas cards to their constituents with all their family members armed to the teeth and smiling happily; vaccinations are perceived as a Deep State plot; facts are treated as "fake news"; Moms for Liberty are convinced that teachers are trying to make their kids gay; white men are an "oppressed minority;" immigrants are unwelcome; maldistribution of wealth is worse than it was in Medieval Europe; the front-running Republican candidate for the presidency of the nation our flag represents is a twice impeached, 91 times indicted, narcissistic grifter; the Democratic front-runner is already the oldest sitting president in U.S. history with the next election still a year away; and elections are always stolen unless the guy we voted for wins.

And over it all, above it all, in the midst of it all, everywhere you look: the Red White & Blue of the Stars & Stripes. What so proudly we hail.

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

# Why Is My Doctor Unionizing?

by Jim Hightower

You wait a month to get a doctor appointment, then you sit in the waiting room an hour because Dr. Incorporated is perpetually overbooked, then you're finally rushed in for your 10-minutes with the doc... tick, tick, tick... and then you're scooted out, uncertain whether you're supposed to take pills or make funeral arrangements.

Welcome to corporatized, consolidated, and bureaucratized "healthcare"—a rigid system in which nurses, pharmacists, and even doctors are no longer independent health professionals driven by a moral mandate to provide their best care to patients. Instead, all are treated as cogs in a monopolistic structure driven by an imperative to provide maximum profit to Wall Street owners of the corporate-care chains. This financial hierarchy demands factory-like cost-cutting—including cutting the numbers of nurses, pharmacists, and physicians who actually provide the care.

The cutbacks leave remaining caregivers stressed to the breaking point, and "care" is regimented to such time-motion metrics as limiting doctors to only 10 minutes per patient. Next!

Even when professionals complain that corporate cutbacks are endangering patients, the hierarchy responds with irrelevant financial statistics. For example, when Walgreens' pharmacists recently revolted against constant staff cuts, the chain's corporate bosses coldly retorted that they were investing \$400 million in new pharmacists. Sounds like a big number, but really? Walgreens is pocketing \$27 billion this year in profit! So, investing under two percent of one year's profit will not make a blip in service to patients. Instead, the bulk of the billions that consumers pay goes to enrich top executives and Wall Street investors.

This enrichment of the rich few at our expense is why health care providers are unionizing—not for themselves, but for us patients. For information and action, go to [doctorscouncil.org](http://doctorscouncil.org).

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## The Alleged News®

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ment to uphold its clear responsibilities in the face of this grave crisis threatening human lives and threatening regional and international peace and security," said Mansour. "Instead of allowing this council to uphold its mandate by finally making a clear call after two months of massacres that the atrocities must end, the war criminals are given more time to perpetuate them. How can this be justified?"

Nicolas de Rivière, France's permanent representative to the Security Council, who voted in favor of the cease-fire, argued that there is

no "contradiction in the fight against terrorism and the protection of civilians, in strict respect of international humanitarian law."

"Unfortunately once again, this council has failed. With a lack of unity and by refusing to genuinely commit to negotiations in doing this, the crisis in Gaza is getting worse and it runs the risk of extending," said de Rivière.

The U.S. has now vetoed U.N. resolutions to hold Israel accountable for its policies in Palestine 45 times, human rights lawyer Noura Erakat said.

Former U.N. human rights official Craig Mokhiber—who resigned in October over the U.N.'s response

to the war in Gaza—noted that U.S. blocked the resolution on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the U.N. Genocide Convention.

"Thousands have died since [the United States'] last veto and more will die now," said Mokhiber.

Julia Conley 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.

Voters Want Gaza Ceasefire, Diplomacy New Data for Progress polling found that a majority of U.S. likely voters support a permanent ceasefire and de-escalation of violence

in Gaza—and most prefer that the U.S. prioritize diplomacy and humanitarian aid to curtail violence in the region.

Sixty-one percent of likely voters, including a majority of Democrats (76 percent) and Independents (57 percent) and a plurality of Republicans (49 percent), support the U.S. calling for a permanent ceasefire and a de-escalation of violence in Gaza.

Asked about additional courses of action, more than 2 in 3 voters across party lines support the U.S. "providing intelligence and resources to assist efforts to find and rescue Israeli hostages in Gaza" and "sending food, water, and medical supplies to people in Gaza."



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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 17                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    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| <p><b>2010</b>—Street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi sets himself afire, thereby igniting the Tunisian Revolution and the subsequent Arab Spring.</p> <p><b>2006</b>—Bill Kristol predicts on “Fox News Sunday,” “Barack Obama is not going to beat Hillary Clinton in a single Democratic primary.”</p> <p><b>1998</b>—Impeachment pending, Bill Clinton wags the dog: half the Pentagon’s cruise missiles explode in Iraq.</p> <p><b>1967</b>—“I know this beach like the back of my hand,” says Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt, before disappearing in heavy surf.</p> <p><b>1960</b>—A U.S.A.F. C-131 hits a Munich steeple, then falls onto a trolley. All 20 on the plane die, along with 18 in the trolley and 11 on the street.</p> <p><b>1953</b>—The NLRB rules that it’s OK for companies to force workers to attend anti-union meetings.</p> <p><b>1951</b>—Black Americans petition UN officials in Paris and New York for relief from genocidal U.S. domestic policies. They’re ignored.</p> <p><b>1947</b>—The National Security Council, just 90 days old, gives the CIA \$1 million to mess with Italian elections.</p> <p><b>1944</b>—Adm. “Bull” Halsey sails the 3rd Fleet into a typhoon. Three destroyers sink; nine other ships are damaged, 100 aircraft are lost, and 790 sailors die, mostly by drowning.</p> <p><b>1927</b>—The U.S. sub <i>S-4</i> is rammed and sunk off Provincetown by Coast Guard destroyer <i>Paulding</i>, which is hunting rum runners; 40 are lost.</p> | <p><b>2020</b>—Dolt #45’s lame duck brain trust holds a boozy, shouty, six-hour sedition-fest in the White House.</p> <p><b>2019</b>—Donald Trump is impeached.</p> <p><b>2005</b>—“Not only can we win the war in Iraq,” says George W.[MD] Bush 962 days after Mission Accomplished, “we’re winning the war in Iraq.”</p> <p><b>2004</b>—“America’s Most Wanted’s” John Walsh says he most wants brothers Jabbar and Alfonso Fowle.</p> <p><b>2000</b>—“If this were a dictatorship,” says George W.[MD] Bush on CNN, “it’d be a heck of a lot easier, just so long as I’m the dictator.”</p> <p><b>1996</b>—G-Man Earl Pitts is arrested for moonlighting for the KGB.</p> <p><b>1972</b>—Richard Nixon begins Operation Linebacker: 12 days of B-52 strikes against North Vietnam. On the first night, surface-to-air missiles shoot down three Stratofortresses.</p> <p><b>1957</b>—Neon signs and car lots get their first jolt of nuke-generated juice.</p> <p><b>1946</b>—Eddie Rickenbacker flies a DC-3 over Broadway so Damon Runyon Jr. can scatter his father’s ashes.</p> <p><b>1941</b>—Outnumbered 10 to one, U.S. forces lose Guam to the Japanese.</p> <p><b>1917</b>—Prohibition, also known as the Organized Crime Job Creation Act, goes to the states for ratification.</p> <p><b>1907</b>—An explosion kills 361 coal miners in Monongah, W. Va.</p> <p><b>1867</b>—Differing track widths cause a train to derail in Angola, N.Y. One wooden car drops 40 feet and catches fire; 49 passengers burn to death.</p> | <p><b>2020</b>—Loser: “Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!”</p> <p><b>2007</b>—A fire breaks out near “Dick” Cheney’s office. Probable cause: spontaneous inhuman combustion.</p> <p><b>1998</b>—As Bill Clinton is being impeached for some hanky-panky, Speaker-elect Bob Livingston resigns to cover up a bit of his own.</p> <p>1997—Real headline, <i>N.Y. Times</i>: “C.I.A. Says It Has Found No Link Between Itself and Crack Trade.”</p> <p><b>1974</b>—Norris Cotton finagles a bill giving New Hampshire’s senior Senator the right in perpetuity to commandeer Daniel Webster’s old desk.</p> <p><b>1946</b>—The Viet Minh begin kicking the French out of Indo-China.</p> <p><b>1944</b>—Primarily due to bad generalship, two-thirds of the 106th Infantry, comprising 8,000 men, must surrender during the Battle of the Bulge.</p> <p><b>1941</b>—Ex-corporal Hitler takes direct command of the German Army.</p> <p><b>1910</b>—Spurred on by the Baltimore <i>Sun</i>, that city mandates the racial segregation of residential areas.</p> <p><b>1907</b>—An explosion kills 239 coal miners, many minors, in Smithton, Pa.</p> <p><b>1865</b>—South Carolina passes a law requiring all Black “servants” to sign contracts with their “masters” and be “polite” while working dawn-to-dusk.</p> <p><b>1777</b>—Washington’s army arrives at Valley Forge, Pa.</p> <p><b>1776</b>—Thomas Paine’s <i>American Crisis</i> is first published; “These are the times that try men’s souls...”</p> | <p><b>2002</b>—The ten largest U.S. brokerage houses cough up \$1.44 billion in fines rather than risk a trial over charges that they fleeced their customers.</p> <p><b>2002</b>—Sen. Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) is forced to step down after lamenting Strom Thurmond’s failure to win the Presidency on a White Supremacy platform in 1948.</p> <p><b>1989</b>—Ex-CIA boss George H. [Hoover] W. Bush invades Panama to arrest ex-CIA asset Manuel Noriega.</p> <p><b>1986</b>—Chased by a mob of young white men, Trinidadian Michael Griffith is run over and killed in Howard Beach, Queens, New York.</p> <p><b>1983</b>—Donald Rumsfeld visits Baghdad to shake mass murderer Saddam Hussein’s hand and convey Ronald Reagan’s best wishes.</p> <p><b>1973</b>—Basque terrorists detonate a bomb which sends a Dodge Dart over a five-story building. Inside was Spanish Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco, aka “Spain’s first astronaut.”</p> <p><b>1960</b>—CIA chief Allen Dulles meets with bigwigs from Standard Oil, Texaco, ITT, Domino Sugar, and other major U.S. corporations, who instruct him to overthrow Fidel Castro.</p> <p><b>1946</b>—Businessmen Charles Luciano, Meyer Lansky, Frank Costello, Vito Genovese, Joseph Bonnano and others confer in Havana, Cuba.</p> <p><b>1786</b>—Hannah Ocuish, a cognitively-impaired 12-year-old Pequot Indian girl, thanks the executioner for his kindness before she’s hanged.</p> | <p><b>2008</b>—Todd Carmichael reaches the South Pole after 692 miles on skis and on foot, solo, in less than 40 days.</p> <p><b>2006</b>—Saparmurat Niyazov’s term of office ends. Turkmenistan’s President for Life leaves a legacy of many golden statues...of himself.</p> <p><b>2001</b>—“All in all,” says George W.[MD] Bush, “it’s been a fabulous year for Laura and me.”</p> <p><b>1996</b>—After two years of denial, Rep. Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) admits to ethics violations.</p> <p><b>1989</b>—Vice President J. Danforth Quayle sends out 30,000 Xmas cards in which “beacon” is spelled “beakon.”</p> <p><b>1988</b>—PanAm Flight 103 explodes over Lockerbie; 270 perish.</p> <p><b>1970</b>—The Oval Office: Elvis gives Tricky Dick a chromed Colt .45; Dick gives Elvis a Narcotics Bureau badge.</p> <p><b>1956</b>—Montgomery, Ala. buses desegregate—the boycott worked.</p> <p><b>1924</b>—Real headline, <i>N.Y. Times</i>: “Hitler Tamed By Prison.”</p> <p><b>1921</b>—The anarchist Bonnot Gang robs a Paris bank then steals a limo—the world’s first getaway car.</p> <p><b>1919</b>—Emma Goldman is deported for speaking out against the draft.</p> <p><b>1913</b>—<i>The New York World</i> introduces a new feature: they call it a “word-cross” puzzle.</p> <p><b>1907</b>—The Chilean Army breaks a strike by machine gunning 2,000 Chilean nitrate miners.</p> <p><b>1620</b>—Pilgrims and “Strangers” land in what is now Plymouth, Mass.</p> | <p><b>2001</b>—Richard Reid’s shoe-bomb fizzles, but all air passengers must still remove shoes before boarding.</p> <p><b>1989</b>—RIP Samuel Beckett.</p> <p><b>1984</b>—Asked for money on a New York subway, Bernhard Goetz responds with lead instead. Then he flees to New Hampshire. Of course.</p> <p><b>1981</b>—Ronald Reagan gives the poor 30 million lbs. of moldy cheese.</p> <p><b>1974</b>—Seymour Hersh exposes the CIA’s Operation Chaos in the <i>New York Times</i>: 10,000 Americans under illegal surveillance since 1967.</p> <p><b>1973</b>—“Dick” Nixon’s paranoid agitation at a Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting leaves four-stars wondering, “did he just ask us if we’d back a coup?”</p> <p><b>1967</b>—The CIA hands the President a second report on its illegal surveillance of anti-war activists. Again, it finds no evidence supporting his belief in foreign influence. LBJ rejects report #2 and demands a third.</p> <p><b>1944</b>—With his 101st Airborne surrounded in Bastogne, and Germans demanding surrender, General Anthony McAuliffe replies “Nuts.”</p> <p><b>1909</b>—Belgians boo their sovereign, King Leopold II, at his funeral.</p> <p><b>1813</b>—In downtown Portsmouth, N.H., 18 acres burn, from Daniel to Court Streets, from Fleet to the river; 272 buildings are destroyed.</p> <p><b>1757</b>—A Portsmouth mob, hundreds strong, incensed by British press gangs, drags HMS <i>Enterprise</i>’s longboat two miles inland and burns it.</p> | <p><b>2004</b>—NASA gives odds of 1 in 233 that an asteroid will hit Earth in 2029.</p> <p><b>1994</b>—Tipped off by a Boston FBI agent that he’s about to be arrested, James “Whitey” Bulger takes a powder. He’s on the lam for 16.5 years.</p> <p><b>1986</b>—The airplane <i>Voyager</i> completes its nonstop circumnavigation.</p> <p><b>1981</b>—Basement digging causes the Foye Building, next to the Portsmouth Athenæum, to partially collapse.</p> <p><b>1971</b>—Nixon lets Jimmy Hoffa out of prison but bars him from running against Frank Fitzsimmons, whose Teamsters then back Nixon.</p> <p><b>1963</b>—FBI officials begin scheming to “neutralize” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with wiretapping, bugging, infiltration, sabotage, and blackmail.</p> <p><b>1955</b>—James Kutcher, a legless WW II vet, has his disability payments cut off, too, because he’s a Socialist.</p> <p><b>1953</b>—In Korea, 21 American POWs refuse to go home. In response, the CIA starts studying mind control.</p> <p><b>1944</b>—Lax security combines with German industriousness: 25 Nazis escape from Phoenix’s Papago Park POW camp through a 178-foot tunnel hacked out of rock-hard caliche.</p> <p><b>1924</b>—The world’s biggest manufacturers of light bulbs form the secret Phoebus cartel. Its aim: shorten the life-span of light bulbs by 60 percent.</p> <p><b>1849</b>—Tied half-naked to a pole, Fyodor Dostoevsky is presumably pleased to learn he’ll be going to Siberia for four years, instead of being shot.</p> |
| <p>2:04</p> <p>2:13</p> <p>7:57</p> <p>8:39</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        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| SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    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**2003**—Responding to “credible intel,” Mike Hayden tells his British counterpart to take over his NSA duties if al-Qaeda nukes D.C. on Xmas.

**1992**—George Herbert [Hoover] Walker Bush pardons Caspar “Cap” Weinberger, Bob McFarlane, and 4 other Iran-Contra creeps, coincidentally protecting his own sorry self.

**1979**—The Soviet Army enters Afghanistan to prop up the Marxist government. Oops. They correct their mistake after just nine years.

**1971**—Her airliner having fallen apart after being hit by lightning two miles above the Amazon, Juliane Koeppcke, 17, falls into the jungle. She survives with minor injuries.

**1963**—Top CIA counterspy and Friend-of-the-Mob James Jesus Angleton shuts down the Agency’s investigation of Lee Harvey Oswald.

**1926**—Eight Americans die and 60 are hospitalized after President Coolidge says, “poison all alcohol.”

**1913**—During a union Christmas party at the Italian Hall in Calumet, Mich, thugs hired by copper bosses yell “Fire!” 73 die, 59 are kids.

**1883**—Increasingly deranged since his stabbing by John Wilkes Booth during Lincoln’s assassination, Maj. Henry Rathbone murders his wife.

**1865**—Six ex-rebels, boozing it up in Pulaski, Tenn., form the KKK.

**1814**—The Treaty of Ghent ends the War of 1812; it accomplished nothing—the *status quo ante* prevails.

**1989**—Romania celebrates Christmas and freedom by putting former President Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife Elena before a firing squad.

**1956**—In Birmingham, Ala., civil rights activist Fred Shuttlesworth survives the bombing of his home.

**1951**—In Mims, Fla., a bomb explodes under the home of NAACP leaders Harry T. and Harriette Moore on the night of their 25th anniversary. Both die; no one is indicted; 55 years later the state concludes that four long-dead Klansmen did it.

**1946**—Demonstrators at the White House demand the release of jailed conscientious objectors.

**1914**—German and British troops leave trenches, sing Christmas carols, shake hands, and share smokes.

**1868**—President Andy Johnson unconditionally pardons all those involved in the “Southern Rebellion.”

**1837**—At Lake Okeechobee, Seminoles under Billy Bowlegs trounce Zachary Taylor’s regulars.

**1832**—Enslaved Jamaicans rise up in rebellion. It’s the beginning of the end for slavery in the British Empire.

**1802**—In Portsmouth, N.H., 132 buildings are destroyed by fire.

**1793**—After gathering the scattered bones of hundreds of soldiers massacred two years earlier by Indians and burying them in a massive pit, troops under General “Mad Anthony” Wayne build Fort Recovery, Ohio, atop the mass grave.

**2010**—H. Kissinger apologizes for having told R. Nixon in 1973, “[if the Soviets] put Jews into gas chambers... it is not an American concern. Maybe a humanitarian concern.”

**2002**—Americans learn a new euphemism from the *Washington Post*: “extraordinary rendition” means kidnapping and torture. A trial? Hah!

**1996**—U.S. Media pick JonBenet Ramsey to be the most celebrated of the 2,500 children murdered this year.

**1991**—The Supreme Soviet meets one last time and dissolves the USSR.

**1971**—Disgruntled Vietnam veterans occupy the Statue of Liberty.

**1969**—Having fought a shifting cargo of bombs, missiles, and mines for nine days in heavy seas, the crew of the freighter SS *Badger State* abandons ship in mid-Pacific after a bomb explodes and blows a hole in the hull. Out of 40 crewmen, 11 survive.

**1966**—*Time Magazine* names “The Younger Generation” the “Man of the Year,” further exacerbating a pandemic of unwarranted self-esteem.

**1913**—Writer and perennially-disgruntled Civil War veteran Ambrose Bierce allegedly pens one final letter before vanishing in Mexico.

**1908**—Jack Johnson becomes the first Black heavyweight boxing champ.

**1862**—Under orders from President Lincoln, the U.S. Army hangs 38 Sioux on one huge gallows.

**1828**—Cocheco “mill girls” in Dover go on the first all-woman strike.

**1986**—In San Diego, Cara Evelyn Knott is strangled by on-duty Highway Patrolman Craig Alan Peyer.

**1981**—Supreme Court Associate Justice William H. Rehnquist checks into a hospital to kick his Placidyl™ habit and end the hallucinations.

**1953**—Mass. bans EC Comics’ version of “The Night Before Christmas.” Illustrated by Will Elder, it features a just-divorced Santa driving a Cadillac sled and giving away poison.

**1900**—Carrie Nation hatchets-up her first saloon, at the Carey Hotel, in Wichita, Kan.

**1895**—In Bill Curtis’s St. Louis saloon, William “Billy” Lyons foolishly—and fatally—grabs “Stagger Lee” Shelton’s brand new Stetson hat.

**1827**—Georgia proclaims “the lands of Georgia belong to her absolutely. The Indians are tenants at her will.” Indulgent solons give the indigenous inhabitants three years to get west of the Mississippi.

**1763**—Sixteen of the few living Conestoga Indians, huddled for protection in the Lancaster, Pa. workhouse, are mysteriously deserted by their guards. A mob known as “the Paxton Boys” hacks 14 of them, mostly children, to death. There is no investigation; no one is ever charged.

**1739**—A large crowd gathers to witness New Hampshire’s first executions: Sarah Simpson and Penelope Kenny are hanged in Portsmouth for infanticide.

**2013**—Congress ends long-term unemployment benefits to 1.3 million Americans, damaging the economy to the tune of an estimated 240,000 jobs.

**1986**—Terry Dolan, Republican critic of gay rights, dies of AIDS.

**1983**—Dr. George Graham, of President Reagan’s Task Force on Food Assistance, says Black children are “probably the best-nourished group in the U.S.”—citing athletes as proof.

**1973**—In space, the crew of Skylab goes on strike to protest over-work and micro-management. NASA meets the demands of the astronauts.

**1973**—The Akron, Ohio Chamber of Commerce denounces the Soap Box Derby as a cheat and a fraud.

**1971**—At the White House, 88 Nam vets are busted for protesting their war.

**1948**—A DC-3 disappears with 32 on board in an area soon to be known as the Bermuda Triangle.

**1945**—Congress recognizes the “Pledge of Allegiance,” authored by Christian Socialist Francis Bellamy.

**1936**—Sit-down strikers close Cleveland’s General Motors plant.

**1917**—H.L. Mencken publishes a phony history of the bathtub, now widely accepted as gospel.

**1879**—As legendary stagecoach driver “One-Eyed Charlie” Parkhurst, 67, is prepared for burial in Watsonville, Calif., it becomes clear that he was a she—namely, Charlotte Darkey Parkhurst, born in Lebanon, N.H. in 1812.

**2006**—The UK pays off its \$100,000,000 WWII debt to the U.S.

**1989**—Playwright Vaclav Havel becomes President of Czechoslovakia.

**1975**—Eleven people are killed and 74 wounded when a bomb explodes in a storage locker at LaGuardia Airport. The crime remains unsolved.

**1972**—Operation Linebacker II, which Richard “Dick” Nixon will call “my terrible personal ordeal,” ends. U.S. losses: 15 downed B-52s, 12 other aircraft, 43 KIA, & 49 POWs.

**1930**—Fred Newton arrives at New Orleans after swimming 1,826 miles down the Mississippi River.

**1916**—Poisoned, stabbed, beaten, shot three times, and thrown unconscious into the freezing Neva River, the Russian Tsarina Alexandra’s favorite faith-healer Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin dies by drowning.

**1900**—Harvard professor Albert B. Hart says states where lynching is prevalent should legalize the practice and thus preserve law and order.

**1890**—The 7th Cavalry massacres about 300 Lakota Sioux men, women, and children on their reservation at Wounded Knee. For this, a grateful nation bestows 20 Medals of Honor.

**1876**—A poorly-designed, unspected railroad bridge collapses in Ashtabula, Ohio, killing 92.

**1837**—In Buffalo, N.Y., Canadian militiamen burn the USS *Carolina*, which has been caught running guns to revolutionaries.

**2019**—Health authorities in Wuhan, China send hospitals an alert and begin investigating a rise in pneumonia.

**2015**—At the North Pole, the temperature rises above 32° for six hours.

**2006**—Saddam Hussein’s inelegant demise is captured by cellphone.

**1994**—In Brookline, Mass., John Salvi lives out his “pro-life” creed by killing two health care workers.

**1978**—A House Select Committee concludes that conspirators “probably” helped kill JFK and MLK.

**1971**—Daniel Ellsberg is indicted for having set free the truth.

**1970**—An unsafe Kentucky coal mine explodes, killing 38 miners.

**1947**—Irgun fighters kill six Arabs and wound 42 in a grenade attack at a Haifa oil refinery. Arabs retaliate by beating 39 Jews to death.

**1936**—The General Motors sit-down strike spreads from Cleveland to Flint.

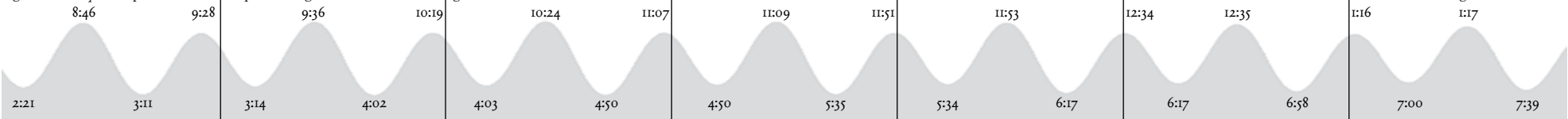
**1928**—Ellas Otha Bates is born in McComb, Mississippi. Later he becomes known as Bo Diddley.

**1922**—Godless Commies establish the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the ruins of a pious Empire.

**1905**—Idaho’s ex-Governor Frank Steunenberg opens his front gate; a bomb planted by miners blows him up.

**1903**—At 3:15 p.m. fire breaks out in Chicago’s new, “fireproof” Iroquois Theater. By 3:30, 600 people are dead.

**1768**—Teacher Ruth Blay, 31, is hanged in Portsmouth for concealing the birth of her illegitimate child.



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