

The Fortnightly Rant

Eagle Pass: the New Fort Sumter?

Had we known where things were headed, we might have set out with a better plan. It did not seem unduly ambitious: distill each passing fortnight into a comprehensible rant. Now, here we are, like Wile E. Coyote: covered with bandages, explosive residue, and chagrin.

Looking back it's easy to see that this plan was doomed to failure. The warning signs were clear enough. Newt Gingrich's GOPAC memo defined the battleground in 1990: *Language: A Key Mechanism of Control*—the *Communist Manifesto* of the resurgent reactionary right. “To victory, through the shameless debasement of language!”

Hobbled by corporate demands for “balance” [*i.e.*, profit], respectable media refused to take a side—thereby siding with the vandals.

Then along came That Guy—you know who we mean. Even the pretence of coherence went out the window. When words have nearly lost their meaning, setting out to write a comprehensible rant feels as futile as building a skyscraper on a foundation of chicken soup.

Were we inclined towards melancholy, we might feel despondent. Fortunately, our ability to take things seriously went the way of the mess sergeant's taste buds in the Tom Lehrer song. But enough with the shilly-shallying and pre-emptive excuse-making—let's dive in to a particularly absurd fourteen days.

We'll begin with a rare instance of clarity emerging from the fog.

On August 28th, attorney and Republican political activist Alexander Talcott died of stab wounds to the neck in his Durham home. The story made the *New York Post*, where commenter “Just Asking” posed this question: “The *Post* and the rest of the press seem strangely uninterested in discovering the name of the person who assassinated this Re-

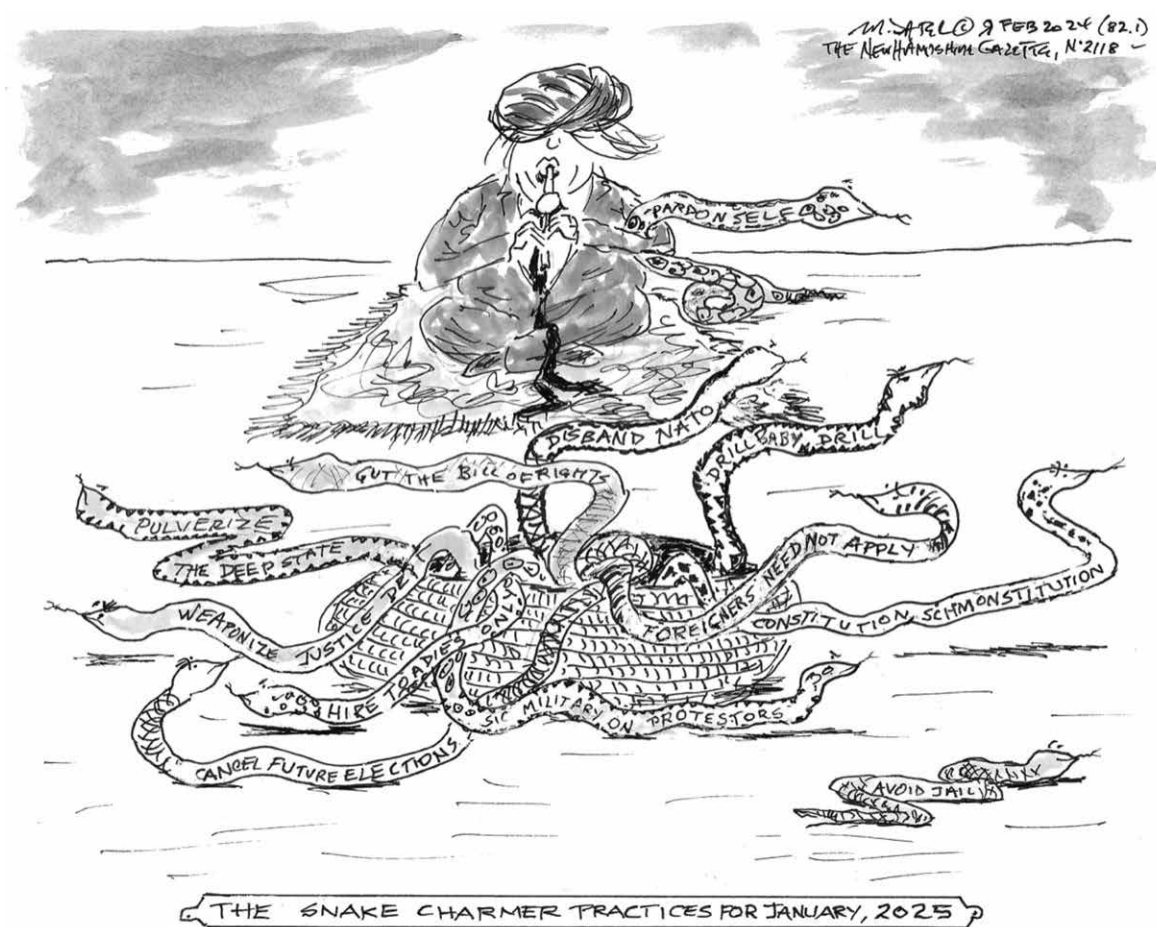
publican.”

As the word spread, someone going by @VoteEmAllOut tweeted, “Tragic! Another mysterious death! Fear, intimidation through murder. #bodycount. Never forget Seth Rich, Antonin Scalia, Alex Talcott, countless others who died for what they knew or what they believed in.”

Naturally we were curious, too. Diving into the online rabbit hole, we found Talcott's trail easily enough. Exactly one year before his death, he began tweeting under the handle @Terralaunch, touting “#spacetech #vc, #STEAM education (#NFTart). Learn about, invest in businesses with revenue & growth potential on Earth + in space.” He also hyped @cognitive_space: “Cognitive optimizes and automates satellite mission management, powering the next generation of space operators.” Even the sky could not limit his imagination; he aimed higher.

Yet even Talcott's space-related interests seemed well-grounded, compared to his apparent fascination with @ATSNFT, “A blockchain technology company building @Grapes (Great Apes).” For the blissfully uninitiated, these are digital cartoon images of simians gussied up with baseball caps, gold chains, and whatnot. It seems there is an internet subculture convinced that these have monetary value.

On February 1st, New Hampshire Attorney General John M. Formella announced what even the dimmest of psychics might easily have predicted Talcott died at the hands of his wife, who would not be charged because she acted in self defense. The AG's 16-page statement told of financial distress, marital discord, erratic behavior, an attempt to separate, escalation to violence. The only surprise was the victim's survival, which will naturally be followed



by the lifelong challenge of enduring the consequences.

Ascending in scale from from a one-off local tragedy, let us visit Shelby Park in Texas. There, hundreds of Central Americans are attempting to flee the consequences of Ronald Reagan's U.S. foreign policy in Central America, only to be met by men with guns and a ribbon of razor wire strung mid-stream along the Rio Grande.

Fittingly—since Reagan began his 1980 presidential campaign within jogging distance of the site where James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner had been murdered 16 years earlier for registering Black voters—the Park was named for Joseph O. Shelby, a Confederate General who, rather than surrender, offered the services of his 1,000 soldiers to Emperor Maximilian of Mexico.

Far less fittingly, at least as we

see things, New Hampshire's Republican Governor recently visited Shelby Park. There, demonstrating once again what is perhaps his best-honed skill, he appeared in photographs standing directly behind Texas Governor Greg Abbott.

Abbott—secure in the knowledge that the Supreme Court is capable of anything when scuttling its planchette across the Ouija Board that is our Constitution—cited Article I, § 10, Clause 3 as his authority to arrogate unto himself the powers of U.S. Customs and Border Protection [CBP]. His aim, he says it to protect Texas against an alien invasion.

The next logical step will be Governor Sununu calling out the National Guard. Will he send them to Texas to defend our fellow state against powerless, penniless families? What if the Lone Star State gets frisky and declares independence? Will the Live Free or Die

State follow suit? Sununu's friends, the Free Staters, would love that.

Before we stray too far from the facts in evidence, let us stipulate that the GOP wants to keep the border more or less as it is. They learned their lesson with the *Dobbs* decision; they need to keep something to campaign on.

Looking back at all this, we've nearly frightened ourselves. How—or *why*—in the face of this, do we keep hope alive? Because you never really know what might happen.

Take Tuesday: the House was in the process of impeaching Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas on literally Trumped-up grounds. Then in rolled Rep. Al Green [D-Texas], freshly sutured after abdominal surgery, wearing hospital blues and—the horror!—tan socks. Farce morphed into drama, and the good guys won. It's been known to happen.

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Less Than 100,000 Swing-State Voters Could Decide the 2024 Election

Hang On, Folks. It's Going To Be A Bumpy And Unpleasant Ride.

by Miles Mogulescu

Although between 125 million and 150 million voters will probably cast ballots nationally in the 2024 presidential election, the winner will likely be decided by only about 100,000 voters in a handful of states.

In 2020, Biden won the majority of the national popular vote by more than seven million votes. But if you put those votes under a magnifying glass, Biden only won the electoral vote by an aggregate of 42,918 votes in Arizona, Wisconsin, and Georgia. If slightly more than 21,000 voters in those three states had chosen Trump instead of Biden, or slightly more than 42,000 Biden voters in

those three states just stayed home, Trump would have won the electoral vote and would have legally become president for a second term.

Similarly, in 2016, Hillary Clinton won the majority of the national popular vote by nearly three million votes. Nonetheless, Trump won the electoral college vote 306-227. Trump only won the electoral vote by an aggregate of 77,744 votes in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. If slightly more than 38,000 voters in those three states had chosen Clinton instead of Trump or slightly more than 77,000 Trump voters in those three states had stayed home, Clinton, not Trump, would have been elected president in 2016.

In 2000, Al Gore won the popular vote by over half a million votes nationally but lost the election to

George W. Bush by a mere 537 votes in Florida after a Republican-majority Supreme Court ordered a recount halted, handing the presidency to Bush (and after Ralph Nader received 97,488 votes in Florida.)

To summarize, since the year 2000, Democrats have won the popular vote five out of six presidential elections but Republicans have won the Presidency by carrying the electoral vote three of those times.

If polls taken ten months before an election are to be taken seriously, there's a strong chance that Biden will win a majority of the popular vote and Trump will win the electoral vote and legitimately retake the presidency in November. A recent poll by Stack Data Strategy predicts that Biden would win the popular vote again by nearly two million

votes, but that Trump would win the electoral vote 292-246 by winning four states that were decided by the closest margins in 2020—Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Similarly, the *New York Times*/Siena poll finds that Trump would closely win five of the six most important battleground states which Biden won in 2020: Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

However, it wouldn't take much to change between now and November for Biden instead of Trump to win the electoral college and be reelected if only a few tens of thousands of voters change their minds in a handful of swing states.

The strength of Biden's and Trump's ground game in the swing states could make a significant difference since, given how close the

swing states are, turnout for the respective candidates could be determinative.

Also, although the economy is doing relatively well, a majority of voters currently disapprove of Biden's handling of the economy. But The *Wall Street Journal* just reported that consumer sentiment rose by a record 29 percent since November. If, over the next 10 months, this convinces a few tens of thousands of voters in the key swing states to vote for Biden instead of sitting home or voting for Trump, the electoral vote majority could shift to Biden. On the other hand, Biden's support for Israel's brutal assault on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip could cause enough Muslim voters in Michigan

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and Pennsylvania, where they are plentiful, to sit out the presidential election or vote third party in enough numbers to shift the electoral votes of these key swing states to Trump which could get him close to a national electoral vote majority. Significantly, recent polls show that if Trump is convicted of a crime before the election, he is likely to lose his current slim lead. A recent *Wall Street Journal* poll shows a five-point swing from Trump to Biden if Trump is convicted. The *Times/Siena* poll indicating Trump winning in five of the six key swing states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin shows Biden winning all six of these swing states if Trump is convicted, with 6 percent of voters switching from Trump to Biden. If true, a Trump conviction could make a Biden victory probable. As in 2000, the outcome of the 2024 presidential election could effectively be determined by the Supreme Court, which will likely hear an appeal concerning Trump's contention that presidents are immune from criminal prosecution. While even this conservative Supreme

Court may well rule that presidents are not immune and Trump can stand trial, the question is whether the appeals process will be concluded in time for a trial to be completed and a verdict rendered before November. Get ready for a bumpy ride over the next nine months. And keep your eye on six states.

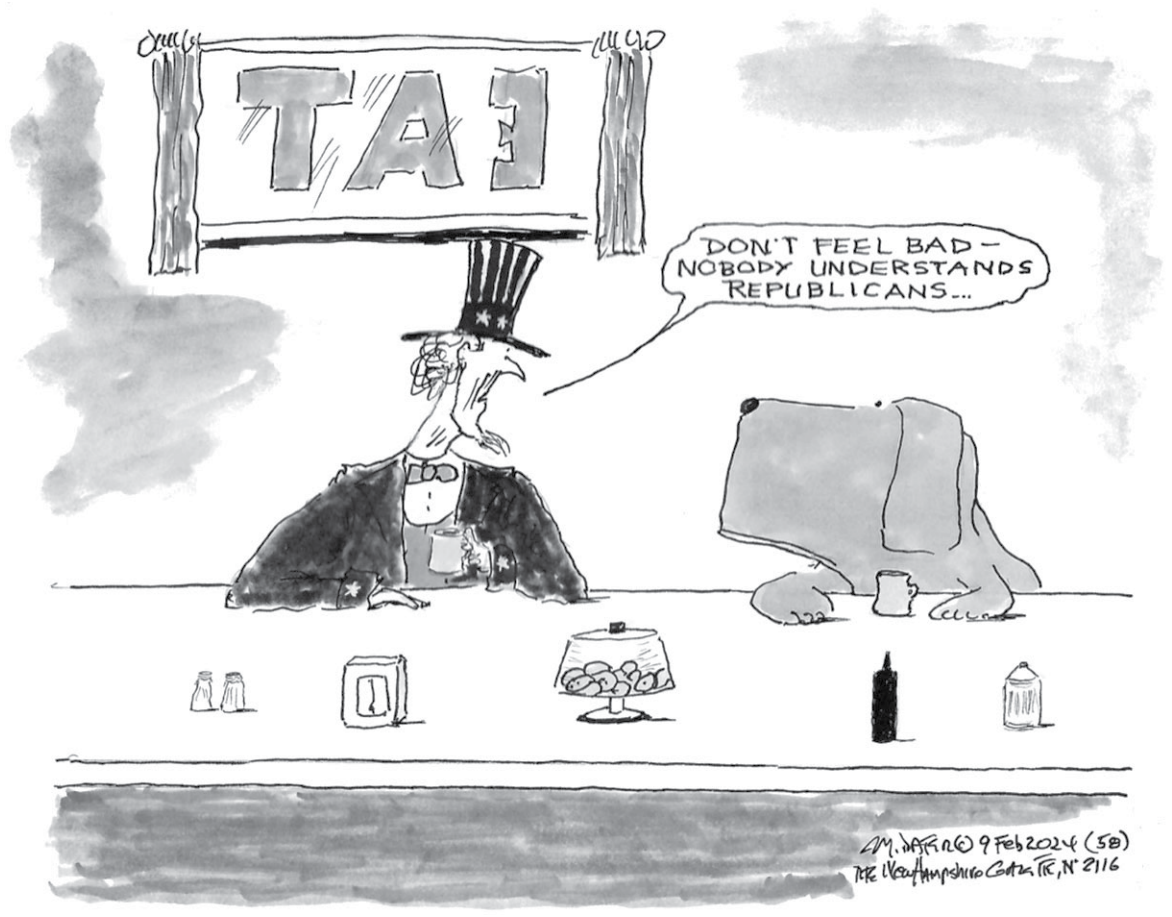
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Miles Mogulescu is an entertainment attorney/business affairs executive, producer, political activist and writer. This work is licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). Feel free to republish and share widely.

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It's Not The Vibes Giving Us A Sour Economic Mood; It's The Monopolists
by Justin Stofferahn

In recent months a lot of economic commentators have been flabbergasted that despite low unemployment, steady job growth and easing inflation, the public mood about the economy remains sour. Pundits have blamed social media, partisanship and negative media headlines. But what if our headline economic data simply fails to tell a complete story? Dig a little deeper and the economic challenges confronting the country sound a lot



The sun showed up for a change last Sunday, perhaps just to shine on the literal handful of protestors who appeared in Market Square and stood—or sat—in support of the people of Gaza, and peace in general.

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more like the misery of monopoly than bad vibes or misinformation.

Any discussion of current economic challenges begins with inflation, and for good reason. While inflation is lower, that just means the rate of increase has cooled. Prices are still 19 percent higher than before the pandemic, and wages have only recently started to keep pace, with more granular analysis revealing that most people have seen their spending power decline, meaning that simply being employed is not enough. To add insult to injury, inflation calculations do not account for interest rate hikes, increasing the monthly payments for car loans, home loans and credit cards.

Inflation on its own generates more intense anger and frustration than other issues, and this is likely exacerbated by the unfairness driving price increases. People are blaming powerful corporations, and so are government economists, think tanks, and private sector experts. Legal action has uncovered an economy apparently rife with monopoly price-gouging. A jury recently found major egg producers guilty of price-fixing and further lawsuits allege the cost of everything from meat to housing is higher because of companies illegally coordinating.

Inflation is just one piece of this misery though. The other is more existential, a sense that we no longer have control over corporate behemoths. Since 2001, Gallup has asked Americans about their satisfaction with the "size and influence" of big business and the response "very dissatisfied" has grown from 17 percent to 44 percent over the past two decades, up 12 percentage points since 2020. While consolidation has been growing for decades, this recent change in attitude about corporate power is likely a reflection of the way the pandemic brought a whole host of long-running structural issues to the forefront, including monopolization.

Monopolists have been suppressing wages for decades, but the past couple years have seen a spike in labor activism as workers fight back amidst the backdrop of rising prices and record profits. Amazon, a poster-child for our monopolized economy, finally saw one of its warehouses vote to unionize. Consolidation was front and center in the massive writers and actors strikes last year, with workers not only hitting the picket line but urging antitrust authorities to investigate the industry. Meanwhile, pharmacists working for the drugstore duopoly of CVS and Walgreens have participated in walkouts; and doctors, fed up with giant health systems, are unionizing.

The Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice recently completed a typically obscure and wonky process of updating the merger guidelines that direct the agencies' enforcement of business combinations. The last time they did this, in 2010, just 32 public comments were submitted—solely from lawyers and academics. This time around, the year and a half process of updating the guidelines generated over 35,000 comments from Americans across the country, tired of being pushed around by monopolists.

In October, Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter, who leads the antitrust division at the Department of Justice, held a roundtable in Minnesota with farmers, workers and small business owners. They did not talk about job growth numbers or the stock market. They talked about how monopolies—from tech giants to massive health systems—are making their lives and professions harder and more precarious and reshaping the very structure of the communities they live in. Farm-

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Distribution Help Wanted in Exeter

Our volunteer distributor in Exeter will soon be facing higher than normal demands on his time. It's just a seasonal thing. He'll be back.

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ers are earning less, nurses are leaving the bedside, and we are losing small businesses like rural pharmacies every day.

Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy recently wrote that “the most important economic and social interactions in your life are being dictated by... massively powerful private companies.” Yet our public discourse fails to match this reality.

The effort to frame people’s dissatisfaction with the economy as manufactured and not grounded in actual experiences is insulting and distracts from solving the problems making life so challenging for so many.

The silver lining to the misery of monopoly power is that there is nothing inevitable about it. Getting screwed by powerful corporations is a policy choice that can be reversed, but that requires identifying the source.

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Justin Stofferahn lives in White Bear Township and is the antimonopoly director at the Minnesota Farmers Union. This commentary was first published in Minnesota Reformer, which is part of the

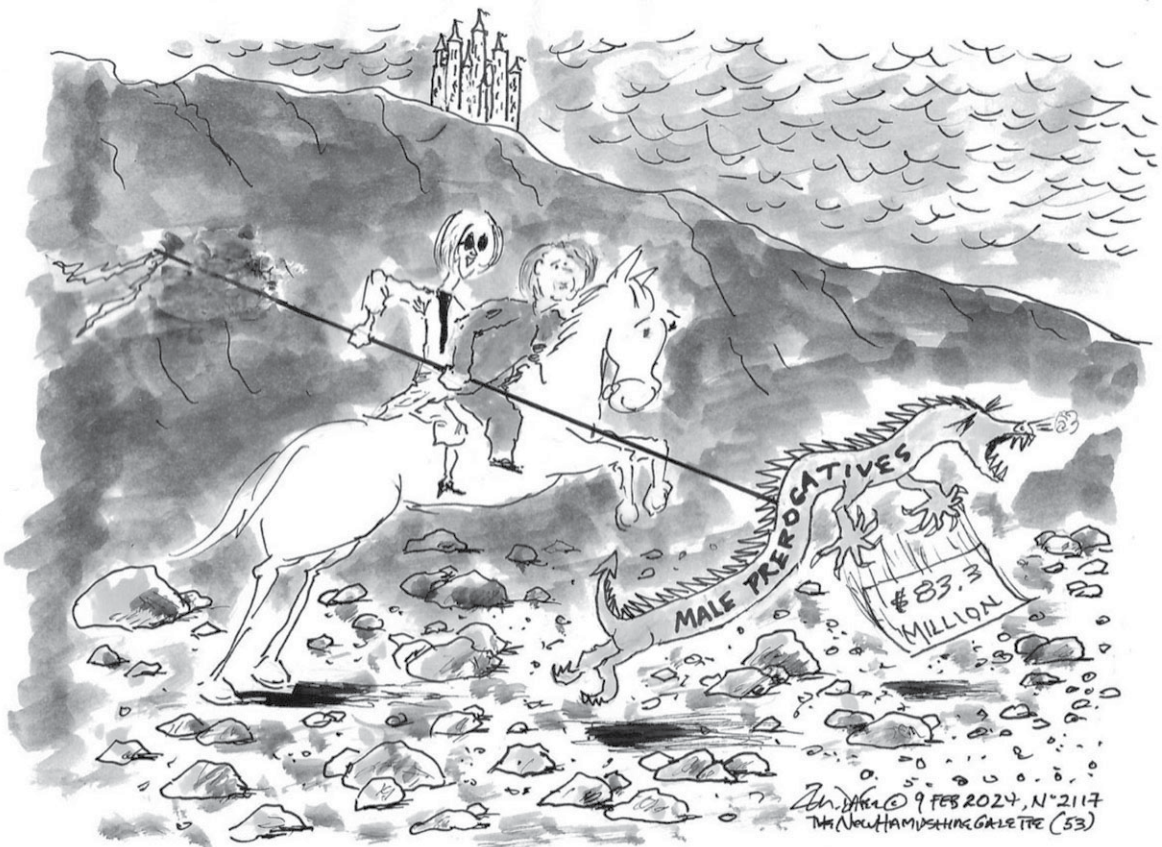
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**Next Portsmouth Democratic Roundtable
Feb. 13, 2024**

After 2 years of hibernation, the Portsmouth Democratic Roundtable will resume on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. at a local restaurant in Portsmouth. Please call or contact Peter Somssich for the location. The Roundtable is an opportunity to socialize with Democrats and other friends without any agenda or rigid structure. It is an opportunity for new residents of Portsmouth to meet those involved in the Portsmouth Democrats and learn of opportunities to get involved, suggest new ideas, or be supportive of planned initiatives. For information or questions please contact Peter Somssich at (603) 436-5382 (No Texts Please) or peter.somssich@gmail.com.

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Why the Market—Not to Mention the Billionaires—Cannot Save Journalism
This isn't just a journalism crisis: it's a democracy crisis. And it's a problem that we must collectively confront as a society.

by Victor Pickard

It's been a particularly brutal stretch for American journalism. Even for an industry that's become synonymous with precarity and crisis, the recent job losses have been jolting.

On Wednesday, The Messenger, a digital news startup that lost \$50 million in less than a year, announced suddenly that it was closing, letting go nearly 300 employees, reportedly without warning or severance pay. The *Los Angeles Times* announced last week that it's cutting 115 jobs, more than 20 percent of its newsroom. In December, the *Washington Post*, once hailed as a promising new model for sustaining journalism in the digital age, eliminated 240 positions through volunteer buyouts, nearly 10 percent of its employees.

This recent spate of downsizing is part of a longer trend: the U.S. has

lost almost one-third of its newspapers and nearly two-thirds of its newspaper journalists since 2005. The shocking decimation of the journalism industry has led to the proliferation of ever-expanding news deserts in which more than one half of American counties have little or no access to local news. And it will only get worse.

There's never a good time for mass layoffs in the journalism sector, but it's especially dire as we head into a pivotal election year and the world suffers from brutal wars and climate catastrophes. This isn't just a journalism crisis: it's a democracy crisis. And it's a problem that we must collectively confront as a society.

Billionaires Won't Save Us

One lesson is crystal clear from the recent bloodletting: the “benevolent billionaire” model for saving journalism—the belief that through their noblesse oblige to democracy, wealthy saviors would transcend the merciless political economy of capitalism to singlehandedly rescue the fourth estate—was always founded on false hope. The likes of Jeff Bezos

(owner of the *Washington Post*) and Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong (owner of the *Los Angeles Times*) lost tens of millions of dollars last year despite sustained attempts to generate new revenue streams. Operating a newspaper is an expensive undertaking, and even billionaires can suffer from sticker shock.

Meanwhile, not all media oligarchs are as “benevolent” as Bezos and Soon-Shiong. Take, for instance, the once-formidable *Baltimore Sun*, which was acquired earlier this month by David D. Smith, the executive chairman of the right-wing Sinclair network of television stations that's notorious for driving media to the right, reducing coverage of local politics, and parroting Trump talking points. Other distressed papers are being scooped up by vulture capitalists like Alden Global Capital, now the second-largest newspaper publisher in the U.S.

These downturns, even if pre-

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The McIntyre is no longer an official Federal Building, but a brief consultation with the Flag Police has confirmed that its recent privatization did not confer upon this unattractive bulk any sort of exemption from the Flag Code. This display is therefore busted on three counts: Staple failure, causing the union of one flag to droop, and improper display allowing the fly ends of both flags to make contact with a concrete anti-terrorism planter.

Murph's Fortnightly Quote

“He (Donald Trump) is fundamentally an aberrant individual who has never won a majority of voters for a reason.”

— Chris Ryan, MSNBC

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On the U.S.-Supported Genocide in Gaza
To the Editor:

I am very disappointed in the *New Hampshire Gazette* for not taking the genocide being perpetrated against Palestinians as seriously as is warranted. Imagine we are back in the thirties. As the Holocaust is being carried out only a few articles appear in the press about it... wait, that actually did happen. It's horrible to see the same thing happening with Gaza accompanied by attempts by fanatic Zionists and the power elite to silence or marginalize critics of Israel's genocidal actions in which over 25,000 have already died, the majority of them women and children... i.e., civilians.

One Israeli official tried to justify this slaughter by pointing out that the U.S. did similar things to Dresden and Hiroshima/Nagasaki during World War II. Thus any mass murderer could justify their actions by citing the fact that there were previous unpunished horrific mass murders prior to theirs! The attempt to slap critics of Israel's atrocities with anti-semitism, including even Jews like myself, is laughable were the situation we're criticizing not so chilling.

Yours has been a voice for reason and change but you've fallen so short of the situation I felt the need to remind you what the priority of everyone who supports social justice should be right now. Don't be diverted by the 2024 political race which, as always, is a pointless horse race leading to a lot of BS but no real change.

As Holocaust Remembrance Day approaches I urge you to remember how the Holocaust was treated when it was actually happening and apply this lesson to what you do with the *Gazette*. As Americans we have a special duty since our government, led by Joe Biden (now dubbed "Genocide Joe") is supplying the very weapons that are killing tens of thousands and rising as well as providing political cover in international organizations like the United Nations, preventing a cease fire and making sure no significant humanitarian aid will reach the victims in support of Israel's intention to ethnically cleanse itself of the origi-

nal inhabitants of the space it now occupies as an Apartheid colonial settler state.

Sincerely,
Roger Rudenstein
Durham, N.H.

Roger:
We beg to differ on one point here, namely the 2024 presidential election. If that goon put forward by the GOP manages to get his tiny mitts on the levers of power again, that may be all she wrote for democracy. And, given what's at stake with the climate, we will need to have a sane person in that position. Not that Joe's been great on that front either, but...

Those quibbles aside, you're right. Since you wrote, Holocaust Remembrance Day has come and gone. But that's no excuse for ignoring the ongoing U.S.-supported genocide underway in Gaza.

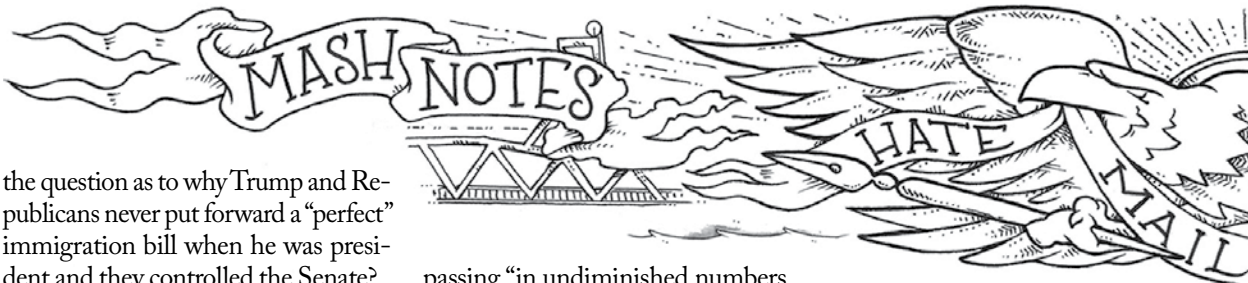
Rather than taking up time and space in a futile effort to explain why we cannot go down the road of attempting to accede to readers' requests that we cover certain subjects in certain ways, we will instead encourage you to address this topic, in this space, on a regular basis.

The Editor

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Hey, GOP: Put Up or Shut Up on Border
Dear Editor:

As the saying goes, "it is time to put up or shut up." A bipartisan group of Senators has almost completed a comprehensive border security bill that also includes aid for Ukraine and Israel. The bill will be ready for a Senate vote next week.

For months Trump and Republicans have been using the situation on the southern border as a key political tool against President Biden. Now, with a real opportunity to do something concrete to secure the border, Republicans are facing a real dilemma. Mr. Trump has been lobbying members of the Senate to oppose the legislation, not based on policy considerations, but solely based on politics. It shows that he is more interested in his personal political future than actually protecting the nation. Trump has said that Senate Republicans should oppose this bill because they need "a perfect bill" or nothing at all. This begs



the question as to why Trump and Republicans never put forward a "perfect" immigration bill when he was president and they controlled the Senate?

Considering how Republicans have turned the immigration issue into a national crisis, how can they now reasonably justify not doing what is necessary to address that crisis? They cannot have it both ways, either there is a crisis that needs to be addressed now, or there is not an immediate need to address the problem. The time has come for Republicans to put up or shut up about immigration and the securing of our border. The time has come for them to finally put the nation ahead of politics and Donald Trump.

Rich DiPentima
Portsmouth, N.H.

Rich:
Since your letter arrived, Republicans, Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa among them, have made it quite plain that they're willing to harm the country in order to get the leader of their cult back into the White House.

Which is illuminating, when you think about it. They'll damage the country to get their guy in, who'll then proceed to do further harm to the country.

It's as if their underlying motive is simply to harm the country.

The Editor

=====
Round Up the Usual Scapegoats
To the Editor,

That what America has been "great" at since its inception is violence and belligerence is reflected in a recent statement by Texas Governor Greg Abbott: "The only thing that we're not doing is we're not shooting people who come across the border because, of course, the Biden administration would charge us with murder."

European colonists came into possession of the North American continent through the slaughter of indigenous populations, animal and human. John James Audubon recorded flocks of the extinct passenger pigeon

passing "in undiminished numbers... for three days in succession," and a population of bison estimated at 60 million that ranged for thousands of years from Alaska to Mexico which was reduced by the late 1800s to fewer than 600 animals. The human inhabitants, being unwilling to cede their continent graciously, were placated with treaties that served to buy time until the encroaching settlers were ready to expand their occupation further. The southwest and west coasts were occupied, and, when the country to which they belonged objected, were annexed by force.

After subjugating the Native Americans and expelling the Mexicans, the new "native" Americans embarked on an explicit program of xenophobia. Freed by a civil war, African Americans were nevertheless "kept in their place" by laws that enforced a dual-class society in the South, and while discrimination against immigrants from "lesser" (albeit "white") European cultures gradually morphed into acceptance, the Chinese, notwithstanding significant contributions to the fledgling nation's economy, were summarily subjected to the Chinese Exclusion Act, and Japanese Americans, during the Second World War, to the indignity of internment camps (perhaps you've seen photos of such camps with well-dressed Japanese pictured in modest but respectable living conditions; these were the exception, the preponderance of such camps being places of abject squalor in which detainees had to bathe and relieve themselves in the open).

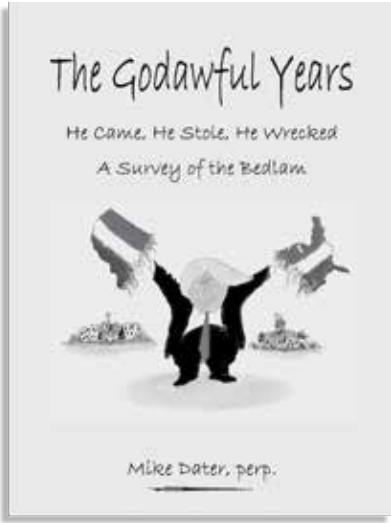
Immigrants, moreover, are the perennial scapegoats for the excesses and depravity of American capitalism. When reckless speculation and deregulation beget economic catastrophe, the capitalist culprits are bailed out and immigrants blamed. Given

Donald Trump's rhetoric on the subject, it's not surprising that a recent survey found little concern on the part of corporate executives about a second Trump presidency.

Although his rhetoric has lately been likened to that of Adolf Hitler, Erika Lee in *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States* (p. 143) recounts how "the Nazis frequently praised the United States for standing 'at the forefront of race-based lawmaking.' They admired not only America's system of Jim Crow segregation but also its immigration and naturalization laws and the creation of *de jure* and *de facto* second-class citizenship for African Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, and the subjects of American colonies like Filipinos." She continues: "In his unpublished sequel to *Mein Kampf*... Hitler applauded the 1924 [U.S.] Immigration Act as an effort to exclude the 'foreign body' of 'strangers to the blood' of the ruling race." Which makes America the ultimate source of the rhetoric Trump is said to be appropriating from Hitler.

If I haven't said much good about America it's because that can be found in history books, some of which, of course, is not really "good" but simply gussied up "bad" (the doctrine of manifest destiny, for example, merely a refined rationale for continued violence and belligerence). "White Americans," writes Mary Trump in *The Reckoning*, "worry that by acknowledging the atrocities of the past, the guilt of the actual perpetrators will somehow attach to us, while it's the failure to acknowledge those atrocities that makes us complicit. We as a nation cannot begin to heal unless we face our past head-on with complete honesty" (p. 157). History is what happened, not what we wish might have happened.

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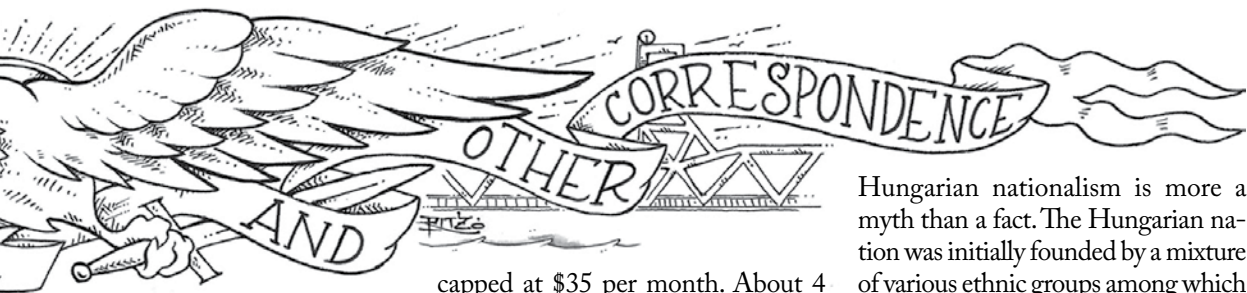
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A history of a “great” America, not “again” but, in a positive sense, perhaps for the first time, is a history it’s up to us to make.

John Simon
Portsmouth, N.H.

John:
“...it’s the failure to acknowledge those atrocities that makes us complicit.”

Hard to believe that the person who wrote that line is so closely related to a food-flinging sociopath.

Makes you wonder if genealogy may be an entirely meaningless pursuit.

The Editor

=====
Biden Is Your Pocket Book’s Friend
To the Editor:

It is astounding how much Biden has done for working America and how little credit he seems to get. There are many examples of the ways he has made life easier and helped people feel more secure.

Prescription Drugs: Part D of medicare, established under George W. Bush, was designed by big pharma and adopted by the Republicans. One provision big pharma insisted on was that the U.S. Government **could not negotiate the price of drugs!** Because of this Republican provision, Part D is incredibly expensive. In addition to what Part D costs participants, it cost taxpayers a whopping \$747 B in 2022!

Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) gave Medicare the authority to negotiate drug prices for the first time in history, cutting down on out-of-pocket expenses and reducing government spending by billions. If the Republicans take over, negotiations will end and the pharmaceutical industry will again set the prices without any “government interference.”

Insulin: Also under the IRA, insulin price gouging ended for seniors under Medicare. Insulin costs were

capped at \$35 per month. About 4 million seniors have benefitted. Many saved \$100s per month without the price gouging.

Junk Fees: Under Biden, the Federal Trade Commission proposed new rules to prohibit junk fees. These hidden, bogus and mandatory fees are added to concert and sports tickets, bank fees, airline charges, cable costs, and... everything. These hidden fees cost consumers tens of billions of dollars each year.

Lets give Brandon some credit!
Michael Frandzel
Portsmouth, N.H.

Michael:
Biden’s marketing team... does he even have one? Did someone cut off their coffee supply? For that matter, is there anyone home at the DNC?

Twitter—screw you, Elon, it’s Twitter to us—is full of graphs comparing job growth under Republican and Democratic presidents. Those alone should be enough to effectively nuke GOP candidates. Not to mention similar graphs on debt and deficits. But nooo. . .

The Editor

=====
Trump is Worse Than Victor Orban
To the Editor:

As a dual citizen and Hungarian American I have twice voted against the party of Hungary’s Prime Minister Victor Orban. While I do not support Mr. Orban’s style of governing, he has not rejected elections nor advocated for undemocratic laws. He is abiding by the laws of Hungary, with a coalition government of approximately 60 percent in parliament.

The opposition parties are, however, making steady progress in their attempt to replace his government. Mr. Orban has used religious themes and Hungarian nationalism to rally support. This even though Hungarians are not particularly religious and

Hungarian nationalism is more a myth than a fact. The Hungarian nation was initially founded by a mixture of various ethnic groups among which were Magyars (the Hungarians).

Also, it seems that most Hungarians want to remain part of the European Union (EU), which has lavished financial benefits on Hungary. That is why Mr. Orban often attempts to violate EU rules, but then retreats by way of some compromise.

So, while democracy is struggling in Hungary, there is much to suggest it will survive.

Donald Trump on the other hand clearly has authoritarian tendencies and poses a grave threat to American democracy.

Peter Somssich
Portsmouth, N.H.

Peter:
Thanks for this illuminating perspective.

The Editor

=====
“Operation Catalonia”: Spain’s Dirty War
To the Editor:

The PSOE, a party in the Spanish government, has changed its stance on Catalan independence, and that is opening a loophole through which uncomfortable truths are surfacing: Spanish nationalism has been fraudulently using justice, for political purposes, to try to destroy the Catalan independence movement. The twist is due to the fact that, to govern Spain, the PSOE needs the 7 votes of Junts, Puigdemont’s Catalan pro-independence party. Currently the PSOE has hardly any representation at any other institutional level, neither regions nor important cities, therefore it needs to govern Spain in order to be able to place in government positions a large number of people from its party and thus subsist economically. This has forced the PSOE to recognize implicitly that it had falsely accused the independence movement of being coup plotters, violent terrorists, racist su-

premacists, of making a pact with Putin to weaken the EU... and, as it knew that all this was invented, it has now needed to clarify the falsity of these accusations so that the citizenship accepts the pact, also recognizing that the Catalan independence movement has suffered “lawfare” (judicial dirty war). The only “crime” of the Catalan independence movement has been to offend the aggressive and intransigent nationalism that is part of the Spanish DNA.

We knew, from an ex-agent, that the PP government organized “Operation Catalonia,” using reserved State funds, to try to find crimes that could have been committed by the Catalan pro-independence activists and, not finding them, bribed, fabricated and spread totally fabricated accusations with the help of the Spanish press. Now some newspapers have published contrasted information on the ways in which the then president of the government, Mariano Rajoy, was receiving the information of this operation of the State’s sewers. We have also learned of a list of people under investigation, not because they are suspects, but because of who they are politically. “Operation Catalonia” made it possible for allegedly, innocent political leaders to be accused. It tried to influence electoral processes, made an Andorran bank go bankrupt, paid to hide information about a jihadist group that ended up attacking Barcelona in August 2017...

After Franco’s dictatorship, the incipient Spanish democracy had to fight against the Basque terrorist group ETA and resorted to all kinds of dirty war (torture, human rights violations, stigmatisation of what was Basque, and even state terrorism by the GAL group) and, with a peaceful and democratic movement, such as the Catalan pro-independence movement, they have decided to activate the same pattern of dirty war by the state but now applied against a movement that has not committed any crime. As this attack has brought together the speeches of the political parties, the judicial and police actions and the stories fabricated by the media, it is difficult

to unravel the truth in the open and to judge it. Moreover, the same PSOE, which is now interested in uncovering the irregular actions of the PP government, in its own government has also practised illegal espionage and “lawfare” against the Catalan pro-independence movement. In any case, this case is unsolvable within Spain because how can the very top of the judiciary itself be tried for a crime? That is why it is necessary for the EU to get involved: penalise Spain and force it to accept a democratic solution in the form of a referendum.

Jordi Oriola Folch
Barcelona, Cataluña

Jordi:
You ask, “how can the very top of the judiciary itself be tried for a crime?”

Yeah, we can relate.

The Editor

=====
Ewing: Still in Bizarro World
To the Editor:

People who have grown rich and powerful from our big, bloated, controlling, and wasteful Federal government will make up and say anything to stop Trump from making our government work for everyone.

[Don: No one has grown more “rich and powerful from our big, bloated, controlling, and wasteful Federal government” than those who fund the GOP. Take Harlan Crow, for example. who now owns a significant share of the Supreme Court. Also, you seem to think Dolt #45 is trying to “make our government work for everyone.” That is only true in the sense that for Dolt #45, no one really exists other than himself.]

Biden feigned outrage when he falsely alleged that Trump slandered our fallen soldiers in France...

[Don: Here you have the gall to cite a clip of Kayleigh McEnany, speaking at a White House press conference, as your source. As the saying goes, “there’s your problem.”]

Don Ewing
Meredith, N.H.

Don:
Sadly, due to lack of space, we had to jettison 225 drivelt units from this, your latest fan fiction entry.

The Editor

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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.
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The Alleged News®
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dictable, should bring further clarity to the fact that we need systemic alternatives to commercial media, especially nonprofit and public-ownership models. Working towards a structural fix to the failing commercial model for local news means going beyond small-bore reforms. We must clearly articulate a bolder, longer-term vision for re-imagining what journalism should be.

Non-Reformist Media Reforms

Unfortunately, most reform initiatives thus far amount to placing Band-Aids on gaping wounds. Whether forcing platforms like Google and Meta to pay publishers and broadcasters more for their content or erecting paywalls that force readers to shell out money, the ongoing reliance on advertising and other monetization schemes are dead ends. Even most policies that call for various kinds of media subsidies—long overdue baby steps in the right direction—ultimately aim to prop up the commercial sector without making major structural changes and leaving the same ownership model intact.

The current crisis calls for “non-reformist reforms” that aim to transform journalism by mitigating or even eliminating the commercial pressures that prevent our news media from serving democratic needs. Such a project should rely on a two-pronged approach of de-commercializing and democratizing media outlets, with the end goal of building entirely new institutions committed to participatory democracy.

Ultimately, our strategies must be informed by the reality that no long-term commercial future exists for most journalism. Tweaking market mechanisms and scrambling for new business models is futile when the market itself is a core part of the problem. Our democracy requires that we disentangle news and information from capitalism—we need a horizon for journalism beyond the market.

A major impediment to this kind of radical project is our inability to imagine alternatives to the commercial media system. However, the burgeoning nonprofit news sector—though often overly-reliant on private capital—demonstrates what journalists can do when unyoked from commercial imperatives. Non-profit exemplars such as City Bureau, Outlier Media, ProPublica, and the *Texas Tribune* all conduct top-notch journalism and, compared to their commercial counterparts, are often more responsive to their respective communities and to larger social missions. An infusion of philanthropic money into local news by Press Forward—more than \$500 million over five years—suggests this sector will continue to expand. But it’s still woefully insufficient given the scope and severity of the crisis.

Ultimately, only a robust public media sector can commit to a universal service ideal that guarantees media access for everyone. We can leverage public infrastructures such as post offices, libraries, public access media, public broadcasting stations, and universities as initial building blocks for a new public media system. But much greater public investments are still necessary, especially with the U.S. being a global outlier for how little it funds public media.

Toward this aim, non-reformist reforms have strategic value by guiding policy interventions in the present juncture that seek to expand future opportunities—interventions that can mobilize and diversify coalitions, shift commonsense, build power from below, and broaden the terrain of struggle for structural reform. Therefore, any initiative that erodes the commercial and anti-democratic design of existing media institutions—by transitioning them into nonprofit outlets, facilitating public media partnerships, unionizing newsrooms, and establishing media cooperatives—can help radicalize news workers and engage communities while laying the groundwork for more transformative change in the future.

Ambitious plans for these kinds of nonmarket-based models are beginning to proliferate. Elsewhere, I’ve called for a practical utopianism embodied by the Public Media Center, a new anchor institution established in every community that’s federally guaranteed but locally owned and controlled. A complementary approach is the Local Journalism Initiative, which enables people to vote on allocating funds to local news organizations of their choice, thereby guaranteeing competition between multiple newsrooms in every county.

Regardless of the precise model, our North Star should remain fixed, even if it takes decades to realize: all members of society should have access to news and information from local media institutions that look like and are operated by the communities they serve. And everyone should be empowered to tell their own stories through their own media. None of this can happen, however, until we take journalism out of the market.

—==—

Victor Pickard is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication where he co-directs the Media, Inequality & Change Center. He is the author of the recent book Democracy Without Journalism? This article first appeared at The Law and Political Economy Project. This slightly updated version then appeared at CommonDreams.org with permission. It appears here under Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). Feel free to republish and share widely.

**Readers in Exeter:
Your Attention, Please**

We love to see highly-credentialed people such as Professor Pickard [above] working on ways to keep journalism alive—and working for the public good. We lack such credentials, but we do have this, the Nation's Oldest Newspaper™.

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—==—

Report of the Woodchuck* Committee
A Timely Excerpt from the Journals of the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the State of New Hampshire, 1883

“The committee to whom was referred the whole woodchuck subject, respectfully submits the following report:

“Your committee has learned on inquiry that much of the apathy and disinterestedness on the part of the members of this house concerning the woodchuck arises not so much from an unwillingness to give the subject a thorough and conscientious consideration, as from a prejudice born of an uncertain knowledge of the animal and its habits.

“First of all, the woodchuck has so many aliases that mankind may easily be misled by the confusion of names. That the woodchuck is a notorious character is apparent by the load of names under which it waddles.

“Even men of science disagree as to the proper appellation to be given to this crusader of the fields. [...]

“[...] The Canadians, being of a conservative cast of mind, still call it the ground-hog and the *siffleur*, according to whether the farmer is an English speaking individual or [Ethnic slur deleted.] The animal is known in that vast fur-bearing region about Hudson’s bay, and answers to the name of the Thickwood Badger, while away to the westward the hardy inhabitants of Alaska mean woodchuck when they exclaim *Tarbagan*, and the wild Chippeways grunt *Kath-hill-oe-Kooay*. Your committee, however, cannot be led away from woodchuck by all the [Ethnic slur deleted] tribes and scientific dudes in Christendom. Woodchuck appears in the *Atlanta Constitution*; and Daniel Webster fought for it. [...]

“Your committee finds that the woodchuck is absolutely destitute of any interesting qualities, that is, such qualities as would recommend it to the average inhabitant of New

* “Woodchuck and groundhog are simply two different names for the same animal. Both terms have been used in English since the 1600s. Preferences around the terms varies by region. In many places, the terms are used interchangeably, but groundhog is increasingly more common.” — *dictionary.com/e/gopher-vs-groundhog-vs-woodchuck/*.



*Woodchuck - Arctomys monax.
Lithograph by E.K., for L. Prang & Co. - Library of Congress.*

Hampshire. It is a thief by nature and a freebooter by profession[...].

“Its body is thick and squatty, and its legs so short that its belly seems almost to touch the ground. [...] As an illustration of the utter want of grace in the animal, the committee would ask the attention of the house to the fact that the woodchuck is fond of sitting on its haunches and letting its fore paws hang loosely down. It also has a very comical rotary movement of the head while engaged in feeding. Your committee is unable to account for this.

“The predatory habits of the animal make it the common foe of mankind, for it is a sneak-thief, first, last, and all the time. As the woodchuck cannot be sued for trespass or imprisoned for larceny the only thing left is to fight it to the bitter death. [...] The woodchuck devours corn, vegetables of all kinds, even pumpkins, and it just dotes on nice grass. Your committee was very much impressed with the similarity existing between the woodchuck and the office-holders. They both prefer to live in clover. [...] Contemporaneous with the ark, the woodchuck has not made any material progress in social science, and it is now too late to attempt to reform the wayward sinner.

“The average age of the woodchuck is too long to please your committee, but the estimate of woodchuck population can only be approximated. One of your committee, however, counted seven-

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A New Strategy for Biden

by W.D. Ehrhart

With Ron DeSantis's withdrawal from the Republican presidential field, and Nicki Haley's defeat in New Hampshire, it seems that only an act of God will prevent Donald Trump from returning to the White House.

Joe Biden was already an old man when he accepted the nomination for president in 2020. He got the nomination because he was perceived as the only Democrat who had a chance of defeating the ignorant, narcissistic, racist, homophobic, misogynistic, criminal, immoral, amoral, reality-starring grifter who'd been occupying the White House for the previous four years.

Uncle Joe won the presidency only because he was not the ignorant, narcissistic, racist, homophobic, misogynistic, criminal, immoral, amoral, reality-starring grifter who'd been occupying the White House for the previous four years.

Biden was supposed to be a "caretaker" president, a one-termer who, by election day 2024, would be days shy of 82 years old. One need only look at photos of former presidents at the beginning of their terms and at the end of just four years to see the toll that being president of the United States takes on the aging process of even much younger men.

One can only speculate about the toll these past three years have taken on Biden, and he's still got more than a year to go with another bruising campaign ahead of him. I'd say, "Good Luck," but he's going to need a lot more than luck.

Why did Biden decide—clearly very early on in his presidency—that he would stand for a second term? And why on Earth has his party allowed him to do it? Once again, the Democratic Party has shown itself to be extremely adept at shooting its collective self in the foot.

The first mistake this time around was choosing Kamala Harris as a running mate. Hey, what could be better? A woman, and a woman of color at that. And not just Black, but also Asian. Three-for-one. What a brilliant choice!

But Harris did so poorly as a presidential candidate that she called off her campaign before 2020 even started. She had a controversial background as a prosecutor, first as district attorney in San Francisco and then as attorney general of California. She often referred to herself as the "top cop," but by 2020 and the murder of George Floyd, that was not exactly a popular monicker.

And it became clear soon after she took office that she had not been a wise choice. She did not mesh with the Biden team, and she is not at all charismatic or inspirational. It became very clear very early on that she was not going to step into the ring in 2024 and take the reins from Uncle Joe.

So what does the Democratic Party do at that point? How do you repudiate your sitting vice president and begin grooming someone new for the nomination in 2024? I suppose the Democrats saw that prospect as doomed to fail politically. And you certainly couldn't give Harris the nomination for president outright. And that left only a second term for Biden.

Unfortunately for the Democratic Party, that solution is also doomed to fail politically. And it doesn't matter if Joe Biden still has all his marbles. Nor does it matter that he's actually managed to get quite a bit done in the past three years in spite of some enormous disadvantages in the form of obstacles like Mitch McConnell, Kevin McCarthy, Joe Manchin, and the self-proclaimed "Freedom Caucus."

The fact is that Joe Biden is simply not inspirational. He does not excite

people—especially young voters—the way Bernie Sanders did in 2016. (More on that anon.) He comes across as exactly what he is: an old man. It's not an image problem. It's just what he is.

Biden won the 2020 election only because enough people had had enough of Donald Trump, and wanted him gone. Voters came out in record numbers. They voted for Uncle Joe because he was not Donald Trump.

But three years later, they've still got Trump. In the headlines every single day. Still at large in spite of four indictments on 91 felony charges. As outrageous as ever. As ridiculous as ever. As incoherent as ever. As popular as ever. And the presumptive Republican nominee for the presidency of the United States in 2024.

Don't forget: though the Democratic Party got more votes than ever before in 2020, so did the Republican Party. And huge numbers of those voters were diehard MAGA supporters of Dolt .45. And still are. They will show up at the polls again in 2024; you can bet your future on that, alas.

You will not see the same fanatical devotion for Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr. The voters who decide to stay home this time will not be the Trumpsters. They will be young voters dismayed by Biden's support of a murderous government in Israel that has long since dwarfed the unarguably outrageous crimes of Hamas. They will be older voters who are disillusioned with Biden and don't fully grasp the consequences of allowing Dolt .45 to become Dolt .47.

The Democratic Party has been shooting its collective self in the foot ever since it allowed Bill Clinton to turn his back on working Americans, got in bed with the financial elite, and created the Party of Republican Lite. Barack Obama was

supposed to "Yes We Can," but he immediately brought a lot of the people responsible for the economic disaster of 2008 into his administration.

And then the Democratic Party ran roughshod over the popular will of rank-and-file voters in 2016, and cheated Bernie Sanders out of the nomination in favor of the immensely polarizing and unelectable Hillary Clinton.

This time, the Democratic Party has collectively shot itself in the head with a 12-gauge shotgun. But I would like to have something positive to say, something hopeful. I would like to be able to posit an alternative outcome for the 2024 election.

Though overweight, Big Mac-eating Donald Trump is, after all, nearly as old as Uncle Joe, and can't be in any better health, we simply can't sit back, do nothing, and count on an Act of God to save us from what seems to be inevitable.

So what should the Democratic Party do? It is now far too late for Uncle Joe to withdraw his candidacy. But can't he at least make Kamala Harris go away? Get her to say that she has to spend more time with her family, or work on her gardening, or something? And then pick a vice presidential candidate who is more inspiring, and might actually make an attractive running mate?

Gretchen Witmer? Julian Castro? Mark Kelly? There's gotta be some younger Democrat who's a lot more appealing than Kamala Harris, who brings nothing to the Biden ticket but dead weight. Biden's got nothing to lose by giving this strategy a try, and everything to lose if he doesn't.

~~~~~

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

# Just What We Need – Another Border Wall!

by Jim Hightower

In the 1980s, many Texans were alarmed that hordes of immigrants were fleeing Rust Belt states and pouring across the Red River to take our jobs. So, my friend Steve Fromholz recommended a big beautiful wall across our northern border to keep them out.

But Fromholz—a popular singer-songwriter and renowned political sprite—was ahead of his time in the political sport of wallbuilding. Instead of steel barriers and miles of nasty of razor wire, Steve proposed preventing Yankee refugees from entering the Lone Star State by planting a 10-foot high, 10-foot thick wall of jalapeño peppers along the length of the Red River. Eat your way through... and you'd be accepted as a naturalized Texan.

I thought of Steve's impishness when I read that Nikki Haley, Ron DeSantis, and other Republicans were concocting a whole new xenophobic bugaboo to goose up their anti-immigrant demagoguery. We can't just fear the "invasion" coming across our Southern border, they cry! Indeed, Haley wailed: "It's the northern border, too"—adding ominously that we must "do whatever it takes to keep people out." And then DeSantis piled on, saying we should wall off America's Canadian border.

Meanwhile, nearly all residents living along that 5,500-mile boundary fear the political wall-mongers more than the imaginary threat of foreigners surging across illegally. "People have always been coming through Canada," says a clerk at a general store in far-north New Hampshire. Scoffing at the silly political hype, she says: "I don't think the residents are really worried."

But Chicken-Little politicians won't be shooed off by reality. After all, they still have the east, west, and gulf coasts to shut off—so expect them to propose razor wire for the entire US shoreline. Their ridiculousness makes Fromholz's satire seem rational!

~~~~~

Populist author, public speaker, and radio commentator Jim Hightower writes "The Hightower Lowdown," a monthly newsletter chronicling the ongoing fights by America's ordinary people against rule by plutocratic elites. Sign up at HightowerLowdown.org.

The Alleged News® from page six

ty-two of these creatures in going a short distance; so it is safe to assume that there are millions in the state. In some parts of the state it is found necessary to shovel a path through the woodchucks in order to reach the barns. This is not right. Hunters will not kill them, for the fur is worth nothing; and now [Ethnic reference deleted], any prospective value the

woodchuck might have had as an article of food is also gone. It is therefore manifest to your committee that something has got to be done for the protection of the farmers of New Hampshire. [...] The animal, so they say, takes its bed about October 1, and forthwith rolling itself into a ball becomes torpid and to all appearances dead. Unfortunately for the farmers, this interesting habit only goes into effect at that season of the year when nobody cares a snap

about the woodchuck or the clover crop. [...] It does prove, however, that the woodchuck must have laid in an enormous amount of plunder during the summer campaign. Your committee also believes that this torpidity has nothing to do with a smitten conscience. The woodchuck is not only a nuisance, but also a bore. It burrows beneath the soil, and then chuckles to see a mowing machine, man and all, slump into one of these holes and disappear. [...].

"Your committee has given this important subject a most thorough examination, and finds the woodchuck one of the worst enemies ever known to the farmer; and unless the legislature will do something to rid the state of these animals, the chances are that the woodchuck will have things its own way. Your committee is confident that a small bounty will prove of incalculable good [...]."

CHARLES R. CORNING,
For the Committee.



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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

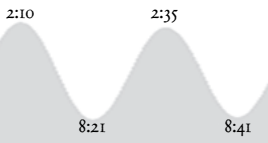
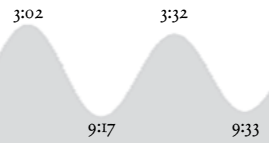
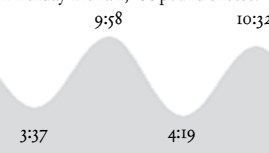
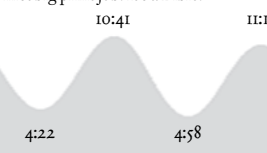
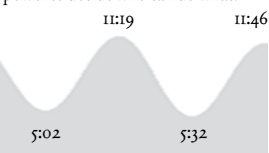
drags about seventeen billion gallons of seawater — enough to fill 2,125,000 tanker trucks — up the river and into Great Bay. This creates a roving hydraulic conflict, as incoming sea and the outgoing river collide. The skirmish line

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, FEBRUARY 11	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12	TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13	WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14	THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15	FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17
<p>2017—The U.S. President and the Japanese Prime Minister confer and read classified documents about a North Korean missile launch while surrounded by diners at Mar-a-Lago.</p> <p>2014—An FEC report confirms what his mom and sis said: U.S. Rep. Frank Guinta lied, that \$355,000 wasn’t his.</p> <p>2013—Bad news today from KRTV in Great Falls, Mont.: “the bodies of the dead are rising from their graves and attacking the living.”</p> <p>2006—Dick “Dick” Cheney becomes the second sitting Vice President to shoot a man when he “peppers” his pal Harry Whittington in the face.</p> <p>1992—“I’d like to thank my family for loving me and taking care of me,” says Johnny Frank Garrett (IQ under 70), as Texas prepares to poison him, “and the rest of the world can kiss my ass.”</p> <p>1990—Nelson Mandela is released from prison after 27 years.</p> <p>1963—RIP Sylvia Plath.</p> <p>1963—The CIA creates a “Domestic Operations Division.” What could possibly go wrong?</p> <p>1937—The Great Flint, Mich. Sit-Down Strike ends in victory for the workers. Good times start to roll.</p> <p>1926—The Mexican government nationalizes all church property.</p> <p>1919—Emma Goldman is arrested for the crime of telling women how birth control works.</p> <p>1861—The House of Representatives unanimously resolves that it will do nothing about slavery in any state.</p>	<p>2004—<i>USA Today</i> reports that former top Texas Air National Guard officers say files were “cleansed” to protect George W.[MD] Bush.</p> <p>1999—N.H. Senators Gregg and Smith notwithstanding, the Senate finds President Clinton not guilty.</p> <p>1983—SS <i>Marine Electric</i>, a rusted, beat-up hulk whose lying owners faked inspections, sinks off Virginia; three survive from a crew of 34.</p> <p>1976—The New World Liberation Front bombs Hearst Castle.</p> <p>1968—LBJ puts the kibosh on Westy’s plan to nuke the NVA.</p> <p>1962—Bill Lancaster is discovered in the Sahara, mummified alongside his biplane, 29 years after disappearing.</p> <p>1947—Sixty antiwar protesters burn draft cards in New York City.</p> <p>1946—Black combat vet Isaac Woodard gets his honorable discharge and boards a bus in Georgia. Before he can get to N.C., he’s beaten and blinded by white cops in Aiken, S.C.</p> <p>1917—A huge mob in Bisbee, Ariz. herds 1,200 members of the IWW into boxcars to be shipped off and dumped in the New Mexico desert.</p> <p>1874—Marines and sailors from the USS <i>Portsmouth</i> quell a riot in Honolulu to assure the election of a pro-American King.</p> <p>1839—The Aroostook War between Maine and New Brunswick begins.</p> <p>1554—Queen “Bloody Mary” Tudor has Lady Jane Grey, her 16-year old cousin and predecessor, decapitated.</p>	<p>2013—Justice Antonin Scalia goes to his final judgment.</p> <p>2008—The Senate tells the CIA to cool it with the waterboarding.</p> <p>2007—An Al-Qaeda tape calls George W.[MD] Bush a drunk gambler.</p> <p>2002—Donald Rumsfeld’s ex-assistant Ken Adelman predicts the Iraq War will be a “cakewalk.”</p> <p>1991—A super-accurate, laser-guided U.S. bomb kills some 400 Iraqi civilians in a bunker in Baghdad.</p> <p>1983—Radicalized by anti-Semite Henry Ford, decorated WW II vet and anti-tax crank Gordon Kahl and son Yorje Von Kahl murder two U.S. Marshals and wound three other lawmen in a shootout near Medina, N.D.</p> <p>1981—Hexane gas illegally discharged from a Purina plant fills the Louisville, Ky. sewer system. A spark from a car causes two miles of sewer lines to explode. Purina denies liability.</p> <p>1968—Five soldiers are busted at Ft. Jackson, S.C.; they prayed for peace.</p> <p>1967—The National Student Association admits it’s received \$3 million from the CIA over 15 years.</p> <p>1950—The crew of a burning B-36 jettisons its Mark IV A-bomb and bails out. With no plutonium core, it merely scatters 100 lbs. of uranium when it explodes over British Columbia. Five crewmen freeze to death.</p> <p>1837—Loco Foco Democrats protest rapidly rising food prices in New York City. Hundreds of barrels are liberated in the ensuing Flour Riot.</p>	<p>2016—A cargo jet linked to the CIA lands in Harare, Zimbabwe carrying 67 tons of South African currency and the decomposing body of a Black man.</p> <p>2016—With wind blowing 20 m.p.h., and the thermometer at -13°, the wind chill in Portsmouth falls to -38°.</p> <p>2015—Another 18 inches of snow fall on Portsmouth, making nearly eight feet in under three weeks.</p> <p>2004—The White House releases some of George W.[MD] Bush’s military records, but they fail to prove he was present for duty.</p> <p>1973—The first American POWs released from North Vietnam arrive at Travis AFB, Calif. [<i>See tomorrow.</i>]</p> <p>1971—Nixon’s secret taping system is installed in the White House.</p> <p>1945—Forty U.S. B-17s intending to firebomb Dresden miss by 90 miles and hit Prague instead. Death toll: 701. Bomb weight per death: 433 lbs.</p> <p>1929—On St. Valentine’s Day in Chicago, a cop asks Frank “Tight Lips” Gusenberg who shot him. “No-body,” he says, then dies.</p> <p>1879—Born into slavery, later escaping, Blanche K. Bruce [R-Miss.] presides over the U.S. Senate.</p> <p>1873—Eric Co. Sheriff and future President Grover Cleveland picks up a \$10 fee for hanging a man in Buffalo, N.Y. He botches the job, though: it takes John Gaffney 23 minutes to die.</p> <p>1349—A power struggle between gentle factions in Strasbourg results in a pogrom against Jews.</p>	<p>2001—Fox airs “Conspiracy Theory: Did We Land on the Moon?” Great.</p> <p>1989—After just a little over nine years in-country, quick-thinking Soviets pull out of Afghanistan.</p> <p>1988—Environmentalists, supporting striking workers, storm Int’l. Paper’s Jay, Maine plant 10 days after scabs create a huge chlorine leak.</p> <p>1978—On his first day at the Hillsboro, N.H. <i>Messenger</i>, our current editor is told, “Get over to Henniker; last night the cop shop was fire-bombed.”</p> <p>1973—Nixon to Joint Chiefs: POWs’ return is “an invaluable opportunity to revise the history of this War.”</p> <p>1966—In place of Senate hearings on the Vietnam War, CBS shows reruns of “I Love Lucy.” Fred Friendly, President of CBS News, quits in disgust.</p> <p>1962—“I support [JFK] to the hilt [in Vietnam],” says R. Nixon, “I only hope he will step up the build-up....”</p> <p>1944—Allies bomb the 6th c. monastery at Monte Cassino. Nazis had removed its historic treasures to the Vatican in trucks accompanied by monks, but 230 Italian civilians in its cellars are killed by falling rubble.</p> <p>1898—The battleship USS <i>Maine</i> explodes and sinks in Havana harbor.</p> <p>1798—After Congress fails to reprimand Rep. Matthew Lyon (R-Vt.) for having spit tobacco juice in his eye, Rep. Roger Griswold (Fed.-Conn.) thrashes the ex-newspaper editor with his cane on the floor of the House. Lyon defends himself with fire tongs.</p>	<p>1982—Nancy Reagan says, via an aide, she’ll no longer accept “loaned” threads from big name designers because she’s “really...tired of people misinterpreting what she was doing.”</p> <p>1978—The first computer bulletin board goes online in Chicago.</p> <p>1976—The <i>Village Voice</i> publishes excerpts from the House-suppressed Pike Report; among other sins, the CIA, the FBI, and the NSA have been illegally spying on U.S. citizens.</p> <p>1964—A week after security in Saigon is “tightened,” a V.C. bomb in an American movie theater kills three U.S. soldiers and wounds another 50.</p> <p>1962—A two-day anti-nuclear march on Washington begins.</p> <p>1959—Fidel Castro is sworn in as Prime Minister of Cuba.</p> <p>1943—Mildred Harnacke, a Milwaukee-born editor, is guillotined in Berlin for spying for the Soviets.</p> <p>1938—Guy Stewart Callendar publishes a scientific paper (drawing in part on the work of F.E. Fowle) showing that mankind’s carbon dioxide emissions are warming the planet.</p> <p>1916—Emma Goldman is busted for lecturing on birth control.</p> <p>1899—French President Félix Faure has a fatal stroke while being felled in his office in the Élysée Palace.</p> <p>1848—The Women’s Rights Convention is held at Seneca Falls, N.Y.</p> <p>1818—Charles W. Brewster begins his 50-year career as a Portsmouth, N.H. newspaperman.</p>	<p>2021—After poisoning U.S. discourse for 37 years, oxygen thief Rush Limbaugh shuts his lying trap.</p> <p>2017—President Trump declares the press to be the enemy of the people.</p> <p>2015—A study finds that previous tallies of lynchings in the U.S. had under-counted by at least 800.</p> <p>2006—Harry Whittington apologizes to Dick “Dick” Cheney for having absorbed a face full of his birdshot.</p> <p>2003—Covert CIA agents grab Abu Omar in Milan, blowing an Italian surveillance program; 23 agents are later convicted of kidnapping.</p> <p>2000—“I hate the g___ks,” Sen. John McCain tells reporters. “I will hate them as long as I live”—that’s 18 years.</p> <p>1985—General William Westmoreland drops his libel suit against CBS. Apparently the network was right: he <i>had</i> covered up VC troop strength.</p> <p>1974—PFC Robert Preston takes a stolen Huey on a tour of D.C, landing in a hail of bullets on the White House Lawn. Superficially wounded, he smiles and laughs on the way to Walter Reed.</p> <p>1971—The U.S. Army’s top-ranked enlisted man is indicted for conspiring to defraud enlisted men’s clubs.</p> <p>1936—The Supreme Court rules that confessions obtained by police violence, <i>i.e.</i>, relentless whipping with buckled leather belts, are inadmissible; the guilty verdict in question had been won by prosecutor and future Senator John Stennis [D-Miss].</p> <p>1862—RIP Henry D. Thoreau.</p>
						
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19	TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20	WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21	THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22	FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24
<p>2012—Rep. Bob Morris [R-Ind.] says Girl Scouts use “feminists, lesbians, and Communists” as role models to promote a “homosexual lifestyle.”</p> <p>2001—Robert Hanssen, a devout Catholic, exhibitionist, patron of strippers, and ex-FBI Special Agent, is arrested for selling U.S. secrets to the U.S.S.R., then to the Russians.</p> <p>1976—Jerry Ford accepts the CIA’s word: if it breaks the law, it’ll confess.</p> <p>1970—All of the Chicago 7 are found innocent of conspiring to incite riots; five are found guilty of crossing state lines to incite riots anyway.</p> <p>1962—“We are going to win in Vietnam,” says RFK in Saigon. “We will remain here until we do win.”</p> <p>1954—Ike’s A.G. OKs a memo saying the CIA need not report criminal activity by its employees.</p> <p>1930—A majority of Congressmen are forced onto the wagon: their bootlegger, George Cassiday, aka “The Man in the Green Hat,” is busted in a Prohibition Bureau sting.</p> <p>1916—Oscar Comery, who expected life in prison after confessing he’d poisoned his wife, is hanged in Concord, N.H. The jury changed its mind on learning he’d molested a child, too.</p> <p>1915—Pres. W. Wilson watches his first movie, also the first ever shown in the White House: <i>Birth of a Nation</i>.</p> <p>1820—“If you have a message you want to send to hell,” screams Lavinia Fisher from Charleston, S.C.’s gallows, “give it to me, and I’ll carry it!”</p>	<p>2009—Outraged that the government might assist mere homeowners, CNBC’s Rick Santelli has a fit on the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade. His convulsions spawn a Tea Party.</p> <p>2000—“I understand small business growth,” says George W.[MD] Bush, “I was one.” A business? Or a growth?</p> <p>1988—Prosecutors in Passaic County, N.J. drop the bogus case against Rubin “Hurricane” Carter after he’d been imprisoned for decades.</p> <p>1986—After due deliberation—37 years—Congress ratifies a UN treaty outlawing genocide.</p> <p>1975—Watergate burglar James W. McCord, Jr. admits that “basically, Martha [Mitchell]’s story is true”—she was abducted and drugged to cover up the break-in. Her abductor, Steve King, is later made ambassador to the Czech Republic by Donald Trump.</p> <p>1965—Protests against the Vietnam War are held in 30 U.S. cities.</p> <p>1964—The CIA informs the State and Defense departments that South Vietnam is making little progress against the Viet Cong.</p> <p>1948—Sen. Harry Byrd [D-Va.] says Truman is like Hitler and Stalin—because he supports civil rights.</p> <p>1945—In a Burmese mangrove swamp, several hundred Japanese soldiers are killed by crocodiles.</p> <p>1942—FDR puts 120,000 Americans into concentration camps.</p> <p>1847—Rescuers reach the leftovers from the Donner Party.</p>	<p>1950—Joe McCarthy delivers a five-hour, paranoid rant in the U.S. Senate; a four-month inquisition ensues.</p> <p>1945—At Iwo Jima, Jacklyn “Jack” Lucas, 17, dives onto one live grenade and pulls another under him. One goes off, one doesn’t. He sets off metal detectors until dying at 80.</p> <p>1943—Hollywood embraces Office of War Information censorship.</p> <p>1939—Fritz Kuhn, a German veteran of WWI and naturalized U.S. citizen, leads 22,000 people in a pro-Nazi rally at Madison Square Garden.</p> <p>1933—At least 20 top German industrialists meet secretly at Reichstag, President H. Göring’s official residence and—yes, we’ll say it—conspire to raise funds to get Nazis elected.</p> <p>1893—After the Reading Railroad fails, the free hand of the self-regulating market reaches for the economy’s throat and nearly chokes it to death.</p> <p>1815—Almost two months after the Treaty of Ghent ends the War of 1812, the USS <i>Constitution</i> captures two British sloops off the coast of Portugal.</p> <p>1792—The United States Post Office Department is established! Yay!</p> <p>1725—Soldiers under Captain John Lovewell kill and scalp 10 Indians in Wakefield, N.H. Later, in Boston, they collect £100 for each one.</p> <p>1524—In Germany, Count von Iggleheim is stoned to death by a mob angry at his refusal to let them board a three-story ark he had built to escape a predicted apocalyptic flood.</p>	<p>2012—Caught by the Piscataqua’s mighty current during construction of the New Memorial Bridge, the tugboat <i>Miss Stacy</i> nearly sinks.</p> <p>1975—“Original Dick” Nixon’s top goons, John Mitchell [ex-AG], Bob Haldeman, and John Ehrlichman, each get 2 ½ years in the slammer for conspiring—yes, we used that C-word again—to do more than will fit here.</p> <p>1965—A week after his home was firebombed, assassins murder Malcolm X; his last words: “Brothers! Brothers! This is a house of peace.” The FBI knew it was coming but didn’t tell the NYPD which didn’t care anyway. One assailant, not the killer, is jailed, along with two innocent men.</p> <p>1934—The U.S.-backed Nicaraguan National Guard assassinates rebel leader Augusto Sandino. Legend says his head is then delivered to D.C.</p> <p>1931—In Arequipa, Peruvian revolutionaries make Pan Am’s Byron Rickards the first pilot ever hijacked; 30 years later he’s hijacked a second time.</p> <p>1930—Witnesses faint and Arizona abandons hanging after “Cheerful Eva” Dugan’s accidentally-decapitated head rolls across the floor.</p> <p>1922—The U.S. Army airship <i>Roma</i> crashes in Norfolk, Va.; 34 die in the nation’s worst air crash to date.</p> <p>1862—In N.Y.C., Portland, Maine’s Nathaniel Gordon becomes the first and last person hanged under an 1820 law against bringing negroes or mullattos onboard ship so as to enslave them.</p>	<p>2018—After jabbing him in the legs and groin for 2.5 hours, Alabama prison officials wheel cancer patient Doyle Hamm out of the death chamber alive.</p> <p>2004—A Pentagon document leaks: it says climate change may spell doom.</p> <p>1994—The FBI arrests a spy: 32-year CIA officer Aldrich Ames.</p> <p>1974—Samuel Byck, planning to crash an airliner into the White House, carelessly shoots the pilot before takeoff. He’s then shot dead, too.</p> <p>1965—<i>The New York Times</i> calls the late Malcolm X “an extraordinary and twisted man [who turned] many true gifts to evil purposes.”</p> <p>1965—Sam Lovejoy derails a planned nuke plant in Montague, Mass. by downing a tower with a crowbar.</p> <p>1951—The Atomic Energy Commission unveils its latest brilliant plan: airplanes powered by nuclear reactors.</p> <p>1945—On the House floor, Rep. John Rankin [D-Miss.] calls Rep. Frank Hook [D-Mich.] a Communist, whereupon Hook calls Rankin a “God damned liar.” Rankin, 63 and 140 lbs., attempts to punch out Hook, 52 and 195 lbs., to little effect.</p> <p>1902—In the Senate Chamber, John McLaurin [D-S.C.] calls Ben Tillman [D-S.C.] a liar, whereupon Tillman belts McLaurin in the jaw.</p> <p>1838—Penn. amends its Constitution to take the vote from free Black men.</p> <p>1837—In the White House, Andy Jackson celebrates Washington’s Birthday with a 1,400 pound cheese.</p>	<p>2016—“I love the poorly educated,” says Dolz #45 to a mob in Nevada.</p> <p>2016—GOP Senators deny Obama’s Supreme Court nominee a hearing.</p> <p>2008—Because one maintenance crew fails to warn another that humid air confuses its sensors, a \$1.4 billion B-2 bomber crashes in Guam.</p> <p>2004—Rod Paige, U.S. Sec. of Education, calls the nation’s largest teachers union a “terrorist organization.”</p> <p>1974—Days after presiding over his paper’s 100th birthday, and deep in debt to mobsters, <i>Oakland Tribune</i> owner and ex-Sen. William Knowlton (R-Calif.), shoots himself dead.</p> <p>1971—Lt. William Calley confesses to mass murder, and says his CO, Capt. Ernest Medina, ordered it.</p> <p>1966—Barry Bondhus dumps human digestive byproduct on draft files in Elk River, Minn. He gets 14 months.</p> <p>1942—The huge [356-foot] Japanese submarine <i>I-17</i> fires more than a dozen 5.5 inch rounds at the Richmond oil refinery near Santa Barbara, Calif.</p> <p>1868—In Great Barrington, Mass., W.E.B. Du Bois is born.</p> <p>1775—“Give me liberty, or give me death,” says Patrick Henry—or words to that effect. Multiple accounts differ.</p> <p>1669—Diarist Samuel Pepys, visiting Westminster Abbey with his family, kisses and fondles Katherine of Valois, interred more than 200 years earlier.</p> <p>1455—In Mainz, Germany, Johannes Gutenberg gets started on the world’s first big print job. It’s a Bible.</p>	<p>2001—“My plan reduces the national debt, and fast,” says G.W.[MD] Bush, “...economists worry that we’re going to run out of debt to retire.”</p> <p>1989—Bad door latch design results in nine passengers being sucked out of a Boeing 747 southwest of Hawaii.</p> <p>1988—SCOTUS says it’s OK to show Jerry Falwell drunk, losing his cherry to his mama in an outhouse.</p> <p>1988—Capitol cops carry Sen. Bob “The Groper” Packwood (R-Ore.) into the Senate to make up a quorum.</p> <p>1942—Turned away from Istanbul, <i>MV Sstruma</i>, a decrepit hulk carrying 791 Jewish refugees, is torpedoed by a Soviet sub. The 19-year old sole survivor, David Stoliar, lives to be 91.</p> <p>1942—Anti-aircraft guns in Los Angeles fire 1,400 rounds at a weather balloon. Three Angelenos are trampled to death in the resulting panic and dozens more are injured.</p> <p>1922—Lewis Vernon Harcourt, 1st Viscount Harcourt and former British Secretary of State for the Colonies, commits suicide rather than face exposure as a pederast.</p> <p>1912—On orders from mill owners, Lawrence, Mass. cops beat the hell out of women and children for trying to get on a train to Philadelphia.</p> <p>1836—Rep. and N.H. native Jonathan Cilley [D-Maine], is killed in the 3rd volley of a rifle duel by Rep. William Graves [Whig-Ky].</p> <p>1803—The Supreme Court grabs the power to decide who can do what.</p>
						

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