

## The Fortnightly Rant

### Hate Means Never Having to Admit You're Wrong

It was a stunningly predictable revelation: those \$5 million bribes we've been hearing about for years? The bribes from Burisma that went to the "Biden crime family"? The bribes Republicans say are the reason why Biden needs to be impeached? Yeah, those bribes were just a fantasy, cooked up by a guy with a wardrobe full of flammable trousers, who has just been arrested by the FBI.

In a more perfect world, one might think that the indictment of star informant Alexander "Hot Pants" Smirnov might cause Republicans, and their cheerleaders at Fox, One America News, and, on the radio, Rush Limbaugh's pale replacements Clay Travis and Buck Sexton, and so forth and so on, *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*, to reconsider, and perhaps temper their rabidity by just a notch. If that more perfect world in fact exists, it must be in some other galaxy far, far away.

Smirnov—a "globe-trotting businessman who speaks Russian," according to the *New York Times*—became an FBI informant in 2010. His take for this service has reportedly run into six figures. As recently as last July, he was, though anonymous, a hero to the GOP.

One Senator in particular harangued and browbeat the FBI for months, demanding that it release its FD-1023\* on Smirnov.

"Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) today [July 20, 2023] released

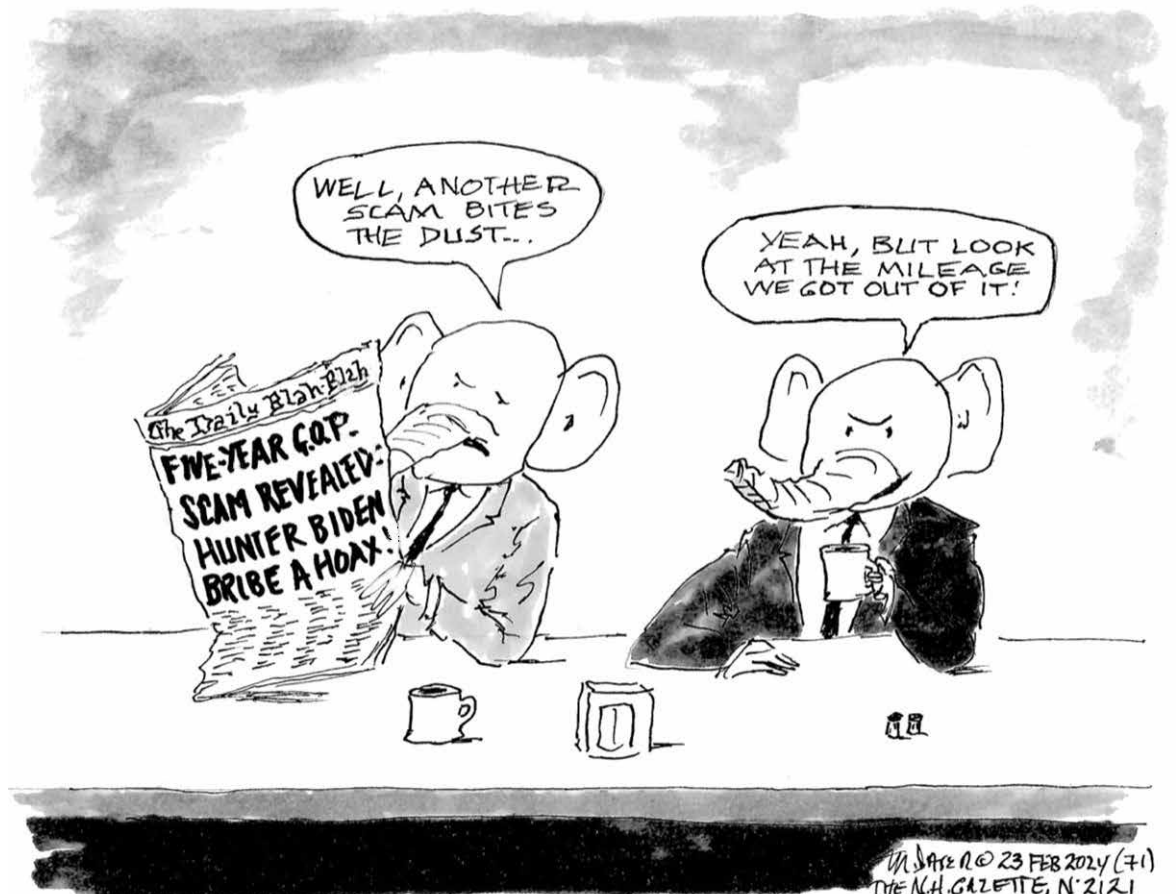
\* "[A] form our special agents use to record raw, unverified reporting from confidential human sources (CHSs). FD-1023s merely document that information; they do not reflect the conclusions of investigators based on a fuller context or understanding. Recording this information does not validate it, establish its credibility, or weigh it against other information known or developed by the FBI in our investigations." — FBI

an unclassified FBI-generated record describing an alleged criminal scheme involving then-Vice President Joe Biden and a Ukrainian business executive. ...

"For the better part of a year, I've been pushing the Justice Department and FBI to provide details on its handling of very significant allegations from a trusted FBI informant implicating then-Vice President Biden in a criminal bribery scheme. While the FBI sought to obfuscate and redact, the American people can now read this document for themselves, without the filter of politicians or bureaucrats, thanks to *brave and heroic whistleblowers*. What did the Justice Department and FBI do with the detailed information in the document? And why have they tried to conceal it from Congress and the American people for so long? The Justice Department and FBI have failed to come clean, but Chairman [U.S. Rep. James R.] Comer and I intend to find out," Grassley said. [*Emphasis added.*]

It now appears that the FBI sat on Smirnov's allegation because they did not believe it. Lack of credibility, however, has not shaken Senator Grassley's faith. In a statement provided to the blog *Bleeding Heartland*, Grassley's staff claimed the indictment '*confirms several points Senator Grassley has made repeatedly.*'

Fox News' Chad Pergram reported—which is to say, stenographed—further comments from Grassley the next day: "Today's indictment makes clear that, without Senator Grassley's oversight and exposure of the FD-1023, the agency would have continued neglecting its duties and failing to provide... transparency..."



Similarly, Fox's Sean Hannity dismissed Smirnov's lies as "a very, very small part of what is the large body of evidence in the Biden impeachment inquiry," according to Media Matters' Matt Gertz, whose ability to transcribe portions of Hannity's diatribes reveals a superhuman tolerance for boring tripe. Once in a while, though, he is rewarded.

First, Gertz demonstrates how Hannity tortures the English language: "I'm mad that the FBI informant, the 1023 form in this case, that now this guy has been charged. It appears that Alexander Smirnov was not to be trusted."

Then, in a brief, uncharacteristic flash of clarity, Hannity speaks the truth: "I guess I was stupid."

It is vitally important, when trying to find one's way through the muck and mire of modern Republicanism, to a) wear sturdy hip-boots, or perhaps one of those old hard-hat diving rigs, and b) remember that every

accusation is a confession.

If Republicans are claiming that the FBI has been covering up for the "Biden Crime Family"... do we really have to spell it out?

On January 6, 2021, with the last days of his presidency trickling away, Donald Trump exhorted a mob that had assembled at his invitation—"It will be wild"—to march on the Capitol and stop Congress from naming his successor.

As offenses against domestic tranquility go, it was right up there with shooting a man on Fifth Avenue. A reasonable person might fairly have expected that, shortly after noon on January 20th, 2021, a phalanx of federal law enforcement officers would ascend the steps of the Capitol and begin a perp walk.

And yet, as the *Washington Post* reported last June, "more than a year would pass before prosecutors and FBI agents jointly embarked on a formal probe of actions direct-

ed from the White House to try to steal the election. Even then, the FBI stopped short of identifying the former president as a focus of that investigation."

This curious inaction would be less troubling in isolation. Alas, it appears to be part of a pattern: Rudy Giuliani's prescient "We got a couple of surprises left," days before James Comey's gratuitous revival of the investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails; Bill Barr's whitewashing of the Mueller report; the FBI's resistance to searching Mar-a-Lago....

More recently, there's Charles McGonigal, former head of counterintelligence for the FBI's New York office—Ground Zero for any investigation into Trump shenanigans. McGonigal pled guilty to taking bribes from Oleg Deripaska, a Russian oligarch with ties to Vladimir Putin, and is now doing time.

But so what? Who cares? That's all old news, anyway.

## The Alleged News®

### 'Cliff-Like' Collapse of Critical Current System More Likely Than Thought: Study

by Brett Wilkins

A study published February 9th warned that a systemic collapse of the Atlantic Ocean currents driving warm water from the tropics toward Europe could be more likely than researchers previously estimated—an event that would send temperatures plummeting in much of the continent.

The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), which includes the Gulf Stream, could be headed for a relatively sudden shutdown that René Van Westen, who led the Dutch study published in *Science Advances*, called "cliff-like."

For many millennia, the Gulf Stream has carried warm waters from the Gulf of Mexico northward along the eastern North American seaboard and across the Atlantic to

Europe. As human-caused global heating melts the Greenland ice sheet, massive quantities of fresh water are released into the North Atlantic, cooling the AMOC—which delivers the bulk of the Gulf Stream's heat—toward a "tipping point" that could stop the current in its tracks.

An AMOC shutdown would cause temperatures to rise in the Southern Hemisphere but plunge dramatically in Europe. In the study's model, London cools by an average of 18°F and Bergen, Norway by 27°F. An AMOC failure would also cause sea levels to rise along North America's east coast.

"We are moving closer [to the collapse], but we're not sure how much closer," van Westen told the Associated Press. "We are heading towards a tipping point."

According to the study:

"Although AMOC collapses have been induced in complex global climate models by strong freshwater forcing, the processes of an AMOC tipping event have so far not been investigated. Here, we show results of the first tipping event in the Community Earth System Model, including the large climate impacts of the collapse. Using these results, we develop a physics-based and observable early warning signal of AMOC tipping: the minimum of the AMOC-induced freshwater transport at the southern boundary of the Atlantic. Reanalysis products indicate that the present-day AMOC is on route to tipping. The early warning signal is a useful alternative to classical statistical ones, which, when applied to our simulated tipping event, turn out to be sen-

sitive to the analyzed time interval before tipping."

"The research makes a convincing case that the AMOC is approaching a tipping point based on a robust, physically based early warning indicator," said Tim Lenton, director of the University of Exeter's Global Systems Institute. "What it cannot and does not say is how close the tipping point [is], because... there is insufficient data to make a statistically reliable estimate of that."

"We have to plan for the worst," added Lenton, who was not involved in the Dutch study. "We should invest in collecting relevant data and improving estimation of how close a tipping point is, improving assessment of what its impacts would be, and getting pre-prepared for how we could best manage and adapt to those impacts if they start

to unfold."

Stefan Rahmstorf—who leads the Earth Systems Analysis department at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research in Germany and was not part of the new study—called the research "a major advance in AMOC stability science."

"The new study adds significantly to the rising concern about an AMOC collapse in the not-too-distant future," Rahmstorf told the Associated Press. "We will ignore this at our peril."

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# Local Gunmaker Aiming For Insurrectionist Market?

NEWINGTON, N.H.—Gun manufacturer Sig Sauer, one of the area’s largest employers, recently launched a new advertising campaign for a five-year old product. The ominous tone of the ad suggests that, for the company’s marketing team, civil discord equals profit.

Dubbed the “M400 TREAD,” the semi-automatic firearm is yet another knockoff of the Colt AR-15—dubbed “America’s Rifle” by the NRA. TREAD is shorthand, of course, for “Don’t Tread on Me.” About 20 million of these generic murdersticks are already in circulation. Adding a few tens of thousands more with Sig Sauer’s logo probably won’t matter much—except, of course, to any individuals who might be “directly impacted” by them.

What’s new—and, frankly, startling—about Sig Sauer’s advertising campaign is how directly it states its premise: someday, destiny may call upon you—presuming you’re a brave and stalwart patriot—to shoot and kill any number of U.S. soldiers, sailors, Marines, Coast Guardsmen,

state or local cops, or, for all we know, members of your local homeowners association.

The world may be going to hell—i.e., your neighbors may not look exactly like you—but not to worry. For under \$900, you, too, can strut around wielding seven pounds of black rifle badassery. And if some blue-helmeted UN punk gives you any guff, your magazine holds 30 rounds of the same 5.56 mm NATO ammunition he’s got. Now it’s just a question of who’s got better body armor.

The ad was apparently posted to Sig Sauer’s official YouTube channel in late January. Titled “The New Face of Freedom,” it was viewed more than half a million times in its first three weeks. And no wonder: the ad’s production values are first-rate. Its various elements work together in harmony. The concept is so fully realized we nearly saluted.

**Scene:** A dark night, a full moon partially obscured by cloud. In the background, a sailing ship docked in a harbor, evoking the Boston Tea



In a screenshot from a new ad from local manufacturer Sig Sauer, a patriotic homeowner stands ready and able to defeat the tyranny of the Federal Government—or, we presume, the Historical District Commission—thanks to his ownership of a SIG M400 TREAD.

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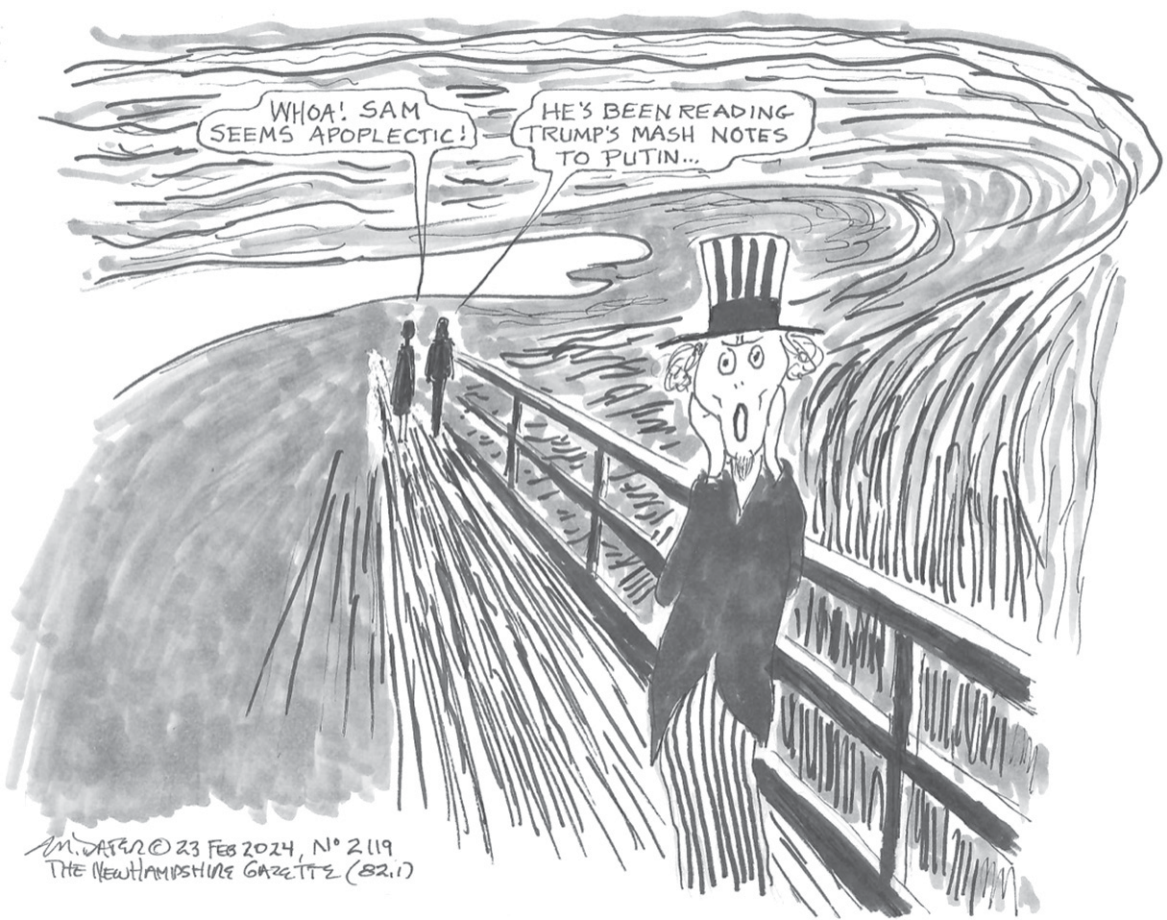
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## LEGENDARY ACTS IN AN INTIMATE THEATER

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Photo Credit: Sydney Bilodeau/Photography SydneyBPhoto.com



Party. **Foreground:** Deadly serious looking man with a beard. In his left hand he holds a lantern aloft. In his right is a flintlock rifle. **Soundtrack:** a muffled drumbeat like a rapidly beating heart. **Voiceover, [deep baritone throughout]:** “As Americans, we have always despised tyranny.”

**Scene:** A dimly-lit yellow “Don’t Tread On Me” flag, with coiled rattlesnake, fading to a stubble-bearded man wearing a tricorn hat. A torch is in his right hand, a musket in his left. Fade to another snake flag, this time depicting Benjamin Franklin’s “Unite or Die” propaganda cartoon. **Voiceover:** “Our freedoms, cast on altar of sacrifice, were born from a desire to unite.”

**Scene:** Parade ground at night, lit by bonfire. A standing soldier in red-trimmed uniform holds a flintlock at port arms. **Soundtrack:** Dramatic rising tone. **Voiceover:** “Those freedoms have been challenged before, yet they have stood the test of time.”

**Scene:** A man clad in jeans, flannel shirt, and ball cap, in front of a ranch-style porch, holding an M400 TREAD. **Voiceover:** “Today, our freedom is once again in question, and its future is not promised. To those who would restrict our free-

dom, we say only this... SHALL. NOT. BE. INFRINGED.”

During each of the last four words of this grand finale, an ominous bass drum beats once, as the previously-seen faces flash by.

YouTube gives out Works Awards to the “most effective and creative advertising campaigns” on the site. If this ad doesn’t win one, we’ll know the game was rigged. Should that happen, will Sig Sauer sue? Or just hand out M400s to the workforce and march on... wherever?

Unsurprisingly, many viewers have been inspired to comment:

@austinellis7465 wrote, “Bald eagles driving nascars while drinking budweiser just flew out of my goosebumps.”

@HyperboreanJihad was less enthusiastic, writing, “Now how quickly is this gonna explode or some other catastrophic malfunction like your pistols[?]”

@dakotawindom: “While you’re supplying the military with the .308s they’ll use to kill us. Nice.”

@Shannonmm: “This is a Swiss company advertising a weapon using staples of American history. This is the most American thing I’ve seen today[.]”

**Veterans Walk for Peace Starts April 24**  
This just in from New Hampshire Peace Action:

“In the tradition and spirit of the many wonderful long-distance walks for peace, Veterans For Peace has initiated a National Project to begin April 27, 2024 and walk from Augusta, Maine, to arrive in Washington, D.C. in July.

“This walk is dedicated to the memory of Daniel Ellsberg, the man who released the Pentagon Papers and exposed the lies that Americans were being told about the Vietnam War. Dan spent nearly every waking hour of the next five decades working for peace and trying to prevent nuclear war.

“Walkers, donations, and partners are all needed! Please visit <https://peacewalk2024.org/> for more information.”

We understand the walkers are expected to cross over the Memorial Bridge into Portsmouth on May 7th.

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**To the Reader Who Left a Phone Message on Feb. 14th**  
We inadvertently erased your message and phone number. Sorry for the ineptitude. Please call again.

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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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**The Alleged News®**  
*from page one*

**Big Oil, Plastics Industry Led 'Campaign of Deception' to Push Recycling Fraud**  
by Olivia Rosane

The petrochemical industry—including major oil companies like ExxonMobil—knew for decades that recycling was not a sustainable solution to the problem of plastic waste, yet continued to promote it in order to avoid regulation and deceive consumers into continuing to buy and use their products, a report released February 15th by the Center for Climate Integrity reveals.

The report, titled "The Fraud of Plastic Recycling: How Big Oil and the Plastics Industry Deceived the Public for Decades and Caused the Plastic Waste Crisis," includes newly disclosed industry documents proving that companies and trade groups knew that plastics could not be recycled indefinitely in the 1980s and 90s even as they launched a massive public relations campaign to sell voters and policymakers on the process.

"This evidence shows that many of the same fossil fuel companies that knew and lied for decades about how their products cause climate change have also known and lied to the public about plastic recycling,"

Center for Climate Integrity (CCI) president Richard Wiles said in a statement. "The oil industry's lies are at the heart of the two most catastrophic pollution crises in human history."

Plastic pollution is a major environmental and public health crisis. If current trends continue, plastics are expected to outweigh fish in the ocean by 2050, and the toxic fumes from plastic production facilities and incineration are a major environmental justice hazard for frontline communities. Humans in general also ingest an estimated credit-card's worth of plastic each week, with unknown but potentially serious health impacts.

Recycling is often touted as a solution for keeping plastic out of the environment, but this has proven to be ineffective and insufficient: More than 90 percent of the plastics disposed of between 1950 and 2015 were either burnt, sent to landfills, or dumped into the environment. There are several technical and economic reasons why plastic recycling doesn't work at scale. Plastics lose quality as they are recycled and can only really be reused once or potentially twice. The decline in quality also means that recycled plastics are more likely to leach toxins add-

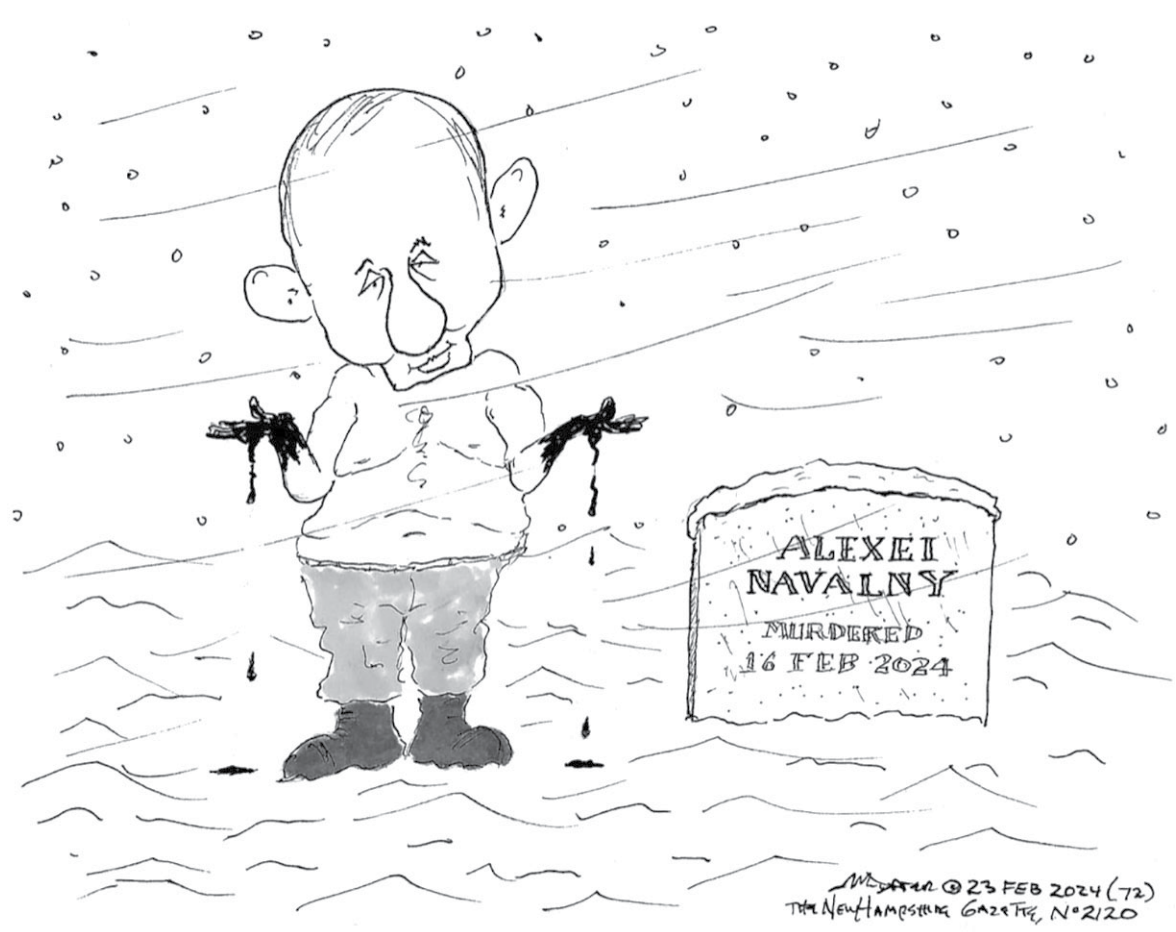


Illustration © 23 FEB 2024 (72)  
THE NEW HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE, N° 2120

ed during production or picked up from other waste items. Economically, it is cheaper to produce new plastics than recycle older ones, and only two types of plastic—PET and HDPE—actually attract markets that will recycle them.

The industry has long been aware of these limitations. In 1969, the American Chemical Society declared, "It is always possible that scientists and engineers will learn to recycle or dispose of wastes at a profit, but that does not seem likely to happen soon on a broad basis."

Despite this, petrochemical companies and their trade groups began to push plastic recycling in the 1980s and 90s as a response to growing public concern over plastic waste, and the threat that this would lead to bans on plastic products.

"No doubt about it, legislation is the single most important reason why we are looking at recycling," Wayne Pearson, the executive director of industry front group the

Plastics Recycling Foundation and a DuPont marketing director, said in 1988.

The plastics industry used various strategies to sell the public on recycling, according to the report. These included: funding front groups to promote recycling; running ad and PR campaigns; investing in recycling research to convince the public that it was taking action; setting unrealistic internal recycling goals; writing educational material promoting recycling to school children; advocating for "advanced recycling," a term for breaking plastics down to chemical components that can theoretically be reused but are not in practice; and claiming, against evidence, that recycling can be part of a "circular economy."

CCI provides new evidence that, while the industry was employing these strategies, it was simultaneously aware of recycling's limitations.

For example, a report from the Vinyl Institute trade group conclud-

ed in 1986 that "recycling cannot be considered a permanent solid waste solution, as it merely prolongs the time until an item is disposed of."

In 1994, Exxon Chemical Vice President Irwin Levowitz told employees of the American Plastics Council that "we are committed to the activities, but not committed to the results."

CCI argued that the petrochemical industry should face legal consequences for its "campaign of deception" similar to suits brought against tobacco and opioid companies.

"When corporations and trade groups know that their products pose grave risks to society, and then lie to the public and policymakers about it, they must be held accountable," Wiles said. "Accountability means stopping the lying, telling the truth, and paying for the damage

**The Alleged News®**  
*to page seven*



On an unnaturally balmy Saturday before Valentine's Day, random passersby and mission-oriented shoppers alike took a moment to check out, or sit next to, the City's heart-decorated Holiday Tree.

**Murph's Fortnightly Quote**

"People ask me sometimes... 'When will there be enough women on the court?' And my answer is: 'When there are nine.'"  
— Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933-2020)  
Associate Justice of the Supreme Court

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**Anonymous Chastisement**  
[To the Editor:]

I am a longtime subscriber to the *Gazette*, living in the Boston area. It's been disappointing to me that the *Gazette* has ignored the gravity of the violent atrocities committed by Hamas on October 7th, but now that you're giving a platform for and even cheering on alternative facts, it's time for me to say goodbye to the *Gazette*.

In your January 12th edition, you published Will Thomas's letter. Thomas criticized the *Union Leader* for publishing a letter which mentioned various references to the violent Hamas attacks without requiring the letter writer to list their sources. Thomas engaged in verbal gymnastics to somehow try to convey that the attacks were not as serious as stated (see *Washington Post* January 21, 2024 about the growing "birther" movement of October 7th deniers). Thomas closed with "Perhaps, in the future, the *Leader* may wish to require letter-writers to list sources where they obtained their sources and not print hearsay." Your only reply: "Perhaps pigs will fly."

Sir, you know that Hamas slaughtered, raped, and beheaded on that day. It has been reported by countless reliable sources, and there is video. When you print misleading letters from Trumpers you set them straight. You could have asked Mr. Thomas why he was employing six paragraphs disingenuously to assert that Hamas did not slaughter, rape, and butcher on October 7th. No—you gave him space and endorsed his letter.

Apparently, you decry alternative facts, as I do, when they are used regarding January 6th election interference, and other facts meant to uplift Donald Trump by his cult, but you promote them when offered in support of your worldview about Israel.

I won't renew my subscription, and I'm sending this letter to some of your top advertisers to urge them to consider withdrawing their support in the future because your standards of fair Journalism are eroding in favor of your perspective.

Signed,  
a former reader and supporter

[Postmarked Boston, Mass.]  
cc: Will Thomas, N.H. Veterans for Peace; The Portsmouth Brewery; Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire; The Music Hall; Strawberry [sic] Banke

*Former Reader, aka Anonymous:  
Thank you for writing.*

*Without wishing to suggest that we endorse the common but idiotic stance that a given position has inherent merit because it falls in between two conflicting points of view, we'll note that we have now achieved symmetry on this issue.*

*Our previous paper, published February 9th, included a letter from a reader—one who was kind and brave enough to sign his name—saying he was "very disappointed in the New Hampshire Gazette for not taking the genocide being perpetrated against Palestinians as seriously as is warranted."*

*Between that prior letter and this one, it might appear that this newspaper treats with insufficient gravity both the atrocities committed, and the sufferings borne, by both sides of this conflict. Please be aware that we hold ourselves under no obligation to report or comment on every atrocity committed on this planet. If we tried, we'd never have time to do anything else.*

*We criticize Israel for committing atrocities because the U.S. is complicit in its actions, footing a goodly part of the bill.*

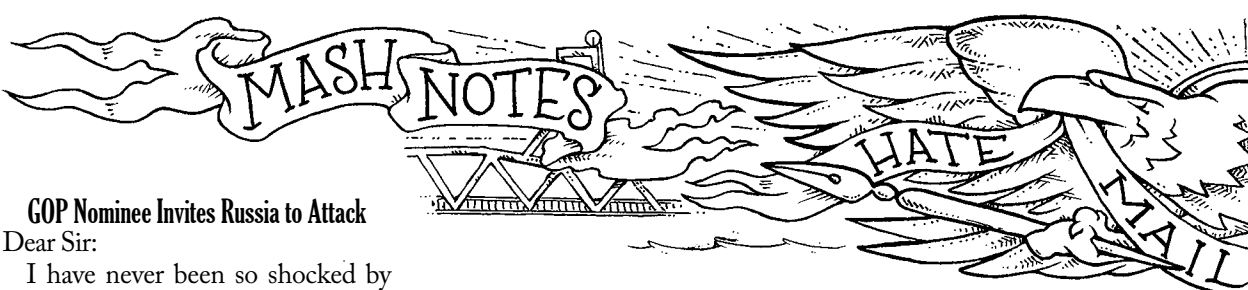
*You write, "Sir, you know that Hamas slaughtered, raped, and beheaded on that day." Please don't try to put words in our mouth. We know no such thing. Less than a week after Hamas' attack, the Israeli government began walking back the beheaded baby allegation. Did you learn nothing from the first Gulf War?*

*You seem upset by our admittedly off-hand comment about airborne pigs. We were not mocking the dead. That wise-crack was directed at the letters page of the Union Leader.*

*Pardon us, too, for seeing in your attempt to alienate our advertisers, a reflection of the disproportionate lethality of the Israeli response to Hamas' attack.*

*We have no expectation that any of this will change your mind. You probably won't even read it. We merely state these facts for the record.*

*The Editor*



**GOP Nominee Invites Russia to Attack**  
Dear Sir:

I have never been so shocked by the comments by a politician as I was today reading Donald Trump's comments at a rally in South Carolina yesterday. Trump related a tale about a NATO ally asking him if he would defend them if attacked by Russia. He responded by saying no because they are delinquent on their payments to NATO. Then he unbelievably went on to say, "In fact I would encourage them to do whatever the hell they want."

This is the most dangerous, anti-democracy, pro-totalitarian comment ever uttered by a former President and now candidate for President. How dare he announce to Putin that he encourages him to attack our allies while he would stand by and do nothing? How dare he put all of our long standing allies at great risk, who came to our aid after 9/11 by invoking for the first time in history Article 5 of the NATO Charter?

This comment alone, even above all of Trump's other legal problems, should disqualify him from ever holding any public office. This comment is an insult to all military members past and present who have served to protect our nation and our allies from the threat posed by men like Putin and his Soviet predecessors. Trump's words clearly demonstrate how existential a threat he is to our nation and the world.

Rich DiPentima, LTC, USAF, Ret.  
Portsmouth, N.H.

*Rich:*  
*That certainly was an eye-popping remark from a former Commander-in-Chief. We expect it will live in infamy—or until he tops it with something even more unbinged.*

*What seems most bizarre to us, though, is that his party now seems to be fully embracing treason. As the kids say, it's a bold strategy.*

*The Editor*

**Trump Shows His True Colors**  
To the Editor:

Once again, D.J. Trump shows his true colors.

The Republicans and Dems came together in the Senate to craft a bill providing comprehensive border security that would have solved the disarray at our southern border. It contained almost everything Republicans wanted. It was paired with aid to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan.

Then, Trump stepped in. He told Republican senators not to vote for their bill because it would look like a victory for Biden and would take away a Republican issue.

To heck with our allies and resolving the Southern Border. They did as he said for fear of retribution for daring to put country above Trump!

But the Maga crowd won't see it—they can only see red.

Michael Frandzel  
Portsmouth, N.H.

*Michael:*  
*They're all hoping that if they show him sufficient loyalty, they'll be issued their very own jackboots. Or gold-colored, Trump-labeled sneakers.*

*The Editor*

—==—  
**Give 'Em Hell, Joe!**

Dear Editor,  
On March 7th, President Biden will deliver this year's State of the Union address to Congress. On the chance this might be the last one, given that Congress and the court system as we know it would most likely be dissolved a year from now—assuming a certain Slouching Beast "wins" again in November, of course—it would behoove the president to cut to the chase. Forget the usual uplifting economic statistics, the feel-good introductions of heroes and patriots in the gallery, the chest-thumping over America's

"greatness" and "the strength of our democracy" and just tell it like it is.

In a word or three, it ain't good. Not by a long shot. But that won't happen. The Democratic Party, bless its little soul, refuses to accept that the rules of the game have changed, and continues to operate as if it's 1954, not 2024, which means we'll get the usual blather associated with every other SOTU. And that's a terrible disservice to the majority of the country that instinctively knows we're in deep doo-doo.

If there's one jaw-dropping fact about America in the past 10 years, it's the speed with which fascism and its acceptance by one of our two major political parties, now nothing more than a pathetic motley cult, has moved into the mainstream of our politics. And that one guy, a bloviating, inherently stupid, lying, criminal sociopath, with the help of this cult, has managed to find and take advantage of each and every loophole in our legal system to advance his personal ambition, while wrecking a 240-year-old democracy, is nothing short of stunning. Were my parents, both World War II veterans, alive to see this, they wouldn't believe it. Most days I still can't, even as I've lived it for the past nine years.

So Joe, er, Mr. President, save us all the nonsense. On March 7th, let 'em have it. In the end, it may not make any difference. If there are enough stupid idiots out there willing to bring the whole thing down on November 5th, at least you can say you went down with your middle finger held high.

John C. Fidor  
Richmond, Va.

*John,*  
*Few things we'd rather see than Joe getting in touch with his inner Harry Truman and "giving 'em hell."*  
*The Editor*

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**Legally Overturning an Election?**  
To the Editor:  
We know many Republican law-makers fear and loathe Donald Trump even as they publicly “support” him. Why? Because his endorsement could make or break their grip on power in the general election.

But, once the election is over, the President Elect loses that cudgel. In fact, from November to January, his power becomes limited—making him vulnerable.

How vulnerable?  
Donald Trump’s court calendar could hold the key. Suppose SCOTUS chooses this transition period to rule PEOTUS ineligible to serve? Or suppose he is convicted of multiple felonies and sentenced to serious hard time prior to taking the oath in January?

The result? All those disgruntled Republicans who rode Trump’s coat tails to reelection are in—and the man who would be King is *out*.

Pretty sneaky, you sly Republican devils!

Rick Littlefield  
Barrington, N.H.

Rick:  
That scenario is so bent it seems almost inevitable.

The Editor

=====  
**A Lathered-Up Horsey Metaphor**

Dear Editor,

Paul Revere comes riding up to a newspaper storefront, jumps off his sweaty steed, bounds into the editorial office and screams, “The British are coming, the British are coming.”

A newspaper employee politely notifies him, “We must decline to publish your message.” “Why, pray tell?”, Revere asks. Overhearing the conversation, the opinion department

editor proceeds to explain to him, “You reside outside our readership area, for one thing. For another, your opinion piece must be exclusive to our paper, and I see from your horse’s condition you have been spreading this exact same message far and wide before you arrived here.”

Mr. Revere looks in astonishment at the editor and several thoughts cross his mind. “Either the editor himself has a redcoat mentality and doesn’t mind that the British are coming; or the editor is a Pharisee journalist who believes it is more important to check off the proper boxes than it is to inform and educate the public; or, perhaps, the editor secretly hates freedom of speech and press.”

“I wonder which it is,” he muses, as he grabs the saddle pommel with his left hand, throws himself up onto his horse and gallops off. “Maybe all three.”

Kimball Shinkoskey  
Woods Cross, Utah  
Kimball:  
We’d offer a sage comment, but we’re too bewildered.  
The Editor

=====  
**Is the Party in a Pickle?**

Dear Editor:

The Democratic Party is in a pickle. Concocted by Democrats long departed, their present dilemma has been 60 years in the making and it is this: many rank and file Democrats today are uncertain that Joe Biden (because of his age and perhaps other factors) can weather the taxing responsibilities of the presidency for another full term. Adding to their anxiety is the prospect of a Kamala Harris administration. I recall the doubts and misgivings when Biden (fulfilling his promise to choose a woman as his running mate), chose Harris.

Hindsight (as we know) is 20/20. May I opine, this is what happens when you substitute race and gender for such attributes as ability, qualifications, competence, aptitude, etc., (“the right stuff”).

Six decades ago (I was active duty Navy then) Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity were introduced across the land. Liberal thinkers of the time believed that discriminatory practices could be corrected, and the playing fields levelled, by providing special conditions (advantages) for women and minorities.

In the process of “opening doors of opportunity” for some but not all people, one important factor got overlooked. “You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong,” at least not without paying a heavy price.

We have witnessed, over decades and several generations, the dumbing down of America, the loss of expertise, the lowering of standards throughout our institutions; education, parenting, production, things that were once considered the backbone of America no longer work, due in part to advancing less qualified men and women and passing over more qualified men and women, in the pursuit of the elusive precept, “equality.”

To the Democratic Party I must submit, you are reaping only what you have sown. As expressed so well in an old Portuguese Proverb; “the fruit of the tree of errors.” The chickens of inclusion and diversity, I am afraid, are coming home to roost.

However, all is not lost. The Republican Party (a.k.a. the “Trump Cult”) has made its choice, raw power over governing, and at any cost, and nothing shy of an Act of God can deter them.

That leaves the fate of our country in the hands of the only real political party left, the Democratic Party. You must make a better choice.

It’s time for a leap of faith. I well

recall John F. Kennedy’s well-chosen words in 1961—“The torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans...”

Mr. President, it’s time to pass the torch again. Please consider choosing a different running mate for your second term, someone from a generation younger than ours, someone with a fresh, lively vision for the future but capable of tackling the agonizing problems of the present. We must not surrender this beautiful land our fathers bequeathed us, or our nation’s future, or the fate of democracy itself, to men who lie, threaten and defraud.

Were it my choice to make (given our present circumstances), I would name Hakeem Jeffries (six-term Congressman from New York) as my running mate. He has shown an extraordinary ability to think on his feet, he is especially well-spoken, articulates complicated matters in simple, understandable terms, and he projects the characteristics of a true statesman.

We have arrived at a fork in the road, Mr. President, and as Yogi Berra was wont to say, we should “take it.”

David L. Snell  
Franklin, N.C.

David:  
Yes, there’s a risk in sticking with Harris—as there is with Biden, for that matter. Not as great though, we suspect, as the risk of jettisoning her at this juncture.  
The Editor

=====  
**Responsible Republicans: an Oxymoron**

To the Editor:

This January, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mike Johnson, led 60 members of his party to the border with Mexico. They clamored that immigration was out of control and something had to be done. Meanwhile a bipartisan group in the Senate crafted legislation to address the problem. Legislation that gave the GOP 90 percent of what they demanded. Then Donald Trump told his party don’t pass anything so nothing passed. Apparently, immigration is not a problem the GOP wants to fix.

Neither is aid to Israel, Ukraine or Taiwan as far as the GOP House is concerned. They want to cut off arms

to Ukraine and let Russia take over all of Ukraine. Donald Trump is now inviting Russia to attack NATO after that.

You may not care about Ukraine or NATO countries, but China is watching and sees America will not stand by its allies if Trump becomes president or the GOP follows his orders. Taiwan makes chips for almost every phone, computer, car and anything electronic you own. If China takes over Taiwan, they will have a triangle hold on this country and Europe. You witnessed what the chip shortage did to the auto industry when the country came out of Covid. That was temporary, China could make that permanent.

This November vote to prevent that from happening.

Walter Hamilton  
Portsmouth, N.H.

Walter:  
One Republican administration after another greased the skids for U.S. corporations so they could ship manufacturing jobs overseas.

Those knuckleheads can’t see beyond their noses, which are buried in quarterly earnings reports.

The Editor

=====  
**Surely They Can’t Be Serious**

To the Editor:

If additional evidence is needed that the Republicans are no longer a serious political party, their torpedoing of the compromise immigration/Ukraine/Israel aid bill provides it. The bill represented a several weeks long bipartisan effort to negotiate a compromise between Republicans who demanded a strong border control bill and Democrats who sought aid to the Ukraine and Israel. According to most accounts, the bill was heavily weighted toward Republican priorities for border security. Despite the bipartisan agreement, Trump announced his opposition to the bill and Republican support evaporated. Trump and MAGA Republicans preferred to preserve immigration as a campaign weapon rather than solving an ongoing, festering problem.

MAGA Republicans have either

to next page

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

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

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

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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.

For more information, contact:  
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**Mash Notes, Hate Mail, &c.**  
*from page five*

forgotten or never realized that the major purpose of political parties in a democracy is to engage in governance intended to improve the welfare of citizens. Effective governance always involves bargaining and compromise with opposing views. Compromise has always been anathema to Trump who seems to view it as weakness. The would-be dictator has consolidated control over the Republican Party so that there are no longer Republican values or policies, only the incoherent fever dreams of an egotistical ex-president. Trump and MAGA Republicans have replaced rational, democratic governance with a relentless quest for self-seeking power based on lies and supported by absurd and harebrained conspiracy theories. The degeneration of the MAGA Republican Party has left them bereft of strategic or moral vision that would benefit public welfare.

Republican rejection of the bipartisan border control bill is cynical hypocrisy. Alleviation of chaos and suffering at the border was sacrificed in exchange for political expediency. The failure to continue aid to the Ukraine is a moral and strategic failure. The immediate approval of Ukrainian aid is imperative. Without it, Ukrainian lives and the destruction of Ukrainian cities will continue as Putin's aggression persists. The lessons of history from Hitler's takeover of the Sudetenland to Putin's aggression in Georgia and the Crimea teach that mollification of belligerent authoritarians only serves to whet their appetite for further expansion. Furthermore, the denial of aid will tarnish the reputation of the U.S. as a loyal and trusted ally and weaken support of critical European allies for U.S. policies.

Robert D. Russell, Ph.D.  
Harrisburg, Pa.

Robert:

*Not to get all cynical or anything, but what shocks us most these days is the number of people who say they're*



*shocked when members of a party that's been lying for years turn out to be liars. They want power and money, not necessarily in that order, and they'll say or do damn near anything to get their hands on either.*

The Editor

**The View From Cologne**

To the Editor:

Many of my European friends view, both with anxiety and in total disbelief, that Donald Trump will most likely be the Republican presidential candidate and even perhaps become president again. They ask how is it possible that such a person, who probably belongs more in a psychiatric hospital or perhaps even in prison, may actually return to the White House? They say this is the same person who nearly destroyed a proud and long-standing democracy and its institutions, and yet, many decent Americans seem not to care so much about his incompetence and his numerous criminal activities.

Now Trump states that he will not protect some of the NATO countries (those he says that are unwilling to pay), and will allow Putin to do whatever he wants with them. How can one be so ignorant? In a recent propaganda interview with the naïve American journalist Tucker Carlson, Putin made it clear who he regards as his real enemy, namely the U.S.A.! In that interview Putin clearly stated not only that the CIA and the U.S. are behind Ukraine's aggression towards Russia, but also that it is the "U.S. and its satellites" that are responsible for most of the conflicts around the globe. Such claims make it evidently clear that it is the U.S.A. who is the prime and ultimate target of Russia. Any sensible politician should then realize that it would be absolutely stupid to forfeit European allies who can help in containing Putin's imperialistic dreams.

My friends find it totally incomprehensible that, at a time of numerous international conflicts, so many

Americans are willing to vote for a person who lacks the ability to think and act rationally. They sincerely hope that a sufficient number of sensible U.S. citizens will turn out on election day to guarantee that neither Trump, nor the Trumpist radicals, succeed in winning, which would only endanger peace and democracy, not only in Europe, but also in America itself. I can only strongly agree with their assessment.

Dr. Imre Somssich  
Cologne, Germany  
Imre:

*We long ago lost the capability to imagine the U.S. as an unalloyed force for good in the world. Our foreign policy, like our domestic policy, seem determined to serve the status quo—which is what got us to our present state of inequality and discontent.*

*That said, Putin's a vicious criminal, and a whole lotta elected Republicans probably belong in jail.*

The Editor

**GOP Up To Their Old Tricks**

Dear Editor:

From the White House Historical Association: "The Iranian hostage crisis contributed greatly to Jimmy Carter's loss of the presidency in the 1980 election. Americans had lost confidence in their leader." Isn't this what the Republican House, under Majority Leader Mike Johnson, wants to pull off now, going into recess early without funding the Ukrainian fight against Putin? The dastardly Republicans, at candidate Trump's order, weaken President Biden's hand.

In Carter's reelection campaign-time, Republican manipulation wasn't revealed until after the fact (hostages released post-election, helping Reagan win, as calculated). Now the hamstringing is overt. The Republicans have no shame, also are a most manipulatable lot of meek mice. What a disgusting and democracy-attacking combination.

Lynn Rudmin Chong  
Sanbornton, N.H.

Lynn:

*Having watched Democrats get punched in the face for the past half cen-*

*tury, we're beginning to wonder if the time might be near when they might consider responding in kind.*

The Editor

**Sununu Joins Border War**

Dear Sir:

Republicans in the New Hampshire Legislature have approved Governor Sununu's request for \$850,000 to support sending members of the N.H. National Guard to the southern border. This is nothing more than a political stunt by Sununu to strengthen his status with MAGA Republicans, and will do nothing to address the border situation.

It is interesting that N.H. Republicans are willing to waste almost a million dollars on a political boondoggle while they refuse to support funding for public education, environmental protection, health care and other needed services right here at home. This money, which is being sold as border protection, comes after the Republicans in the House of Representative refused to take up the border security bill passed by the Senate in a strong bipartisan vote.

If Sununu is so concerned about border security he might better pressure his Republicans in Congress to pass the comprehensive border security bill rather than waste N.H. taxpayer money and play into Trump's destructive agenda.

Rich DiPentima  
Portsmouth, N.H.

Rich:

*That's an excellent suggestion, and one we're sure the Governor would follow, if the state's well being was his top priority. Sadly, it looks like New Hampshire will be playing second fiddle to his run for President in 2028.*

The Editor

**In Support of Mamadou Dembele**

To the editor of the Portsmouth [sic] Gazette,

I was never a cigar smoker till I wandered into Federal Cigar on Market Street a few years ago.

An eclectic crew; from the knowledgeable staff, the part owner Jeremy, a smart character from Dorchester and the people that frequent the es-

tablishment keep me coming back.

My friends Murat, a neighbor on Sagamore; Jimmy, a restaurateur from York, Joe, a Manhattan transplant, Mike and his beautiful wife Kelly, Ray, a bridge operator, and Tony, a thoughtful parking attendant, all have life stories that make smoking a cigar in the basement watching Boston sports a lot fun.

If there was one man that represented the pulse of this establishment and this great seacoast town, it's Mamadou Dembele, aka Moose. Moose was one of the first guys that welcomed me to Portsmouth. His smile and energy were infectious. I'll never forget walking into the back room and being a little nervous. Moose got up and came over and introduced himself. He made me feel welcome.

Fast forward to last night. I watched a YouTube video about Moose and his attack next to Gilley's, my favorite hamburger joint in town. I'm heart broken. Moose was beat up. I wasn't there that day after Thanksgiving when it took place.

All I can say is I stand by this man. Yes he is Black. I didn't think this happened in New Hampshire. I know that sounds naive. I'm ashamed that this goes on in my backyard.

Moose is a gentle man. He is also a gentleman. If you ask anyone who knows him, they would tell you Moose is the polite guy that gets up to give his seat to a woman. It's obvious he was raised by good and educated parents. Moose is genuine. His actions speak loudly. He's conscientious and aware. He has those traits that you want in a friend. He's also smart and impeccably dressed. He's a banker downtown.

They say when you see something say something. Generally that's when you see a wrong. But not today. I see a right. I want to say Moose is the guy we need to stand up for today. Not because he's Black but because he's the guy that does right by everyone around him.

I want this town to know about Moose.

Thanksgiving 2023 he was attacked and beaten to the ground in front of Gilley's. He had two fractured bones. All violence has to stop!

Dave Hindle  
Portsmouth, N.H.

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# Smart Fish Don't Bite

For John Prados

Only the stupid ones who get caught,  
gutted, beheaded, filleted, and eaten  
fried or poached or boiled or broiled,  
pickled in brine, fed to porpoises raw  
at Sea World, canned for family pets.

The smart ones just keep swimming.  
You'll never meet an intelligent fish  
because they don't take the bait,  
though they never seem to go hungry.

The title of this poem is a sentence found  
on p.193 of *The Ghosts of Langley*:  
Into the CIA's Heart of Darkness by  
the late historian John Prados.

My friend Gary Metras loves to fish;  
ties his own flies, pulls on his waders  
and heads for his local river several  
times a week, rain or shine, year-round.  
Strictly catch-&-release. Lucky fish,  
but not very bright. He tells me  
he often catches the same fish  
multiple times. One of these days,  
the guy with the rod won't be so kind.

This is why we hear about the liars,  
hypocrites and crooks like Spiro Agnew,  
Richard Nixon, Jimmy Swaggart,  
Bernie Madoff, Sam Bankman-Fried,  
and all those other stupid fish who  
can't resist the bait. Ever wonder  
what the smart fish are up to,  
the ones you never hear about?



Gary Metras (pictured above) has  
long been active with Pioneer Val-  
ley Chapter 276 of Trout Unlim-  
ited; as both a poet and founder/  
editor/publisher of *Adastra Press*  
in Easthampton, Massachusetts, he  
is a fixture of New England liter-  
ature, and was *Ehrhart's* primary  
poetry publisher for over three de-  
cades.

# Where Did Our Local Papers Go?

by Jim Hightower

I no longer receive my local news-  
paper, the *Austin-American States-  
man*.

Oh, the paper still comes, but it's  
just paper, minus the news part—  
news that our community once  
counted on to keep up with local  
government doings, corporate she-  
nanigans, citizen actions, and other  
critical features of our city's demo-  
cratic life. What happened? Wall  
Street profiteers swept in a few years  
ago to conglomeratize, homogenize,  
and financialize, the *Statesman*.

It's now a money cog in the Gan-  
nett/USA Today chain of some 200  
major dailies that the syndicate  
seized. Indeed, Gannett itself is  
wholly owned by SoftBank, a Jap-  
anese hedge fund. Those distant  
bankers are not interested in local  
news, but in slashing news staffs to  
fatten their profits. In Austin alone,  
Softbank has cut two-thirds of  
the paper's journalists since taking  
over—and coverage of local stories  
has also plunged by two-thirds.

Interestingly, the *Statesman* re-  
cently ran a front-page piece about  
a local union protest by flight at-  
tendants demanding fair wages. On  
that same day, the paper also report-  
ed that Uber and Lyft drivers were  
striking in Austin. But wait—at the  
same time, the *Statesman* journalists  
were picketing right in front of the  
paper's office, protesting the greed  
of SoftBank/Gannett and the de-  
mise of local news. Curiously *States-  
man* editors did not consider this  
local news about our newspaper to  
be news, so they cravenly kept this  
important information from the  
people.

Austin was not alone in this news  
blackout by the chain's managers.  
Journalists at a dozen other Gan-  
nett papers—from Akron to South  
Bend—were picketing, yet, none of  
those papers ran a peep about their  
journalists' defense of local news.  
Nor did Gannett's flagship paper,  
*USA Today*, mention this nationwide  
union rebellion by its own journal-  
ists.

To support journalists and real  
journalism, go to [newsguild.org](http://newsguild.org).

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sociates. Contact Laura Ehrlich  
([Laura@jimhightower.com](mailto:Laura@jimhightower.com)) for  
more info.

## The Alleged News®

from page three

they've caused."

CCI vice president of legal and  
general counsel Alyssa Johl added:  
"Big Oil and the plastics industry's  
decades-long campaign to deceive  
the public about plastic recycling  
has likely violated laws designed  
to protect consumers and the pub-  
lic from corporate misconduct and  
pollution."

"Attorneys general and other  
officials should carefully consider  
the evidence that these companies  
defrauded the public and take ap-  
propriate action to hold them ac-  
countable," Johl said.

—==—

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—==—

## Waking the Sleeping Giant of the Low-Income Voting Bloc

Amidst all the nail-biting uncer-  
tainty over the 2024 election, one  
thing's for sure: turnout will be key.  
This week, the Poor People's  
Campaign announced plans to  
mobilize a potentially powerful yet  
often overlooked voting bloc: the 85  
million eligible voters who are poor  
or low-income.

The campaign has crunched the  
numbers and determined that if this

bloc voted at the same rate as high-  
er-income voters, they could sway  
elections in every state. But most  
voting drives and political candi-  
dates still ignore this segment of our  
society.

"The conventional wisdom—  
which isn't very wise—is that the  
poor don't care about voting," said  
Poor People's Campaign Policy  
Director Shailly Gupta Barnes at a  
February 5th press conference. "But  
that's just not true."

What's the biggest factor discour-  
aging poor and low-wage people  
from exercising this basic right?

"Political campaigns do not talk  
to them or speak to their issues," ex-  
plained campaign co-chair Bishop  
William J. Barber, II. "In our elec-  
tion cycles sometimes we have 15,  
20 debates for president. In 2020,  
not one of those—not 15 minutes—  
was given to raising questions about  
how the policies of that particular  
party or politician would impact  
poor and low-income people."

The Poor People's Campaign is  
planning 42 weeks of action aimed  
at pushing the concerns of poor  
and low-income people into the  
center of the 2024 political debate.  
The kick-off will be on March 2nd,  
with marches to state legislatures in  
32-plus states. A June 15th conver-  
gence at the U.S. Capitol will launch  
a wave of actions leading up to the  
party conventions and the Novem-  
ber election. Their goal: to mobilize  
15 million "infrequent" poor and

low-income voters.

Will politicians be listening? At  
the press conference, pollster Celin-  
da Lake ticked off one battleground  
state after another where even a  
small increase in poor and low-in-  
come voter participation could de-  
termine the election outcome. As  
one example, she pointed out that  
in Arizona, 40 percent of voters are  
low-wage and in 2020 the margin of  
victory was just 0.03 percent.

"You'd have to be a moron to not  
get this and most elected officials are  
not complete morons," Lake said.

What are some of the most  
pressing issues on the Poor People's  
Campaign agenda? The Institute for  
Policy Studies has just co-published  
campaign fact sheets for the nation  
and all 50 states with data on the  
interlocking problems that hit the  
poor hardest: poverty and inequality,  
systemic racism, ecological devastat-  
ion, and militarism. Several speak-  
ers at the recent press conference  
spoke about these problems from  
their own personal experiences.

"I'm tired of companies and bil-  
lionaires buying politicians who are  
pushing people deeper into poverty  
and debt," said Matthew Rosing, of  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania. "I've put up  
with the thankless toll of minimum  
wage retail jobs and back-breaking  
construction jobs in a state that has  
19 billionaires. And because of our  
flat tax, they pay the same state in-  
come tax rate as I do."

Linda Burns, a former Amazon

worker, has struggled for basic la-  
bor rights and decent health care  
benefits. She was a supporter of the  
valiant union drive at the Bessemer,  
Alabama facility that Amazon even-  
tually crushed through harsh intimid-  
ation tactics. Burns says she was  
fired for her union activity, which  
led to the loss of her health benefits  
right before a needed surgery relat-  
ed to a workplace injury. Today she  
works 16 hours a day as a caregiver.

"I've worked too hard to have  
nothing," said Burns. "We have to  
stand up for our rights."

Veronica Burton spoke about the  
economic gulf in her communi-  
ty of Beloit, Wisconsin. A woman  
who lives "around the corner" from  
her is a billionaire while Burton is  
struggling to pay bills in the face of  
multiple rent increases and the low  
wages she earns at an understaffed  
child care center.

"If you want to know what's  
wrong with our society, listen to the  
babies," Burton said. While dealing  
with her own problems, she often  
finds herself trying to help parents of  
the children under her care. "We've  
had mothers unenroll their children  
because they can't afford their asth-  
ma medicine," she said.

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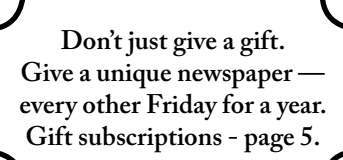


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