

The Fortnightly Rant

Out of the Mouths of Aristocrats

Let's conduct a thought experiment. We'll begin by running down a checklist presciently provided by Charles Dickens in his novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Are these the best of times? Yes, if your happiness hinges on being able to eat a pizza encrusted in 24-karat gold. Industry Kitchen in New York will fix you right up for a mere \$2,000.

Are these the worst of times? Yes, if you're diabetic and you can't afford to pay twice as much for insulin as you did five years ago.

Is this the age of wisdom? Yes, at least it can appear to be, considering how easy it is to research things like \$2,000 gold pizzas on the internet.

Is this the age of foolishness?

Look around. We rest our case.

Pointing out similarities between the U.S. today and 18th century France is depressingly easy—and not just because those were the days when Donald Trump's household furnishings were last in vogue.

Gilded late-baroque frippery may have given way to less gaudy, more practical furniture design; but human nature hasn't really changed that much. There is a point at which even the most patient citizenry will decide that it's taken about as much abuse as it is going to stand.

We, as a nation, were racing towards that point, when, a week ago today, Donald Trump knuckled under and ended his government shutdown. Sadly, we are in an era distinguished by a non-stop, rapid-fire succession of stupidities. It's conceivable that in another week, the longest government shutdown in history will be nearly forgotten. Certain things about it, though, deserve to be remembered.

Paramount among them, of course, is how powerful people can be—flight attendants and air traffic

controllers, in this case—when they decide to stand together. They're the ones who got this done.

The most substantive benefit to come out of Trump's capitulation was that 800,000 workers, and their family members, could start repairing the damage. The whole exercise was utterly pointless, but at least things are getting better, not worse, for a couple of million people. They matter, so that matters.

Least important, but still of some value, was the visceral pleasure of seeing a pompous buffoon eat a very large crow. Thrills are thrills, even the cheap ones.

Most illuminating were the comments made by our illustrious nouveau aristocrats. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, for example seemed confused when he was told that some of the 20,000 workers furloughed by his Department were going to local food banks. Ross, who goes around town wearing custom-made red embroidered slippers costing \$600 a pair, said "I don't really quite understand why ... there's no real reason why they shouldn't be able to get a loan."

His confusion is all the more perplexing since Ross achieved his exalted position by demonstrating economic savvy. His modus operandi has been to buy up struggling companies, fire the union workers, loot their pension funds, and cut the wages of whoever's left to do twice the work. Notable among his many properties was the Sago Mine, where an explosion killed a dozen miners in 2006.

Where in the world do these people even come from? They spring spontaneously from an economy which—anything but free and market-based—is in fact hand-tailored by lobbyists and think-tank geniuses, all in the employ of the already



wealthy, specifically so that it can create a man like hedge fund manager Ken Griffith.

Probably the least-homeless man in the world, Griffith just paid \$238 million for an apartment in Manhattan. That may sound like a lot of money, but it amounts to only one-fifth of his income for 2014. In addition to those new digs on Central Park, he's got four places in Palm Beach, for which he paid a total of \$130 million. Then there's the house near Buckingham Palace—that cost him \$122 million. Somehow, after spending half a billion dollars on places to stay out of the rain, he still finds enough money under the couch cushions to contribute to the Koch Brothers Freedom Fund. Freedom from what? From taxation, of course.

William Jennings Bryan used to say, "No one can earn a million dollars honestly." Adjusted for inflation, that would be \$30 million today.

According to Bryan, then, Griffith's real estate portfolio is evidence of at least 16 crimes. What's next on the agenda for this global criminal class?

"You get a pink slip! And you get a pink slip! Everybody gets a pink slip!" You think the government shutdown was something? You just wait until *everybody* gets fired!

Kevin Roose, of *The New York Times*, just spent a week "mingling with corporate executives at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos." He reported January 25th that although they will "never admit it in public ... many of your bosses want machines to replace you as soon as possible" because they "crave the fat profit margins automation can deliver."

It makes perfect sense. Why would they hire smelly, trouble-

some humans they have to pay, even if only a pittance? Of course they would prefer to buy sleek, uncomplaining machines instead. Once again, we hear the voice of Emilio, Sage of Daniel Street: "If the robot makes it, let the robot buy it."

An aggravated public can become a motivated public. Maybe that 70 percent marginal tax rate isn't out of



reach. @Cmdrblogface suggests that all it needs is a little marketing magic: "It's time to change the name from 'high marginal tax rates' to 'Guillotine Insurance'."

Anyone finding that last gag offensive can spare us their pearl-clutching, by the way. This is New Hampshire—"Live Free or Die." General Stark lifted our state motto from the Jacobins, who coined it to celebrate storming the Bastille. The *jeton* shown above is proof—"Vivre Libre Ou Mourir."

The Alleged News®

Will no one deliver us from these meddlesome billionaires?

It was not our intention originally to devote this whole page to mocking, deriding, and belittling billionaires. You can blame Howard Schultz—he made us do it.

Under ordinary circumstances we would pay no attention to anyone who brags about knowing real estate but tries to sell burnt coffee at high prices in this town on a corner by the bus stop where the panhandlers hang out.

In this case, though, to our deep chagrin, said idiot is threatening to run for President—as an independent candidate. The obvious and inevitable result, unless he's dissuaded, will be to split the opposition and re-elect the incumbent idiot.

Two idiots, no waiting—and, apparently, no escape.

This is the sort of catastrophe-in-waiting which demonstrates the necessity of ruthlessly crushing

bad ideas at their first appearance.

Decades ago some think-tank hero came up with the idea of arguing that the government should be run like a business. Our hero's intention—dollars to donuts it was a man—would not have been to assure fiscal prudence and thereby promote the general welfare. To the contrary, it was anything but.

His primary purpose in conjuring up that false but facile analogy was to put in the minds of the most gullible third of the public a semi-plausible excuse for the government to lower spending on public services and reduce high-bracket tax rates. He was also trying to justify his salary to the boss of the propaganda mill that hired him.

We haven't seen anyone chanting "Hare Krishna" for years, but it looks like we'll be stuck forever with "run the government like a business." A

particularly pernicious side effect of this brain worm is the spark it sets off in the minds of guys like Schultz—the opposite but equally deranged notion that if he can run a business, he should run the government.

Hey, what the hell—why shouldn't a butcher become a surgeon?

We'll say this for Schultz: unlike the President, he really did become a billionaire by building a successful business. Judging by the results of his campaign so far, though, that can't be as hard as it looks. He's clearly not the hottest cup of java on the counter.

Before we go any further we should confess that we don't know much about this guy. We're just rushing to write about him because at the rate he's going he won't make it through the fortnight. We do know

he grew up in government-subsidized public housing and attended public schools at a time when the top tax rate was 91 percent. Now that he's worth \$3.4 billion he says that a 70 percent marginal tax rate on income over \$10 million would be "punitive."

He's no Ken Griffith [see Rant, above] but he does own at least two spiffy domiciles: a \$40-million penthouse in Greenwich Village, and a \$33-million, 10,641 square foot house in Hawaii which he bought from a former Wells Fargo bigwig. Better make sure that deed's not a forgery, Howard.

Whoa! Stop the Presses! This just in: "Schultz is gearing up to visit early caucus and primary states as he mulls an independent run for president in 2020, CNBC has learned."

Riiight ... the independent candidate is visiting states where they

hold early primaries and caucuses to determine [Lewis Black voice begins taking over] who will be the nominees of the major political parties **YOU BLITHERING IDIOT!**

Instead of hanging out in the Village drinking good coffee for a change, or lounging around in his bathing suit, he's coming here, where it's 8°. As we said, he's not too bright.

Presumably, once he gets here, he'll drop by the local Starbucks and explain to the guy who's sitting there on the cold granite steps playing a harmonica for quarters why it would be wrong to make billionaires pay taxes just so people like him can find out before they die what it looks like inside a doctor's office. We just hope our Wandering Photographer is there to capture the moment.

The Alleged News®
from page one

A Modest Manifesto for
the McIntyre Building

Judging by the results of the process so far, it does not appear that the City has taken seriously enough the one central, fundamental, irreplaceable public function which has been faithfully provided at the McIntyre Building since its doors first opened: a functioning, full-service Post Office. We therefore propose the following three points, to be included in any contract regarding its re-development.

One: The developer will allow the U.S. Postal Service to continue operating in the one-story wing now in use on the north side of the building for however long it takes to complete whatever renovations are necessary—asbestos remediation included, if required—for said Post Office to make a single move into the space it formerly occupied in the main building.

Two: Before being granted the right to re-develop the building, the developer will have in hand a signed

lease agreement with the Postal Service for use of the renovated space.

Three: The developer will also commit to conducting demolition and construction in a manner which will minimize disruption and allow continued operation of the Post Office during re-development.

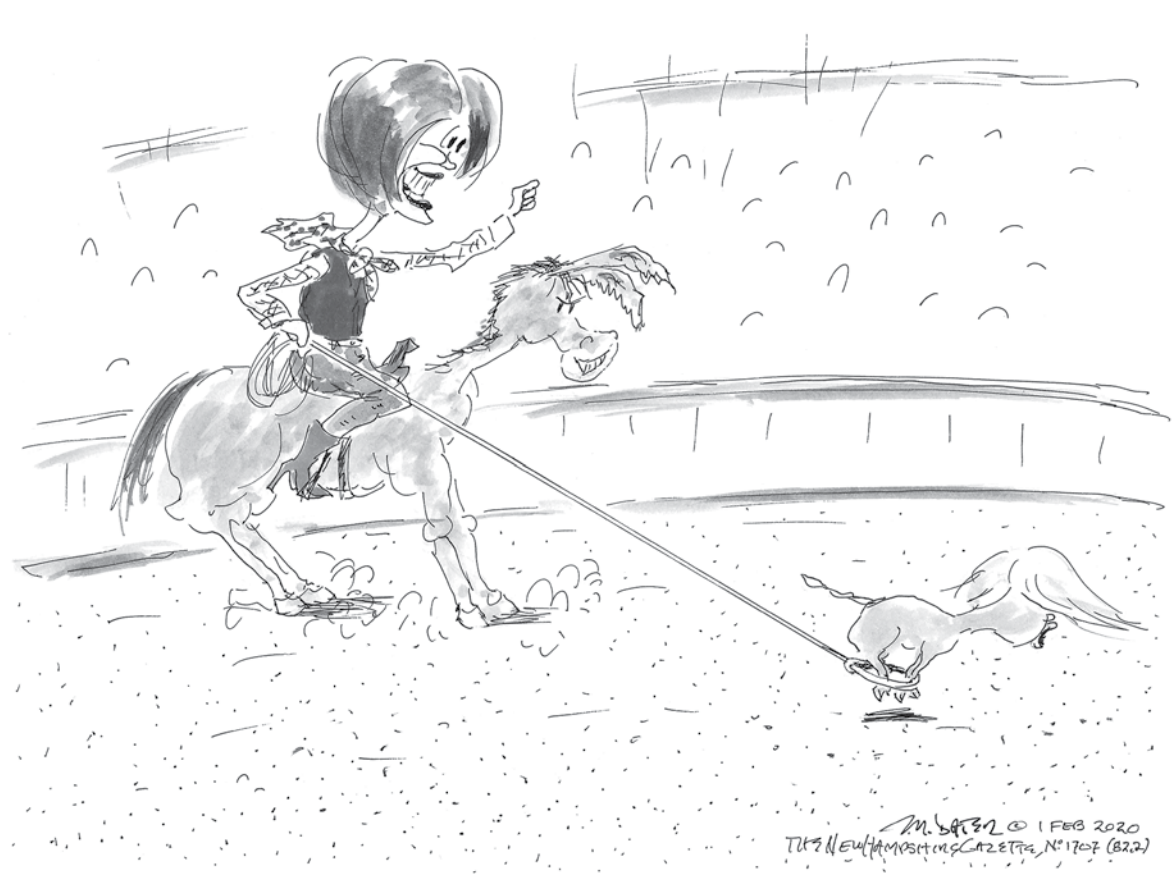
[We will pause here briefly while the cacophony subsides.—The Ed.]

Some will argue that if the City Council issued such a demand, no developer would sign a contract to redevelop the building.

We believe that unless the City issues such a demand, no developer will ever build what the people want.

Journalism, Meet Land Use Policy

The City Council has taken a lot of heat for the way this process has gone. The *Portsmouth Herald* also bears some responsibility for its failure. Newspapers have a duty to provide lucid reportage to serve as a substrate for public discussion. The *Herald* has filled hundreds, perhaps thousands of column inches to the McIntyre redevelopment issue. It has done so, though, in its usual fashion, and has therefore lost the thread.



The fate of the McIntyre Federal Building, Portsmouth's red-headed step-child, is as yet unresolved. It seems likely to remain so for an indefinite period. Since there may be time to fend off catastrophe, we have prepared a draft Manifesto regarding its future. Being well aware of this screed's pecuniary worth, we offer it to the community at no charge, for consideration, modification, and—who knows?—perhaps eventual implementation.

Its coverage has repeated *ad nauseam* the claims of the would-be developers about the architectural merits of their proposals, along with criticism from the public. It often seems that “new” reports consist of one fresh paragraph grafted onto yesterday’s story—or last week’s. Meanwhile, the paper has shrugged off the building’s most important function—providing a location for the Post Office to operate.

One might think that the paper would be more cautious about focusing so intently on the plans of real estate developers while glossing over a basic need of people living in the community—particularly given its own complicity in the destruction of the old North End.

In the late 1960s, you see, after a long campaign promoting the City’s plan to demolish hundreds of homes, the *Portsmouth Herald* moved from Congress Street to a new brick building on Maplewood Avenue—built on the former site of several razed homes.

Private Profit Trumps Public Service

No one at the paper now, of course, was personally involved in that lamentable episode. What could provide more complete exoneration than 50 years worth of personnel changes? The paper’s institutional memory, too, has largely been lobotomized through a series of changes in ownership.

Since the old North End came to its sad end, the Award-Winning Local Daily has had a succession of owners. Kenneth Thomson, 2nd Baron Thomson of Fleet,* sold it to the Ottaway chain. Ottaway sold it to the Bancroft family, aka Dow Jones, publishers of the *Wall Street Journal*. The Bancrofts later sold it to Rupert Murdoch.

* In 1989, our editor discovered that the trade name of *The New Hampshire Gazette*—subsumed by the *Portsmouth Herald* some 30 years earlier—had been left up for grabs by Lord Kenneth’s local managers. With a \$40 check to Secretary of State (For Life) Bill Gardner, he wrested The Nation’s Oldest Newspaper™ from the world’s 9th richest man.

With each of those transactions, the paper became weaker—but there was worse to come.

Hard as it may be to believe, the community would have been better off if the *Herald* had stayed in Murdoch’s hands. Before going forward, though, we should take a step back. To fully appreciate the horror of the slow motion trainwreck we’re experiencing, we need to understand the historic trend of newspaper profitability.

In Lord Kenneth’s day and throughout the 20th century, ownership of a daily newspaper conferred a license to print money. Even as late as the 1990’s, profit margins ranged from a respectable low of seven percent to an enviable high of 34.6 percent.

Then came the Internet. Craigslist alone almost single-handedly destroyed the classified advertising, the most lucrative part of any paper. The rise of online news sources further eroded their share of the eyeball market.

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As Robert Kuttner and the pseudonymous Hildy Zenger* argue, though, in the Winter, 2018 issue of *The American Prospect*, the internet has merely challenged newspapers' tradition business model. Private equity finance is the existential threat—particularly in small markets all around the country, like Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

"Companies with names like Alden Capital, Digital First Media, Citadel, Fortress, GateHouse, and many others that you've never heard of have purchased more than 1,500 small-city dailies and weeklies. The malign genius of the private equity business model, of which more in a moment, is that it allows the absentee owner to drive a paper into the ground, but extract exorbitant profits along the way from management fees, dividends, and tax breaks. By the time the paper is a hollow shell, the private equity company can exit and move on, having more than made back its investment.

* Hildy Johnson was a star reporter in the hit Broadway comedy *The Front Page*. In 1735, printer Peter Zenger won a court case which established in law the principle of a free press. "Hildy Zenger" is a writer employed by a newspaper owned by a private equity firm.

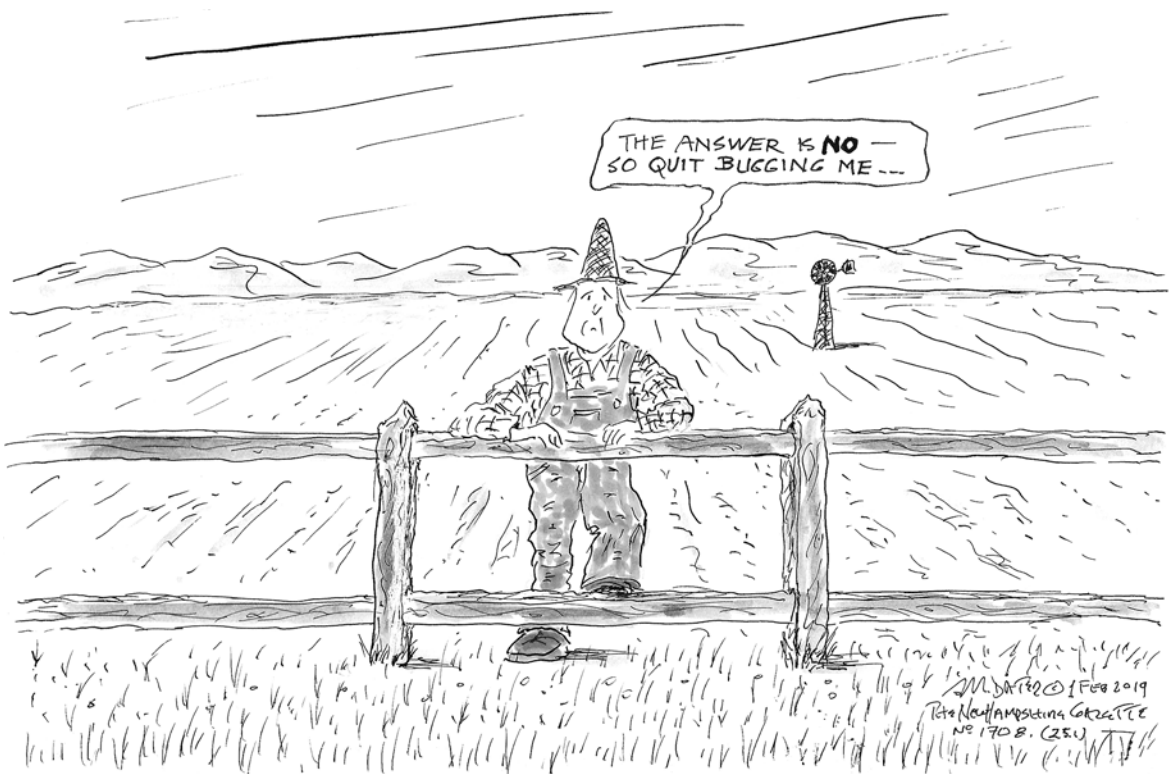
"Whether private equity is contained and driven from ownership of newspapers could well determine whether local newspapers as priceless civic resources survive to make it across the digital divide."

Our Post Office is threatened by a redevelopment scheme which hasn't earned the public's trust. The AWLD can't cover the project properly because GateHouse, its owner, starves its staff of resources. Meanwhile Wall Street is out to privatize the whole Postal Service.

Three cheers for capitalism.

Death Penalty Repeal Effort Continues
The New Hampshire Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty informs us that it is "moving full steam ahead" in support of HB 455, which would get the state out of the people-killing business. To that end the Coalition has a four-point plan.

Step One is writing letters to newspapers: "Now is the time to let your fellow New Hampshire citizens know where you stand on the death penalty, and why," the Campaign advises. "A steady drumbeat of voices is more effective in the long run than a smattering of letters only around the time of voting in the leg-



THE GREAT HOLDOUT - ARTHUR G. HOLZINGER, THE ONLY DEMOCRAT IN AMERICA NOT RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT IN 2020

islature. Consider writing multiple letters (each uniquely penned) to various state newspapers." A form is provided online at nodeathpenaltynh.org/.

Step Two is letters to legislators, to "let them know that their constituency values this issue, and ... to educate them, especially the large group of new Reps in the House." Another online tool at nodeathpenaltynh.org/ makes it easy to find your specific legislator. The Coalition notes that "to make the biggest impact, you can handwrite a letter or postcard." A link to the full list of legislators' addresses is provided online.

Step Three would be to hold a House Party. The Coalition suggests inviting friends and neighbors over for a showing of a documentary film, *N.H. Law Enforcement Veterans Confront the Death Penalty*. Produced by Law Enforcement Against Death Sentencing in New Hampshire (LEADS-NH), the 25-minute film features "police, marshals, attorneys general, prosecutors, judges and corrections officials who have

spent their lives in the law enforcement field, most of whom once supported the death penalty and many of whom have family members currently serving in law enforcement... sharing their thoughts on the problems of the death penalty as a public policy." The film can also be found online at leads-nh.org. According to the Coalition, "the documentary has helped open a lot of eyes to the intricacies and shortcomings of the death penalty system."

Finally, Step Four: on Tuesday, February 19, there will be a morning vigil in front of the State House in Concord, beginning at 9 a.m. Then, at 10 a.m., the House Criminal Justice Committee will hold a Public Hearing in Representatives Hall. Among the featured speakers will be Sr. Helen Prejean, and death row exonerees Kirk Bloodsworth and Ray Krone.

The Criminal Justice Committee will hold an Executive Session on HB 455 the following day, Wednesday, February 20, at 10:00 a.m.

The Coalition is encouraging

those opposed to the death penalty to "prepare a one-minute testimony and help fill Representatives Hall, demonstrating overwhelming support for abolishing the death penalty!"

Come See How Our Elections Are Bought
Dark Money, a gripping film about the influence of corporate money in elections, will be shown at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday Feb. 13, at the Portsmouth Public Library. Admission is free.

With a five-star Rotten Tomato review, one critic described the film as "Damning, clear-eyed, and as gripping as any John Grisham thriller." It follows a Montana investigative journalist dissecting how elections are bought and sold in the wake of the 2010 U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United decision that allows large, corporate campaign contributions to remain anonymous. The showing is sponsored by Open Democracy and Seacoast Resistance, presented in collaboration with the documentary series POV.



Across from the McIntyre building, the Press Room has been brought up to code, at considerable expense, by the new owners. Their efforts to honor the past while accommodating the demands of the present went so far as to once again hang an old Remington typewriter in the center of their sign.

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but it bends toward justice."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

— Not-So-Random Thoughts from an Oregon Subscriber

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**More Transparency for
New Hampshire's Presidential Primary**
To the Editor:

This week the New Hampshire House of Representatives Committee on Election Law had a hearing on HB 202, which would require candidates to release their five most recent Federal income tax returns in order to be placed on the New Hampshire Presidential Primary ballot. This bill is one of a number of similar bills submitted in many other states, as well as those introduced by both Republicans and Democrats on the national level. However, what makes HB 202 special is that New Hampshire's primary is the first in the nation, and as such would provide valuable information for the entire nation early in the presidential nomination process. It would allow New Hampshire once again to lead the nation, not only with choosing our next President, but also in transparency in government. By casting a vote in the primary, New Hampshire voters have often narrowed the field of candidates from many to just a few. With the issue of money in politics in mind, this bill helps voters make a more informed choice, by allowing voters to question some of the financial background of the candidates. During our nation's history all major Presidential candidates (with few exceptions) have voluntarily disclosed their income taxes. In addition this bill, if passed, would result in other positive outcomes, such as providing a level playing field for all presidential candidates participating in the New Hampshire Presidential primary and reducing concerns regarding possible conflicts of interests of presidential candidates. Let's make New Hampshire the first in transparency and open government in the nation.

We encourage the Election Law committee to vote ought to pass to the full House and to pass this bill on to the Senate for approval. To support this bill, we encourage voters to contact the Chair David Cote at *David.Cote@leg.state.nh.us* or call 271-3310.

Peter Somssich, State Representative, District #27, Portsmouth, prime sponsor of HB 202

David Meuse, State Representative, District #29, Portsmouth, co-sponsor of HB 202

Richard DiPentima, former State Representative, Portsmouth

Gentlemen:
Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to put this matter before our readers.
The Editor

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Shameful

To the Editor:

I now appreciate how truly Machiavellian President Trump is. For all his intellectual failures and disdain for reading and history, he has a certain type of genius. There is little serendipity to his administration. Every choice and move he makes has been calculated to achieve the end-game of what Republican strategist Grover Norquist and the K Street gang of Washington D.C. mercenaries have been seeking since the days of President Reagan. To quote Norquist, that is to "shrink government to the size where we can drown it in a bathtub."

What could be smaller than a closed government, where its employees continue working as unpaid indentured servants? And, with government closed and seeming to be incompetent and inefficient, how could a playbook be any better scripted to make it seem that the privatization of many necessary and valuable government functions is the preferred *modus operandi*?

Consider the many devious and unscrupulous persons specifically chosen to run the Trump Administration and to speak for it. You would be hard-pressed to find any people more interested in torpedoing the government programs they have been chosen by Trump to run than the current or previously disgraced foxes guarding government "henhouses."

And, how about those beacons of "honesty, integrity, and compassion" who have recently had something to say about those ungrateful government employees failing to cheerily cope with their present situation?

Here's Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, confused at unpaid federal workers suffering financial hardship and wondering why they don't just



take out loans. "There really is not a good excuse why there really should be a liquidity crisis," he said. "True, the people might have to pay a little bit of interest, but the idea that it's paycheck or zero is not a really valid idea." Told that some workers have been relying on food banks, he said, "I know they are, and I don't really quite understand why." Really?

Larry Kudlow, director of Trump's National Economic Council, said federal employees required to work without pay were "volunteering." He added, they're doing it because of their love for America "and presumably their allegiance to President Trump."

Kevin Hassett, the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, suggested that furloughed workers were lucky not to have to use their vacation days over the holidays. "And then they come back, and then they get their back pay. Then they're—in some sense, they're better off." I wonder how government workers will be "better off" when they miss bill payments due and see their credit scores drop, making future economic activity more expensive for them?

And, the "sensitive and caring" President Trump himself, when he retweeted a likely anonymous member of his own administration in a *Daily Caller* piece, arguing that the work of most federal employees is worthless. "We do not want most employees to return, because we are working better without them," the tweet said. Trump later said that grocery stores will "work along" with people who can't pay for food.

As an additional slap in the face of furloughed, unpaid government workers without enough savings to tide them over during this shutdown of unknown duration, they may be lucky if they can get a bank or credit union loan against the value of their home. Those who don't own homes will likely have to use credit cards

(with their burdensome and usurious interest rates) or get "payday" loans. A "payday" loan example from a *New York Times* article: be lent \$400, two weeks later the bill due is \$460. If you are still without a paycheck, take out a \$500 loan to pay back the \$460, and you will now owe \$575.

It is not a coincidence that Republican administrations and members of Congress have for years been changing the rules to disadvantage the most economically vulnerable among us:

- Making consumer bankruptcy more difficult, but corporate bankruptcy easier.

- Allowing credit card companies to charge usurious rates. (Credit card companies can charge whatever they want; there is no law providing a cap. In fact, the median penalty rate charged on credit cards issued by banks is 29.99 percent).

- Allowing "for profit" colleges and the U.S. Government to charge very high interest rates on student loans.

Special Counsel Joseph Welch's retort at the 1954 McCarthy hearings, "Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last?" has resonance today.

Many, maybe even most Americans have had enough, and would like to say to President Trump, "You're fired!"

Herb Moyer
Exeter, N.H.

Herb:
We believe you have correctly identified yet another instance in which deleterious effects on the nation are considered by Republicans to be desirable outcomes, i.e., "That's not a bug, that's a feature." The persistence of this increasingly common phenomenon depends entirely, in our view, on the complicity of profit-driven corporate media. The pattern is too obvious to miss, save by willful blindness. Upton Sinclair pointed this out in 1934, writing, "It is difficult to get a man to

understand something, when his salary depends upon his not understanding it!"
The Editor

=====

Loose Lips Sink Ships
Dear Sir:

The expression, "loose lips sink ships" was once again proven accurate by none other than Donald Trump. Last week four Americans and fifteen others were killed in Manbij, Syria, as a result of a suicide bomb for which ISIS has claimed responsibility. The four Americans included two service members and two civilians. It is no coincidence that this attack occurred not long after Donald Trump made his very reckless public announcement on Twitter that ISIS has been "defeated" and we will be withdrawing our troops from Syria "starting now."

The deaths of these four Americans are directly related to this irresponsible pronouncement by Trump. By declaring that ISIS had been "defeated," Trump no less than invited them to respond in some way to demonstrate that they are still very much alive and able to attack and kill Americans and others. Clearly, this ISIS attack was in direct response to Trump's ignorant and amateurish approach to national defense policy. Even Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) stated that Trump's comments emboldened ISIS. With previous thoughtful Presidents, decisions of such magnitude and their possible serious consequences are discussed and debated within their national security community before a decision is made and before the policy change is made public. In this case, Mr. Trump made this decision on his own without warning his national security experts, and the policy change announcement was made via social media as if it was some kind of a trivi-

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al personal matter, rather than having the policy made public only after being carefully managed so as to protect our troops and our allies. In fact, Mr. Trump's actions were so irresponsible that they were the reason that General Mattis, the Secretary of Defense resigned.

Since Trump's announcement and these deaths, his administration has been doing back flips to clarify and back track Trump's tweet. Unfortunately, for these four Americans and the others killed in this attack, these clarifications come much too late. This tragic episode is just another reminder as to how unfit and unprepared Donald Trump is to serve as Commander in Chief.

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

Rich:
It is a tribute to the discipline of America's military personnel that the White House has yet to be surrounded by rogue tanks.

The Editor

Dear Editor,

Is it legal for the Federal government to force employees to work without pay? This looks like slavery, which is constitutionally prohibited. Sure, Congress passed a bill requiring workers' reimbursement after the Trump shutdown ends, but that payment date is indefinite. Doesn't this also violate labor laws?

Putin's puppet President is destabilizing the integrity and security of our government. He forces slavery on shutdown government workers so that the impact of their absence won't be felt by the general public. The true absence of 800,000 government workers, including TSA inspectors, Securities

and Exchange regulators, judges, firefighters and IRS accountants, could not be sustained for these long weeks of shutdown. So, instead, the burden of Trump's desperate political shutdown piles on the backs of dedicated men and women who chose public service, working for what should be a reliable employer. Meanwhile, how can they pay their bills?

This just ain't right.
Bruce Joffe
Piedmont, Calif.

Bruce:
Many achievers modestly admit they stand on the shoulders of giants.

This administration will forever be known as one that oozed under the bellies of snakes.

The Editor

Is There a Doctor in the House?

To the Editor:
Infantile Paralysis used to be the alternate name for Polio. Today, it best describes the despicable behavior of U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

History will show the current President of the United States came to Washington with preexisting mental-health issues that have worsened with aging and the pressures of the office. As a result, the hand of our enemies has been strengthened and the legitimate functions of government have been thrown into disarray—even grinding the work of key agencies to a halt.

The leader of the Senate has an obligation beyond partisanship to oversee the Presidency and to do what is necessary to protect the American people. Mitch McConnell is the lynchpin to ending the current government shutdown and to removing a dangerously ill man from office. Yet his feet refuse to move, and he stands as a motionless

hulk blocking the isle.
Somebody call a doctor! Or perhaps a wrecker.

Rick Littlefield
Barrington, N.H.

Rick:
The flamboyant grotesqueries of the Administration too often hide the sinister machinations of the Senate's Dr. No. Thank you for reminding our readers of his untiring efforts to pervert democracy.

The Editor

Rights for People, Not Just Corporations

To the Editor:
In 2006 Barnstead Selectman Jack O'Neil proclaimed support for a rights-based ordinance protecting Barnstead's water resources stating, "...we pledge to walk point for you...". It's doubtful that at the time he imagined New Hampshire residents would today be walking point for the nation in the struggle for community rights and the rights of nature.

Since then towns across New Hampshire have been initiating and passing rights-based ordinances in the face of corporate assaults on local economies, rights, and natural environments. In 2015, a holocaust survivor living in Barnstead recognized the fomenting climate of religious intolerance during the presidential primary and initiated a rights-based ordinance guaranteeing freedom from religious identification. It passed unanimously at town meeting.

In a time when State and Federal lawmakers fail to act on pressing social, environmental, and economic issues, and corporate entities are rushing to enact legislation pre-empting communities from addressing these, it is more important than ever to seize the opportunity to affirm the rights of people to self-govern in their communities.

New Hampshire representative Ellen Read has reintroduced the Community Rights Amendment, CACR 8, an amendment which codifies the

rights of people in New Hampshire to make governing decisions about policies and endeavors that impact the well-being of residents and the natural environment. Having garnered one third of the legislature's support in the past session, New Hampshire is leading the nation in the fight against legalized destruction of our planet and the stripping away of our individual right to self-govern.

Those involved in the early work of local democracy are grateful for the efforts of many residents, but especially those of longtime Barnstead Selectman Gordon Preston, Katherine Preston, the late Jack O'Neil, and the late Gail Darrell, founder of New Hampshire Community Rights Network and tireless advocate for a sustainable, peaceful world. The many people who carry on this work across New Hampshire ask for your support of CACR 8, the New Hampshire Community Rights Amendment to the New Hampshire Constitution.

Diane St. Germain
NHCRN Board Member
Center Barnstead, N.H.

Diane:
New Hampshire citizens using our tradition of self-government to stand up for humans in an increasingly corporatized world: it's enough to give democracy its good name back!

The Editor

Bravo to Brilliant Russian Spy Tradecraft

To the Editor:
There are so many interesting angles to the probe into interference by the Russians in the 2016 election. This includes the newest revelation, that Special Counsel Robert Mueller has been investigating the possibility that the 45th POTUS "had been working on behalf of Russia against American interests." That would certainly be quite a first for a sitting U.S. President.

Having been involved in Human Resource Intelligence as a linguist during my past career in the military, I'm finding the most fascinating aspect of the probe to be the one involving confessed Russian agent Maria Butina. Butina made some very interesting admissions as part of a plea deal.

Masquerading as a staunch Second Amendment enthusiast and a devout Evangelical Christian, while peddling sex and funneling Russian money to the Republicans, she was able to infiltrate political organizations, such as the NRA and the Evangelicals responsible for the annual National Prayer Breakfast. She established "back channel" lines of communication with Republican politicians and brokered meetings between Russian President Vladimir Putin and #45 (at the behest of her boss, Russian billionaire oligarch Alexander Torshin, a friend of Putin).

Putin, a former KGB chief, has clearly been playing a game of 3D chess while our President and the Republicans thought they were involved in a game of checkers. Implementing brilliant spy tradecraft, that the Russians are known for, Putin and Russia simply borrowed the page from the Republican handbook which calls for pandering to and manipulating those whom the Republicans lead to believe that the path to prosperity is through shooting, praying, and trickle-down economics. With help from the Right Wing Media and political organizations (i.e. the NRA and Religious Right), the GOP tried selling Americans self-interested bills and policies instead of national healthcare, universal education and the dignity of a good paying job.

Putin and company beat #45 and the Republicans, badly, at their own game, and in doing so were able to install a completely compromised asset (aka #45 or Putin's Puppet) for Russia and destabilize America and democracy throughout the Western World, leaving the world order for Putin to reestablish in his image.

Wayne H. Merritt
Dover, N.H.

Wayne:
Perhaps the Republicans took to Butina because, as a hypocrite and double-dealer, they simply recognized her as a kindred soul.

The Editor

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

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Murph's Fortnightly Quote
"Bullying journalists is not presidential. Period."
—Julie Banderas (1973-) Fox News anchor

"We do not own the land we abuse, or the lakes and streams we pollute ... The greatest predator on earth is man himself, and we must look inward to destroy the killer instinct which may yet atomize the human race."
Sterling North (1906-1974) American author and critic, *Raccoons Are the Brightest People* john@wordpraxis.com

Sometimes Old is Good
The Fechheimer Building, one of the finest examples of a cast-iron facade in Portland, Oregon, was built in 1885. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, it was restored in 1981 by Russell Fellows Properties, the principals of which enjoy a subscription to this newspaper.

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The Northcountry Chronicle

Primarily New Hampshire

by William Marvel

On January 29, 1869, the *New York Times* published a sizable article about Granite State politics, naming all the candidates for major state offices and Congress, and describing many of them in some detail. Yet the article began with the admission that the New Hampshire election “presents but few indications of any interest.”

One might wonder, then, why that piece even ran. The answer lay in the almost incidental comment that New Hampshire held the first state elections after the inauguration of President Grant, and was therefore regarded as a bellwether of all the state elections to come. Which-ever party prevailed in New Hampshire might wield cachet in those that followed.

The *New York Times* harbored as much political bias 150 years ago as it does today, but the editors were less careful about pretending otherwise. The paper openly ran down Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Bedel, who had been wound-

ed and captured in the battle now known mainly as the one depicted in *Glory*. The *Times* described General Bedel as “a lawyer of undoubted mediocrity” who “was more distinguished for energy than judgment.” Meanwhile, the paper flattered Republican candidate Onslow Stearns, who had not served in the war that Republicans claimed as their crusade. Stearns had “worked his way up from poverty to a competency,” said the *Times*, and he was “one of the most prominent railroad men in New England.”

Railroads were big, with New Hampshire towns paying what amounted to open bribes to lure new lines their way, so the most closely watched race after the governorship was that of railroad commissioner. Two other Union veterans vied for that post. The Republican contender was Samuel D. Quarles of Ossipee, who had gone to war in 1861 in command of a company in the 6th New Hampshire that was filled mainly with Carroll County men. His opponent was Michael Donohoe of Manchester, formerly colonel

of the Irish 10th New Hampshire. Quarles won, and held office for several years.

New Hampshire had three representatives in Congress, and Republicans held all three seats in 1869. The same three were reelected, but it was the last term for all of them, thanks to disgust with corruption in the Grant administration. One declined to run again, but the others were Republican hacks, and in defeat one went home for political jobs within the state while Grant gave the other a federal sinecure that he kept for life.

It was not merely after presidential elections that New Hampshire politics attracted national attention. It happened every year, because all state elections took place annually, and ours was always first. All local and state officers were chosen at the town meetings in March. Every other year, the three congressional races were thrown in as well. U.S. Senators were still chosen by the legislature.

During the Civil War, New Hampshire’s first-in-the-nation annual elections made it something of

a pet of the Lincoln administration. The man who best fit the description of Lincoln’s “fixer,” Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, interfered more than once to swing Granite State gubernatorial elections to the Republican Party. In 1863, with the state clearly leaning Democratic, Stanton persuaded the colonel of the 11th New Hampshire, a well-known Democrat who had secretly turned Republican, to run as a third-party spoiler. That drew enough votes away from Democrat Ira Eastman to rob him of a majority by a tiny fraction, which threw the election into the Republican-dominated General Court. Republican Joseph Gilmore—a railroad president whom Eastman had trounced—thus became governor.

The next year, just before the election, Stanton and Gilmore conspired to spread the fake news that the state had already filled its quota for the most recent draft call. That eroded support for antiwar Democratic candidates, and Gilmore won re-election. Then he and Stanton had to scramble to fill that overdue

draft quota with volunteers, which cost the state and federal treasuries a fortune in special enlistment bounties.

Annual state elections were abandoned in 1878 in favor of a biennial schedule, and New Hampshire’s national significance evaporated as a result. It may have been partly to recoup that prestige that the state established the first-in-the-nation presidential primary in time for the 1920 election. As intended, a primary in so small a state also opened presidential campaigns to poorer, lesser-known candidates. The Democrats forgot to play that year, and the first winner was native son Leonard Wood, who was born in Winchester. He dominated the first seven ballots at the Republican convention, only to see Warren Harding nominated in a back-room deal.

One other result of our primary has been the disproportionate advantage enjoyed by candidates from Massachusetts. As most of us eventually learn, even the best intentions breed unfortunate consequences.

from page five

The Devil’s Advocate Weighs In

Dear Editor:

Not meaning to disagree with the *New Hampshire Gazette’s* distinguished editor, but I view Richard Nixon in a different light. Richard Milhous Nixon (1913-1994), our 37th President (1969-1974), facing certain impeachment for covering up illegal activities by members of his administration concerning Watergate, opted to resign from office.

Nixon was born January 9th, 1913, in Yorba Linda, California, and died April 22nd, 1994 in New York, N.Y. Most everything written about Nixon revolves around Watergate but there was a lot more to the man than that brief a tragic incident

portrays.

It’s unfortunate Watergate so over-shadowed his youth, his years at Whittier College and Duke Law School, his having served in the Pacific during WW II as a Navy Lieutenant Commander, and his marriage to Thelma Catherine (Patricia) Ryan in 1940, and his years in Congress following the war.

Dwight Eisenhower chose Nixon as his running mate in 1952 and he served as Vice President from 1953 to 1961, throughout my high school years and beyond. My mother (during the 1950’s) was active in Republican politics in Massachusetts

and did quite a bit of stenographic work through the local party for the Eisenhower-Nixon Administration. Consequently Nixon became a revered name in my home.

Unknown to most (or perhaps forgotten), Nixon made several diplomatic journeys to Africa and South America during his two terms as VP. During visits to Uruguay, Peru, Venezuela, he survived student demonstrations, having objects thrown at him, being spat on, and having his limousine attacked by a pipe-wielding mob. He ventured to places other Presidents and Vice

Presidents feared to tread. There’s an old Vulcan proverb—”Only Nixon could go to China.”

Despite his dark side and many faults (a burden all us Capricorns must carry) Nixon had an inexhaustible love of America. In 1960 he lost a close election to John F. Kennedy and, amidst serious charges of voter fraud, Nixon refused to consider contesting the election, feeling that lengthy controversy would diminish the United States in the eyes of the world and the uncertainty would hurt U.S. interests both at home and abroad.

Nixon never received adequate

credit for this accomplishments or for his noteworthy ventures. Actually he had that in common with Franklin Pierce (New Hampshire’s only President, who served from 1853-1857). During his years as President, Nixon promoted revenue sharing policies, ended the draft, ended the war in Vietnam, promoted anti-crime legislation, instituted a broad environmental program, and established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), among other things.

On the global stage, Richard Nixon flew to Beijing in 1972 and met with Chairman Mao Zedung, with whom he developed an element of trust. Of Henry Kissinger, Mao was quite wary. Nixon also built a relationship with Leonid Brezhnev al-



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Lies our president tells us

by Jim Hightower

A fitting epitaph for the tombstone of our present president would be: "Here Lies Donald Trump—Still Lying."

Never has one President hurled such big lies with such force in such a short time. *The Washington Post* keeps count, reporting that so far, in his first 738 days in office, Trump has uttered more than 8,158 falsehoods—averaging more than 11 a

day! Check out some on his favorite topic: The Wall.

The U.S. is being "invaded by dangerous "aliens" crossing the Mexican border illegally and creating a "National Security crisis," he screeches. FACTS: Illegal immigration across the border is at a 50-year low. The migrants now crossing are mostly Central American women and children fleeing abuse, repression, and abject poverty back home, and they're legally seeking asylum here.

Still, Trump recently flew to the border city of McAllen, Texas, to dramatize the need for "a big beautiful wall" to cut the crime rate and "stop heroin" from entering. FACTS: Today's crime rate in McAllen is the lowest in 34 years, and Trump's own drug agency reports that nearly all heroin enters by smuggling it in trucks, &c., that go right through inspection stations. A wall won't stop that.

But, he declared, "Mexico is go-

ing to pay for the wall." FACT: Not a prayer. So, The Donald now claims, "obviously I never said this, and I never meant they're going to write out a check." FACT: He did say just that, many times, so, he's lately been trying a double back-flip lie, claiming that his new NAFTA deal with Mexico requires it to pay up. FACT: No such language exists—and if it did, why would he still be demanding that you and I pay for his boondoggle?

It's not simply that Trump lies, but that his presidency is a lie, dependent on his self-deceptions and his pitiful attempts to deceive us.

~~~~~  
*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.*  
~~~~~

from page six

lowing for the initiation of a treaty to limit strategic nuclear weapons.

Unlike our present leader, Richard Nixon readily acknowledged his shortcomings. Regarding Watergate, he lamented, "I was wrong in not acting more decisively and more forthrightly in dealing with Watergate, particularly when it reached the stage of judicial proceedings and grew from a political scandal into a national tragedy. No words can describe the depth of my regret and pain at the anguish my mistakes over Watergate have caused the nation and the presidency, a nation I so deeply love, and an institution I so greatly respect."

On his tombstone, and by his request, are the words, "The greatest honor history can bestow is the title of peacemaker." And this is the way I choose to remember Richard M. Nixon, RIP.

David L. Snell
Franklin, N.C.
David:
Ordinarily, anyone defending Richard Nixon on these pages would be subjected to intense editorial scorn, at best. We have not forgotten, however, your generosity in supplying us with much of the material we used to write our May 26, 2017 piece about the June 8, 1968 attack by Israel on the U.S.S. Liberty.

Our ordinarily rigorous objectivity having been further eroded by breaking bread with you and your lovely wife at Bubby's, we can't even muster the requisite bile to savagely pick nits on specific items in your letter. We'll just leave it at this: in our not particularly humble opinion, Nixon didn't deserve you.

The Editor



Pharma Strikes Again
To the Editor:

In the first weeks of January over three dozen drug makers announced price increases averaging 6.3 percent on hundreds of their most popular drugs. More increases are expected in the coming weeks. Although the price hikes this year are somewhat less than the last two years, they continue the year after year increases that have resulted in an average price rise of over 208 percent since 2008. The hikes exceed both the inflation rate and growth in wage rates, likely ensuring an increase in health insurance rates and added pain to those without insurance or with high co-pays or deductibles.

The price increases demonstrate the pharmaceutical industry's disdain for public opinion and political rhetoric. There are no restraints on the industry to prevent price hikes either from competition or regulation. Pharma companies increase prices simply because they can. Many of the drugs that saw increases are under patent protection, therefore companies can raise their price whenever and by how much they want. Even when industry participants produce drugs to attack a common disease, there is little price competition since prices are set to match rather than compete with similar drugs. Pharma's ability to implement unrestrained price increases has made the industry more profitable than any other sector. Its profits even exceed the margins of the banking industry.

Pharma's large profits benefit its Wall Street investors and industry executives (median salary of a Pharma CEO in 2015 was \$14.5 million) while doing economic and health damage to its consumers. In 1943 Robert Wood Johnson, Chairman of Johnson and Johnson, published "Our Credo," a statement of values that was meant to guide the behavior of J&J employees. The Credo stated that the first responsibility of the company was to provide high quality and affordable health care to "the people who use our products." The Credo lists other stakeholders, including employees, the community and, lastly, shareholders. The effect of the Credo was to establish a direct bond between J&J employees and their primary stakeholder, the customer. Loyal J&J customers could expect high quality and affordable health care products, while J&J employees were charged with the obligation to provide them. The bond between company and customer served both J&J and its customers well for several decades, but it is clear that present day pharmaceutical companies feel more obligation to Wall Street shareholders than the consumers of their products.

Unrestrained yearly price increases that exceed GDP growth are clearly unsustainable. It is past time to rein in the monopoly power of drug companies and restore the obligation to their most important stakeholder, the consumers of their products. One action that can be

taken quickly is to allow Medicare to bargain directly with the pharmaceutical industry on the price of all drugs used in the Medicare system. The ability to bargain price was denied to Medicare in the legislation that enabled Medicare Part D in 2006. Pharma lobbyists convinced legislators that if Medicare was permitted to bargain the price of drugs, it would constitute a form of price control. In the absence of competition in the pharmaceutical industry, however, giving Medicare bargaining power is necessary to counter the industry's control over pricing. It should be noted that drug prices in Europe, where agencies tasked with the acquisition of drugs are given bargaining power on price, are one-half those in the U.S.

A more fundamental way to restrain out of control prices would be to legislate a change in the governance structure of the pharmaceutical companies. The companies would be obliged to appoint a significant number of individuals to their Board of Directors who would directly represent the interests of drug consumers. The public interest board members would have full voting rights and access to all company information equal to board members representing shareholders. Alternatively, legislation could be enacted that would require consideration of the consumer's interests on the part of all board members. Failure to do so would make the board liable to civil or criminal litigation.

By giving the public interest influ-

ence in governance, drug consumers would gain a voice in determining the price of drugs. Moreover, such actions may help to restore the lost sense of company obligation and customer rights as illustrated by Johnson and Johnson's Credo that used to bind drug companies and the consumers of their products.

Robert D. Russell, Ph.D
Harrisburg, Pa.
Robert:
Thank you once again for providing insight into the opaque network of corporations, alleged regulators, and hired legislators which treats our bodies as sources of obscene profit. Mortal beings hoping to fend off the inevitable, dependent on soulless entities driven solely by greed: it's an existential nightmare. That's why it's so important to laugh at every available opportunity, and fight like hell to wrap the corporate devils in chains forged by democracy.

The Editor

More Fear & Hate from Ewing
To the Editor:

Some people say Democrat (sic) politicians care more about illegal aliens than about American citizens. ... No matter how many Americans and foreigners suffer, Democrats don't care; they only care about defeating President Trump.

Don Ewing
Meredith, N.H.
Don:
Welcome back to one of our more popular correspondents. Unfortunately, the volume of letters received this fortnight has made it necessary to be even more savage than usual in trimming your missive down to size. Better luck next time—do keep writing.

The Editor

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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 3	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4	TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5	WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6	THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7	FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8	SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9
2012—“Today is the day that in 1924 Woodrow Wilson died, that son of a bitch,” radio-active dingbat Glenn Beck says, “and I’m happy.” 2006—After Don Rumsfeld likens H. Chavez to Hitler, Venezuela’s VP compares the U.S. to the Third Reich. 1959—In Iowa, a plane crash kills Buddy Holly, “The Big Bopper,” and Richie Valens. 1956—Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Johnny Cash jam at Sun studio in Memphis. 1953—J. Fred Muggs, a bad-tempered chimpanzee from Cameroon, becomes the first non-human primate to appear regularly on TV. 1943—Four U.S. Navy chaplains aboard the U.S. Army transport <i>Dorchester</i> drown after giving their life jackets to others. 1931—Arkansas’ state legislature votes to pray for the soul of H.L. Mencken after he calls the state “the apex of moronia.” 1916—In Zurich, Hugo Ball opens Café Voltaire, hotbed of dadaism. 1870—The 15th Amendment is ratified: black male Americans are told they can now vote. 1811—Future newspaperman and notable eccentric Horace Greeley is born on a farm in Amherst, N.H. 1793—Shot in the face and bayoneted 13 times by the British at Lexington 17 years earlier, Samuel Whittemore, a farmer, dies of natural causes at 98. 1468—RIP Johannes Gutenberg.	2004—The Pentagon cancels LifeLog, a database designed to trace every threads of an individual’s life. 2004—Facebook is launched. 1976—Lockheed admits paying \$22 million in bribes to sell aircraft. 1974—William Randolph Hearst’s granddaughter Patty, 19, is kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army. 1968—Cholon, Saigon’s Chinatown, is declared a free-fire zone; South Vietnamese pilots bomb their own capitol. 1968—Ur-beat Neal Cassady dies alongside Mexican railroad tracks. 1913—Rosa Louise McCauley Parks is born in Tuskegee, Ala. 1912—Franz Reichelt, an Austrian tailor, tests an experimental parachute/overcoat from the Eiffel Tower. His design is fatally flawed. 1899—Five months after being liberated from Spaniards by Americans, Filipinos begin fighting the liberators. 1887—The ICC is established, “having a good sound,” according to a future Union Pacific president, “but quite harmless, which will impress the popular mind with the idea that a great deal is being done, when, in reality, very little is intended to be done.” 1875—Eadweard Muybridge, the pioneering photographer who shot Major Harry Larkyns dead for impregnating his wife, is found not guilty by a California jury which says they’d have done the same. He’s the last man to enjoy that loophole in America. 1869—“Big Bill” Haywood is born.	2018—At a rally, D.J. Trump says Democrats who didn’t applaud his State of the Union speech are traitors. 2012—A Robinson R44 begins shaking violently over Modesto, Calif. To save himself, the pilot makes an emergency landing on the grounds of an elementary school. 2007—Astronaut Lisa Marie Nowak is arrested for attempting to kidnap the girlfriend of another astronaut and for suspected misappropriation of NASA diapers. 2003—Secretary of State Colin Powell tells the UN that Saddam Hussein’s Iraq is bristling with WMDs. 1992—George Herbert [Hoover] Walker Bush encounters a supermarket checkout scanner and confesses he is “amazed.” 1981—In preparation for her husband’s 70th birthday, First Lady Nancy Reagan flies her manicurist in from Los Angeles. 1958—A B-47 bomber collides with a jet fighter near Tybee Island off the coast of Georgia and jettisons an H-bomb. It’s still buried in the mud. 1937—Roosevelt attempts to “pack” the Supreme Court. 1934—Hank Aaron is born. 1918—Stephen W. Thompson becomes the first American pilot to down an enemy aircraft. 1897—Marcel Proust meets critic Jean Lorrain for a pistol duel at 3:00 p.m.—the earliest hour decent people are up and about.	2013—In Seabrook, N.H., Phantom Fireworks sells Tamerlan Tsarnaev 1.5 lbs. of black powder, and gives him another 1.5 pounds for free. 2006—An inebriated flight instructor commits suicide by crashing a Robinson R44 helicopter in Helena, Mont. 1994—U.S. Army Golden Knights parachutist Dana Bowman collides with a partner in mid-air and loses both legs. Nine months later he’s back on the team. 1978—The northeastern U.S. is clobbered by a huge blizzard; 29 die, 10,000 are homeless. 1971—New Hampshire’s own Alan Shepherd uses a nine iron to whack a golf ball on the moon. 1968—NVA troops in Soviet tanks overrun Lang Vei; 21 of 24 Green Berets are KIA, WIA, or captured. 1919—A telegram telling Seattle shipyard owners not to raise wages goes to union leaders instead; a General Strike results. Workers control the city for a week. Union bureaucrats intervene to end the strike and maintain their own power while strikers are denounced as Bolsheviks. 1684—Rev. Joshua Moody, Portsmouth’s first minister, is jailed by Lieut. Gov. Cranfield for refusing to administer the sacraments as per the Church of England. 1557—In Cambridge, England, Martin Bucer and Paul Fagius are burned at the stake for heresy; painlessly, since they’ve been dead for years.	1994—British journalist and Conservative member of Parliament Stephen Milligan is found dead of auto-erotic asphyxiation. 1991—The IRA attacks 10 Downing St. with mortars. 1968—“It became necessary to destroy [the Vietnamese village of Ben Tre] in order to save it,” an American major tells reporter Peter Arnett. 1965—VC attack Camp Holloway near Pleiku killing 9 Americans and wounding 137. The U.S. responds by bombing North Vietnam. 1950—Ex-Emperor Bao Dai [1926–1945], ineffective serial puppet of the Japanese and then the French, is recognized by the U.S. as ruler of the bogus State of Vietnam. 1951—In Korea, Capt. Lewis Millett leads the U.S.’s most recent bayonet charge. This anachronistic victory earns him the Medal of Honor. 1926—The First Negro History Week, precursor to Black History Month, is observed. 1848—<i>Le Représentant du peuple</i>, the first anarchist paper, is begun by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. 1821—John Davis becomes first person known to set foot on Antarctica. 1812—The last, and most destructive, of the three big New Madrid, Mo. earthquakes causes the Mississippi to briefly reverse direction. 1497—In Florence, the pious burn “lewd” books and cosmetics in a Bonfire of the Vanities.	2015—Another two feet of snow fall on Portsmouth; that’s a total of nearly six feet in less than a fortnight. 2001—An Air Force official rebuts recent news reports: “The public was misinformed” about Democratic looting of Air Force One. “There was no china or anything like that missing.” 1996—The Telecommunications Act gives corporations airwaves worth \$70 billion, eliminates ownership limits, deregulates cable rates, and protects licenses against citizen complaints. 1971—ARVN invades Laos in Operation Lam Son 719: a chaotic disaster. 1968—State Troopers fire on black protestors in Orangeburg, S.C., killing three and wounding 27. 1946—For taking down a sign about Jim Crow laws in a Bessemer, Ala. bus, honorably discharged former Marine Timothy Hood is shot by a streetcar conductor. The Police Chief arrests Hood, then shoots him dead. The Coroner calls it “justifiable homicide.” 1942—The House Un-American Activities Committee recommends putting innocent Japanese-Americans in concentration camps. 1924—Nevada becomes the first state to kill someone in a gas chamber: Gee Jon, a hit man for the Hop Sing Tong. 1923—A coal dust explosion in Dawson, N.M.’s Stag Canyon No. 1 mine kills 123 miners, many of whom had been orphaned in 1913 by a coal dust explosion in the Stag Canyon No. 2 mine that killed 263.	1919—Suffragettes burn W. Wilson in effigy in front of the White House. 2007—A Pentagon report concludes that Douglas Feith’s policy office inappropriately manipulated intelligence on Iraq. 2004—University of N.H. nursing student Maura Murray vanishes in Haverhill, N.H. 2001—The <i>USS Greeneville</i>, demonstrating an emergency ballast-blowing maneuver to 16 “Distinguished Visitors,” half with Texas oil and Bush connections, sinks a Japanese high-school fishery training ship off Hawaii, killing five adult crew and four high-school students. 1982—George Herbert [Hoover] Walker Bush denies he ever used the phrase “voodoo economics.” Then NBC plays the tape. 1971—Satchel Paige becomes the first Negro League player inducted into the Hall of Fame. 1967—New York City police arrest Charlotte Moorman for playing the cello while toppers. 1950—“I have here in my hand,” says Sen. Joe McCarthy, “the names of 205 men that were known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping the policy of the state department.” Years later he admits he held a laundry list. 1945—<i>HMS Venturer</i>, submerged, torpedoes and sinks <i>U-864</i>, also submerged, off the coast of Norway.
10:2511:00	11:0511:37	11:42	12:1312:17	12:4612:50	1:181:25	1:512:01
4:044:44	4:465:22	5:245:57	6:016:30	6:367:03	7:127:37	7:508:12
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2014—Donald Trump tells Fox “News,” “When the economy crashes, when the country goes to total hell, and everything is a disaster, then you’ll have riots to go back to where we used to be, when we were great.”

2010—Innovative tax protestor Joe Stack flies a fuel-laden Piper into the IRS Field Office in Austin, Texas, killing one other, injuring 13, and causing damage in the millions.

2003—The G.W.[MD] Bush Administration touts plastic sheeting and duct tape as a first line of defense.

1990—Benzene-laden Perrier Water is pulled from the shelves.

1968—Westmoreland, top U.S. general in Vietnam, sends a cable to the Navy’s top admiral in the Pacific. It’s a request for tactical nukes.

1962—U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers is released by the Soviet Union during a spy swap in Berlin.

1964—*HMAS Melbourne* hits *HMAS Voyager*. Cut in half, *Voyager* sinks and 82 die. It’s the first of two friendly ships *Melbourne* is destined to sink.

1936—The Supreme Court rules that corporations which publish newspapers have First Amendment rights.

1910—Five Bloomsbury Groupers, disguised as Abyssinian royalty, trick Royal Navy officers into giving them a tour of *HMS Dreadnaught*.

1355—Students at Oxford assault the mayor, leading to two days of riots. Sixty-three students are killed, along with about 30 townies.

2014—An FEC report confirms: Frank Guinta’s mom and sis say he lied about “his” \$355K.

2013—KRTV in Great Falls, Mont. announces that “the bodies of the dead are rising from their graves and attacking the living.”

2006—Dick “Dick” Cheney becomes the second sitting Vice President to shoot a man when he “peppers” his pal Harry Whittington in the face.

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.”

1990—Nelson Mandela is released from prison after 27 years.

1963—RIP Sylvia Plath.

1963—The CIA creates a “Domestic Operations Division.” What could possibly go wrong?

1937—The Great Flint, Mich. Sit-Down Strike ends in victory for the workers. Good times start to roll.

1926—The Mexican government nationalizes all church property.

1919—Emma Goldman is arrested for the crime of telling women how birth control works.

1861—The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously resolves not to interfere with slavery.

1812—Massachusetts gets “gerry-mandered” by Republican governor Elbridge Gerry.

1790—Quakers petition Congress to emancipate the nation’s slaves.

2004—*USA Today* reports that former top Texas Air National Guard officers say files were “cleansed” to protect George W.[MD] Bush.

2001—NASA lands a spacecraft on the asteroid Eros.

1999—N.H. Senators Gregg and Smith notwithstanding, the Senate finds President Clinton not guilty.

1976—The New World Liberation Front bombs Hearst Castle.

1968—LBJ puts the kibosh on Westy’s plan to nuke the... NVA.

1962—A French patrol in the Sahara happens upon Bill Lancaster, mummified, alongside his biplane, 29 years after his disappearance.

1955—The U.S. takes over training of the South Vietnamese military.

1947—Sixty protesters burn draft cards in New York City.

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.

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.

1839—The “Aroostook War” between Maine and New Brunswick begins.

1831—A solar eclipse inspires slave Nat Turner’s rebellion.

1554—Ex-Queen of England Lady Jane Grey, 16, is decapitated by order of her cousin and successor, Queen “Bloody Mary” Tudor, 17.

2013—Justice Antonin Scalia goes to his final judgment.

2008—The Senate tells the CIA to lay off the waterboarding.

2007—An Al-Qaeda tape calls George W.[MD] Bush a drunk gambler.

2002—Donald Rumsfeld’s ex-assistant Ken Adelman predicts the Iraq War will be a “cakewalk.”

1991—A super-accurate, laser-guided U.S. bomb kills some 400 Iraqi civilians in a bunker in Baghdad.

1983—Radicalized by anti-Semite Henry Ford, decorated WW II vet and anti-tax crank Gordon Kahl and his son Yorivon murder two U.S. Marshals and wound three other lawmen in a shootout near Medina, N.D.

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.

1971—After hitting three spectators with his first two shots at the Bob Hope Classic, Veep Spiro “Ted” Agnew throws down his clubs and quits.

1968—Five soldiers are busted at Ft. Jackson, S.C.; they prayed for peace.

1967—The National Student Association admits it’s received \$3 million from the CIA over 15 years.

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.

2016—With wind blowing 20 m.p.h., and the thermometer at -13°, the wind chill in Portsmouth falls to -38°.

2015—Another 18 inches of snow fall on Portsmouth, making nearly eight feet in under three weeks.

2004—The White House releases some of George W.[MD] Bush’s military records, but they fail to prove he was present for duty.

1973—The first American POWs released from North Vietnam arrive at Travis AFB, Calif.

1971—Nixon’s secret taping system is installed in the White House.

1950—A U.S. bomber crew jettisons a Mark IV nuke off British Columbia before bailing out of their burning B-36. A non-nuclear explosion ensues.

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.

1929—On St. Valentine’s Day in Chicago, a cop asks Frank “Tight Lips” Gusenberg who shot him. “Nobody,” he says, then dies.

1911—Bernard Harden “Bern” Porter, Manhattan Project scientist and Henry Miller’s first U.S. publisher, is born in northern Maine.

1884—Typhoid fever kills Teddy Roosevelt’s mother. Hours later his wife dies, two days after giving birth.

1873—Jack Gaffney is hanged for murder in Buffalo, N.Y. by Erie County Sheriff and future president Grover Cleveland.

2013—A previously unknown meteor explodes over Chelyabinsk, Russia, injuring 1,500 people.

2003—In the largest global protest ever, between 10 and 25 million people around the world denounce the coming war in Iraq.

2000—“We ought to make the pie higher,” says G.W.[MD] Bush.

1973—Nixon tells the Joint Chiefs that the return of our POWs presents “an invaluable opportunity to revise the history of this War.”

1966—CBS broadcasts reruns of “I Love Lucy” in place of Senate hearings on the conduct of the Vietnam War, prompting news chief Fred Friendly to quit in disgust.

1962—“I support Pres. Kennedy to the hilt [in Vietnam],” says Richard Nixon, “I only hope he will step up the build-up”

1944—Mistakenly believing it is full of Nazi troops, Allied bombers destroy the 1,415 year-old monastery at Monte Cassino. Fortunately its historic treasures had previously been moved to the Vatican in 100 trucks, by Nazis, accompanied by monks.

1942—Japanese attackers, though outnumbered 2 to 1 by British and Australian defenders, take Singapore. Lt. Gen. Gordon Bennett escapes. His name becomes Aussie slang for “running shoes.”

1933—An attempted assassination of FDR results in death of Chicago mayor Anton Cermak.

1982—An aide to Nancy Reagan explains that the First Lady will no longer accept “loaned” threads from big name designers because she “really just got tired of people misinterpreting what she was doing.”

1978—The first computer bulletin board goes online in Chicago.

1964—A week after security in Saigon is “tightened,” a Viet Cong bomb in an American movie theater kills 3 U.S. soldiers and wounds another 50.

1962—A two-day anti-nuclear march on Washington begins.

1959—Fidel Castro becomes Premier of Cuba.

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.

1916—Emma Goldman is busted for lecturing on birth control.

1899—French President Félix Faure has a fatal stroke while being felled in his office in the Élysée Palace.

1868—“The Jolly Gorks” change their name to “The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.”

1848—Womens’ Rights Convention, Seneca Falls, N.Y.

1818—Charles W. Brewster begins his 50-year career as a Portsmouth, N.H. newspaperman.

1804—U.S. Navy Lt. Stephen Decatur climbs aboard the captured *Philadelphia* and burns it. He’s promoted to Captain.

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