

The Fortnightly Rant

Vote Twice, Test Never

Seven weeks from Tuesday, the 2020 Presidential campaign will end. Polling stations will close, and the real fun will begin.*

We lucky Americans, we happy multitudes, trained for more than half a century by nearly-anonymous benefactors carefully crafting the slime oozin' out from our TV sets, have come to expect a dramatic election night full of brightly colored maps and lively gesticulations combining to form an arc of rising expectations, leading to a dramatic wee-hour climax.

Let us hope and pray that the current cadre of showrunners—funny how the Framers left them out of the Constitution—are up to the challenge on this occasion. If they deliver us a 20 year-old re-run, the future will make these seem like the good old days.

No contract purporting to renew the unreality-TV show “This American Carnage™” should be considered legally valid. Consider the damage done during the initial run. That was from a standing start. Whatever might survive another four years of this would not be the U.S.A.

For all the uncertainty, though, one thing seems fairly certain: no matter how the votes add up on the night of November 3rd, there's a better than even chance that the incumbent will declare victory—perhaps the greatest victory in history. There may even be fireworks over the Washington Monument. Perhaps a new statue will be unveiled in the Lincoln Memorial. To quote the would-be tyrant himself, “Who the

hell knows?”

As our previous paper went to press [so to speak], Kellyanne Conway, one of the President's closest advisors, set the tone for the fortnight. “The more chaos and anarchy and vandalism and violence reigns,” she said on Fox & Friends, “the better it is for the very clear choice on who's best on public safety and law and order.”

The next day, using Air Force One as a backdrop, El Jefe held a corona-fest at the fancifully-named Manchester-Boston Regional Airport. AP's Zeke Miller and Kevin Freking reported that “a campaign advisory said masks for attendees are ‘required’ in accordance with Republican Gov. Chris Sununu's executive orders, and would be provided.”

Judging from AP photos accompanying the article, about half of the audience may have complied. “Many in the crowd did not put their masks back on after singing the national anthem,” AP reported. “They later booed when a campaign staffer called on them to do so.” Sununu's mask orders were mocked by the crowd, but the day's featured speaker honored a lie the Governor told nearly four years ago.

On October 31, 2016, Sununu said, “The Democrats are very sly. ... (in New Hampshire) we have same day voter registration, and to be honest, when Massachusetts elections are not very close, they're busing them in all over the place.”

Nine months later Sununu lied about the lie. “I've always said,” he told NHPR on July 7, 2017, “we have no evidence of voter fraud in this state. We have none. I've never seen a bit of actual evidence of it.”

...but we digress. That's the trouble with trying to hold certain parties accountable when they lie with such abandon. We set out here to



provide an overview of the ways in which the guy with the nuclear launch code at his disposal is scheming and plotting to get another four years in which to use it. Transfixed, though, by the sight of this vast and bizarre political structure—the most grandiose thing ever built by using an architectural theory wholly dependent upon lies—we run the risk of losing the plot altogether. Where were we?

Ah, yes: a few days later—after denying last fall's visit to Walter Reed was prompted by mini-strokes in his “very, very large brain”—President Runamouth suggested that his supporters 1) vote by mail, and, 2) go to the polls. So far, so terrible. But did this administration leave it at that? Don't be silly.

CNN's Wolf Blitzer, attempting to perform his assigned, not-yet-outlawed function as a member of the Fourth Estate, did his best to clear up the confusion caused by the President. During a live ex-

change with the nation's top law enforcement officer, he asserted that “if somebody mailed in a ballot, and then actually showed up to vote in person, that would be illegal.”

“I don't know what the law in a particular state says,” Attorney General William Barr replied.

“You can't vote twice,” Blitzer said. “Well, I don't know what the law in a particular state says,” Barr reiterated, “and when that vote becomes final...”

Blitzer: “Is there any state where you can vote twice?”

Barr: “Well, if there's some... maybe you can change your vote up to a particular time? I don't know the law...”

Yes, that's becoming quite clear. The little kerfuffle over the President's suggestion that his supporters ought to get to vote twice—and Barr's attempt to reinforce it—were promptly washed from the public's brain by an article in *The Atlantic*. The President, it said, called 1,800

Marines buried at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery “losers” who were “suckers” for getting killed at Belleau Wood. The story was quickly confirmed by other news outlets. Among those corroborating it was Fox News' own intrepid Jennifer Griffin.

The furor still reverberates—so much so that another outrage involving the A.G. hasn't gained much traction. If Barr has his way, and Trump loses a court case, the U.S. taxpayer may pay damages to a woman suing the President for rape.

It takes courage these days just to glance at the headlines, now that the sky over Nancy Pelosi's Congressional district has turned the color of the President's face.

There is always the option to hide and mope. That only increases the odds of defeat, though, and heaps shame upon the survivors. As for us, we intend to continue scratching out some record of these times, however bizarre they become.

* This being the year of [good Lord] 2020, a disclaimer is required here. If the events of the past fortnight have shown us anything, it's that 3.7 fortnights hence, nearly anything could happen—or not happen. In order to publish at all, though, we are forced to make some assumptions.

The Alleged News®

Whether [We'll Survive This Term Or Not] Report

Here in New England we love to brag about rapid weather changes. Hah! We're pikers.

Monday afternoon in Denver the temperature was 93°. The weather was described by NOAA's ever-succinct web page as “Smoke.” By Tuesday morning the temperature had dropped nearly 60 degrees in 15 hours. It was 34° and snowing.

Coloradans weren't complaining about the snow, of course. It would help to counter all the smoke coming down from the Cameron Peak fire, up north. Still burning after three weeks, it had scorched 160 square miles and was still only four percent contained. The fire crews needed all the help they could get—especially after some of them came down with Covid-19. Between Cameron Peak and the Pine Gulch fire—the largest in Colorado histo-

ry—an area of that state one-third the size of our Rockingham County has burned this year.

Although the theory is still controversial in some quarters, many scientists now suspect that there may be some link between the increased frequency of extended, oppressive heat waves and the rapid oxidation of matter in the exothermic chemical process of combustion we know as fire.

Putting aside questions of scientific theory for further consideration by experts such as Dan Bongino, Newt Gingrich, and Jeanine Pirro, let us return to the safer, less controvertible matter of facts: the fires in Colorado are nothing compared to what's going on in Washington State, Oregon, and California.

Washington had done pretty well throughout the early part of this

year's fire season. Then, on Tuesday, Governor Jay Inslee tweeted, “Yesterday, 330,000 acres burned in WA. That's more than 12 of the last 18 entire fire seasons. In a single day.” Oops.

As for Oregon, some 1,228 square miles have gone up in smoke. That's Rockingham and Strafford Counties combined, with a little bit left over.

Meanwhile California has seen five of the 16 largest fires in its history this year. The total area burned covers about 3,125 square miles. That is an area 8.4 times the size of the State of New Hampshire.

It's not over yet, either. According to well-known regional weather person Eric Fisher, “Pattern ahead is no bueno for the west in an already bad wildfire season. A lot of warmth expected to dominate this month.”

White Terrorists? What White Terrorists? Robert Evans, who has covered the protests in Portland, Oregon for Bellingcat, wrote recently, “Wild that antifa lighting that trash can on fire was an objectively bigger national story than all of Oregon burning down.”

It's kind of wild, too, that the Department of Homeland Security whistleblower story seems to have vanished in the smoke of corruption pouring out of the White House.

Brian Murphy was the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis at DHS until late July, when he got demoted to a lesser position. According to Murphy's whistleblower protection complaint, Chad Wolf, the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security, and Ken Cuccinelli, whose official title is apparently “Senior Official Performing the Duties of

the Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security,” abused their authority by rewriting a Homeland Threat Assessment [HTA] because they were concerned about “how the HTA would reflect upon President Trump.” Two specific problem areas were “White Supremacy and Russian influence in the United States.”

According to Murphy's complaint, “Mr. Cuccinelli stated that Mr. Murphy needed to specifically modify the section on White Supremacy in a manner that made the threat appear less severe, as well as include information on the prominence of violent ‘left-wing’ groups. Mr. Murphy declined to make the requested modifications, and informed Mr. Cuccinelli that it would

The Alleged News®
from page one

constitute censorship of analysis and the improper administration of an intelligence program.”

“Dereliction of Duty”

U.S.P.S. Board Issues

*Gushing Praise for DeJoy
Amid Mail Slowdowns, Medicine
Delays, and Straw-Donor Scandal*
by Jake Johnson, *Common Dreams*

Brushing aside widespread alarm over mail slowdowns, prescription medicine delays, potential election sabotage, and Postmaster General Louis DeJoy’s reported role in an illegal straw-donor scheme, members of the Republican-dominated U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors on Wednesday said they are “thrilled” by DeJoy’s performance thus far as the head of America’s most popular government institution.

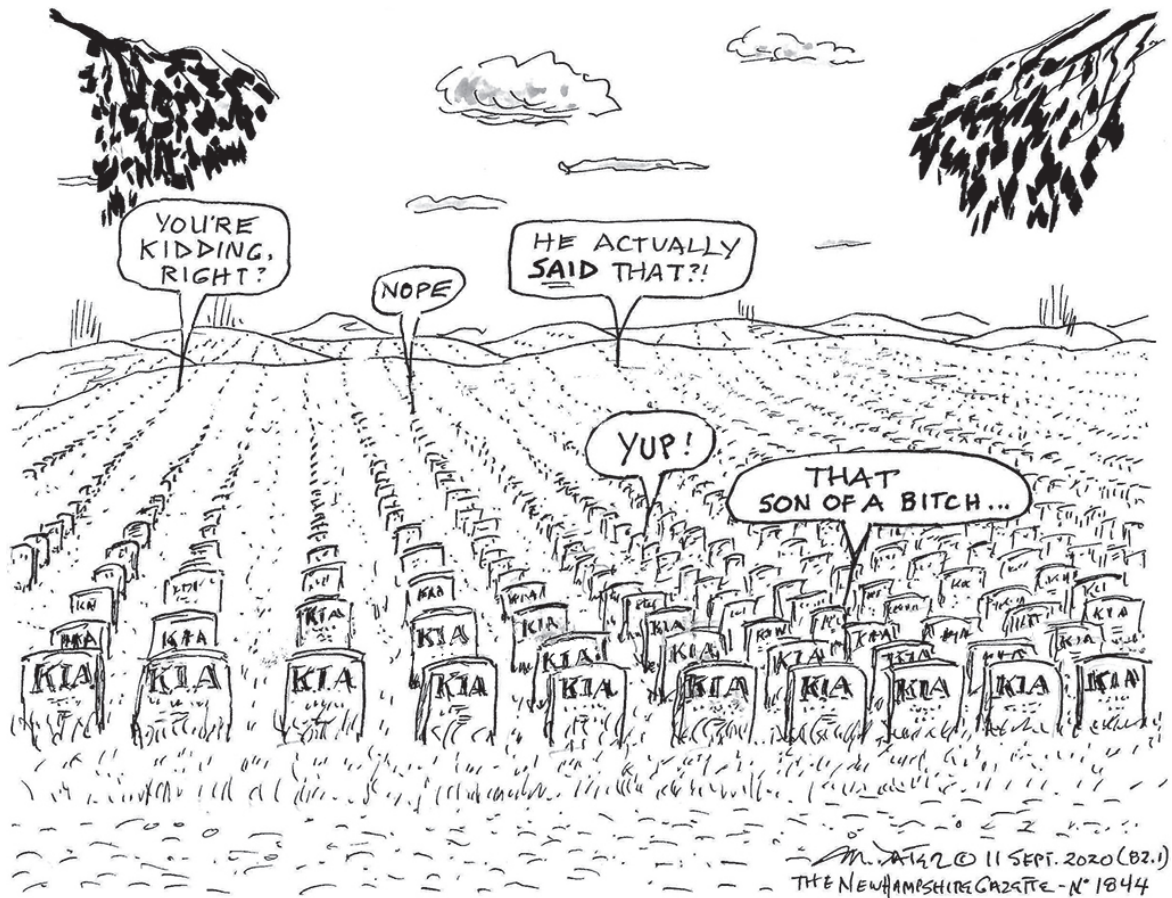
After meeting with DeJoy behind closed doors to discuss several ongoing congressional investigations into his actions as U.S.P.S. chief and

previous work as a GOP fundraising powerhouse, two Republican board members gushingly praised the postmaster general and said there are no plans to discipline him over his destructive policy changes or possible criminal actions.

“The board is tickled pink, every single board member, with the impact he’s having,” board member John Barger—who, like DeJoy, is a Republican donor—told the *Washington Post* in an interview following the private meeting. “He’s an excellent leader. He’s an excellent supply-chain logistics savant. And I’m very, very pleased with his performance since coming on board.”

William Zollars, another GOP member of the board, said DeJoy has the full support of the panel, which currently consists of four Republicans and two Democrats—all appointed by President Donald Trump. Zollars told the *Post* that DeJoy insisted during the closed-door meeting that “he feels like he has done nothing wrong.”

“From a logistics and operations standpoint, Louis DeJoy is as good



as it gets,” said Zollars. “He has support on both sides of the aisle.”

The board members’ comments drew outrage from lawmakers and watchdogs who have been urging the body to exercise its authority to remove—or, at the very least, suspend—DeJoy over policy changes that have significantly disrupted Postal Service operations just weeks ahead of an election that could be decided by mail-in ballots.

Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Government Operations, tweeted late Wednesday that “when given the opportunity to restore confidence in the U.S.P.S., the Board of Governors today chose instead to continue their dereliction of duty.”

“Mr. DeJoy’s term as Postmaster General has been defined by conflict, sabotage, incompetence and politicization,” said Connolly. “Anything short of his immediate removal is a total failure in oversight and accountability.”

The U.S.P.S. Board of Governors

unanimously appointed DeJoy—a former logistics executive with zero prior Postal Service experience—in May following a search process that Democratic lawmakers have deemed “highly irregular.”

David Williams, a former board member who resigned in protest in April, told the Congressional Progressive Caucus last month that he believes it was Barger who suggested DeJoy as a postmaster general candidate “late in the process.” Williams also alleged that Barger assisted DeJoy in job interviews with the board, helping him “finish a number of sentences where he got stuck.”

Members of the board have come under closer scrutiny in recent weeks as they’ve remained largely silent about DeJoy’s policy changes, which have altered longstanding U.S.P.S. practices and required postal workers to leave mail behind, significantly delaying package deliveries across the country.

As *Common Dreams* reported earlier this month, documents show

that Robert Duncan, the chairman of the U.S.P.S. Board of Governors, is serving on two major Republican super PACs, one of which is closely aligned with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). Duncan, the former chairman of the Republican National Committee, also briefly appeared in a GOP convention video clip in which he backs Trump’s reelection bid.

According to the *New York Times*, Republican members of the U.S.P.S. Board of Governors have “helped raise more than \$3 million” to support Trump and “hundreds of millions more for his party over the past decade.”

“It’s appalling,” Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) said of the board members’ ties to Trump and the GOP. “The Postal Service is respected and revered because it has a single job: delivering the mail, not serving the partisan interest of whoever happens to be president at the moment.”

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Portsmouth may be a bastion of Democratic voters, but, paranoid fantasies notwithstanding, the town has yet to ban pro-fascist banners. This prime example of the genre depicts Donald J. Trump, his face in a pugnacious grimace, wearing a Captain America costume. Beyond noting that one might just as plausibly kit up Florence Nightingale in a Nazi dominatrix costume, the Flag Police take no position on such ludicrous juxtapositions of disparate elements. That said, the banner also shows Trump holding an American flag. A synod will be held next month, to pore over the Flag Code in search of any applicable clauses.

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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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– Joe Keefe

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RIP David Graeber

David Graeber died on September 2nd, of natural causes, at the age of 59. As far as we can determine, he was probably the most influential person ever to have combined the politics of anarchism with the study of anthropology.

Graeber was born in 1961 to Kenneth and Ruth (Rubenstein) Graeber. They were working class, self-taught intellectuals who had taken part in the labor struggles of the 1930s. Kenneth, who fought against fascism in the Spanish Civil War, worked as a plate stripper for an offset printer. Ruth was a garment worker.

His book, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, published in 2011, will, we suspect, go down in history as the the most gripping and frequently-amusing 534-page work on economics ever written. It begins by taking a closer look at a familiar story—commonly used to introduce freshmen to the topic of economics—and demonstrates that it's fiction, with no basis in the historical, anthropological record. Money, as it

turns out, was not invented to solve the problem of the inefficiency of a barter economy, and Graeber has the receipts to prove it.

If that were all he'd accomplished, it would be more than most. He was also one of the minds behind the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement.

"Debt cancellation would not only relieve human suffering, it would also remind us that money is not ineffable, that these are human arrangements and that if democracy is going to mean anything, it is the ability to all agree to arrange things in a different way."

— David Graeber

Wicked New Hampshire

Our readers are no doubt familiar with the small volumes put out by Arcadia Publishing: generally well-edited, always profusely illustrated, and tightly focused on a particular topic. From time to time we get unsolicited copies in the mail. Recently, for example, we received *Catholic New Hampshire*, by Barbara D. Miles. We assumed it was a review copy, although we can't rule out the chance that the sender may have had some ecclesiastical intent. One day we'll take a closer look.



The red-hatted gentleman on the bench proudly told a passerby, as our Wandering Photographer was dropping off his ballot last Thursday, that he had been banned from City Hall. When the passerby asked why, he explained that it was because he refused to wear a mask. "There's no law that says I have to," he said.



Renee Mallett is a prolific writer of these works. We recently received her latest, *Wicked New Hampshire*. That one, we ate right up.

Leading New Hampshire politicians are forever going on about our First in the Nation™ Presidential Primary Election.® That's all well and good, but, one has to wonder, considering the popularity of a certain genre of TV, why is it they never tout Herman Webster Mudgett? He's the Nation's First Serial Killer, for pete's sake.

Mudgett, probably one of Gilman's least favorite sons, was a rather odd child who grew up into an exceedingly bad man. Under the alias H.H. Holmes, he became a pharmacist, with a sideline of preparing skeletal remains.

We've long been fans of the colorful Judge John Pickering, whose early legal career was co-temporaneous with our first decades of publication. A multilingual graduate of Harvard, he was destined for a great legal career—and might have had one, if not for the drink. As it was, he did attain a high level of infamy as the

first federal judge to be impeached.

We were particularly astonished to learn that the infamous English Satanist Aleister Crowley lived for a time in the Granite State. John Lovell gets his due here, too, as a scourge of the Abenaki.

Altogether, this is quite a lively, fun little book, though not for the faint-hearted, perhaps. For example, we haven't yet read the story of the murder of Josie Langmaid. That one's a little too close to home. Josie was a schoolmate of the editor's grandmother, Georgie Ann Fowle.

Sununu Silent on The Bad Spillane

There are two Jim Spillanes. They're easy to tell apart.

One is the frequent Portsmouth City Councilor and State Representative who wrote the law which put the New Hampshire Primary first.

The other one is a State Rep. from Deerfield, who posted the following message on his Facebook page:

"Public Service Announcement: If you see a BLM sign on a lawn it's the same as having the porch light on for Halloween. You're free to loot

and burn that house."

Spillane has since deleted the post, and no doubt passed it off as a joke which everyone should just get over. Governor Sununu has apparently done so, having been silent about the matter.

Spillane's sense of humor is known to be quite robust. Last summer he tweeted a photograph of small mass of gore which once was a squirrel. "I shot a squirrel on my bird feeder today with a .50 caliber muzzleloader," he wrote. "Enjoy."

Squirrel season runs from September 1st through January 1st. Spillane blasted this one into eternity in late May, 2019, so it was out of season. According to the *Union Leader*, "Spillane serves on the House Fish and Game and Marine Resources Committee and is described in his General Court biography as a 'life-long hunter' who is committed to 'preserving the great American tradition of hunting, and ensuring that the game animals and their environment remain healthy so that every future generation can enjoy hunting New Hampshire.'"

Murph's Fortnightly Quote

"I just invent, then wait until man comes around to needing what I've invented."

— R. Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983)
author, designer, inventor

"The truth knocks on the door and you say, 'Go away, I'm looking for the truth,' and so it goes away. Puzzling."

— Robert Pirsig

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"Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

— Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

— Not-So-Random Thoughts from an Oregon Subscriber

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Fear Is All Trump Has
Dear Sir:
Fear is a very powerful emotion, one that causes otherwise rational people to make irrational decisions. No one knows this better than Donald Trump and the Republican Party. They have used fear for decades to get voters to support them. The Lee Atwater/Willie Horton ads against Michael Dukakis, in the George H.W. Bush Presidential campaign in 1988, were very effective in getting people to vote for Mr. Bush.

Now, in 2020, Donald Trump is using fear to sway the election in his favor. Considering that he has no other accomplishment to run on, fear is the only tool available to him. He cannot run on a successful economy with very high unemployment. He cannot run on fiscal responsibility with a doubling of the budget deficit and adding trillions of dollars to the national debt. He cannot run on a coordinated, effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic. He cannot run on an administration of high ethics and family values, considering all his associates convicted of crimes and his own sexual misconduct. He cannot run on a policy of uniting the nation and managing racial injustice and police brutality. He cannot run on an effective foreign policy that has strengthened our alliances and weakened our enemies. He cannot run on a policy that has improved our environmental quality and education systems. No, the only thing Donald Trump has to run on is fear—fear that has been magnified as a result of the failures of the Trump Administration.

As FDR stated in the 1930s, “the only thing we have to fear, is fear itself.” Donald Trump has been the major cause of the fear that currently grips the nation. Allowing him to benefit from the chaos and fear he has created is not the solution, but a guarantee of even more chaos, fear, and worse.

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

Rich:
It's no wonder his strategy—such as it is—is entirely fear-based. Somewhere inside that bloated, self-aggrandized exterior is Fred Trump's abused and terri-

fied child. We'd pity him, if he weren't an existential threat to life on earth. As it is, we just say, "Lock him up."
The Editor

Trump Shows His True Self
Dear Editor:

Really, Trump shows his true self often. It is not the rosied-up self from Republican Convention time, with its hype, through to November 3rd voting. I just came across Trump's true self in an Oct. 19, 2017, news article, found while cleaning around my computer. True Trump shows in gone-public interaction with the widow of Sgt. La David T. Johnson, killed in an ambush in Nigeria. Trump called and told Myeshia Johnson, “He knew what he signed up for,” and called her husband, “your guy.” Sgt. Johnson's mother called the President “disrespectful.” Trump characterized the exchange as “a very nice conversation.” He does glossing often. There's what actually happened, and also how he recalls it. Also in the article is the bad temper Trump aimed at Sen. John McCain.

In July of 2018, Trump believed Putin over our U.S. intelligence agencies on 2016 election meddling. (We hear now about that criminal behavior repeating). Trump publicly vouched for President Putin's sincerity because Putin denied meddling. Trump believers—do you see yourselves as Russia-lovers?

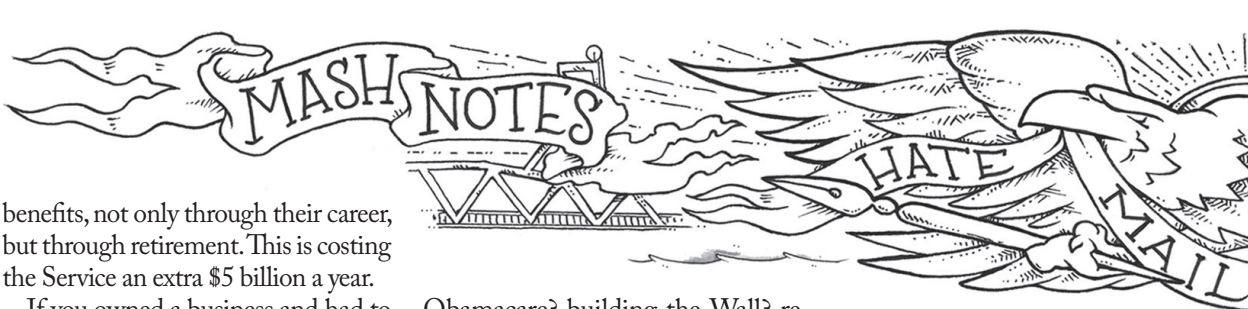
Trump not only fudges reality, he's also a sucker. Time for this dangerous embarrassment to be out of our White House.

Lynn Rudmin Chong
Sanbornton, N.H.

Lynn:
During the Cold War, Republicans loved to call anyone to the left of Richard Nixon a “useful idiot”—meaning, a dupe of the Kremlin. Now they're blind to this guy.
The Editor

Vandalizing the U.S.P.S.
To the Editor:

In 2006, in an attempt to strangle the Postal Service financially, Congress mandated the Service to prefund each employee's health and retirement



benefits, not only through their career, but through retirement. This is costing the Service an extra \$5 billion a year.

If you owned a business and had to prepay 40-plus years of health insurance premiums, plus their pension, as soon as you hired someone, would you add an employee or ask your current employees to work some overtime? For the most part the Postal Service has found it less expensive to pay overtime.

Now we come to the current situation. A Trump-appointed Postal Board of Governors, headed by someone who raised almost \$500 million for the GOP, picked another major donor to the GOP to be CEO of the Postal Service. He ordered a near-end to overtime, and told managers, if you cannot get the mail out on time, leave it behind. This isn't just mail-in ballots. It is your letters, medications, checks, packages, and everything else people and businesses depend upon the Service to deliver.

If you want the Postal Service to remain a reliable service tell Congress to protect it today.

Walter Hamilton
Portsmouth, N.H.

Walter:
It is of course nothing less than despicable for Republicans to attempt to destroy an institution—created by the Founding Fathers, whom they claim to venerate—the purpose of which was to bring the nation together. But, since they're post-Eisenhower Republicans, that's to be expected.

It's the Democrats' acquiescence to this vandalism, dating right back to the passage of the bill in 2006, that drives us to a state of near-apoplexy.
The Editor

The Views of Trump Supporters
To the Editor:

The Republican convention has shown how Trump's supporters see him: as keeping promises (replacing

Obamacare? building the Wall? rebuilding infrastructure?), as a strong “law and order” leader (“dominating” the streets—except in Charlottesville).

They say cops have gunned down whites as well as Blacks, so the George Floyd incident was overblown. They say since the virus kills mostly old people, it's “a lot less severe” than initially feared—no reason to shut down bars or mass gatherings, or to wear masks.

They dismiss as “irrelevant” aspects of Trump's character that make him unfit for office. They say we should take his bullying and lying with a grain of salt. All politicians lie, they say. Evangelicals overlook his moral lapses since he opposes abortion.

But let's see the facts. Trump has shattered the norms of presidential behavior with racist tweets and divisive policies, taking lying to a new level, using federal agencies to advance personal interests, appointing corrupt “interim” officials, decrying the press as “enemy of the people,” undermining confidence in government agencies, science, and the validity of our votes.

His delay, then denial of any responsibility, in addressing the pandemic cost many thousands of lives that might have been spared had he displayed the leadership expected of a President. And his inaction brought the economy, which had been continuing its Obama growth, to its knees.

Yet he says he is our protector. How would he handle the next pandemic?

Don Nolte
Exeter, N.H.

Don:
We make every effort to remain calm and optimistic, but the situation you hypothesize—another, different pandemic, during a Trump second term—that's giving us the fantods.
The Editor

The View from Europe
To the Editor:

In 1956, during the Hungarian revolution against the communist regime, my family escaped and went on to live in the U.S.A. and we all became naturalized citizens. I still recall what my mother used to say about the daily life under the authoritarian regime in Hungary. She said that it made her and many others extremely mad regarding the blatant propaganda and obvious lies that government officials and government-controlled newspapers repeatedly stated. She said that authorities would look directly at you and still make the most outrageous falsehoods, similar to someone standing in front of a white wall and claiming it was black, thereby totally insulting the intelligence of their citizens.

We all thought that in a democracy such as in the U.S. this could not happen. Well, I now believe that we were absolutely wrong. Watching the video shown on the first day of the 2020 Republican National Convention, in which they claimed that only the Democrats, Nancy Pelosi, Joe Biden, Andrew Cuomo and others, downplayed the dangers of the Covid-19 virus, while President Trump “immediately” took action to ensure that this pandemic would be quickly and successfully restricted, felt like a déjà vu.

How ridiculous can it get, considering that already over 183,000 Americans have died, and the pandemic continues to rage uncontrolled in many States. That video would be a laughing stock if it weren't dealing with such a sad episode.

I am fortunate that my family currently lives in a country where its federal government has actually shown true leadership in trying to handle the

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epidemic, and I can ensure everyone that it completely contrasts with the chaotic way Trump and his administration have mis-managed it in the U.S. Don't just believe there was a black wall in the background of that video. Think for yourself, and then you probably will come to the conclusion that that wall was in fact white.

Dr. Imre Somssich
Cologne, Germany
Imre:

We can only imagine the horror Europeans of a certain age must feel as they watch events unfold over here.

The Editor

=====
[**Note:** This fortnight we received several letters which shared two characteristics: they were written in support of the same candidate, but arrived too late to be published in advance of the election. We're going to publish two of them anyway. They won't be able to influence primary election voters, but they illuminate structural problems in the governance of this state—problems that are unlikely to be solved by Hereditary Governor Sununu Two, or any other members of his party. —The Ed.]

=====
Volinsky vs. The N.H. Disadvantage
To the Editor:

Recently, a high-school classmate was telling some friends that her daughter was upset that their soccer coach quit; they were offered more money by a wealthier town. We come from a small town with relatively lower incomes and home values, thus—limited resources for our school. Though we are far from the worst affected, we are affected. Andru Volinsky's been talking about this problem for decades. It's unfair that the quality of education varies depending on zip code.

Another friend pointed out that

this was only one of many issues due to limited resources. Wealthier towns have an abundance of academic options, extracurriculars, and sports that poorer towns can't afford for their students. Poorer towns can't fund the salaries or number of teachers needed to offer choices beyond core instruction, nor provide more than a few extracurriculars. Meanwhile, wealthier towns offer dozens. For example, wealthier towns offer multiple languages. Our town only offers one.

Poorer towns' athletic programs are smaller, and have fewer choices and coaches. Last year our school wasn't able to offer basketball or tennis, as they have before. Meanwhile, wealthier towns offer wrestling, lacrosse, football, and more, that we never have.

The offerings and resources available to students in wealthier towns enrich their lives today. Less recognized is that they increase opportunities for scholarships and college acceptance for wealthier kids, leaving poorer ones further disadvantaged. Equitable education shouldn't depend on zipcode.

Every kid deserves a good, fairly funded education

Please, vote for Andru Volinsky on September 8th.

David Holt
Somersworth, N.H.

=====
Volinsky—A Great Democratic Governor
To the Editor:

The Democratic primary for Governor has two outstanding candidates with very different talents. While it will not be easy to defeat Governor Sununu in the General Election, I believe that Andru Volinsky is the one who would be the strongest Democratic candidate.

In all honesty, I believe that Governor Sununu has done a good job managing the virus pandemic in New

Hampshire. However, he has also bypassed all manner of accountability and oversight by claiming that under his emergency powers he is allowed to do so. That emergency must end, because New Hampshire can manage the virus pandemic in a collaborative manner with both the Executive and the Legislature being involved, provid-

House, while other proposals were soundly defeated. He has refused to work with the Democratic majorities in both the House and the Senate, fearing reprisals by the right-wing faction of his own party. So, his mode of operation has been to create a stalemate on some issues and to block others, so that New Hampshire falls even further behind our New England neighbors. Whether on family and medical leave insurance, a minimum wage, renewable energy, social justice issues, gun-violence safety issues or joining with other New En-

Soup Can Blues

Our president says the left-wing mob are throwing soup cans at our cops instead of bricks. Easier to throw, and if you're caught, you can always say you're only trying to feed the kids.

It's true that you can get a better grip on Campbell's Cream of Mushroom or Progresso Italian Style Wedding than you're going to get on a brick, and a can's more aerodynamic, too.

But what's all this about soup? What's the matter with baked beans, canned peaches, pineapple chunks, Chef Boyardee Spaghetti O's? Surely hungry kids'll eat that stuff.

Or even tuna fish? Those little cans, like flat stones or silver dollars, man, you'd get some wicked speed with those, like throwing fastballs at a batter's head. Cruising the aisles of a looted grocery

store, the possibilities are endless: Armour Star, Amy's Organic, Wild Planet. That's the trouble with our president: he can't tell the truth to save his ass, and still has no imagination.

— W.D. Ehrhart

ing the needed accountability.

Beyond the pandemic, Governor Sununu has accomplished very little. Most of his own agenda never got past the Republican members of the

gland states to dramatically reduce our energy dependency and improve our transportation infrastructure, this Governor is missing in action.

Mr. Volinsky has regularly taken

on tough tasks. As a lawyer he has argued before the U.S. Supreme Court and won, and was the lead lawyer in the Claremont adequate educational funding lawsuit, which the state of New Hampshire lost—and has still not fully complied. He is running for Governor to reduce the property tax burden. As an Executive Councilor, he has frequently refused questionable contracts submitted by the Governor, as well as rejecting unqualified candidates for appointment. He knows the Governor well from these interactions and will be a formidable candidate.

It is my pleasure to endorse Andru Volinsky for New Hampshire Governor.

Peter Somssich
N.H. Rep., District 27
Portsmouth, N.H.

=====
Lab Meat—Taste of the Future!
To the Editor:

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden released a \$2 trillion climate plan that won praise from the previously-critical Sunrise Movement. Unfortunately, so far as I'm aware, the plan does not include funding for cultured-meat research. For those who don't know, cultured meat is grown from cells, without slaughtering animals. It requires a fraction of the greenhouse-gas emissions that raising livestock does.

Dr. Mark Post created the first cultured-beef hamburger in 2013. It cost a whopping \$280,000. Soon, he thinks, that price could be reduced to \$10. Still, more research is required to make cultured meat economically viable. Politicians who hope to prevent climate change, like Biden, should support this goal, because animal agriculture is one of the most significant contributors to global warming.

Jon Hochschartner
Granby, Conn.

Jon:
Please don't be offended by the less-than-reverent heading we put above your letter. Consider it an attempt by a stodgy old coot, struggling to come to grips

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

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“The New Hampshire Advantage”—But, For Whom?

by Jean Stimmell

Ray Duckler recently wrote a disturbing column in the *Concord Monitor* about Pittsfield, one of New Hampshire’s property-poor towns, struggling to provide an adequate education for their kids. He quotes one of Pittsfield’s high school students, who addressed the Senate last summer: “every year, we’re set up to lose more and more, and at some point, there’s just going to be nothing left.”

I have many fond memories from attending Pittsfield High School many years ago and received, at that time, an education good enough to get into Columbia. But, over the years, our educational system has become increasingly unequal, hamstringing property-poor towns, increasingly unable to raise enough money to provide quality education, despite paying sky-high property taxes.

While it is gratifying that our nation is finally facing up to a history of gross discrimination in many areas like race, gender, and religion, no one talks about class: Class remains the third rail, shunned by polite company. But the truth is, it’s

the poor and working-class in these towns who get hurt the worst. Our leaders have betrayed them.

The situation goes beyond improving education. With bipartisan support, the legislature has tried to start leveling the playing field by mandating a livable wage (our current minimum of \$7.25 is a joke), affordable daycare, family leave, things like that. But Governor Sununu has vetoed every bill.

Now Covid-19 has magnified these already existing inequities. Sure, perhaps you are doing okay if you are working at home, still earning your old salary with benefits, yet still faced with the dilemma of whether to send your kids to school—or not. You might be okay if you are retired with a decent pension or IRA.

But what about the bulk of our residents who suffer from financial insecurity,¹ or the 40 percent who don’t have enough savings to pay for a \$400 car repair?² What about those laid off from jobs that may never come back and the health insurance that disappeared with it?

Or what about our fellow citizens still squeaking by on poorly-paid, essential jobs, worried first and fore-

most about getting Covid; and second, if school doesn’t open, will they keep their job or quit to homeschool the kids?

Without a functioning government or personal wealth, what do you do?

First of all, don’t vote for Chris Sununu. Yeah, I know he seems to be an affable guy. And, yes, he has done a pretty good job managing the Covid pandemic. But the heart of the matter is, he is the last in a long line of prominent politicians, anointed by the *Union Leader* to take the pledge, promising to ax the tax on rich people.

View Governor Sununu for what he really is: CEO of Club New Hampshire, a resort catering to the well-to-do and big business owners. The famed “New Hampshire Advantage” gives members a fantastic benefit, unsurpassed by any other state: all club fees are waived. No income taxes will ever be deducted from their bulging pocketbooks.

Without question, that’s the most unfair aspect of our tax system. It puts all the burden on those who can least afford it. And it did not happen by accident. Previous legislatures have consistently voted to increase

taxes that affect the working class. Working people in New Hampshire now pay four times as much of their income in state and local taxes than our wealthiest residents.³

Covid-19 only sweetens the pot for Sununu’s Club. Fat cats nationwide are fleeing congested cities to move to New Hampshire for its rural character and unspoiled lakes and mountains. They are snapping up high-end real estate within surroundings they are accustomed to: high value, property-rich towns, populated with fellow high-income families. Poor towns like Pittsfield and Franklin, as usual, are left out in the cold.

Of course, part of New Hampshire’s charm for these new-comers is not having to pay income tax. Even before Covid, our state had the seventh-highest percentage of U.S. millionaires, making up eight percent of all households.⁴

As Duckler illustrates so well in his column, working folks, particularly in poor towns, are getting screwed: Paying an exorbitant four times as much of their income in taxes as the rich, yet treated like a skunk at a garden party by Governor Sununu, servant of his privileged

class patrons.

1 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/donnafusco/2019/11/15/most-americans-struggling-financially-despite-the-strong-economy/#3b1af9404b6b>
2 <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/07/20/heres-why-so-many-americans-cant-handle-a-400-unexpected-expense.html>
3 http://www.faireconomy.org/new_hampshire_capital_gains_and_estate_tax_amendments
4 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/294941/largest-ratio-millionaire-households-per-capita-us/>

Jean Stimmell publishes his writings and photographs at <https://jeanstimmell.blogspot.com/>.

[A Note to Any Irate Readers: Yes, we know Governor Merrill, originator of the phrase, “The New Hampshire Advantage,” died last Saturday. No, we are not publishing this in some cheap, mean-spirited effort to speak ill of the dead. Mr. Stimmell offered us this piece on Saturday morning, September 5th, and we accepted it immediately—at least six hours before we learned of Merrill’s demise. — The Ed.]

from page five

with a future that’s weirder than he’d ever imagined.

The Editor

Don’t Trust Casella

Dear Editor:

Like a snake oil salesman come to town, representatives of Casella Waste Systems arrived in the Town of Dalton on August 31st to deliver Host Community Agreement documents and a contract relative to its proposed “Granite State Landfill” (yes, next to Forest Lake and Forest Lake State Park).

Like a modern-day Cassandra, I would like to offer a warning to the Town of Dalton: Beware of this



“gift” from Casella Waste Systems, for like the predicted Fall of ancient Troy that fell on deaf ears, I have spent much of my time trying to warn the Town of Dalton and the North Country of the dangers to come. We will be forced to suffer thru the very same “impacts” that Casella cites within the pages of the HCA: pollution of groundwater, surface water and air, as well as noise, odor, and visual impacts, wildlife access, increased truck traffic, and declining property values. Don’t believe me? They are all listed right there in the documents presented

to the town. Why would they list them? Because Casella acknowledges that these are the impacts borne of a landfill within any community. Those same impacts have been suffered by other host communities from Bethlehem, right next door, to numerous communities from New York to Maine. Look it up, that’s the beauty of the internet, there’s so much data out there about this very controversial company.

However, I must warn that, like a snake oil salesman peddling his wares, this is a company that is not

to be trusted. If we are to learn anything from the long and well-documented history of Casella Waste Systems, it is that they violate agreements when it suits their financial needs. They have been sued numerous times for breach of contract, and they are a very litigious company. Once they get a foot in the door, they will use their wealth to sue the Town of Dalton into submission if there is any opposition to their operations and plans. Bottom line, I would advise the Town of Dalton to never enter into a contract with this company.

The fact that Casella representatives came to this board meeting to present the HCA documents/contract, but failed to submit a town zoning application, speaks volumes. To so blatantly disrespect the wishes of the citizens of Dalton by bringing forth a contract to be signed, with promises of financial benefits to commence thereafter, should tell you something. The HCA contract is nothing more than an attempt to enter into negotiations for an agreement between the Town of Dalton and Casella Waste Systems and to skirt our zoning ordinance in its entirety. The details in the HCA documents and the contract do not matter in the least, frankly. The wording in the documents is very

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CEO tricksters cut their pay without bleeding

by Jim Hightower

Covid-19 has been a doubly-deadly disaster for millions of Americans, destroying both life and livelihoods. But one of the most heartening responses to the crisis has come from the least-expected place: Corporate executive suites.

This spring, numerous CEOs made headlines by showing some class solidarity. If we're having to wallop our workers because of a pandemic, these bosses told media interviewers, the least we can do is

cut our own salaries. Yes—all in this together!

Only...not really. An analytical firm looked at the books of nearly all major U.S. corporations, finding that a mere fraction had made any cuts to senior executive pay, and the few that did only made little nicks in the boss' take-home, rather than real cuts.

The trick is that the "sacrifices" only applied to official salaries. They are the tiniest part of a chief executive's compensation, which mostly is made up of bonuses, stock options,

&c. For example, United Airlines, which is presently zeroing out the paychecks of 36,000 workers, docked its CEO's salary by nearly a third—sounds like a real gesture, but that works out to less than three percent of the \$22 million he's getting in total pay. So middle-income workers get the boot, while the boss still has his job, gets more than \$21 million in annual pay, and claims bragging rights for being an "ethical" corporate chieftain.

The ethical crime here is not merely in the cynical fudging of

numbers, but that even in this unprecedented time of national crisis, the elites who've converted capitalism into a system of plutocratic plunder still feel entitled to cheat.

If a nation's economic system doesn't care about shared sacrifice in hard times and shared prosperity in good times, why should the majority who pay the price and are denied the gains care about that economic system?

~~~~~  
*"As the Pandemic Forced Layoffs, C.E.O.s Gave Up Little," nytimes.*

com/2020/07/29/business/economy/ceo-pay-pandemic-layoffs.html, July 29, 2020.

~~~~~  
 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 *Hightower-Lowdown.org*.



from page six

similar to the 2012 Agreement and the 2018 MOU signed by Casella with the Town of Bethlehem. This HCA and the recently-sent abut-ter notice *confirm* that Casella is in *violation* of those two agreements with Bethlehem! (Will Bethlehem enforce its own zoning?) Therefore, it does not matter what the terms of the HCA contract spell, for Casella will violate those terms when it suits them. Like Bethlehem, the Town of Dalton will either be forced to surrender entirely to Casella or spend much time and treasure battling them in court. Do not let them gain a foothold.

As someone who has spent the past year and a half researching the history of this company, I would advise the Town of Dalton to not waste time or legal expenses on the submitted HCA documents. Rather, I would insist that Casella submit the appropriate documentation, in the form of a zoning application, requiring town approval. Casella knows it will never get that, due to the very impacts they list in the HCA, thus the purposeful omission of the zoning application. Following that, I would advise the Town of Dalton to simply *never* enter into a contract with Casella Waste Systems. Let the state of New Hampshire try to force us to be host to a *second* landfill within our boundaries. (Hey, there's an idea, perhaps a counter-offer to Casella to purchase the old town landfill from Dalton and create a "state of the art" landfill



there!). Otherwise, history is a great predictor of things to come and Dalton has been warned.

Jon Swan
Dalton, N.H.

~~~~~ Imprisonment During the Pandemic is Unconstitutional Cruel and Unusual Punishment

by William Cooper

The Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. It states: "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."

The Supreme Court has construed "cruel and unusual punishments" to include certain forms of torture, such as drawing and quartering. Yet the Court has allowed the death penalty—which is still legal in dozens of states—to continue, with some restrictions. In sum, the Eighth Amendment prohibits criminal punishments that are very harmful to prisoners and also rare or unprecedented.

Right now, over two million inmates sit locked inside U.S. prisons, where the novel coronavirus is rapidly spreading. They are confined in close quarters and typically unable to practice physical distancing. They are, moreover, at the mercy of prison officials when it comes to receiving protective equipment and medical attention. A huge percentage of

these prisoners will continue to be infected by the virus. A subset of those infected will get severe symptoms. And a subset of those with severe symptoms will die. Each and every inmate will suffer the torment of not knowing where she or he will ultimately fit into that equation.

Is confining people under these deadly and unprecedented conditions cruel and unusual punishment? Put another way: Is imprisonment during the coronavirus very harmful to prisoners and also unprecedented? Yes, of course.

What, then, should the authorities do when a punishment becomes cruel and unusual not by an affirmative act of the state but instead by a global pandemic?

The wholesale release of all prisoners is obviously not a practical option. Among other concerns, the risk to public safety of such an approach—which would include setting free individuals convicted of violent offenses and even murder—is too great. And the political opposition to such a drastic move would be immense.

At the same time, taking only incremental steps is not viable either. Those in charge of federal and state prisons must recognize not just the grave health risks to prisoners and the moral imperative to protect them, but also the constitutional implications of their confinement.

The Eighth Amendment prohibits this harrowing situation from continuing. Government officials must accordingly do a full court press to alleviate virus-induced pain and suffering in prisons. They must optimize the balance between public safety on the one hand and protecting the lives and constitutional rights of prisoners on the other.

Releasing non-violent offenders is a necessary and fundamental part of this process. Some prisons have done so. But the scope and speed of the releases must immediately and dramatically increase.

The Supreme Court has explained that the Eighth Amendment "must draw its meaning from the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society." Only an immature and indecent society would casually leave vulnerable citizens—even those convicted of crimes—within the close quarters of a prison in the midst of a global pandemic.

The coronavirus is cruel. It is also unusual. And sitting in prison waiting to be infected is cruel and unusual punishment. We need to aggressively release nonviolent prisoners on a broad scale across the country. Now.

~~~~~  
*William Cooper is an attorney and columnist who has written for The Wall Street Journal, Baltimore Sun, and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.*

*"And here were these freemen assembled in the early morning to work on their lord the bishop's road three days each—gratis.... Why, it was like reading about France and the French, before the ever memorable and blessed Revolution, which swept a thousand years of such villany away in one swift tidal-wave of blood—one: a settlement of that hoary debt in the proportion of half a drop of blood for each hogshead of it that had been pressed by slow tortures out of that people in the weary stretch of ten centuries of wrong and shame and misery the like of which was not to be mated but in hell. There were two 'Reigns of Terror,' if we would but remember it and consider it; the one wrought murder in hot passion, the other in heartless cold blood; the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon ten thousand persons, the other upon a hundred millions; but our shudders are all for the 'horrors' of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak; whereas, what is the horror of swift death by the axe, compared with lifelong death from hunger, cold, insult, cruelty, and heart-break? What is swift death by lightning compared with death by slow fire at the stake? A city cemetery could contain the coffins filled by that brief Terror which we have all been so diligently taught to shiver at and mourn over; but all France could hardly contain the coffins filled by that older and real Terror—that unspeakably bitter and awful Terror which none of us has been taught to see in its vastness or pity as it deserves."*

—Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

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