

# Northern Neck Sentinel™

## The Voice of The People

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Volume 8 - Edition 3 - April 2025

FREE TAKE ONE



### A SAFE HAVEN FOR VETERANS AND J6ERS

Tom Jeffries  
On March 31st, 2025

I had the privilege of touring a portion of the Legacy Imperial Village residential facility in the Bellevue neighborhood of Richmond, VA. My guides were Adam Villareal and Brian Mock who are both pardoned J-Sixers. They are working closely with Josh Macias of On Your Six Foundation (OY6) to provide the groundwork and a Safe Haven for homeless Veterans, First Responders, and now J-Sixers.

In fact, the idea of pairing Veterans and J-Sixers together makes perfect sense notes Adam as “they often are working through Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



Former Detainee Robert Morss Exposes Brutalities


### NNRJ IN FULL COVERUP MODE

### CLOSED SESSION HELD TO LIMIT PUBLIC COMMENTS AT MEETINGS

John Haynes Jr.

As I have written as recently as last month’s edition, when the first group of J6 detainees arrived at the Northern Neck Regional Jail (NNRJ) in November of 2021 there were no suspicions of abuse until several months later when detainees began speaking out at the weekly vigils conducted in the park-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Local Attorney Patrick O'Brien Addresses School Malfeasance in May of 2021

### SCHOOL SCANDALS EMERGE IN NORTHUMBERLAND AND ESSEX

John Haynes, Jr.

Over the last couple of months long simmering problems in Northumberland and Essex counties have resulted in investigations, resignations and a call to do away with the elected school board in Northumberland as taxpayers and Supervisors alike are fed up with poor performance, arrogance and rank incompetence in our public schools.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



(L to R) Former President Obama, Former President Biden, Former House Speaker Pelosi and Senate Leader Schumer [Photo Credit: reporter.am]

### THE LEFT KNEW THEY WERE LYING TO US ALL ALONG

Victor Davis Hanson

For years, the left has advanced utter untruths for cheap partisan purposes that it knew at the time were all false. And now when caught, they just shrug and say they were lying all along.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22




Image: AT via Magic Studio

### WE CAN CURE DEMOCRACY, BUT CAN WE CURE STUPID?

Eliot Pattison

After four long years during which our democracy was under constant peril, one might say the November election cured that crisis, at least for now, returning the American voter and American values to center stage. Zealots of the Left, however, continue their tired chorus of accusation and cancellation. It

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



U.S. Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., with Sens. Patty Murray, D-Wash., Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., (2nd L) Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, and Ron Wyden, D-Ore., (R)

### DEMOCRATS IMplode, SHAMEFULLY BLAMING OTHERS

Craig Shirley

The legendary Vince Lombardi, once said, “You don’t win once in a while; you don’t do things right once in a while; you do them right all of the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.”

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# Observations



John Haynes Jr., Editor

## EGGS, GAS AND RATES DROP BUT THE LIARS JUST KEEP ON LYING

Barely a month into the Trump Administration the scaremongers of the far left and the Democrat Party (or do I repeat myself?) began sounding the alarm about the sky-high price of eggs and gas as well as high interest rates, claiming that the beleaguered American middle class, whom they despise, were in desperate straits.

In late February Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer addressed the Senate, saying, in part:

"Far too many families across New York – and across the country, far too many – have been shell-shocked by higher egg prices as more bird flu outbreaks continue to happen.

But so far, it seems President Trump has not announced a plan to address the bird flu outbreak. He has spent his first week pardoning insurrectionists and firing the government's watchdogs instead of focusing on things ordinary Americans care about, like the price of groceries.

The President owes the American people some answers: what is he going to do about the price of eggs exacerbated by bird flu? When hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of chickens die, they lay fewer eggs, and when there are fewer eggs, price goes up."

What the good senator failed to note was the fact that the soaring cost of eggs, gas and interest were caused by four years of brain-dead policies by the Biden Administration. Despite that, everything was Donald Trump's fault despite the fact that he had just taken the reins of a failing country.

And then the inevitable happened. Due to a variety of factors such as impending tax cuts, foreign investment and soaring public sentiment the prices and interest rates began to plummet. All of this was covered by Forbes, the highly regarded financial analysts, in a series of March articles.

According to a March 18th article in Forbes: "Egg prices, which hit a record high of \$8.17 per dozen in early March

2025, have since dropped rapidly to \$4.90 per dozen within a week, marking one of the sharpest declines in recent history."

In another Forbes article published March 10th reporter Molly Bohnannon states: "The average price of gasoline in the U.S. dropped for the third straight week, falling to \$3.03 per gallon, according to GasBuddy—reaching the lowest average price for the month of March since 2021, as analysts cite uncertainty over the state of the economy, including President Donald Trump's tariffs."

To finish off the trifecta of good news Forbes published an article on March 5th, stating, in part: "Mortgage rates declined last week to their lowest level of 2025, according to a Mortgage Bankers Association survey released Wednesday morning, providing some relief for prospective home buyers beleaguered by years of high rates, though the impetus for cheaper mortgages is not exactly welcome news for consumers."

So, with this sudden influx of good news you would think that Chuck Schumer would be ecstatic over the overwhelmingly positive outlook for the middle class. You would be mistaken.

Schumer treated the economic surge with utter silence, as though it had never happened while privately bemoaning the good news as depicted in the cartoon accompanying this editorial. His phony talking points had been demolished so he did what lying liars always do. He pretended that it never happened and then launched into another fact free diatribe about the impending stock market collapse.

In early April President Trump announced a series of tariffs to level the playing field with other countries that have been exploiting us financially for decades. He predicted that there would be a rough period as the markets adjusted to the new situation but assured the nation that it would be temporary and compared it to an operation that may cause temporary discomfort in order to save your life.

Predictably enough, the markets dropped as they always do during periods of uncertainty and Schumer was ready to pounce. In an early April article in MSN the case against Trump was stated as follows: "Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer slammed Donald Trump on Friday, claiming he went to play golf while markets continued to crash as a result of his tariffs.

"While we're here doing all of this, it's my understanding that Donald Trump is out at a golf course," Schumer told press. "Now I don't know if



he's playing today or if he's caddying for somebody. I don't know if anyone trusts him to caddy, but that's what he's up to," he added."

As I finish this editorial on April 7th I have a bold prediction. By the time our May edition is published the stock market will have stabilized as surging foreign investment, dropping interest rates and sound monetary policy ignite a resurgence of the American economy.

I also have one other prediction. The liars will just keep on lying.

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**SCHOOL SCANDAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

The uproar in Northumberland County has been building over the past four years and first started gaining public attention in 2021. In our June, 2021 edition we published an article where local attorney Patrick O'Brien publically challenged the School Board and accused them of "fraud and malfeasance". His remarks, as reported in our June, 2021 edition, included the following:

"Mr. O'Brien began by noting that his remarks were meant for not only the Board but for the County Attorney. He first objected to Board of Supervisors and the School Board being referred to as coequal. "By law and by fact that is not true," he noted. He also pointed out that, if this were not true, "then why are all these people in this room asking for more money?"

Mr. O'Brien then referred to an agreement between the two Boards the previous spring that the teachers would not receive a pay raise until December so that the financial impact of the Covid Crisis could be gauged. Despite that, the School Board granted the raise in August without consulting the Supervisors. He also noted that these types of things had occurred repeatedly.

Mr. O'Brien also cited an example where the School Board had suggested to the Planning Commission that they wanted to hire an additional custodian and "That they were going to seek the approval of the Board of Supervisors." He later learned that this person had already been hired and was on the payroll before he met with Superintendent. "I find this fiscal recklessness utterly appalling," he added.

He then directed his remarks to County Attorney Gregory. Citing the Code of Virginia definition of fraud, he read it aloud: "Fraud means the intentional deception perpetrated by an individual or individuals or an organization or organizations by either internal or external local government that could result in tangible or intangible benefit to themselves, others or the locality or could cause a detriment to others. Fraud includes a false representation of a matter of fact whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading statements or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed which deceives and is intended to deceive."

Mr. O'Brien then directly asked the County Attorney if the two incidents which he had just described constituted fraud within the meaning of the statute. The County Attorney did not immediately respond and Mr. O'Brien thanked the Board and returned to his seat."

There was a total of 22 people who spoke at the



*District 1 School Board Member Dana O'Bier*

meeting, mostly school employees lobbying for raises and better benefits, but the most outspoken was School Board member Dana O'Bier, who is by far the most arrogant and entitled School Board member in recent memory. Should you have any doubts, here is a sampling of her comments:

"The next speaker was School Board member Dana O'Bier. After introducing herself she defiantly stated: "I'm not clear how the School Board is in the position of having to explain ourselves to the Board of Supervisors." Mrs. O'Bier also pointed out that they were the first to provide meals to students during the pandemic but did not elaborate as to how this advanced their educations.

She also claimed: "You're not going to find any parents who feel that our employees did not deserve the 2% pay raise they received last year or the proposed raise in the upcoming budget." This is despite a loss in enrollment of 51 students from the previous year.

Mrs. O'Bier also expressed displeasure that the Board had decided to examine a categorical budget by a 4 to 1 vote and thanked Supervisor Long, a retired school physical education teacher, for voting against the change. She also claimed that this was "punishment" for granting the previous 2% raise which was done without consulting the Board of Supervisors.

She also claimed that the Supervisors were engaging in "politics" and "micromanaging" the schools and further claimed that they were "the top school system in the region." Upon closer examination her last point seems to be debatable as the accompanying chart of the most recent regional SAT scores shows:"

Beginning the next month School Superintendent Holly Wargo began boycotting monthly supervisors meeting and her childish non-attendance lasted for over a year. Those of you who are regular readers realize that these types of antics and attitudes have not diminished and the results of the recent forensic audit were horrendous, exacerbated by the constant turnover of finance directors due to the chaotic working conditions.

Recently, the aforementioned Patrick O'Brien and fellow resident Jim Penney decided to do something about the rebellious and incompetent School Board by designing and circulating a petition to be submitted to the Circuit Court requiring that the School Board members be selected by the Board of Supervisors rather than a general election. They have released the following press release:

**NORTHUMBERLAND CITIZENS BEGIN PROCESS TO ABOLISH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD**

Media Contact: Patrick O'Brien  
804-450-2002  
HEATHSVILLE, VIRGINIA  
April 3, 2025

"Yesterday Northumberland County citizens Jim Penney and Patrick O'Brien initiated the statutory process for eliminating the elected county School Board and to replace it with a school board appointed by the county Board of Supervisors. As required by §24.2-684.1 and §§22.1-57.2 through 57.4, the citizens filed a petition with Clerk of the Circuit Court calling for a referendum on the question in

the November, 2025 elections. Penny and O'Brien believe that appointment of qualified accountants and business persons can eliminate school budget chaos while improving the quality of education in the County and relieve taxpayers of wasteful spending. They note that overall academic performance has declined relative to other local counties, while spending has skyrocketed amid a steady decline in the numbers of students. "Retired and low-income taxpayers are at the breaking point," said O'Brien.

The Clerk of the Circuit Court must certify receipt of the petition within 10 days of the filing, after which the petition may be circulated for signatures by the registered voter who are citizens of the County. At least ten percent of the citizens registered to vote in the County, some one thousand voters, must sign the petition form before the question can appear on the ballot.

Signed valid petition forms must be submitted to Court and the Board of Elections at least 111 days before the elections (by July 17, 2025). The same question can appear on the ballot only once every four years if defeated by a majority of actual voters."

As you can see, matters are coming to a head. On March 27th a meeting was held between the Board of Supervisors, the School Board and Assistant School Superintendent Karen Leslie. School Superintendent Holly Wargo was notably not in attendance.

This was prompted by the horrendous forensic audit and the recent disclosure that "miscalculations" going back as far as 2020 could result as much as \$700,000 being owed to the state for special education funding. This was verified by Assistant Superintendent Leslie and Director of Special Education and Support Services Jessica Rogers.

Also present at the March 27th meeting was Planning Commission member John Kost who has 20 years of government experience. Mr. Kost suggested all important items be referred to the Board of Supervisors, stating, in part: "even if the school system were to resolve all of your concerns, how could you be certain at this point, given the lack of trust, accountability and transparency?"

Board members chimed in with Supervisor Brann stating: "All due respect, there's a lot going on over there. They are in over their head and things haven't gotten any better. It would be better if it was all under one umbrella."



*Northumberland County School Superintendent Holly Wargo*

Chairman Haynie agreed, stating: "We need to get it done ASAP. We have a budget that needs to be presented. We're going to be late on the budget now because it should have been presented in February."

Based on the suggestions of Mr. Kost and their own experiences, the Board voted 4 to 0 to develop a services agreement mandating that school finances will perma-

## SCHOOL SCANDAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

nently be handled by the County going forward. Chairman Fisher was not in attendance.

All of this begs the question about the curious lack of involvement by School Superintendent Holly Wargo. This has all happened on her watch and it doesn't appear that it is due to lack of time. As previously reported in our January edition, Mrs. Wargo serves on the Board of the Northern Neck Electric Cooperative (NNEC) where she pulls down a cool \$34,300 for her wise counsel. Perhaps the time she devotes to her side hustle could be better used to do her day job.

As horrific as the school situation in Northumberland is, they are not alone. On of the most interesting bits of information that came out of the remarks by John Kost at the March 27th Northumberland meeting is that Mr. Kost had also met with Essex County Board of Supervisors Chairman Rob Akers and Supervisor John Magruder to discuss what he characterized as: "financial regularities, inaccurate budgets and overspending." Sound familiar?



Essex County Schools Superintendent Harry Thomas

Our Essex readers already know that we have been covering the problems with the Essex County schools for years. Even before current School Supervisor Harry Thomas was hired in August of 2019 there had been problems with previous Superintendent Scott Burckbuchler who served for 2013 to 2019. Mr. Burckbuchler left under suspicious circumstances with over a year left on his contract and no reason was ever given for his departure.

Current Superintendent Thomas had already submitted a statement on February 27 stating that he was leaving effective May 30th to pursue: "consulting work with school divisions that are seeking to improve their student achievement." He also admitted to missteps, further stating: "I fully acknowledge the litany of mistakes, miscues, and missteps along the way; however, the overall trajectory of the school division has been positively upward."

Immediately after Thomas' announcement High School Principal Roger "Butch" Gross announced his retirement effective March 1st stating: "I have come to the realization that my passion for public education as it stands is not what it once was". He also cited that he was retiring due to his mental and physical health and his family.

On March 11th the Supervisors instructed legal counsel

to pursue consolidating the County and school financial departments. The School Board had already approved such an agreement after an internal investigation of their own.

As if all of this were not bad enough, it was learned at a March 25th Joint Meeting that the County may have to return \$451,036 to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) because of reporting errors. This is similar to the current situation in Northumberland County as previously discussed in this article.

With the suspension of Thomas and the departure of School Director of Finance Libby Franklin earlier this year, Essex County Chief Financial Officer Bobbie Tassinari was left scrambling for explanations.

Near the end of March Chairman Akers announced that both a State Police investigation and a forensic audit had been ordered to try to unscramble exactly what has happened but he added that he was more concerned about systemic errors than actual theft.

In the final analysis it looks like the taxpayers of Essex County will be taking the hit for this flagrant mismanagement. Despite all of that School Board Chair Garlyn Bundy remained defiant. She still claims that the school should control their financial situation, stating: "If you are trying to take everything from the School Board, then why have a School Board? I want us to stop using this as a personal gain and agenda when our agenda should be the kids." She also accused the Board of "micromanagement".

This attitude is typical of most of the school boards in public schools across the nation. No matter how bad they screw things up the are indignant when accountability is demanded, claiming they are just in it "for the children".

These are the same children who have been indoctrinat-

ed instead of being educated while their taxpaying parents are bled dry by wasteful spending on watered down programs. Perhaps Chairman Akers summed it up best when responding to Mrs. Bundy's excuse that "a lot of pieces regarding finances I was not aware of." Chairman Akers responded by stating the obvious: "That's your responsibility as chairperson." Exactly.

The problems in Northumberland and Essex counties are not out outliers but are indicative of an inept and corrupt system that is desperately in need of reform. Thanks to the Boards of Supervisors and angry taxpayers in those counties it appears that long overdue accountability is on the way as, at long last, the chickens have finally come home to roost.

## NNRJ IN A PANIC, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ing lot of NNRJ by the Northern Neck Patriots (NNP).

Once members of the NNP and family members of local inmates learned of the brutal tactics being employed at the Jail they began attending monthly NNRJ meetings and voicing their concerns during the public comment period.

The members of the Jail Board, especially Chairman Darrell Fisher, bristled at the accusations and both Jail Board members and staff members insisted that the accusations were false and expressed indignation that anyone would even suggest such atrocities could occur at what they claimed was the best jail in the state.

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Board of Supervisors  
Chairman Rob Akers





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# NNRJ IN A PANIC, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Although the Board was dismissive and arrogant they at least allowed the public to voice their concerns publically. Now, all that has changed.

At their March meeting the Jail Board, offended by remarks made during the public comment period, abruptly went into closed session with the announced intention of discussing "the public comment period." The public was then asked to leave.

The closed session was not on the agenda and was obviously triggered by the public remarks, particularly by former NNRJ J6 detainee Robert Morss, describing the brutal conditions at the facility and the ongoing efforts to conceal those conditions. It appears that the hastily called closed session was illegal.

According to provision 2.2-3711(8) of the Code of Virginia:

"8. Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter."

The operative statement of this provision is the final sentence which makes it clear that a closed session cannot be spontaneously called just because the Jail Board attorney happens to be present.

It was later learned the Jail Board voted to forbid future public comment periods except for once every quarter which is the statutory minimum.



January 4, 2021  
215 lbs



October 21, 2021  
150 lbs  
Warsaw VA NNRJ  
1 Week after Assault  
3rd Assault

Efforts to suppress the public are nothing new for the Jail Board. Nearly two years ago a large number of citizens attended

the monthly meeting. When the meeting opened Chairman Fisher saw the large crowd and immediately went to a closed meeting citing "Personal Matters" That is not an allowed reason for closing a meeting to the public so I can

only assume the Chairman meant "Personnel" matters which would include hiring or firing of employees.

To put things in perspective this occurred shortly after I reported on the brutal beating of J6 detainee Ryan Samsel. Samsel described Correctional Officer Caleb Taylor as the most brutal of the group that beat him. This appears to be the motive of the closed meeting as Taylor was terminated shortly thereafter despite having been recently promoted.

The closed meeting lasted for an hour and four minutes and I am convinced that it was placed at the beginning of the meeting to encourage the public to leave. Generally, scheduled closed meetings are held at the end of regular meetings so not to inconvenience the public. I am further convinced that inconveniencing the public was exactly why the closed meeting was held at the beginning of the session.



(L to R) Cowboy Logic Hosts Donna Fiducia and Don Neuen with Sentinel Editor John Haynes Jr.

When members of the NNP attended their first Jail

Board meeting in February of 2022 they were assured that the types of abuses suffered by J6 detainees at the D. C. Jail could never occur at NNRJ and that two J6ers were actually trustys, who are generally the best behaved inmates who assist with repairs and maintenance at the facility for pennies a day on their commissary account.

The NNP members were also told that the current prisoners at NNRJ weren't even aware of the events of

1/6/21 and were not political at all. That could not be further from the truth as inmates, especially gang members, and staff members regularly singled out J6ers for ridicule and intimidation, calling them

racists and terrorists as well as threatening and attacking them. This was all encouraged by the staff.

Both of those trustys referenced in the first meeting that the NNP attended, Robert Morss and Jeffrey Sills, have since spoken out in no uncertain terms about the horrors that they witnessed and endured at NNRJ. In April of 2023 I did a couple of segments on the nationally televised Cowboy Logic show which regularly showcases J6 related stories and events.

During my appearance I read a letter from Jeffrey Sills which follows, in part:

"In the first 6 months I lost 40 lbs. But weight wasn't all that I lost; I also became malnourished. Some of us-others before me- began to find large subdermal masses under our skin, often in the armpit or "backside" region. Out of our ignorance we called them "boils", not knowing we were infected with a dangerous antibiotic-resistant form of staph called MRSA. I witnessed inmates conduct their own medical procedures in efforts to drain their painful sores due to medical unaccountability.

Then it happened to me. Beginning in January 2022 after being a prisoner at NNRJ for 6 months I suddenly noticed a painful mass growing under my skin. Over the course of a week my skin went from healthy to a painful and festering open sore that prevented me from sitting or sleeping regularly. I bled for days. I brought this immediately to the attention of the NNRJ medical staff in January 2022 requesting to see the doctor and to get bandages

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# LOCAL NEWS



Photo Credit: cbc.ca

## ESSEX COUNTY NEWS SCHOOL BOARD MELTDOWN

After a series of resignations, investigations and seemingly endless meetings the Board of Supervisors has essentially taken over financial supervision of school finances by agreeing to an arrangement with the School Board to a "cooperative services agreement" to better control school funds.

It was also revealed by Board of Supervisors Chairman Rob Akers that a State Police Investigation has been requested along with a forensic audit. Events are still unfolding rapidly and there is insufficient room in this article to provide all of the facts, but there is a front page article in this edition providing further information.

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Financial Adviser Ted Cole  
[Photo Credit: investdavenport.com]

## LANCASTER COUNTY NEWS GOING DEEP IN DEBT

At the March 27th Supervisors meeting the Board listened to options about how to best fund \$25 million dollars needed to finance obligations over the next year. The completion of the new school is the largest obligation, totaling \$15 million dollars and is in addition to \$60 million already allocated through a bond issued by the Virginia Public School Authority (VSPA).

Other projects to be funded, in order of amount, include \$8.27 million to complete a series of various park projects, \$1.2 million to finish the P25 regional radio upgrade, \$424,000 to complete improvements for the Kilmarnock Con-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Photo Credit:  
dreamstime.com

## RICHMOND COUNTY NEWS NEW SOLAR PROJECT PROPOSED DESPITE CURRENT EROSION PROBLEMS

It has been learned that the Town of Warsaw has entered into discussions with Dominion Energy over the power company purchasing 200 acres of a 700 acre plot owned by the Town located off of Wellford's Wharf Road outside of Town.

That plot is where the Town wastewater plant is located that releases treated sewage into Totuskey Creek on which it borders. Many residents in that area are already concerned about that and the addition of a solar facility on such an environmentally sensitive area is bound to stir controversy.

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Courthouse  
Opening Ceremony  
[Photo Credit: Taft Coghill]

## KING GEORGE COUNTY NEWS

James R. Shaw

New Courthouse Open- With dignitaries or their representatives present, a ribbon cutting was held on Friday March 21.

Official public access began Monday March 24. Various

items continued to be moved to the new courthouse and long-term storage. This will allow for cost-efficient renovation work to begin at the now nearly empty old courthouse. Moving out "stuff" from the old courthouse so that brief renovation can be quickly completed will allow for movement of personnel from costly leased space. Reallocating of various county offices to various buildings along with long- and short-term storage will be a constant work in progress in the coming months. So call ahead to make sure you show up at the right place for that face-to-face meeting.

Agricultural Zoning Adjustment Proposal- The BoS has established a committee called the "Zoning Ordinance Text

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Photo Credit: storage.googleapis.com

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY NEWS SCHOOL BOARD CALLED OUT SHIPPING CONTAINERS ADDRESSED

As any of you that follow the news in Northumberland County already know, the schools have been a mess for years and public anger along with increasing scrutiny by the Board of Supervisors has brought the situation to where the

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Jail Board Chairman Darrell Fisher

## WESTMORELAND COUNTY NEWS

### "REALLY A HORRIBLE INDIVIDUAL"

For decades we have heard former County Administrator Norm Risavi and current long time Board Chairman Darrell Fisher touting the Northern Neck Regional Jail (NNRJ) as the best run jail in the state. If you are speaking in terms of pure profit they have a point. If you are talking about public corruption and human suffering, they are at the bottom of the list according to those who have studied the subject or

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**ESSEX, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

In other county news, the long running dispute between the Town of Tappahannock and the Lowery family over taxes due for the former Lowery's Restaurant looks like it may have finally ended with a proposed agreement between the two parties. Tyler Lowery, who is the grandson of the founders of the popular restaurant, appeared at the March 10th Town Council meeting to announce his proposal to pay \$10,000 monthly for three consecutive months from funds expected from an estate sale.

The entire debt is \$107,963.83 and consists of \$64,664.25 in unpaid meals taxes and \$43,299.58 in penalties, fees and interest. The restaurant first closed in 2020 due to the Covid Crisis and the debt has continued to accumulate since then.

There had been a closed meeting of the Town Council to discuss the matter and Mayor Roy Gladding announced that further talks would be handled by the town attorney. It can only be hoped that this will prove to be the final resolution and is a sad legacy for an iconic landmark beloved by local residents and travelers alike. Lowery's was in operation for 82 years.

It was also announced in March that Essex County taxpayers can expect their amended tax reassessment notices soon. The Board of Supervisors was informed of the details at a work session on March 11th.

The reassessment was caused by the public uproar over the initial increase that resulted in an average rise of 48.6%. Since reassessments are done every four years, that equates to an annual increase of over 12% which many residents felt was ridiculous.

The new reassessment was done by what is called a mass appraisal which involves what is described as establishing the value of a group of properties through a combination of standardized guidelines and statistical analysis.

At the March work session, the Supervisors were advised that a total of 833 properties were reviewed. Commissioner of Revenue Kristen Foster explained that

some reductions could occur due to "softening" of the estimates for improvements and 90% of the properties that were subject to appeals are expected to see adjustments according to South District Supervisor Ronnie Gill.

The current tax rate for Essex County is 73 per \$100 of assessed value. Once the final figures are announced a decision will be made by the Board over whether or not to adjust the rate.

Although it may be of little solace to the taxpayers of Essex County, surrounding counties have also experienced similar increases.

**KING GEORGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

Amendment Committee" They have publicly met on 3/19, 4/2, and a scheduled meeting 4/9.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Approved –Harwood Power LLC worked out a siting agreement which was approved by the BoS (03-08 3/18). The energy captured from excess power and various residential, small and larger future solar farms will benefit the community by providing more reliable and steady power to residential, commercial, and government customers in the county including the Dahlgren Naval Base. Additional firefighting equipment and training will come along once the installation gets further along in the next year or two. Future updates will include a more precise timeline.

King George Technology Center (GEV)-Green Energy Ventures will have their scheduled Public Hearing before the Planning Commission on April 8. Their Rt 3 site pro-

posal for multiple data center buildings of various heights is roughly on the northwest corner of Rt 3 and Bloomsbury Road.

Gibson Solar [and Sheep] The public hearing before the Planning Commission on March 11 was at times contentious with various landowners and adjacent landowners making their case for and against the project. The vote was very close with the majority sending the project on to the Board of Supervisors for further action. A few weeks later, Gibson held an Open House at the Smoot Library March 27 4:30p-7:30p. This was another opportunity to hear their story, ask questions, and see the improvements to the 1,300 overall acre project.

Davis Hill Development (solar) also had a public hearing before the Planning Commission on March 11. This was for a smaller "medium scale" solar farm consisting of around 14 acres located just off Daisy Lane.

King George County Historical Society presented (03-06.09 3/18) their proposal for expanded space utilization now that many of the offices in the old courthouse have transitioned to vacant status.

Budget Time- The Board of Supervisors and the School Board met in joint session on March 10. Superintendent Boyd and County Administrator Smolnik presented on Facilities—presenting a number of insights on how to proceed making effective use of the space we already have for students, staff, and administration. This year's budget is \$64,880,878. Next year's proposed budget (not final) is \$70,862,203. This is an increase of \$5,981,325.

For the county as a whole: This year's adopted budget is \$132,593,960. Next year's proposed budget (not final) is \$137,231,520. This is an increase of \$4,637,560.

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was presented (03-09 3/18). A Board of Supervisors Work Session to review the 2025-2026 county budget (03-10 3/18) is scheduled for Wednesday April 9.

Irrigation Application Report- This is a new form that is being proposed by the Service Authority to deal with the problem of sewer customers getting charged on their sewer bill for water that is used for irrigation, filling swimming pools, etc. There has been no good reliable way to accommodate these special cases in the past. This is the first




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Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump talk during a bilateral meeting at the G20 leaders summit in Osaka, Japan, June 28, 2019. [Kevin Lamarque/Reuters]

## WHY BEIJING FEARS THE US 'PLAYING THE RUSSIAN CARD'

James Gorrie

Today, a significant part of the Chinese regime's geopolitical calculus rests on its alliance with Russia, a critical but by no means unbreakable ally. The war in Ukraine, now grinding through its third year, has exposed vulnerabilities in this partnership, as has the potential peace deal being brokered by the Trump administration.

### A Global Strategy

In fact, the United States "playing the Russian card" should be viewed not just as an effort to stop the bloodshed in Ukraine but as a global strategy to undermine Beijing's influence with Moscow and other countries worldwide. This bold move flips the script on the Nixon-era triangulation. Beginning in the early 1970s, the United States countered the Russian-led Soviet Union's global influence by engaging China diplomatically and economically, which served to counterbalance the United States' top global adversary.

The idea has merit. Russia's economy is battered, its military stretched thin, and its global isolation is growing. Western sanctions have choked its access to technology and markets, leaving it desperate for a lifeline.

Furthermore, Moscow is now the weaker partner in its relations with Beijing, reliant on China for trade and diplomatic cover. If the United States flips Russia, China loses a counterweight to Western pressure, leaving it more isolated against a unified NATO and its Indo-Pacific allies.

### Making Beijing Even More Vulnerable

As for China, it finds itself in a vulnerable position as well. Its dependence on Russia runs deep, especially for resources. For example, Russia supplies more than 15 percent of China's crude oil imports and vast amounts of natural gas via pipelines such as the Power of Siberia. China also sees Russia's freshwater reserves—Lake Baikal alone holds 20

percent of the world's unfrozen freshwater—as a hedge against its own water scarcity.

Losing or even reducing access to Russia's resources, including its arable land and timber, would put huge pressure on China to find alternatives at a much higher cost. But that could well be the outcome of a U.S.–Russia rapprochement.

### A One-Sided Relationship

What's more, Russian trade with China—\$240 billion in 2023—keeps Moscow afloat, but it's a one-sided relationship. China buys cheap Russian energy while selling finished goods, leaving Russia a junior partner. Moscow is not comfortable and even resents playing second fiddle to Beijing.

On the other hand, the United States could offer a sweeter deal: access to global markets, investment in infrastructure, and a tech lifeline. For Russian President Vladimir Putin, who thrives on pragmatism, the allure of rebuilding Russia's economy might outweigh ideological affinity with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

The potential for such a development is more than hypothetical. A negotiated settlement in Ukraine where Russia retains some territorial gains but withdraws from most of Ukraine could be framed as a "win" for domestic consumption. In return, the United States could push NATO to pull back from its easternmost footprint—perhaps even reverting to pre-1997 boundaries, as Russia has long demanded, or a planned return to prior agreed-upon limits along with an enforced neutrality for non-NATO nations bordering Russia, such as Ukraine.

### A New US–Russia Détente?

Such an arrangement wouldn't dismantle NATO but could ease Moscow's paranoia about encirclement, making a pivot away from China palatable. It's a low-cost concession for the United States: NATO's core remains intact, and Russia's ties to China diminish.

Of course, it's not yet a reality. Putin and Russia's elite are wary of U.S./NATO promises. Plus, China could counter with sweeter deals—more loans, more weapons tech. But that remains to be seen.

The Ukraine leadership is also a wild card. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is proving himself to be less predictable and more capricious than the Trump administration anticipated. What's more, Western European NATO members are all less inclined to seek a peace settlement with Putin.

Therefore, part of the Trump administration's effort is to force Ukraine to the peace table, which is happening as I write this, and to convince NATO members such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany to accept a peace deal. The United States must also find a way to meet Russia's conditions while not losing Ukraine's agreement to a cease-fire. Both should be achievable, but time will tell.

### The US Has Better Cards Than China

However, as far as Moscow is concerned, Washington has better cards to play than Beijing in terms of market size, technological edge, and the relief of a powerful NATO backing off Russia's border countries—all of those factors appeal to Moscow.

At the same time, such a deal would add salt to the wound of the Chinese regime, which already finds itself in the Trump administration's crosshairs concerning the Panama Canal, rising trade tariffs, and the accelerating American economic decoupling from China.

At the moment, Trump is showing both a carrot and a stick to Putin. At the same time, China's shrinking economy and growing diplomatic isolation from U.S. actions become a greater negative going forward. This isn't just a hypothetical for the Chinese regime—it's a nightmare scenario that threatens its

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

**BEIJING**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9  
strategic depth, resource security, and regional dominance.  
The stakes are high, and China has plenty to lose.  
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*Views expressed in this article are opinions of the author  
and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch  
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**RICHMOND COUNTY**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

According to Town Manager Joseph Quesenberry Dominion has already presented a preliminary contract and the Town Council has reviewed it with the Town Attorney and, if the parameters are as expected, Quesenberry already has permission to sign it.

Richmond County, in which the Town is located, has already caught a lot of flak over the Moon Corner Solar Facility that was recently completed in another environmentally sensitive area where it appears that runoff problems are already occurring. A reader recently reported that he had noticed muddy runoff into a Chinn's Mill Pond after recent rains, which is concerning for such a new project.

This pond is especially concerning as it straddles the boundary between Richmond and Lancaster counties. In recent years projects in environmentally sensitive areas in both Essex and Richmond counties have been levied huge fines for runoff problems by the Department of Environmen-

tal Quality (DEQ) and this situation leaves the operators of the project vulnerable to both the DEQ and Lancaster and Richmond Counties.



*Hope Mothershead*

ment practices are going to be modified /added to prevent future sediment releases/unauthorized discharges from reoccurring in this specific area. These modifications/ additions will need to be approved by the Department of Environmental Quality and the county prior to installation."

District 1 Supervisor Richard Thomas was reached for comment and he verified that the County was working closely to resolve the situation as rapidly as possible. He added that a detailed update would be provided at the April Supervisors Meeting. The meeting is open to the public and can also be viewed on youtube.

County Administrator Hope Mothershead addressed the issue at the March Supervisors meeting and advised that the County is working closely with the developer Strata Solar to remedy the situation. According to Mrs. Mothershead:

"Hydroseeding is taking place and the engineering group is providing documentation of what best manage-

**WESTMORELAND**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6  
had the misfortune to have been incarcerated there.

Fisher and the Jail Board have been under increasing pressure from a local citizens group called the Northern Neck Patriots (NNP), relatives of those incarcerated and, most recently, former J6 detainees who were detained at NNRJ but are now free thanks to presidential pardons.

In fact, the uproar has become so intense that Chairman Fisher abruptly stopped the March Jail Board meeting and went into closed session where the Board decided to change public comments from monthly to quarterly, which is the legal minimum.

This was in reaction the remarks made by former J6 detainee Robert Morss at the March meeting where he described the horrors that he had witnessed. Robert was a painting trustee while at NNRJ where he never had a disciplinary complaint. More of Robert's remarks can be read in a front page article in this edition or on a recent telecast of the nationally televised Cowboy Logic show which can be seen at this link: <https://americasvoice.news/video/V5AKlj4mBw-JODVp/>

By way of background, Westmoreland County began experiencing an increase in crime in the late 1980's resulting in a rapid increase in incarcerated offenders and a consequent jump in costs.

As a method to control costs it was suggested by County Administrator Norm Risavi that a regional jail be constructed in cooperation with other nearby counties. That was eventually done and costs have gone down, not through efficiency, but by skimming federal per diem payments and failing to provide the services for which these funds were intended.

Over the past couple of years NNRJ has come under increasing scrutiny as evidence has accumulated of the abuses committed there and Chairman Fisher is becoming increasingly vocal as the evidence of his incompetence and corruption continues to accumulate.

At a meeting in late March Chairman Fisher opened proceedings as usual and then asked to make a comment that would last "two or three minutes." He then proceeded to make the following remarks:

"There's a statement that needs to be made, needs to be made to the Board, needs to be made publically. We've been in partnership with the Northern Neck Regional Jail for 30 years. In recent times that organization and operation have come under much scrutiny. But I just wanted to let this Board know that the Regional Jail is in great shape, under great operation.

It's unfortunate that folk can hurl accusations that are untrue, unsubstantiated and the press will pick it up as the truth. But I would invite the public or any of the Board members that have not been down recently to come down, schedule a meeting with superintendent, staff and go over the inspection reports and they will substantiate that it's a well run operation and what you may hear or read you will find very little if any of it to be true.

And, um, I just felt I needed to come back and say that you, as one of the member organizations, as well as now being the longest tenured member on the Board, I was there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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You can expect these types of problems to continue as new solar projects are expected to be approved across the region in the immediate future. What many of our supervisors fail to realize is that solar, wind and other "green" energy sources are unreliable, expensive and will eventually drive energy prices to the levels that currently exist in Europe. Is this really the legacy that we want to leave for our children?



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# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## A WORD OF WARNING FOR ESSEX COUNTY RESIDENTS

A strong word of advice. Don't ever get caught in the Essex County dishonest web of legal predicaments and imbroglios. You should hear the tale of woe from an old friend who had to recently deal with this corrupt system.

First, we all need to understand the legal system is designed to protect the guilty, not the innocent. The Essex legal system is all about punishing the innocent while letting the guilty go free with no consequences.

As one example, this friend of mine was in a car accident recently on Rt. 17.

The accident was entirely 100 percent the fault of a little old man who illegally crossed traffic in front of my friend, causing an accident and nearly killing him and his wife.

The little old man was cited by the state police for his offense at the scene of his crime, but he never apologized for causing the accident not did he ever inquire as to the well-being of the couple he almost killed. After being ticketed, the little old man drove off and the couple in question went to the emergency room. The woman sustained injuries to her right side and her right knee. She had to be x-rayed. The man had to also be x-rayed for a sprained jaw and a badly injured back.

The little old man, in a fit of pettiness, claimed the man he injured threatened him at the scene which was impossible as the man he injured was attending to his equally hurt

wife.

But the old man found a gullible Essex County magistrate to file a phony complaint and some cronies to lie for him claiming the badly injured man threatened the little old man!

A "settlement" was reached where the injured man had to go to anger management classes with men, some who were thugs, drunks and wife beaters.

The little old man appallingly also wanted the injured man's insurance company to pay for the "damages" to his old truck, claiming thousands of dollars of damage to an old truck which was not worth 10.00 cents. His own insurance company had already turned him down.

A trial was set and the attorney appointed by the insurance company made mincemeat out of the little old man. The lawyer essentially had the little old man admitting he was wrong and that he lied about the whole thing.

She made a complete fool out of the little old man. She had him so muddled, he didn't know whether to scratch his watch or wind his ass.

Babbling incoherently, the little old man lost in court of course and stormed off. He could have appealed the ruling but did not, obviously knowing his tissue of lies would not hold up.

Meanwhile the victims of the little old man had to pay unnecessary thousands to lawyers and bottom feeders running anger management "classes." "All because a little old man lied and a gullible magistrate fell for his lies. Is this justice?

The moral of the story is, stay away from the Essex County legal system. You will not get a fair break, especially if you are innocent. Let's face it, the Essex courts are run as a money-making scheme for bottom feeders and shysters and not as a vehicle for justice for the innocent.

Unless of course you are already a guilty reprobate. Then the Essex County government might give you a trophy. As a result of all this, my friend is now talking to lawyers about suing Essex County for wrongful prosecution.

Craig Shirley  
Dunnsville, VA

LANCASTER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

venience Center and \$67,000 for the plan to merge the Sheriff's Office and the Emergency Medical Services into a single building.

Ted Cole of Davenport Public Finance presented financing options to the Board. Davenport is a public finance specialist that operates in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and Georgia and virtually all of the counties in the region use their services for public finance.

Mr. Cole advised that even though there were several potential lending sources that VSPA has the most attractive terms as they allow up to 30 years for repayment which helps keep payments low. Most banks have a 20 year maximum.

He also advised the Board they would need to have an application in no later than August and that a public hearing would be needed by late September and that a final commitment would need to be made by early October.

A broadband update was also provided at the March meeting by Broadband Authority Chairman Keith Kidd who informed the Board that, based on 2020 census data, 92% of residents and 67% of businesses currently have cable or fiber. This is a huge leap from just a few years ago. He did, however, add the caveat that further growth could be impeded by federal regulations. Although there is well over 40 billion dollars set aside for future expansion in the federal budget, there is considerable disagreement as how to best allocate those funds.

Assistant County Administrator John Bateman also gave an update on the ongoing construction of the Windmill Point Maritime Recreational Campus. Dredging has already begun and the sand, which is high quality, is being used to restore Westland Beach.

Bateman further advised that the Harris Road connector, which is Phase 1A of the Triway Trail, has been completed and an opening is tentatively set for April 12th to coincide with the second annual Red Devils Run fundraiser.

Phase 1B is currently on hold due to the federal spending freeze but Bateman disclosed that he has been working with Senator Mark Warner's office to be able to access those funds.

A public hearing was also held to receive comments on the proposed school budget of \$20,969,588 and, amazingly, there were no comments. A budget work session is scheduled for April 10th at 5:00 p.m. with the final vote to be held at 7:00 p.m.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Sentinel encourages Letters to the Editor and all viewpoints are welcome.

- Please limit submissions to 500 words.
- The deadline is the last work day of each month.
- Profanity and personal invective will not be allowed.

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**NNRJ IN A PANIC**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5  
for the bleeding. Not only was I refused admittance to see the doctor for 5 months, but my request for bandages was also repeatedly ignored. All of my clothes would become bloodied as I awaited laundry day which only comes twice a week. My bedsheets became soaked in my own blood. After days of draining the wound would eventually heal before another would appear 2-3 weeks later.

If the jail medical allowed me to meet with the doctor when I requested, I would have been spared 5 months of medical mistreatment and suffering. My body would not bear the scars of a monthslong fight with a dangerous infection. I communicate these facts to you in the hopes that through public exposure and action other inmates may not have to suffer the pain and neglect that I suffered for a year and a half at the Northern Neck Regional Jail."

Sills is not the only former J6er to speak out. Over the past two months the Northern Neck Regional Jail has been personally addressed by former inmates during the public comment period at their monthly meetings. The alarming disclosures of beatings, inedible food, filthy living conditions and medical neglect were both shocking and disgusting to hear.

At the February meeting former J6 detainee Chris Quaglin spoke out as described in our March edition.



Chris Quaglin

He detailed the abuse he had observed but, most interesting was the fact that all citizen attendees were searched and made to walk through a metal detector before being allowed in the meeting room. This was undoubtedly caused by the fact that Quaglin and NNP Chairman Tom Jeffries stopped by the Jail a couple of days before the meeting and notified Assistant Superintendent Jonathan English that Quaglin would be at the meeting

The same thing happened in March when Robert Morss spoke along with two members of the NNP. Their remarks upset Chairman Fisher so much that he closed the meeting to the public and went into closed session as described earlier in this article.

The first speaker at the March meeting was Cheryl Johnson of Northumberland County. She reminded the Board that she and other members of the Northern Neck Patriots (NNP) had been coming to Jail Board meetings for a couple of years. In her case that involves a 45 minute drive and she didn't appreciate the Board's apparent lack of concern for the remarks by her and others.

Next Mrs. Johnson brought up recently approved House Bill 2105 calling for investigations into claims of abuse and suggested that they could read about it in the current edition of the Sentinel. She then read the body of the bill to the Board.

She also referenced a letter from Richmond County's Commonwealth's Attorney Elizabeth Tribble advocating for just such a policy that had been reported on in the Sentinel and further pointed out that all of the Jail Board members had been copied on Mrs. Tribble's email. Mrs. Johnson concluded her remarks by stating: "The truth will prevail."

The next speaker was Robert Morss, who is pictured at the beginning of this article. He introduced himself as a former detainee for 13 months who had served as a painting trusty who had never had a single disciplinary action. He then stated that he had seen abuses "more horrific and extensive than what I can recount in a handful of minutes."

He then described hearing officers brag about the spaces with no cameras where they dragged prisoners to beat them and how Captain English had complained about blood on his dress shoes after stomping a prisoners face in. He spoke of how the head chef bragged about how much money was saved by stealing from the food budget while feeding the prisoners food worse than dog food from packages marked: "Not intended for human consumption."

Mr. Morss also spoke of medical staff laughing about a detainee who had Celiac Disease starving because they would not feed him food he could digest and Captain Taylor bragging about dragging prisoners into the showers and challenging them to fights while wearing their infamous "knuckle gloves". If the prisoners refused, they were branded as cowards and shamed by other prisoners and if they

fought back, they were given additional time for attacking an officer.

He further recounted painting over mold, blood stains and scribbled calls for help on the walls to get ready for "unannounced" inspections.

Mr. Morss also accused Captain

English for lying about him enjoying his stay because he thanked English for "calling off the dogs" when the trustys couldn't sleep because the guards were turning on lights and making loud noises.

The list of abuses cited by Mr. Morss was so extensive that we are unable to print them in their entirety but he did state that some officers did not approve of the brutality and were denied promotions for being "too lenient" with prisoners or even ended up quitting as attested to by the astronomical employee turnover at NNRJ.

Near the end of his remarks Mr. Morss stated that he had served three combat tours an Army Combat Ranger and, added: I don't want to be here. I don't like you people and you smile while you inflict disturbing amounts of pain on individuals in this building and then smile at your children with that same smile when you go home after work calling yourselves the good guys and that disturbs me. I certainly don't trust you and have every reason to hate you but, because of my interaction with the Almighty, and due to how destitute and desperate this facility made me I acknowledge how I must respond.

At this point Mr. Morss began reading from the Bible as Chairman Fisher banged the gavel attempting to end his remarks.

The final speaker was Tom Jeffries who is Chairman of the NNP. After reciting a summary of abuses that have been repeatedly cited over the past two years Mr. Jeffries summarized his observations at the conclusion of his remarks, stating:

"A picture is emerging about how this institution functions: The Superintendent and Staff check all the boxes and pass inspections Prisoner complaints are ignored and self-investigated by their captors. Usually with findings of "nothing to see here".

1. The Superintendent and Staff check  
CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 20

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# Schools & Education



Students prepare for lecture at the University of Texas at Austin in Austin, Texas, on Feb. 22, 2024. Brandon Bell/Getty Images

## PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM SET FOR SHAKE-UP UNDER TRUMP

Aaron Gifford

Expected policy changes to U.S. public education under the Trump administration will likely involve areas such as universal school choice, critical race theory, transgender ideology, student college debt relief, and higher education accreditation.

In addition, the fate of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) itself hangs in the balance—though dismantling it would require an act of Congress.

“We will send Education back to the states, and Linda will spearhead that effort,” Trump wrote in a Nov. 19 statement when announcing his nomination of Linda McMahon to lead the DOE in his administration.

The Department of Education was established in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter.

Its scope was to ensure equal educational opportunities, to share research and information with state and local education agencies, to provide additional funds to very low-income schools, and to administer federal grant and loan programs for higher education.

The federal agency cannot mandate curriculum, graduation requirements, or teacher and administrator credentials. Those decisions are made at the state and local levels, where state aid and municipal property taxes fund schools.

More recently, the department has taken on tasks such as awarding special education funding, conducting civil rights investigations, and issuing guidance on technology and artificial intelligence education.

Jonathan Butcher, a senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation’s Center for Education Policy, said that all of those functions could easily be absorbed into other federal agencies, resulting in massive savings for taxpayers.

“Washington is paying an administration to do the work

that state departments of education should already be doing,” Butcher told The Epoch Times, adding that federal aid to poor districts amounts to less than 10 percent of per-student allocations.

“Abolishing the U.S. Department of Education provides more authority for states and districts to make decisions for themselves.”

Under the Trump administration, Butcher said he expects the DOE to cut redundant administrative costs, emphasize academic improvement, promote universal school choice nationwide, and empower state and local education administrators to provide better leadership. Representatives from the American Council on Education (ACE), during a Nov. 6 panel discussion, said that Congress has lacked the political will to dismantle the department. With a Republican majority, it could eliminate positions in the agency to save millions of dollars, but abolishing the agency may not be advantageous, they said.

“The Department of Education is a massive, influential, visible tool to reach into every school district, to reach into every college and university campus, and exert attention and pressure and other things as to your administration’s policy priorities,” said Jon Fansmith, ACE’s assistant vice president of government relations.

“Why would you give that up if that’s now with your authority?”

The U.S. Department of Education did not respond to a request for comment.

### Gender Ideology and Critical Race Theory

During a July rally in St. Cloud, Minnesota, former President Donald Trump vowed to cut federal education funds to schools that push critical race theory (CRT), gender ideology, and “other inappropriate racial, sexual, or political content” on students.

“And I will not give one penny to any school that has a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



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**SHAKE-UP, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14** vaccine mandate or a mask mandate," Trump said. "And I'll keep men out of women's sports." The nonprofit Parents Defending Education (PDE) publishes an online map that records incidents of liberal ideology in schools.

Its research is based on complaints submitted by parents and on information obtained via Freedom of Information Act requests.

In one recent incident, a California district paid a consultant \$530,000 to develop a curriculum around "CRT, whiteness, and social justice activism." In another, a story-time program in Vermont taught kindergartners how to explore gender identity. And a district in Virginia collaborated with a Chinese organization that wanted to establish schools with U.S. curriculum in the communist country, as part of a "cultural exchange" program.

Most states had at least one instance where a district hid a student's "gender identity" to comply with President Joe Biden's executive order amending Title IX, according to PDE's research.

Michele Exner, director of federal affairs at PDE, said the election results came as no surprise to her considering the number of complaints her organization has received in

every state over the past four years.

"Parents are fed up," she said. "There's an erosion of parental trust. Schools can't hide information from parents. We are getting back to merit and meritocracy. Lowering the bar and getting rid of metrics doesn't help the students."

Exner does not think Trump will immediately leverage federal funding to force lower-income school districts to eliminate CRT and gender ideology programs.

Instead, the DOE's Office of Civil Rights, which investigates complaints of discrimination or harassment, will apply pressure on noncompliant schools and remind them they risk losing aid if they don't take corrective actions.

"It's a way to dismantle the woke cancer that is affecting education," Exner said.

In education, support and opposition to CRT and transgender ideology represent a national dichotomy.

Website pages for state education departments in some deep blue states highlight special events such as Transgender Day of Visibility.

In contrast, those in red states like Arizona and Arkansas have disclaimers noting that bias that detracts from academic standards is not tolerated.

"Without commenting on politics, I am encouraged to see a new administration commit to removing the elements

of Critical Race Theory and so-called diversity, equity, and inclusion from schools," Arizona Education Commissioner Tom Horne said in a statement to The Epoch Times.

"I have fought against those programs for years because they divide people on the basis of race when people should be judged on their character, their knowledge, and ability to appreciate beauty."

#### Expanding School Choice

At the national level, Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) plans to push his Educational Choice for Children Act, which would provide income tax credits to individuals or organizations that donate money to private school voucher programs.

He said he has Trump's support and hopes to replace Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) as the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee when Republicans take control of the Senate in January.

Cassidy joined other politicians and education leaders in rallying for school choice during a Nov. 7 event hosted by the Center for Education Reform in Washington.

They said restricting tax dollars to local schools is an outdated idea and funding should instead be allocated according to each family's choice, whether that's public, private, or home schooling.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



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Tackle box

## CRAPPIE TIPS THAT WILL HELP MAKE THAT FAMILY FISH FRY

Mark Fike

Over the years I have picked up a few crappie tips from old timers and crappie die hards, and I have stumbled upon some techniques that helped me fill the bucket for the family fish fry. Here are some of the tips to help those that are looking for Mr. or Miss Speckles this spring.

### Where there is one there are more

That is a pretty obvious statement, but it surprises me that some people will catch one crappie and then if they do not catch another in a few minutes they will leave the area in search of crappie elsewhere.

During the spring crappie school and are spawning in numbers. They are not a solitary fish. If one crappie is boated, do your best to figure out exactly where it was and keep fishing that area.

### Depth can be tricky

Sometimes crappie are holding a very specific depth and if you are off by a foot or so, you won't get a bite. Slip bob-

bers help keep baits in the zone. Once you catch a fish at a certain depth, quickly determine what that was and fish that depth only adjust when you know the fish have moved.

At times the crappie are right on the bank spawning. Sometimes I find the fish in less than a foot of water and simply walk along the edge of the pond or lake flipping jigs or minnows in their face and picking them off on the bank.

### Structure counts pre and post spawn

Crappie do like treetops or other woody structures, so if you are in search of fish, hit those areas first. A wire hook when using minnows will allow you to pull free from hang ups as you probe the treetop. Keep in mind where you catch fish now for next spring as crappie are creatures of habit as most of us are.

### A moving bait entices strikes

A moving bait, even a dead minnow wiggled up and down, will take fish when a still bait will not. Often when fishing a pond, I will rig one rod and actively fish with it and rig a second rod with a minnow and let out enough line to get it to the proper depth and drop it over the side of the jon boat and then put my foot on the rod or put it in a rod holder. The rocking of the boat as we lean over the side or over to the bait bucket will jig our minnows or baits just enough to draw strikes and catch fish. Sometimes 30% of the fish I boat are on that particular rod and often the larger crappie are on that rod.

### Color and flash

If your jigs are going ignored, change the color of the grub or jig and find what they want. Stump jumpers with the flashing spoon on the jig are often just the trick to get fish. Also, small or tiny spinnerbaits that flash with a grub on the other side will do the trick as well. Often those baits are viewed as bluegill or small bass baits, but they work great for crappie. Sabiki rigs (used for shad and herring) have a few varieties that have glitter or sparkles to them and red hooks. These are great for jigging deeper water, but they do get foul hooked in treetops easily so be careful.

### Go on the troll

Trolling a small lake or pond with multiple rods rigged with minnows, spinners, spoons and crappie jigs at various depths will often be the quickest way to figure out where the fish are and what they want to eat. Once you get a few fish on a certain rod

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



Gobbling turkey

## SPRING TURKEY TACTICS

Mark Fike

Spring gobbler season is upon us. Do you have a game plan? If not, here are some tips that might help you close the deal this season.

### Get in the blind

Unlike deer, turkey seem to care less about a new ground blind popping up on the landscape. Using a blind has a few advantages and a few disadvantages. If you know where the turkeys strut and feed often and you can put a blind in that location ahead of time, it can be well worth it. Having a spot to go directly to before sunrise is a time saver. Using a blind also helps hide hunters, particularly fidgety hunters or those new to hunting wary gobblers. Movement is not easily detected by turkeys while hunters are in the blind. Be sure to keep any windows closed behind you though so you are not skylined!

Some disadvantages with blinds is that you are pretty much stuck in that location unless you are willing to forego the blind if necessary and hunt on the move or you are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



Picking off the bank

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**CRAPPIE TIPS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16**

or bait, switch a few of the others and slowly work the area. The trolling motor will have to be on the slowest setting, and I often shut it off after 10 to 20 yards and then rest a few seconds before firing it up again. The lull and rise and fall of the lure will often draw strikes too.

This season, get your light rods and jigs out for some tasty panfish. It is crappie time!

**TURKEY TIPS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16**

willing and have the time to break the blind down and move it if necessary. Sometimes turkeys don't come to calls and hunters need to be willing to move towards them or to a new spot all together. Finally, blinds get stolen by bad people and that is a shame.

Running and gunning

In detail, running and gunning is when a hunter creates a plan of action to start at a certain location, call a little bit and wait for a response and if no response is received within a certain amount of time, usually 15-30 minutes, then the hunter moves along deeper into the property or even to another property nearby that they have permission to hunt. This is a great tactic to cover a lot of ground and is very effective. It is also a great tactic for those of us that have chores to do later in the day or those of us that get fidgety sitting in the same spot for a long time.

However, one of the biggest safety concerns when running and gunning is other people in the woods with a gun that are unsafe. I won't call them hunters because a true hunter makes SURE to identify their target before raising the gun. Some people that do not follow property hunter safety rules might take a shot a movement or at a turkey calling that is unseen, specifically you. I reserve this tactic for property I am sure is free of trespassers and poachers. People that trespass or poach also are more likely to shoot at movement or sounds before verifying their target.

Public land

Many hunters have no place to hunt that is private and they must hunt wildlife management areas, BLM lands, National Forest, military lands or USFWS lands. These places have great places to hunt but many people use them. This means that spring gobbler hunters must take extra precautions while hunting public land because the opportunity for

other hunters to hear your hen or gobbler calling will attract attention and bring those hunters within close proximity to you enhancing changes of some concerns.

A good tip to use when hunting public land is to walk as far as possible from the parking lot to reduce the chances of bumping into others. Get there early too. Some military lands break parcels into units and only allow certain numbers of hunters per unit and that is a good safety strategy that works well.

Sleep in

Yep, I typed that. I thought long and hard about the gobblers I have taken over the years. It seems about half of them were taken within an hour of sunup and the other half were taken after 10 AM and most closer to the noon hour when the season closes during April. There were a few birds taken mid morning for me but not many. I quick poll of friends and acquaintances seems to bear this out for others too. So, if you had a long night, are struggling to get up, have early morning chores or just want to wait until Old Tom has done his business with willing hens first thing in the morning and will be looking for a new lady to strut for, go later in the morning and see what happens. I like to get to my spot around 10 and start listening and then cut or yelp a few times to see if anything answers. Get in position before doing this as moving in the daylight hours is a tough job without getting busted by Tom!

Be a tease

Yeah, we know how that frustrates the opposite sex at times and it is not nice or fun to be the subject of this as a human, but it does work on turkeys. If you have a gobbler answering but not coming in, go dark, go silent and sit for a half hour or so. Then call a few times and shut up again. Resist the urge to answer the gobbler if he calls. He may get good and mad and come running to see why the lady he was communicating with is not coming to him.

Or, you can get up and back up about 50 yards and

call quietly giving the impression you are leaving him. That has worked well for me more than a few times. Last, if you are on private land and feel confident you are not surrounded by trespassers or poachers, pull a gobbler call out and hit it right after you cluck enticingly. That gives the impression that a strange gobbler is encroaching on the territory of the bird you are calling and making off with his potential mate. Often the gobbler you are calling will come running mad as fire about the situation so be ready to shoot!

**KING GEORGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7**

attempt at dealing with the complaints submitted by Service Authority customers with these special usage cases.

Assessment Continues- The periodic reassessment of county ag land, commercial, and residential properties is proceeding.

Election Season Continues- In local elections the only candidate that has thus far been certified (gathered the requisite 125 signatures) is Cathy Binder (incumbent-Board of Supervisors) of the Shiloh district. We will continue to report any names that are certified by the Registrar as we are made aware. The deadline for certification is in early June.

Tea Party meeting in March included reports from Supervisors and other county officials as well as the signing of petitions of potential candidates for the four open county offices.

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## WASHINGTON MARCH SUMMARY LOTS OF COMINGS AND GOINGS

March started off with a bang for the Commanders as, on the first day of the month, they traded a fifth round 2025 draft pick to the 49ers for former All Pro wide receiver Deebo Samuels. Although Samuels was slowed by injuries in 2024, he is a versatile player who had a 1,400 yard season a few years ago and is also a force after the catch as he has the skills of a running back. He will be an able compliment to fellow Pro Bowler Terry McLaurin who has drawn extra scrutiny in the past because of the lack of depth at the wide receiver position.

Although Washington lost both Dyami Brown and Amide Zaccheus to free agency, they resigned Noah Brown who was the best receiver behind McLaurin last season making the wide receiver group much stronger going forward.

Then in mid-March Michael Gallup was signed. Washington fans will remember Gallup from his Dallas days where he played from 2018 to 2023. His best year was 2019 when he had 1,107 yards and 6 touchdowns. He signed with the Raiders before the 2024 season but then abruptly retired. Still only 29, Gallup should battle Brown as the third option in the passing attack. Second year player Luke McCaffrey is also expected to continue developing and he should provide quality depth.

On March 10th the Commanders filled their second major offensive need by trading for 5-time Pro Bowler Laremy Tunsil who has been one of the premier left tackles in the league since his rookie year in 2016. Although Tunsil's predecessor rookie Brandon Coleman tried valiantly, he surrendered 9 sacks for the year and is probably better suited for guard which should come in handy as stud right guard Sam Cosmi is expected to miss the early 2025 season with a knee injury.

To further solidify their offensive line Washington signed Pittsburgh guard Nate Herbig who missed most of 2024 with a torn rotator cuff. He had been expected to start for the Steelers and provides a great option to fill the void at right guard until Sam Cosmi returns. Washington also reworked the contract of right tackle Andrew Wylie who played better last year after a shaky 2023 season and he may be moved to guard if Brandon Coleman moves to right tackle.

Surprisingly, both center Michael Deiter and guard/tackle Trent Scott were also resigned but their roster spots are hardly assured, especially if Washington drafts an offensive lineman.

The tight end position will remain the same as veteran Zach Ertz and John Bates were resigned. Second year player Ben Sinnott, who played sparingly in 2024, is expected to be Ertz's eventual successor.

Likewise, the running back group of Brian Robinson, Austin Ekeler, Jeremy McNichols and Chris Rodriguez all return but Robinson is entering the final year of his rookie contract and it would come as no surprise if a running back is drafted.

One signing that didn't garner much attention was the resigning of veteran quarterback

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



## DALLAS MARCH SUMMARY BIG CHANGES ARE IN STORE

Despite salary cap limitations the Cowboys have made some inroads shoring up their roster during free agency. They are set at the quarterback position as Dak Prescott has returned to full health and, at age 31, should have plenty of years ahead. They have, however lost both primary backups and only journeyman Will Grier is left in reserve. This needs to be addressed as an injury to Prescott would be catastrophic.

The loss of starting running back Rico Dowdle was handled by signing former panther Miles Saunders and former Bronco Javonte Williams. Both had subpar 2024 seasons, gaining about 600 yards rushing apiece. Both are also on one year deals so expect a high draft choice to be used to find a running back of the future.

At wide receiver the Cowboys have CeeDee Lamb who is one of the most dominant receivers in the league. There's not much behind him with Jalen Tolbert and KaVontae Turpin, who is primarily a kick returner, as the next men up. Parris Campbell was signed to a one year contract but he spent most of last season on the Eagles practice squad and had only 5 catches for the year for 60 yards and a touchdown.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



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Deebo Samuel [Photo Credit: sportingnews.com]

#### WASHINGTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Marcus Mariota. The former second overall pick (just like Jayden Daniels) was a viable starter for years and he won 2 games last year, first when Daniels was injured and second when Daniels was pulled early after the Commanders had clinched a playoff spot. His return is a valuable insurance policy.

Defensively, the Commanders had 2 major losses in safety Jeremy Chinn and linebacker Dante Fowler who departed in free agency. Washington countered the loss of Chinn by signing safety Will Harris from the Saints.

Fowler's pass rushing will be missed but his loss was mitigated by the signing of Jacob Martin from the Bears and Deitrich Wise from the Patriots. Martin is primarily a pass rusher and Wise is more versatile although he did have 5 sacks last season as a part time player.

At defensive tackle the Commanders compensated for the release of Jonathan Allen by signing Javon Kinlaw to a 3 year 45 million dollar. At 6'5" and 319 pounds Kinlaw is strong against the run which was a weakness last year. Still only 27 years old, Kinlaw should be an upgrade over Allen, who has faded the past couple of years

Eddie Goldman, who grew up in the D.C. area, was also added and he is also strong against the run. 2024 backup Sheldon Day was also brought back on a one year deal to provide depth. Johnnie Newton and Daron Payne are

projected starters but the depth has notably improved.

At defensive end Deatrich Wise was brought over from the Patriots and he will compete to start against Clelin Ferrell who was brought back on a 1 year deal. Dorrance Armstrong is expected to start on the opposite side.

At cornerback Jonathan Jones was signed from the Patriots to start opposite Marshon Lattimore who was obtained in a trade late last season but struggled with injuries. If he can return to his old form the 4-time Pro Bowler could be a major asset.

Jones is a major upgrade over Benjamin St. Juste who was released. 2024 rookie Mike Sainristil is also expected to start and he has a bright future. Backups will be Noah Igbinoghene, who started some last year and Kevin Seymour but expect another draft pick or free agent to be added.

Although the loss of Chinn hurt, Quan Martin returns from a strong season and Will Harris was signed from the Saints. Harris is a good all-around player and Percy Butler, Jeremy Reaves and young Tyler Owens return in reserve. Don't be surprised is a draft pick is used at this position.

As far as the kicking game pro Bowler Tress Way returns at punter with Zane Gonzalez returning as the placekicker. Second Team All Pro Austin Ekeler returns to handle kick-offs and the punt returner job is still undecided.

While no one could have predicted the Commander's meteoric rise in 2024, the league will be prepared in 2025. However, with some key free agent signings and a little luck in the draft it appears that Washington is on the way to a bright future.

#### DALLAS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

The Cowboys are loaded at tight end with the emerging Jake Ferguson and two talented backups so this is one position where the Cowboys are set for the foreseeable future.

The offensive line is in flux with the loss of perennial Pro Bowler Zack Martin and none of the other starters impress-

es other than left guard Tyler Smith. This problem was address by the signing of Robert Jones from the Dolphins to a 1 year contract. Jones is solid and at 26 years of age is still improving.

Defensively, Dallas concentrated on keeping their current free agents and began by signing a new 4 year contract with defensive tackle Osa Odighizuwa who, at 26, is in his prime. He had 4.5 sacks last season and is a solid performer.

Dallas also resigned kick returner/wide



Quarterback Dak Prescott Returns in 2025  
[Photo Credit: si.com]

receiver KaVontae Turpin to a 3 year contract. Turpin has blazing speed but, at 155 pounds, is vulnerable to injury so his offensive reps will remain limited.

Safety Markquese Bell is also versatile and can play linebacker in a pinch. Bell was also resigned to a 3 year contract and is a reliable starter with good all around skills

Dallas did address their need on the defensive line by signing defensive end Solomon Thomas from the Jets on a 2 year deal. Thomas will help replace Chauncey Golston and is a solid player. Also signed to bolster the defensive line was Payton Turner from the Saints. He will primarily be a reserve behind Sam Williams and Marshawn Kneeland both of whom are coming off injuries. With the loss of DeMarcus Lawrence in free agency Dallas looks to be weaker in the defensive line unless some of the young players step up.

Dallas also needed reinforcements at linebacker with emerging DeMarvion Overshown coming off a serious knee injury and Eric Kendricks a free agent. The Cowboys responded by signing former Cowboy Dante Fowler to a 1year deal. Fowler had 10.5 sacks last season for the Commanders but is a liability against the run. Jack Sanborn was also signed from the Bears where he was a rotational player.

The secondary should be strong again with standout cornerbacks DaRon Bland and Tevon Diggs returning but Diggs is coming off an injury and underrated Jourdan Lewis was lost to free agency.

As previously mentioned, Markquese Bell was resigned at safety to provide depth behind Malik Hooker, Jayron Kearse and Donovan Wison. This may be the deepest safety group in the league.

Despite their lackluster free agency season, Dallas is loaded with extra draft pick due to receiving compensatory picks and they are looking to hit it big in the draft. They have 10 total picks including 3 in the 5th, 2 in the sixth and 2 in the 7th. They don't have a fourth round pick.

Areas of interest are running back, wide receiver and both lines. With the extra draft picks and the fact that they are picking 12th in most rounds, the Cowboys are in a position to add a lot of talent to their roster.

The draft is loaded at running back. Ashton Jeanty of Boise State is the consensus leader at running back but may not last until the 12th pick. If he is gone there are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



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DALLAS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

several other top talents, especially Omarion Hampton of North Carolina. Either would be a huge upgrade at a position where Dallas has struggled since the early years of Ezekiel Elliott.

Dallas could also score big in the second round as there should still be considerable talent available at wide receiver and both lines. With all of their extra picks Dallas should also be able to bolster their depth which has been depleted over the past couple of seasons by free agent departures.

There are mixed opinions regarding the future of the Cowboys. Some feel that last season's 7 and 10 record signals the beginning of the end fueled by massive contracts for star players that result in insufficient cap room for quality depth.

Others feel that 2024 was an anomaly and the return of quarterback Dak Prescott from injury and a good draft will cure all of their ills. Regardless of who's right, the NFC East should be loaded with the World Champion Eagles and the surging Commanders and Dallas will be hard pressed to keep up with them.

#### SHAKE-UP, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Christopher Marker, chief executive officer of the Freedom Institute of Collier County in Florida, said that while there are many examples of outstanding public schools, too many school leaders and elected officials have dismissed parents instead of embracing them as partners in the education process.

Without more input from parents and universal school

choice nationwide, he said, public education will become a trillion-dollar industry "of factory schools with warehouse model inefficiencies."

"We all love our schools and our school programs, but we don't love them more than we love our kids," Marker said.

The National Education Association (NEA), a teacher's union, endorsed Democratic presidential candidate Vice President Kamala Harris. It issued a public statement expressing disappointment with the election results.

However, the union also claimed victory with the passing of a referendum in Nebraska to end a taxpayer-funded private school voucher program, as well as the defeat of referendums to codify school choice into the state constitutions in Colorado and Kentucky.

"Now that this election is over, elected leaders around the country should come together and focus on serving all Americans, ensuring all students can attend an excellent public school, and America's educators have the support and respect they deserve," NEA President Becky Pringle said in the Nov. 6 statement.

#### Higher Education

During the Moms for Liberty summit in Philadelphia last year, Trump criticized Biden's student loan forgiveness program and applauded the Supreme Court for its decision to prohibit affirmative action in college admissions. He also said he would eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs funded by the federal government at institutes of higher education.

Ted Mitchell, president of ACE, said the election results ushered in "an anxious moment" for higher education. "An

awful lot of Americans feel higher education is moving American society in the wrong direction," Mitchell said during the Nov. 6 panel discussion.

Fansmith predicts Trump will use the DOE's civil rights office to oppose DEI hiring and curriculum programs.

"The critique is that they inherently discriminate against other groups of students," he said.

Jan Friis, senior vice president for the nonprofit Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), agrees.

CHEA oversees dozens of organizations that set and maintain industry standards in the humanities and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects.

Under the 1965 Higher Education Act, college majors

are required to be accredited in order to get federal money for research and other functions.

While CHEA is not federally funded, Friis said, but the U.S. government "accredits the accreditors."

"Accreditation has been around a lot longer [than college DEI and social justice programs]," Friis told The Epoch Times. "Any threat would be met with a strong reaction from higher education."

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) notes on its website that it plans to fight the Trump administration from day one.

The organization vows to represent schools that teach CRT and transgender ideology.

"We call on lawmakers, students, parents, educators, and community members to support the fight against these classroom censorship attacks and book challenges. The battle is far from over," a page on the ACLU website titled Defending Our Right to Learn states.

Exner, from PDE, said parent groups like hers are no strangers to litigation, and they expect a series of lawsuits from the ACLU in the years to come.

However, given Republicans' success in the 2024 election, she said, supporters of education reform and an objective education for all should be confident that change is coming.

"These are common sense 80/20 issues," she said. "We are bracing for more friction and resistance, yes, but public sentiment is on our side so it's an uphill battle for them."

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THE EPOCH TIMES

Janice Hisle contributed to this report

#### NNRJ IN A PANIC, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

- all the boxes and pass inspections
2. Prisoner complaints are ignored and self-investigated by their captors. Usually with findings of "nothing to see here".
3. The Jail Chairman decrees "All is well and keep up the good work".
4. The County Representatives go along for the ride.
5. Sheriffs what about you? One of you considers it a "conflict of interest" to investigate the jail that sits in your county!

I'm reminding you of the five action items I laid out at the last meeting, and I would like these entered into the record."

The live testimony of J6 detainees at both the February and March meetings has clearly shaken Chairman Fisher who started pre-meeting pat downs of attendees by uniformed security, changed the bylaws to allow public comment only quarterly and generally declaring his innocence to all that will hear. In fact, at a late March Westmoreland County Supervisors meeting, Fisher went off script to defend himself about the disclosures that have gone viral on the internet, broadcast TV and elsewhere.

His remarks are reprinted in their entirety in the local section of this edition but one paragraph, in particular,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



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**NNRJ IN A PANIC**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20 stands out:

"And to think that we would allow these atrocities to take place in an institutional organization we have oversight of and the truth of it is if it were true, it would make me really a horrible individual because the things we are accused of down there are inhumane and just ought not to be."

The basic reason that NNRJ is so secretive is that they don't want the public to know that they are basically a skimming operation diverting federal funds to enrich participating counties and Jail Staff by depriving the inmates of the basic necessities that the federal funds were intended for.

According to the 2024 report from the General Assembly NNRJ has the highest percentage of federal funding in the state at 50.4%. The amount spent on prisoners is a fraction of that with the difference being held in an "investment account that has been as high as 2.8 million dollars recently.

It is also apparent that counties such as Northumberland and Richmond, who average 12 to 13 inmates monthly, do not have crime problems such as Westmoreland and Gloucester Counties who average 35 and 90 monthly inmates respectively.

This is borne out by arrest rates. According to the most recent statistics from the Sheriff's Association, over the most recent year recorded Gloucester had 764 arrests, Westmoreland had 354 arrests, Northumberland had 99 arrests and Richmond had 90 arrests. It is clear which counties benefit most from this corrupt arrangement which explains why the Jail Board members from Westmoreland and Gloucester are the most determined to defend the

status quo.

It has been said: "First they ignore you. Then they laugh at you. Then they attack you. Then you win." Although there is disagreement as to whom to attribute this statement, it rings true nonetheless and those who have spoken out against the atrocities that have occurred at the NNRJ are now in the third stage as the Jail Board, especially Chairman Fisher, have pulled out all stops to silence the public whose tax dollars finance this corrupt and merciless facility.

And now they are running scared as they finally begin to realize that, under the new Trump Administration, the abuses and cruelties that abound in the penal system are being exposed and what you are hearing is, as Steve Bannon so eloquently puts it: "The primal scream of a dying regime." And then you win.

## SAFE HAVEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

(PTSD) as a result of their military deployment, their years of horrible confinement, or both". It is true that a very large number of J-Sixers were Veterans or First Responders who already proudly served our country before being entrapped at the election protests on the US Capitol grounds on January 6, 2021.

The Division of Civil Liberties (DOCL) is an organization that was co-founded by Brian Mock and Joshua Macias, founder of Veterans for Trump. Adam Villarreal later joined as Co-Chair. Each of them has personally experienced civil rights violations at the hands of federal agencies, fueling their commitment to government accountability and systemic reform.

Brian Mock stated the reason this group created DOCL was a responsibility he felt "to give back to the men that I left behind when I was in prison".

As part of the On Your Six Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to housing and rehabilitating homeless veterans and individuals affected by government persecution, DOCL recently partnered with a multi-building housing complex in Richmond, VA to achieve that goal. This facility is set to become the nation's premier veteran rehabilitation center.

From the [www.oy6.org](http://www.oy6.org) website:

### Our Mission

The Civil Liberties Division is dedicated to defending constitutional rights, exposing government corruption, and advocating for justice reform. Founded by January 6 politi-

cal prisoners Brian Mock and Adam Villarreal, our mission is to ensure accountability in the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), Department of Justice (DOJ), and federal institutions while fighting for due process and civil liberties for all Americans. We are committed to:

- Prison Reform – Holding the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and Department of Justice (DOJ) accountable for violations of the First Step Act (FSA) and the unlawful detention of inmates.
- January 6 Investigations – Leading a J6-led independent investigation into the truth surrounding the events of January 6, ensuring real justice for political prisoners.
- Civil Liberties – Protecting free speech, due process, and fundamental rights against government overreach.

We stand for truth, justice, and accountability—because no American should be persecuted for political beliefs or denied their legal rights. Join us in this fight.

The Legacy Imperial Village is a former Assisted Living facility that evolved into affordable apartments for Seniors. This complex offers great amenities including ample opportunities to get outdoors in the nearby Joseph Bryan Park. On campus amenities:

24-Hour Fitness Center, Billiards Room, Bocce Ball Courts, Business Center, Clubhouse, Community Convenience Store, Community Garden, Community Salon, Dog Park, Dog Wash Station, Gated Access, Laundry Facility, On-site Maintenance, Pet-Friendly, Physical Rehab facility, Pickle Ball, Picnic Area, Putting Green, Restaurant, Shuffle Board, Theatre Room, Walking Paths

This home for Vets in Richmond is just one of many envisioned by the On Your Six Foundation. Please go to [www.oy6.org](http://www.oy6.org) to learn more about volunteer opportunities or to donate to this great cause. Our Veterans, First Responders, and many J-Sixers can use a lot of help in getting started to rebuild their lives. Let us not let them down in their hour of need!

OY6 official Press Release - December 11, 2024

On Your Six Foundation Launches SafeHaven Program to Support Veterans

The On Your Six Foundation is proud to announce the official launch of its groundbreaking SafeHaven Program, a comprehensive initiative designed to address housing instability among homeless veterans. With a mission to stabilize lives and empower those who have served, the SafeHaven Program provides essential resources and tailored support to help veterans transition into secure and independent living.

SafeHaven shelters are specialized facilities offering a range of services, including individualized case management, collaboration with the VA for coordinated care, and access to basic amenities such as semi-private bedrooms, communal dining areas, and laundry facilities. Beyond providing housing solutions, the program emphasizes supportive services, including education, job training, legal aid, and mental health treatment, ensuring a holistic approach

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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SAFE HAVEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

to veteran rehabilitation and reintegration.

"We recognize the unique challenges our veterans face, from mental health issues to financial instability," said Joshua Macias, Executive Director of the On Your Six Foundation. "The SafeHaven Program is about more than housing; it's about offering dignity, stability, and a pathway to a brighter future."

Eligibility for the program is open to veterans aged 20 or older who are homeless, OTH, medically or honorably discharged, or are in a financial crisis. Each participant works closely with case managers to develop a personalized plan that addresses their specific needs, fostering growth and self-sufficiency. Residents are expected to maintain a clean and sober lifestyle, contribute through community service, and actively engage in their recovery journey.

#### A Proven Model for Success

The SafeHaven Program is already showing promising results, with measurable improvements in housing stability, mental health outcomes, and income for participants. This model is driven by strategic partnerships with local organizations and the VA, ensuring that veterans have access to the full spectrum of support they need.

"Our mission is to reintegrate veterans into society with restored pride and purpose," added Ozzy Perez. "SafeHaven is not just a program; it's a commitment to our heroes who have given so much. It is a camp fire we all gather around"

The On Your Six Foundation invites community members, organizations, and businesses to join this life-changing initiative through donations, volunteering, and partnerships. Together, we can create a future where no veteran is left without the support they deserve.

For more information about the SafeHaven Program or how to get involved contact us at [info@oy6.org](mailto:info@oy6.org).

#### THE LEFT KNEW, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Once it was known that the first COVID-19 case originated in or near a Chinese communist virology lab engineering gain-in-function deadly viruses—with help from Western agencies—the left went into full persecution mode.

They damned as incompetent, racist, and conspiratorial any who dared follow logic and evidence to point out that the Chinese government and its military were both culpable

for the virus and lying.

A million Americans died of COVID. Millions more suffered long-term injuries. Still, the left-wing media and Biden administration demonized any who dared speak the truth about a lab origin of the deadly virus.

The lies were designed to protect the guilty who had helped fund the virus's origins, such as Doctors Anthony Fauci and Francis Collins.

The Biden government also tried to use the lab theory to ridicule a supposedly pro-Trump "conspiracy."

Western corporate interests deeply invested in China did not want their partner

held responsible for veritably killing and maiming hundreds of millions worldwide.

Almost as soon as Joe Biden was inaugurated, the left knew that he was physically and mentally unable to serve as president.

Indeed, that was the point.

Biden's role was designed as a waxen figurine for hard-left agendas that, without the "old Joe Biden from Scranton" pseudo-moderate veneer, could never have been advanced.

His handlers operated a nightmare administration: the destruction of deterrence abroad, two theater wars, 12 million illegal aliens, a weaponized justice system, hyperinflation, and \$7 trillion more in debt.

By 2017, the public knew three truths about the so-called Christopher Steele dossier.

One, it was completely fallacious—fabricated by a has-been, ex-British spy Christopher Steele. He childishly had cobbled together lurid sex stories, James Bond spy fictions, and Russian-fed disinformation to destroy the Trump candidacy and later presidency.

Two, it was paid for by the Hillary Clinton campaign. She hid her checks behind the Democratic National Committee, the Perkins Coie law firm, and Fusion GPS paywalls.

Three, the FBI under James Comey hired Steele as an informant. It helped disseminate his concocted files and was also instrumental in trying to subvert the Trump campaign and later administration.

No sane person ever believed that Hunter Biden's laptop was the work of "Russian disinformation." Its contents a year before the 2020 election were verified by the FBI, but it kept mum about its confirmation.

The pornographic pictures, the evidence of prostitution and drug use, the electronic communications implicating Joe Biden in his family's illicit shake-down operation of foreign governments—all were never challenged by anyone who was associated with the laptop's contents.

Yet future Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, along with former interim CIA Director Mike Morrell, sought to fabricate a colossal lie to arm their candidate, Joe Biden, with plausible denial in the last presidential debate before the 2020 election.

They rounded up a rogue's gallery of 51 now utterly discredited former intelligence authorities to lie to the nation that the laptop was likely fake.

All knew the FBI had verified the laptop. But they also knew that their titles would empower their lies that the Russians likely invented the laptop to aid the sinister Trump.

And the ruse worked like a charm.

In the debate, Biden cited their lies chapter and verse to claim the incriminating laptop was fake. A lying media damned Trump as a puppet of Vladimir Putin. Joe Biden, little more than a week later, won the 2020 election.

The Biden administration deliberately destroyed the southern border and welcomed 12 million illegal aliens. And then it lied that Biden had no power to stop the influx.

The media fabricated the excuse that "comprehensive immigration reform" was needed to enforce federal immi-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

## Benlak's Sleepy Hollow Salon

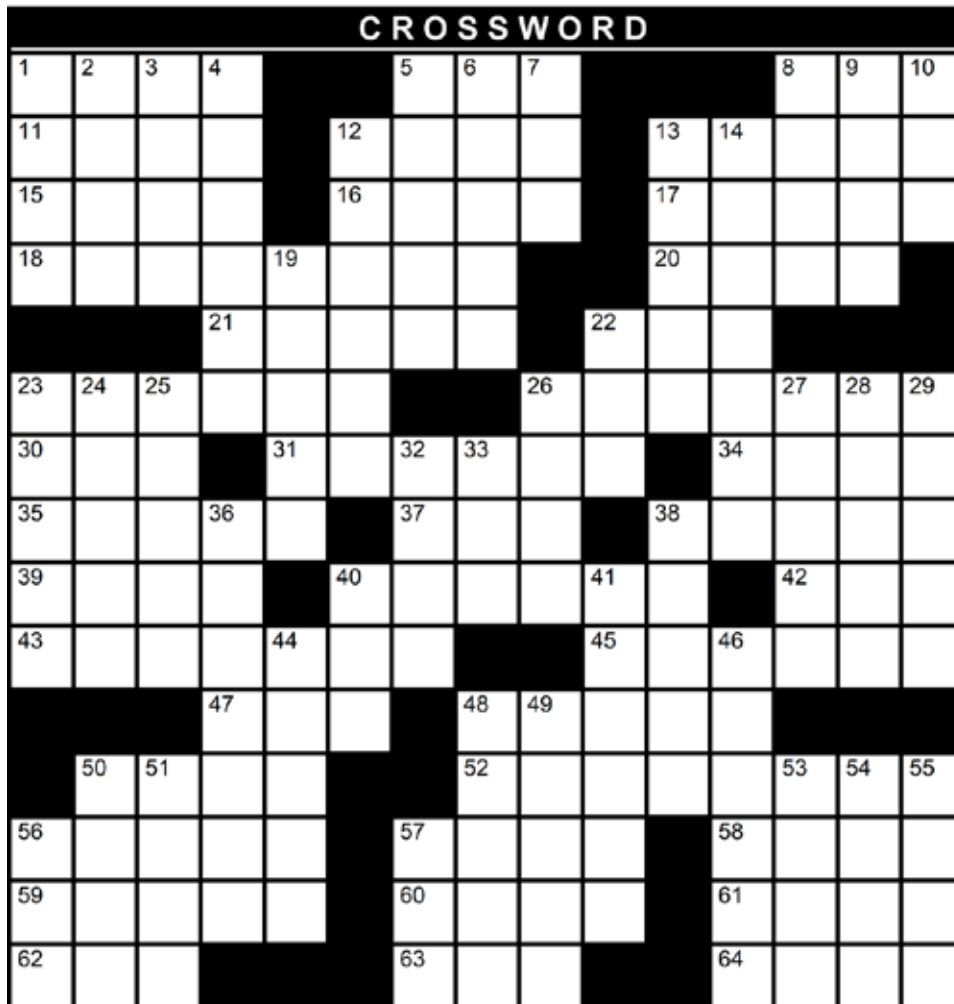
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# CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## THEME: DESSERTS

### ACROSS

1. Like some champagnes
5. Undergarment
8. Dashboard acronym
11. Poison ivy woe
12. Took to court
13. Milan's La \_\_\_\_
15. Afresh
16. Globes and such
17. SNL's forté
18. \*Ladyfingers+coffee liqueur
20. Grammy of sports
21. Jeweler's unit
22. \*Like walnuts on ice cream
23. \*Thin Mint or Carmel deLite
26. \*Apple dip
30. Nelson Mandela's org.
31. Profoundness, pl.
34. Frost-covered
35. Ticket leftovers
37. Pathet \_\_\_\_
38. Lazybones
39. Samoan money
40. A in AU, Alabama
42. Heidi Samuel \_\_\_\_ Klum
43. Contaminating punch
45. Flammable anesthetics
47. a.k.a. acid
48. Military group
50. Jezebel's deity
52. \*Espresso+gelato
56. Forgo
57. Palo \_\_\_\_, CA
58. Sacred image
59. Southern cuisine pods
60. Show the guns
61. Small stream
62. "The Star-Spangled Banner" author
63. Toni Morrison's "\_\_\_\_ Baby"
64. Adeline or Addison, for short

### DOWN

1. Troublesome child
2. Jasmine of "Aladdin," e.g.
3. Olympic cast-out
4. Smack
5. Anatomical sac
6. Overthrow by argument
7. Marketing creations
8. Wild onion
9. Clever tactic
10. Spanish sea
12. Evening party
13. See-through
14. \*Eggs+milk+sugar
19. Old \_\_\_\_, or unpopped popcorn kernels
22. Be, singular past tense
23. Uses a fishing reel
24. Like beer at a kegger (2 words)
25. Round openings
26. Cabbage, in France
27. "The House at Pooh Corner" author
28. African chieftain
29. Ancient Greeks' harps
32. Socket counterpart
33. Bar bill
36. \*Filo dough+nuts+honey
38. Book opener
40. Uniting conjunction
41. Robin Hood in Disney's "Robin Hood" (2 words)
44. Keys
46. Mecca to Medina exodus
48. Type of lily
49. Happily ever when?
50. \*Make Alaska
51. Gossamer
53. Vinegar or lemon juice, to a chef
54. Communicated
55. James Bond's "For Your Eyes \_\_\_\_"
56. Asian cuisine pan
57. Astern

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SOLUTIONS PAGE 38



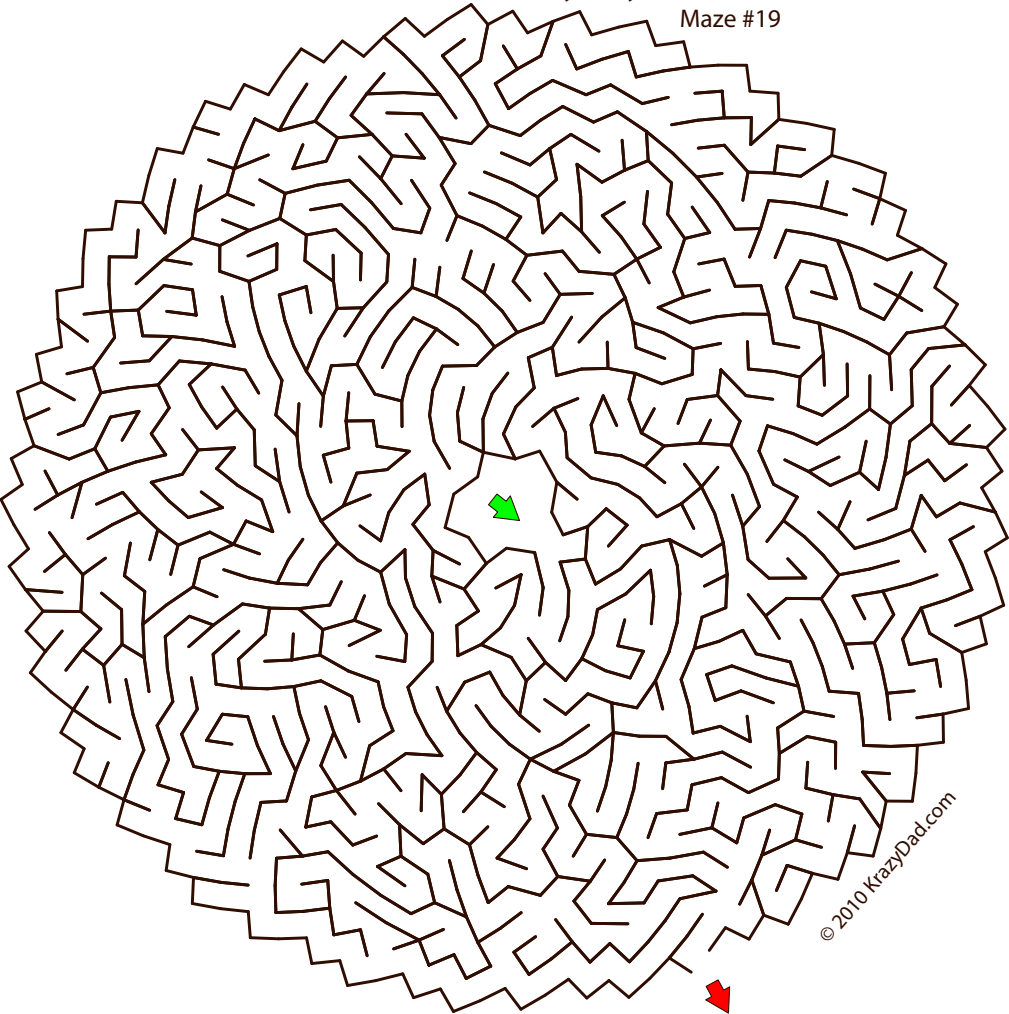
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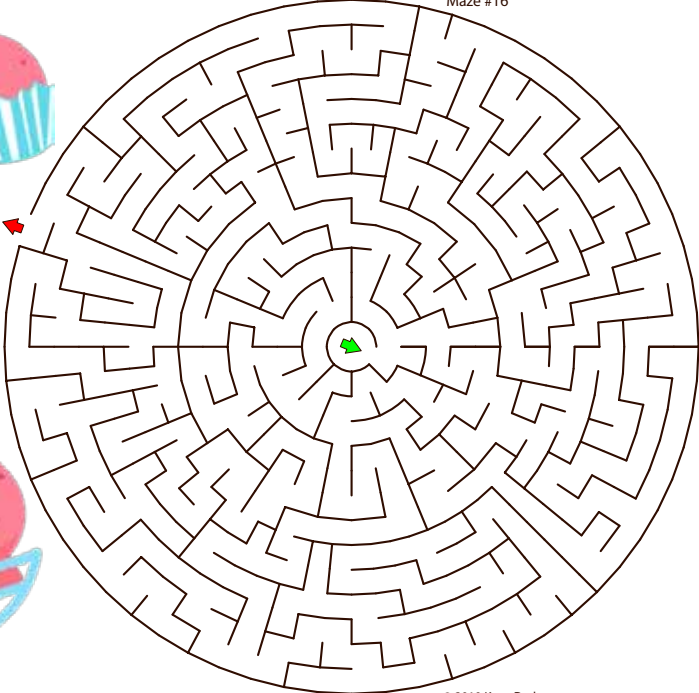
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**THE LEFT KNEW**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22  
gration laws already on the books.

Upon inauguration, Trump, in a matter of days, stopped what Biden had deliberately engineered for years.

Biden's handlers wanted new millions of poor illegal aliens, dependent on social services, to swarm the borders.

They saw them as future voters and constituents to fuel their victim/victimizer Marxist binaries.

And they now quietly see their efforts as a huge success—knowing that it will be near impossible to find the millions of illegal aliens they welcomed in.

All these lies have divided the country and permanently damaged the U.S.

The perpetrators have neither apologized for their lies nor tried to either deny or substantiate them.

No one involved has ever been held legally accountable.

The legacy media permanently ruined its reputation and will likely never be seen as credible again.

The Biden administration, overseer of many of these lies, will be regarded as the most duplicitous and dishonest presidency in modern history.

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AMERICAN GREATNESS

## CURE DEMOCRACY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

is staggering how blind to election results and deaf to the voices of voters they seem to be. Wokeness may be in retreat, but this core cadre, still including many in legacy media, continues their ranting about existential threats and trying to shame us into shedding crocodile tears over illegals. Leftists have doubled down on their playbook even though its tenets have been hollowed out and proven false again and again.

This failing mindset was perfectly captured by the perspicacious novelist Saul Bellow, an early victim of political correctness: "A great deal of intelligence," Bellow observed, "can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is great." What we have been witnessing is proof of the Bellow equation: the Left ever more desperately clings to its illusions, and its investment in ignorance commensurately soars. Their conjured existential crises have evolved from global warming to climate change, to Russian collusion, Trump 45, then Trump 47, and now expanding to include Elon Musk, every challenge to the Deep State, and whatever Executive Order happens to be signed today.

I recall being puzzled long ago at the leftist declarations of certain of my acquaintances, wondering what sources their hypereducated intellects were consulting to support their emotional pronouncements. Gradually, I realized it wasn't about their words; it was about that emotion. They weren't using their once-questing intellect to get to the truth; they were just consulting their newly discovered elitist tribe (coached by legacy media) to see what cue card they should read. They were not exploring and processing knowledge; they were just mechanically reciting leftist sound loops dressed up with Ivy League syntax. You hear a lot of accusations and derision in those loops, but seldom

do you hear words of cognitive engagement, words that reflect a genuine interest in discovery or the shared advancement of knowledge that until now drove human progress.

For years, many of us wanted to believe this was just a passing naivete. No longer. At this point, the Left's deliberate lack of interest in the truth can only be called willful ignorance. It is impossible to embrace the 1619 Project or claim that Winston Churchill caused World War II without deliberately ignoring actual, easily accessible history. Perhaps the most blatant examples are the zealots' pronouncements that grammar, spelling, and math are constructs of white supremacy — particularly disturbing since impressionable students are being indoctrinated with this ignorance.

Too many of our institutions are entrenching stupidity and proliferating it throughout society, spreading not just disregard for truth but also an inability to articulate clear, rational thought. If you don't understand that this embrace of ignorance underlies the plummeting scores in our schools (the new National Report Card shows our students failing math and reading), the abysmal decline of media, the promulgation of climate myths, and the tendency of Democrats to act like screaming banshees instead of offering substantive dialogue, then you need to put down your phone and go read a book. Responsible adults pursue questions to get to the truth. When did these people stop asking questions?

"We are born ignorant but one must work hard to remain stupid," that quintessential American, Benjamin Franklin, stated. The Left has been working very hard indeed. An essential ingredient for their stubborn ignorance is narcissism, which was on blatant display in the Left's 2024 presidential campaign and at their recent conclave to baptize new leaders. Their toxic mixture of ignorance and ego lets them pretend they know everything. With bizarre confidence, they treat ignorance as a virtue, not a political handicap. They pat each other on the back and deem themselves the true emperors. But not a one is wearing any clothes


It's a sad commentary on our culture that we have to talk about an epidemic of ignorance, but we can no longer dismiss this syndrome as a mere irritant. The Left doesn't simply make themselves irrelevant, they are infecting our institutions with the virus. They dumb down public discourse, which means that those who incessantly cry wolf with shrieks of "threat to democracy!" and "Constitutional crisis!" are the real threat to democracy. The most inhu-

man, amoral regimes of history were made possible by the ignorant. "Anyone who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities," warned Voltaire. Willful stupidity is toxic to a healthy democracy and ultimately our way of life. Jefferson was not speaking lightly when he observed that a civilization cannot be ignorant and free at the same time. Do we need a reminder: civilization is not something other people do; we all participate, and each of us shares responsibility for it.

No off-the-shelf cure exists for stupidity. It can't be reversed by executive order. With rare but wonderful exceptions, it cannot be mitigated by a single teacher. The antidote has much to do with thinking for yourself and cajoling those around you to do the same. Don't be shaped or led by the ignorant. Push back with facts. Stop supporting the elite universities, which have become incubators for ignorance. Mock the narcissism that breeds it. Let the legacy media die their well-deserved death. Stop being silent when you encounter stupidity leaking out of your local schools.

Before he was martyred by the Nazi regime, Dietrich Bonhoeffer recognized the terrible truth behind his fate. "We have more to fear from stupid people," Bonhoeffer concluded as he faced execution, "than evil ones." Great countries, like great people, can be done in by ignorance. America won't be great again if we don't push back against the stupidity.

*Eliot Pattison's nineteen novels include the award-winning Skull Mantra series, casting a spotlight on human rights abuses in China, and his Bone Rattler series, which explores the complex people and events leading to the American Revolution.*



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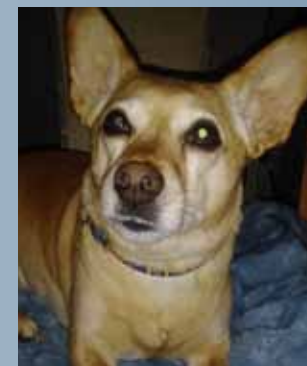
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## CHOOSING IDENTIFICATION RESOURCES FOR YOUR DOG

Kristy Fike

It's no secret that there are a few different identification resources that dog owners use in efforts to return their dog home should they get lost. It is imperative that you consider what those resources are, and which will be the most appropriate for your dog's lifestyle.

### Permanent Identification

Microchipping has been a popular permanent identification method utilized by breeders and dog owners alike. Microchips are inserted between a dog's front two shoulders. The chips contain a specific identification number that is shown when the microchip scanner reads the chip. This number is linked to a registry that has the owner's contact information. Some breeders send their pups home already microchipped. Some dog owners do not favor the idea of a chip being in their dog. However, if you plan on breeding your dog, microchipping will be required to proceed with select health clearance screenings prior to breeding your dog. Tattooing or a special identification marker has been another identification option for dog owners. Similar to microchips, they too are in the form of a special identification number that is linked to a registry that has the owner's contact information.

### Other Identification

Other identification options largely involve collars and

identification plates. The key here is to have the ideal identification plate or tag for your dog's lifestyle with useful information on it. Some owners have collars embroidered with their dog's information on it. This option eliminates the scare of a plate or tag getting torn off or hung on something. Identification plates are another option and are popular among those with active dogs that may lose their hanging tag or wear it down quickly as it swings back and forth. Some plates are made to slide

onto a dog's collar and others are made to be riveted onto their dog's collar. For owners whose dogs do not live an active outdoor lifestyle, hanging dog tags are a popular and ideal option.

### Customizing Your Dog's Identification

Many owners view collars, identification tags, and plates as more of an accessory for their dog rather than a practical tool. It is imperative that the information you choose to utilize on your dog's collars, tags, and plates is up to date and informative. Many owners utilize their dog's name. However, some don't like the idea. Their concern is that if a stranger sees it, they may use it to call the dog to them with intentions of trying to keep the dog. Regardless of where you stand on that opinion, ensure that you put on your choice identification resource your name and the best point of contact should your dog get away. If your dog has a medical condition, it is important to have a medical symbol put on your choice identification resource or the phrase "Needs Meds Daily." This will hopefully encourage someone to return the dog as soon as possible. Some owners will also put "Microchipped" or simply "chipped" on their choice identification.

Location is another key piece of information. While some owners put their full address on their choice identification resource, owners should at least put their city and state of residence. My personal preferences for my dog's active lifestyle include name plates that are riveted onto the collar. On those plates I include: my name, "Needs Meds Daily", two phone numbers, the city and state of residence.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

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## IDENTIFICATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

Some people may wonder if identification is that important, especially if they have an angel for a dog. In the event their dog gets out, they will wish that their dog had something on. I've had a dog on the loose without a collar, and it was a sick feeling. Take the time to determine what identification methods you would like to use for your dog and ensure you utilize the methods that will be practical for your dog's lifestyle. In addition, ensure you keep all the information up to date. This includes updating any information linked to your dog's microchip or special identification marker. Lastly, ensure that you keep your collars, tags, and plates clean (legible) and replace them as they wear out.

## DEMOCRATS IMplode, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Democratic Party is having a nervous breakdown, peppered with notable, simultaneous temper tantrums.

Their long-time losing habit rages on.

This is garnering optics no one in their right mind would ever wish for.

Case in point, witness their appalling and reprehensible behavior at President Donald Trump's joint session of Congress address of March 5, 2025.

Throw in the left's violent and childish and dangerous actions against Elon Musk, and Tesla, and we're now witness to a Democratic Party in well-deserved disarray.

Long gone are the days of the Democratic Party of FDR, Harry Truman, JFK, LBJ, and even Bill Clinton.

Franklin D. Roosevelt truly wanted to help the downtrodden "The Forgotten Man."

He also, of course, wanted to rescue the world from Nazism and the terror of the Japanese Empire.

Gone are the days of the anti-Communist John Kennedy who stood up to the Soviets and his sensible tax cuts to restore the vitality of the American economy.

In the context of today's politics, JFK would be a cherished conservative and an outcast is his own party.

Donald Trump and the GOP have completely befuddled the left.

The Democratic Party is no longer comprised of scholars and statesmen, it's makeup in the present day, is made up of oversized adults behaving like violent school children.

As their poll numbers tank, they have the stark appearance of being only a tiny gaggle of their own grievances.

So it now appears with the dysfunctional, dejected, and despondent Democrats are happiest squabbling among themselves.

Eventually, good books will be written on the dismayed, pathetic, sad state of the modern Democrat. A recently planned book on Joe Biden was cancelled due to lack of interest.

If one needs further proof of Democrats in beyond appreciable decline, reflect on the demeanor of Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

His recent "performance" on ABC's "The View," demonstrates, as is the case with so many other limousine liberals, he really doesn't "get it."

So, what do today's Democrats stand for?

They are left to debate atmospheric, and other platitudinal froth. Most of which is irrelevant to and for decent Americans.

As of today, they only stand for abortion on demand, even into the ninth month, and astonishingly, support post-natal abortion as does

the former Democratic governor of Virginia, Ralph Northam.

And Democrats, who for the past 30 years or so, loudly chirp: "transparency" and "good government," strongly support that in government which is now emerging as wholly unsettling and dysfunctional.

How so?

Look at the left camp's wailing over the contemplated cuts in USAID.

What are Americans supposed to think — and believe — about Democrats today?

As far as the American people are concerned, these are the only two things the modern left supports today.

Oh yes, they support illegal immigrants in America, inclusive of those who rape and pillage decent Americans.

Today's Democrats, along with being in shambles, are

only interested in raw, naked power.

This is why they vociferously defend that which is corrupt and entrenched.

The reason?

They feed from it, developing new methods to continue their feeding from the trough.

The one funded by rightfully distressed American taxpayers.


Think: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and shrill support for the transgendered way of life.

Throw in the fact they engaged in lawfare, at multiple levels, trying to get Trump.

They eagerly spent 2.5 billion dollars doing so.

Furthermore, they had the national liberal media, as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29




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*"Now, more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless, and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness, and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave, and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature....."*

— President James Garfield

# Community



## NEW SHOW AT TAG BRINGS COLORFUL DIMENSIONS FROM TWO VIRGINIA ARTISTS TAPPAHANNOCK ART GALLERY (TAG) PRESENTS: “NATURE’S ESSENCE”

Paige Conner Totaro, Executive Director

*A Two-Person Art Exhibit featuring works by Jon Larsen and Juli Schuszler*

- Opening Reception: Friday, March 28, from 5:00-7:00 pm
- Exhibition Dates: March 28 - April 19, 2025
- Location: TAG, Tappahannock Art Gallery, 200 Prince Street, Tappahannock, VA

TAG is delighted to host “Nature’s Essence,” a two-person art exhibit featuring the compelling sculptures of Jon Larsen and the vibrant oil paintings and pastels of Juli Schuszler.

### About the Artists:

Jon Larsen, a veteran of the US Coast Guard, discovered his passion for glass while earning his bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary arts at Towson University in 2001. Self-taught in kiln forming, Jon is renowned for his innovative process of casting human faces into evocative glass masks, often incorporating natural elements like driftwood and stones. His artwork, celebrating the colors and structure of the natural world, has been featured in exhibitions throughout the United States and internationally, including the notable “Nature Personified” at the Art Center and “Permaculture: Art of the Natural World” at the Indianapolis Art Center. Jon currently creates in his home studio in Culpeper, Virginia.

“To be human is to be natural, a part of nature and our surroundings,” says Larsen. “Humans often view nature from a detached perspective, yet it is integral to our human experience. My respect for the natural world greatly influ-

ences my work, pushing me to explore and understand nature’s complexities. Through my sculptures, I strive to encourage viewers to see themselves as integral to nature rather than separate from it. Art should challenge perspectives and inspire new ways of thinking, and I hope my creations prompt this introspection.”

Juli Schuszler, a Tidewater native, is celebrated for her detailed and vibrant paintings depicting nature’s inherent beauty. As a meticulous representational artist, Juli captures the nuances of color, light, and shadow through carefully applied layers of oil paint and pastels. Her extensive portfolio includes florals, landscapes, seascapes, and portraits inspired by nature’s rich diversity. Juli’s artistic talents, influenced by her Hungarian heritage, emerged at an early age. She holds degrees from Old Dominion University and the Citadel and has an extensive career background as both a commercial artist and art educator. Her work is displayed in prominent regional art centers, and more can be viewed online at [julischuszler.com](http://julischuszler.com).

Juli Schuszler shares: “I paint to express the real joy and pleasure nature provides me. Through careful layering and vivid representation, I capture the interplay of light and shadow, aiming to reflect nature’s inherent beauty and evoke joy in viewers.”

Juli was a winner of a juried show at TAG a few years ago, and will be serving as juror for TAG’s 2025 summer juried show, Wild and Wacky, which will open on June 27.

The opening reception on March 28th, from 5 to 7 pm, offers an opportunity to meet both artists. Admission to the exhibit is free, and all displayed works will be available for purchase.

On Saturday, March 29 at 10am, Jon Larsen will offer a demonstration of his glass sculpture techniques. Register online at <https://>

[tapparts.org/2025/03/18/03-29-25-jon-larsen-glass-sculpture-demonstration/](http://tapparts.org/2025/03/18/03-29-25-jon-larsen-glass-sculpture-demonstration/)

For additional information, visit TAG’s website [tapparts.org](http://tapparts.org) or contact the gallery directly.

### About TAG

*Tappahannock Artists Guild, also known as Tappahannock Art Gallery or TAG, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The mission of TAG is to build and maintain a community art center, to promote artists and their work, and to offer opportunities for art education, cultural enrichment, and creative expression to all citizens and visitors by sharing and celebrating diverse talents, traditions, and lifestyles.*

## WESTMORELAND, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

when the blueprints was drawn up for its construction and have served continuously for the last 30 years, a good majority of those as chair and when folk attack your integrity it becomes personal.

And to think that we would allow these atrocities to take place in an institutional organization we have oversight of and the truth of it is if it were true, it would make me really a horrible individual because the things we are accused of down there are inhumane and just ought not to be.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29



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**WESTMORELAND, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28**

So, since the other audiences always take this opportunity to say what's not true I'll take this platform to say what is true and challenge any and all to follow up and read the reports, follow the unannounced inspections and look to see what the reports say and, with that being said, thank you so much for your time, your opportunity and thank you all for the opportunity to be able to serve you and, with that being said, the County Administrator."

Right on cue, County Administrator Jim Taylor jumped on the band wagon, praising Chairman Fisher and then stated that he had been given a tour of the facility and was totally impressed.

The Sentinel has been covering this subject for three years and has interviewed countless detainees, their attorneys and families and former employees and finds Mr. Fisher's remarks to be false.

Inspections are not "unannounced" as supported by trustys who helped prepare for inspections and former employees. Mr. Fisher has never performed an unannounced inspection and has admitted in live jail board meetings that he does not even read abuse investigation reports as he trusts the staff.

Not that it would matter. "Investigations" consist of staff members "investigating" other staff members and, as you would expect, the reports are determined to be false 100% of the time.

Or perhaps he could explain how the jail has accumulated 2.8 million dollars in an "investment funds" as inmates are starved, beaten and mocked by staff. These funds were skimmed from federal per diem payments and other funds intended for the needs of the incarcerated.

So, after three years of in depth investigation, the Sentinel asserts that Chairman Fisher is, in his own words: "really a horrible individual".

**DEMOCRATS IMplode,**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

allies, bashing Trump daily.

Trump and the renewed Republican Party represent a majority countervailing force in America. It reminds one of the Greek God Antaeus who got stronger the more he was attacked.

Lawfare is an ideological ghetto, and Democrats, as with others on the left, simply can't help themselves.

Think: Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., or Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y.

They simply can't pull themselves from the same exact way of leftward thinking.

Certainly, they, among other officeholders, will never allow their chosen political party to veer anywhere near moderation.

Nov. 5, 2024, stands as a powerful, enduring tribute to the man who will revolutionize Ameri-

ca, bringing her back to peace, prosperity, and freedom . . . President Donald John Trump.

*Craig Shirley is Chairman of Citizens for the Republic, as well as a Ronald Reagan biographer and presidential historian. He's authored six books on Reagan. He's also written The New York Times bestseller, "December, 1941" and also published the companion book, "April, 1945." He's also the author of "Mary Ball Washington," which won the People's Choice Award from the Library of Virginia. His book on the 1980 presidential campaign, "Rendezvous with Destiny" was named by The Wall Street Journal as one of the five best campaign books of all time. Shirley is also the author of the newly released bestseller, "The Search for Reagan."*

**NORTHUMBERLAND, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**  
Board of Supervisors is basically taking over the schools finances. Meanwhile, local citizens are circulating a peti-

tion for a county referendum to have future school boards selected by the Board of Supervisors rather than being selected by popular vote.

Things have gotten even worse lately when it was discovered that as much as \$700,000 could be owed to the state because of bungled bookkeeping in what is a chaotic system. There is also a petition being circulated to have a referendum placed on the ballot to replace the current policy of elected school boards with school boards appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

There is insufficient room in this article to review the voluminous evidence of neglect and abuse but a detailed article describing the entire situation can be found on the front page of this edition. Because of that this article will be abbreviated.

In other county news, the long standing controversy as to how best handle the growing number of shipping

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31



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# VETERANS AFFAIRS

## WEEK EIGHT WINS A TESTAMENT TO AMERICAN GREATNESS UNDER PRESIDENT TRUMP

The past week was marked by another series of triumphs that underscore the commitment of President Donald J. Trump and his administration to making America stronger, safer, and more prosperous than ever before. Here is a non-comprehensive list of wins in week eight:

- President Trump's economic agenda came into focus as Americans saw needed economic relief following years of Bidenflation.
  - Consumer inflation "eased more than expected" in February, with core inflation at its lowest level in nearly four years — driven by a decline in airfare prices as Americans prepare for Spring Break.
  - Wholesale inflation came in much lower than expected in February.
  - Mortgage rates dropped to their lowest levels since December, while home purchase applications are at their highest level since January.
  - The price of a dozen eggs is down 36.6% since President Trump's inauguration.
  - The average price for regular gas has fallen below \$3/gallon in 31 states — the third straight week of decline — with the price of oil down nearly 15% since President Trump took office.
- President Trump and his administration continued their remarkable progress in securing the border following the news that illegal crossings have plummeted to the lowest levels ever recorded.
- In President Trump's first 50 days, ICE arrested 32,809 illegal immigrants — nearly 75% of whom were accused or convicted criminals — virtually the same

number of arrests over the entirety of Biden's final year in office.

- Just 77 "gotaways" were recorded in the past three weeks — a 95% decrease from the average daily number of "gotaways" under Biden in 2023.
- Migration to the U.S. through Panama's Darien Gap has dropped by 99% as would-be illegal border crossers turn around.



- President Trump's Section 232 tariffs on imported steel and aluminum took effect as the Trump Administration levels the playing field for American workers.
- Steel Manufacturers Association: "As the revised steel tariff goes into effect today, President Trump is boldly declaring that America will no longer be a dumping ground for cheap, subsidized foreign steel ... By closing loopholes in the tariff that have been exploited for years, President Trump will again supercharge a steel industry that stands ready to rebuild America."
- Five major organizations representing the steel industry issued a statement lauding the tariffs.
- President Trump's tariffs continued driving manufacturing back to the U.S.
  - Cra-Z-Art — the biggest toymaker in the country — is expanding its domestic manufacturing by 50%.
  - "We are moving a large percentage of what we have in China to here, duplicating some machinery and investing in high speed automation equipment," said Chairman Lawrence Rosen. "When Trump announced the higher tariffs on China, it's been full steam ahead."
- GE Aerospace announced a \$1 billion investment in its U.S.-based manufacturing operation, which will create 5,000 new jobs.

North Carolina manufacturing facility as it plans to invest \$8 billion in the U.S. over the next several years.

- Saica Group, a Spain-based corrugated packaging maker, announced plans to build a \$110 million new manufacturing facility in Anderson, Indiana.
- Saint Gobain Ceramics announced a new \$40 million NorPro manufacturing facility in Wheatfield, New York.
- LGM Pharma announced a \$6 million investment to expand its manufacturing facility in Rosenberg, Texas.
- President Trump forced Ontario, Canada, Premier Doug Ford to back down from his threat to implement 25% electricity tariffs on American consumers.
- The Department of Homeland Security unveiled the CBP Home App, which repurposes the Biden-era CBP One App to give illegal immigrants the option of self-deporting.
- The Trump Administration stripped the first visa of a foreign student linked to Hamas-supporting "disruptions" on a college campus.
- The Environmental Protection Agency launched the "biggest day of deregulation in American history," which included ending the Biden-Harris electric vehicle mandate, stopping the Biden Administration's assault on power plants, and eliminating costly emissions standards.
- The EPA canceled more than 400 "diversity, equity, and inclusion" and "environmental justice" grants, totaling \$1.7 billion.
- The Department of Education opened investigations into 45 universities under Title VI for alleged impermissible use of race-exclusionary preferences, race-based scholarships, and/or race-based segregation.
- The Trump Administration announced Ukraine accepted an offer to enter into immediate negotiations for a cease-fire and ultimate end to the brutal war.
- The Trump Administration secured an agreement by Israel and Lebanon to engage in land border negotiations.
- Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum officially fulfilled President Trump's promise to rename the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge in Texas as the Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge — honoring the memory of Jocelyn Nungaray, a young woman whose life was tragically cut short by an illegal immigrant.
- The Department of the Interior announced the approval of a federal mining plan modification to extend the

CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 31



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**WEEK EIGHT WINS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30**  
operational life of Montana's Spring Creek Mine by 16 years — enabling the production of nearly 40 million tons of coal and supporting hundreds of full-time jobs.

- The Department of Energy signed the third major liquefied natural gas export permit approval since President Trump reversed the Biden-era ban, allowing the Delfin LNG project — which was delayed by the Biden Administration — to move forward.
- The Department of Justice's new interagency task force arrested 214 criminals in its first two weeks, including violent MS-13 and Tren de Aragua gang members.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs opened another new clinic — in addition to the three new clinics opened over the past several weeks — to serve thousands of additional veterans.
- Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth ordered a department-wide review of the U.S. military's physical and grooming guidelines to ensure the force is meeting the highest possible standard.
- The Department of Defense terminated woke climate change programs and initiatives that were not in line with the department's core warfighting mission.
- Army Chief of Staff General George ordered a review of all general officer memorandums of reprimand that were issued to soldiers who refused to comply with the Biden Administration's COVID vaccine mandate.
- The Department of Transportation rescinded memos issued by the Biden administration that injected social justice, radical environmental agendas into infrastructure funding decisions.
- The Department of the Treasury sanctioned Iran's oil

minister and shadow fleet operators and targeted Houthi terrorists involved in smuggling and procuring weapons.

- The Department of Agriculture continued its push to root out fraud, waste, and abuse — including terminating a grant that supports “queer and trans farmers and urban consumers.”
- The Department of Health and Human Services ended a loophole that allowed ingredient manufacturers to utilize chemicals with unknown safety data in food.
- The Federal Communications Commission launched its sweeping “In Re: Delete, Delete, Delete” deregulation initiative to alleviate the unnecessary, burdensome regulatory assault on Americans.

FIRST PRINTED IN “THE WHITE HOUSE”

**NORTHUMBERLAND, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29**

containers in the county appears to have finally been resolved. Supervisor Fisher has led the charge on this issue for over a year and last year and he was the driving force in implementing a policy that requires all shipping containers on land zoned A-1 that is visible from the road or by a neighboring property to either be painted to blend in with the surroundings or be concealed behind vegetative screening.

After checking with county staff on the enforcement of

the new policy he was advised by Zoning Administrator Philip Marston that it would be a violation if the containers are on land zoned agricultural if they applied for a conditional use permit. This applies only to containers on agricultural property.

Supervisor Fisher then inquired about whether containers in the view of highways can be required to be painted and was advised by County Administrator Luttrell Tadlock that the Board could require that if they chose to.

Fisher was also advised that properties currently in violation could be sent a letter to appear before the board but that the ones in place before the new policy was put in place would be “grandfathered in” and could not be cited for a violation.

Fisher determined it would be best going forward to concentrate on new containers being put in use.



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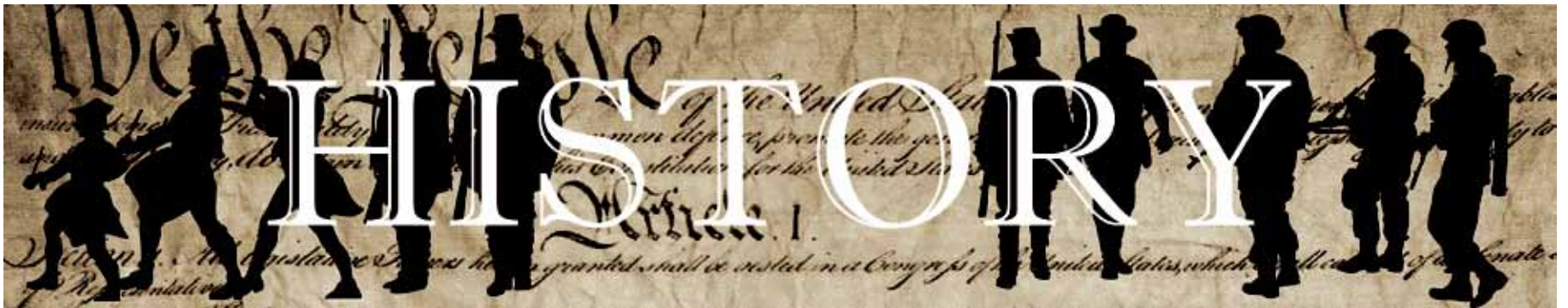
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## THE US CONSTITUTION THROUGH HISTORY

Gammon Irons

### Lincoln, The Civil War, And the Constitution

Abraham Lincoln's election on November 6, 1860, made the South's secession inevitable. The South could not tolerate the election of a man who had repeatedly denounced slavery as morally wrong. At the 1787 Constitutional Convention, the South had secured political power disproportionate to its population. But by 1860, the North's population had grown so large Lincoln won the presidency despite not being on the ballot in most Southern states. This chapter explores the creation of the Confederacy and the measures Lincoln took to protect the Union.

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union. It justified secession in constitutional terms. Within two months, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas had also seceded. They did so by conventions of the states rather than by popular vote. This was partly because state conventions mirrored the process by which the original states had originally ratified the Constitution in 1788. These Southern states believed they could reassert their sovereignty using this same process.

In early February 1861, Southern delegates met in Montgomery, Alabama, to create the Confederate States of America. They adopted their own constitution and elected Mississippi's Jefferson Davis as the provisional president. Lincoln had not yet taken office. But his worst fears had already come true: The country had divided. By Lincoln's inauguration on March 4, 1861, the Confederacy was a fact.

Most Southerners did not believe secession meant war. But when the Union refused to surrender Fort Sumter in South Carolina, tensions grew. In April 1861, as Lincoln sought to send supplies into Fort Sumter, the Confederacy started shelling it. If war had not yet begun, it began then.

Southerners had long argued that the states had the ultimate sovereign right to interpret the Constitution. For example, the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798

had asserted that each state not only retained its sovereignty but also could adjudicate the constitutionality of the federal government's actions. During the nullification crisis of 1832, South Carolina had sought to nullify a federal tariff within its own borders. As sectional tensions heightened in the late 1840s, Southern constitutional thinkers increasingly asserted the right of a disgruntled state to secede.

Consistent with these episodes, the South believed state sovereignty had preceded national sovereignty. Thus, the states had no obligation to take instructions from the federal government, even though the Constitution's supremacy clause holds that federal law is supreme over conflicting, otherwise valid state law. The South's theory challenged the assumption that written constitutional rules, as interpreted by a tribunal like the Supreme Court, could govern a country. On the contrary, Southern constitutional theory envisioned constitutional adjudication as a political process of



negotiating state viewpoints. Where differences became irreconcilable, the states could go their separate ways.

Jefferson Davis defended the constitutionality of secession in similar terms shortly after Fort Sumter. Davis relied on the "compact" theory of the Constitution. During the American Revolution, Davis argued, the states had

responded to British offenses by forming a confederation under which each state expressly reserved its rights of sovereignty. The war was won under this "contract of alliance." In 1787, the states appointed delegates to the Constitutional Convention and subsequently ratified the Constitution. The fact that the Constitution had become effective only after ratification by conventions held in each state showed that it was "a compact between independent states." The Tenth Amendment reinforced that state sovereignty.

The North, by contrast, believed that the Constitution had created a national government. According to Davis, this Northern view corrupted the Constitution's meaning and disrespected the compact between the states. Davis particularly objected to the North's "fanatic" opposition to slavery. Lincoln's election threatened to annihilate the Southern states' property rights to their own slaves. Accordingly, the South was falling back on its natural right to revolt for liberty. Its goals were to be free from the coercive power of the federal government, to preserve white supremacy, and to own slaves and take them into the territories.

The Confederacy's new constitution was similar in structure and content to the US Constitution, with some significant differences. For one, whereas the US Constitution only alludes to slavery, the Confederacy's Constitution used the word slave or slaveholder 10 times. Moreover, the Confederate Constitution opened: "We, the people of the Confederate States, each State acting in its sovereign and independent character." The preamble of the US Constitution, by contrast, does not reference state sovereignty.

Interestingly, the Confederacy's opposition to national unity proved to be damaging to its cause. For example, the Confederate Constitution explicitly forbade its congress from appropriating money for internal improvements like railroads. This partially explains why railroad construction

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

\*EDITORS NOTE: Gammon Irons is a well known historical writer who is widely published. He distributes his works to teachers nationwide to help counter the many false narratives that have worked their way into our history curriculum. Learn more about Gammon Irons at this link:

<https://www.gammonirons.weebly.com>



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CONSTITUTION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

in the South lagged far behind the North. Military historians have identified the South's inferior railroad infrastructure as a substantial reason for its defeat.

Meanwhile, Northern Republicans were explaining why secession was unconstitutional. Even if the Constitution were a contract, a contract cannot be rescinded without the consent of all parties - and the North had not consented to rescinding the Constitution. Moreover, the Constitution itself was ordained to "form a more perfect Union." But if the union could be destroyed by one or more states, Lincoln argued, "the Union is less perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity." The executive power, according to Lincoln, thus includes the power to preserve the government. Finally, the nationalists contested the South's view that each state could determine constitutional meaning for itself. The Constitution had assigned that role to the federal government.

In response to secession and Fort Sumter, Lincoln called for 75,000 Northern militiamen to suppress the rebellion. Northern troops began to head south in April 1861. Their first destination was Washington DC. The capital needed protection against potential Southern invasion, and it would also be a launching point for attacks into the South. But first, the troops needed to pass through Baltimore,

Maryland.

The trip through Baltimore was complicated by an 1831 city ordinance forbidding steam trains from operating in the heart of the city. As a result, Northern troops needed to get off their railroad cars on the east side of Baltimore and head across the city to a station on the west side. Maryland was a border state—a slave state that had not seceded, but might. Soon after the Northern regiments began crossing the city, demonstrators gathered, waving Confederate flags and taunting the soldiers. Violence erupted.

Lincoln realized that losing Maryland to the Confederacy would be devastating for the Union. Virginia had seceded on April 17, sealing off access to Washington DC from the south. If Maryland also seceded, the capital would be surrounded by rebel states and virtually indefensible. In that case, Congress might have been unable to convene since senators and representatives might have been unable to return to the capital. Continuing to march troops through Baltimore would only provoke more anti-Union protests, thus heightening the chance that Maryland would secede. Lincoln therefore decided to send soldiers around Baltimore rather than through it.

Concerning the violence that had already occurred, Lincoln resisted advice to arrest representatives of the pro-Southern Maryland legislature. He did, though, write

to his general, Winfield Scott, that if Marylanders continued to attack Union soldiers, he would in turn attack Maryland cities and, if necessary, suspend the writ of habeas corpus. Habeas corpus enables persons detained by the government to challenge the legality of their detention. The suspension clause of Article I reads, "The privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it."

Lincoln was reluctant to sus-

pend habeas corpus now. Still, he believed that authorizing General Scott to suspend habeas in Maryland would help his troops subdue Maryland's Confederate sympathizers. Though Lincoln feared trampling individual rights, he also felt that if persons arrested by federal troops could be freed almost overnight by pro-Southern federal judges, it would be difficult for the army to secure its supply lines and guard against attack. If habeas were not suspended, federal judges could release dangerous persons as quickly as the army could arrest them.

There remained a serious constitutional question of whether Lincoln had the power to suspend habeas. The suspension clause is located in Article I of the Constitution - the article devoted to congressional power. This placement strongly signals that the suspension power lies with Congress. Lincoln, however, believed that other provisions of the Constitution cut in favor of joint power to suspend the writ. Article II, for instance, provides: "The President shall be Commander in Chief" of the armed forces. Article II also requires the president to swear to "faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States" and to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States." Lincoln argued that this conferred upon him the power necessary to take the steps to protect the country, including suspending habeas in extreme situations like this one. Yet Lincoln himself realized his position was controversial.

Eventually, Lincoln did suspend the writ. When a US district judge in Baltimore issued a writ of habeas corpus for a detained man, a Union army major handed the writ back, saying he "would see the court and the marshal damned before delivering up one of his men." The judge responded that only Congress can suspend habeas, but the major held firm. Within days, Lincoln's suspension of habeas came under attack again, this time from a much higher judicial authority. On May 25, 1861, federal soldiers arrested John Merryman, a wealthy secessionist Baltimore resident, who had allegedly burned bridges and torn down telegraph wires to stop Northern troops from reaching Washington. Military authorities alleged he was collaborating with the Confederacy and was guilty of "acts of treason."

The Union army denied Merryman's attorney access to his client. Thus, the attorney sought a writ of habeas corpus from a justice on the United States Supreme Court. In those days, US Supreme Court justices also traveled to hear lower court cases in districts around the country. The justice responsible for the circuit containing Maryland was Chief Justice Roger B. Taney. Taney quickly issued a writ of habeas corpus demanding that Merryman be presented in the circuit court room in Baltimore. When the army refused, Chief Justice Taney declared that Merryman was being held unlawfully.

In Ex parte Merryman, Taney made three basic arguments rejecting the president's power to suspend habeas or to authorize a military officer to do so. First, because the suspension clause is found in Article I, which addresses legislative powers, it did not authorize the president to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. Second, Taney cited

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# Wellness

## THE LINK BETWEEN ANXIETY AND DEMENTIA

Gammon Irons

*A Growing Body Of Research Suggests That Anxiety Experienced Earlier In Life Might Have A Causal Effect On The Development Of Dementia Later In Life.*

Is there a link between anxiety and dementia? The answer appears to be a resounding yes. Anxiety is commonly seen in individuals with certain types of dementia. However, researchers are increasingly studying anxiety as a potential risk factor for dementia.

Indeed, a growing body of research suggests anxiety experienced earlier in life might have a causal effect on the development of dementia later in life. Individuals with mild cognitive impairment may have a higher risk of developing dementia, which is relevant to the discussion about anxiety as a potential risk factor.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorder affecting more than 40 million U.S. adults. Considering just 43.2% get proper treatment, the implications for dementia risk are significant. Here's what you need to know about anxiety and its potential role in the development of dementia. Plus, you'll discover ways to keep your anxiety levels in check.

What is clinically significant anxiety? General Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is characterized by persistent feelings of fear, worry, and unease. An individual's anxious feelings are uncontrollable, and they are typically out of proportion for a particular situation or stressor.

This is different than the transitory anxiety we all experience. This type of anxiousness is usually related to an event or situation, such as the first day on a new job, a first date, or an exam.

People who have general anxiety disorders worry and feel nervous most of the time about everyday activities that do not pose a threat. Anxiety is disproportionately more common in women, teens, and those affected with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), also known as Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD).

Common physical symptoms of anxiety include insomnia, heart palpitations (panic attacks), trouble concentrating, and dizziness. Anxiety disorder symptoms can run the gamut from mild (such as nervous feelings, tending to imagine the worst, or feeling tensed up) to severe (such as suicidal thoughts).

When anxiety goes untreated, it can wreak havoc in your life. It can put an individual at risk for other mental health conditions and physical health issues such as: depression, panic disorder, substance abuse, physical ailments (e.g., colds), and/or suicidal behavior.

Mounting research suggests untreated anxiety may impact your brain in such a way that it also sets you up for dementia later in life.

Basics about dementia. Dementia is defined as a general and pervasive deterioration of memory, as well as at least one other cognitive ability, such as language and executive function. This can be due to various causes. The loss of cognitive function is pronounced enough to negatively impact an individual's normal daily functioning, work, and social life.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, accounting for 60-80% of memory loss cases. Ongoing research has shown connections between Alzheimer's disease and various factors, such as stress and emotional dysregulation, indicating the complexity of its development and progression. But there are many other types of dementia, including: vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia (FTD), and alcohol-related dementia.

Regardless of the type of dementia, memory loss is not normal, even for aging people.



Photo Credit: rd.com

What causes dementia? There are multiple dementia causes or risk factors leading to its development. In addition to the recent study findings suggesting anxiety as a risk factor, other common causes may include any of the following: depression, ADD/ADHD, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), alcoholism and substance abuse, traumatic brain injury (TBI) including mild concussions, family history of Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia, infections that can affect the brain, such as Lyme disease, heart health issues, type-2 diabetes and prediabetes, genetic factors such as APOE4, altered microbiome, gum disease, gender, obesity and eating a poor diet, untreated sleep apnea, certain medications, cancer/chemotherapy, exposure to toxins, underactive thyroid, hypertension or prehypertension, and chronic inflammation.

Anxiety's link to dementia. A marked association between anxiety and dementia has been noted in multiple studies over the past decade. However, until recently, researchers were not sure if anxiety was an early symptom of dementia

or an independent risk factor.

Research findings indicate individuals with mild cognitive impairment may have a higher risk of converting to dementia compared to those who are cognitively intact. This is relevant to the association between anxiety and dementia, as studies have included cohorts of participants with mild cognitive impairment to examine this link.

A systematic review published in the January 2022 issue of British Medical Journal Open points to the latter. The review included four reliable studies involving close to 30,000 participants. All four studies indicated a positive connection between moderate to severe anxiety and the development of dementia later in life.

The researchers concluded, "Clinically significant anxiety in midlife was associated with an increased risk of dementia over at least 10 years."

What's more, the review's authors noted the findings indicate anxiety may be a risk factor for late-life dementia - and not a symptom. The authors additionally suggested the link may be explained by the excessive stress response triggered by the anxiety.

Indeed, chronic stress and anxiety can cause ongoing suppression of the prefrontal cortex, as well as hippocampus atrophy, research has noted. These actions contribute to the development of dementia.

Another study found chronic phobic anxiety may shorten telomere length in middle-aged and older women. Telomeres are structures found at the ends of chromosomes made from DNA sequences and proteins. Like the end of a shoelace, telomeres cap and protect the end of a chromosome from getting tangled or frayed.

Telomere length shortens with age. Shortened telomere length is associated with a greater likelihood of disease and poor survival. The study indicated untreated chronic phobic anxiety is a possible risk factor for accelerated aging. Other research shows short telomeres are associated with a greater risk of neurological

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CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 35



**ANXIETY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34**

and psychiatric disorders including dementia.

Emotional dysregulation, which is common with anxiety disorders, may also play into the development of dementia recent research indicates. It appears that emotional dysregulation can adversely impact the posterior cingulate and the amygdala - areas heavily involved in autobiographical memory and regulating emotions.

Regardless of the specific cause, anxiety is undoubtedly linked to an increased risk of developing dementia, especially as we grow older.

Anxiety's impact on cognitive function. Anxiety can have a profound impact on cognitive function, particularly as we age. Research has shown anxiety can impair attention, memory, and processing speed, leading to cognitive impairment. This can make everyday tasks more challenging and affect an individual's ability to maintain independence.

Anxiety often reduces the ability to focus and pay attention, making it difficult to concentrate on tasks. This can be particularly problematic for older adults, who may already be experiencing some degree of cognitive decline. Additionally, anxiety can affect memory, making it harder to learn new information and recall existing memories.

Chronic anxiety can also lead to structural changes in the brain. Studies have shown prolonged anxiety can reduce the volume of the hippocampus, a region critical for memory and learning. This reduction in hippocampal volume is associated with cognitive decline and an increased risk of developing dementia.

Moreover, anxiety can exacerbate existing cognitive decline, creating a vicious cycle where anxiety and cognitive impairment feed into each other. This highlights the importance of managing anxiety to protect cognitive function and reduce the risk of dementia.

The role of stress in dementia development. Stress is a well-known risk factor for dementia, and chronic stress can significantly accelerate cognitive decline. When we experience stress, our body's fight or flight response is triggered, releasing stress hormones like cortisol. While this response is beneficial in short bursts, chronically elevated cortisol levels can be detrimental to the brain.

Chronic stress can lead to structural changes in the brain, including reduced volume in the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex. These areas are crucial for memory, learning, and executive function. Prolonged exposure to high levels of cortisol can damage these brain regions, leading to cognitive impairment and increasing the risk of dementia.

Additionally, stress can promote inflammation and oxidative stress, both of which are linked to cognitive decline and dementia. Inflammation can damage brain cells and disrupt neural communication, while oxidative stress can lead to the accumulation of harmful molecules that further damage brain tissue.

Research has shown managing stress through relaxation techniques, regular exercise, and social support can help mitigate the risk of dementia. By reducing stress levels, we can protect our brain health and potentially delay or prevent

genetic predisposition can increase an individual's risk of developing the condition.

Lifestyle factors are also important to consider. Physical inactivity, social isolation, and a poor diet can all increase the risk of dementia. Engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining social connections, and following a healthy diet can help reduce this risk.

By assessing individual risk factors, healthcare providers can identify those who may benefit from early intervention and prevention strategies. This proactive approach can help delay the onset of dementia and improve the quality of life for those at risk.

In conclusion, understanding the impact of anxiety and stress on cognitive function, as well as assessing individual risk factors, is essential for mitigating the risk of dementia. By addressing these factors early on, we can take steps to protect our brain health and maintain cognitive function as we age.

Reduce anxiety to mitigate dementia risk. You may wonder, "If anxiety is to blame for accelerated cognitive decline, does this mean alleviating anxiety would minimize the risk of dementia?" It's an excellent question remaining unanswered by science.

That said, there are many lifestyle actions you can take that can relieve anxiety. This can make you feel better in the short term and may possibly protect you against memory loss issues in the future.

Five ways to lessen anxiety. Here are five natural ways to reduce your anxiety levels.

(1) Try psychotherapy. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helps to address negative self-talk and is the most effective therapy for reducing anxiety. Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy helps reduce stress and anxiety related to trauma. (2) Avoid foods that can increase anxiety. For example, coffee is associated with higher levels of anxiety as are many inflammatory foods. Consider a calming alternative to coffee like green tea, which still promotes alertness and mental clarity. You can also take nutritional supplements with calming ingredients like L-theanine (extracted from green tea), GABA, saffron, or magnesium. (3) Try holistic and natural solutions. Yoga, tai chi, biofeedback, and meditation have been shown to provide relaxation benefits according to research. Of course, a simple walk in nature can help alleviate anxiety, too. (4) Practice diaphragmatic breathing. Anxiety can constrict your breathing to rapid, shallow breaths, which may impact your blood's oxygen levels and increase anxiety further. Calm your nervous system by repeating 10 cycles of deep breathing. Research shows that diaphragmatic breathing practices may help bring down stress and anxiety levels. (5) Try alternative calming methods. Research indicates acupuncture may help to alleviate anxiety. Also, hypnosis, guided imagery, listening to soothing music, or progressive muscle relaxation may help to lessen anxiety and even offer additional benefits like better sleep.

If you struggle with anxiety, it doesn't mean you will develop dementia. But it is a warning signal to address it right away. Don't hesitate to reach out to a mental health professional for help.



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the onset of cognitive decline.

Assessing individual risk. Assessing individual risk for dementia is crucial for identifying those who may benefit from early intervention and prevention strategies. Several factors can increase the risk of dementia, including age, family history, and lifestyle choices.

Age is the greatest risk factor for dementia, with the risk increasing significantly after the age of 65. However, it's not the only factor to consider. Family history also plays a role, particularly if a first-degree relative has been diagnosed with dementia. This

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 POST OFFICE - COLONIAL BEACH  
 POST OFFICE - HAGUE  
 POST OFFICE - MONTROSS  
 POST OFFICE - MT. HOLLY  
 RITE AID - COLONIAL BEACH  
 RITE AID - MONTROSS  
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## BRING THE FAMILY TOGETHER WITH BAKED BREAKFAST PIZZAS

If you feel like it's a struggle to get the entire family together for a meal, it might be time to put fun back on the menu. A little creativity and a few favorite ingredients are all it takes to bring back family mealtime and spend precious moments at the table.\\

These Individual Sweetpotato Breakfast Pizzas are a perfect way to start a weekend morning, offering a delicious invitation to loved ones to join you in the kitchen. Equal parts sweet, savory and nutritious, you can enjoy seeing smiles on their faces while feeling good about what you're serving them.

Providing just the right touch of sweetness are North Carolina Sweetpotatoes, one of the most versatile vegetables in the produce department. They're easy to add to a variety of recipes – even breakfast pizza – to enhance flavor and nutrition. Try them on the stove, baked, microwaved, grilled, slow-cooked or air-fried for quick and easy options that are a breeze in the kitchen.

Spelled as one word to avoid confusion with the white potato (a distinctly different species), sweetpotatoes are rich in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber, all of which are good for overall health and may help prevent disease. In fact, they're even considered a "diabetes superfood" by the American Diabetes Association. As a natural sweetener, they give recipes that sweet flavor you crave without the added sugar.

Whether they become your favorite oft-used ingredient or

you stock up on the abundant veggie, sweetpotatoes also boast a long shelf-life – up to 4 weeks if stored properly in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area away from heat sources – meaning you can buy in bulk without worrying about waste.

Find more ways to cook with sweetpotatoes by visiting [ncsweetpotatoes.com](http://ncsweetpotatoes.com).

## INDIVIDUAL SWEET POTATO BREAKFAST PIZZAS

Recipe courtesy of the North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission // Servings: 4

- 4 medium North Carolina sweet potatoes (about 2 pounds), divided
- 1 tablespoon, plus 1 teaspoon, olive oil, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- kosher salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- all-purpose flour, for rolling out dough
- 1 pound whole-wheat pizza dough at room temperature, divided into four equal portions (4 ounces each)
- 1 cup freshly shredded Gouda cheese
- 4 large eggs
- 1/4 cup diced chives

Preheat oven to 400 F. Place 1 pound sweetpotatoes directly on rack and bake until soft, about 1 hour. Remove from oven and let cool 5-10 minutes. Peel and puree flesh until smooth; reserve 1 cup.



Increase oven heat to 450 F. Peel remaining sweetpotatoes and dice into 1/2-inch pieces. Toss 2 cups diced sweetpotatoes with 1 tablespoon olive oil, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, cayenne and salt and pepper, to taste; place in even layer on baking sheet. Roast until softened but not crisp, 15-20 minutes, stirring halfway. Remove from oven.

Lightly flour clean, flat work surface. Roll each ball of dough out to about 1/4-inch thickness (about 7 inches diameter).

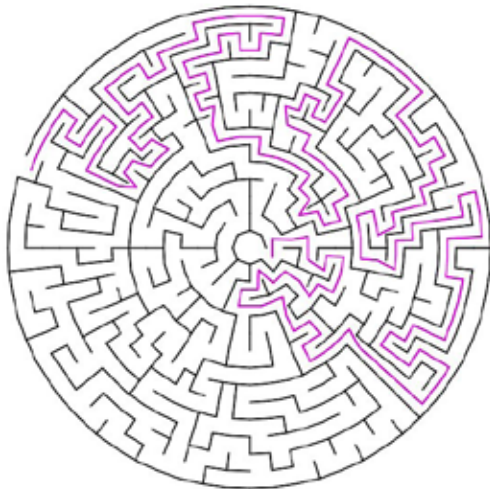
With remaining oil, lightly coat rimless baking sheet. Transfer rolled out dough to baking sheet.

Spread pureed sweetpotato over surface of each dough round, about 1/4 cup each, leaving about 1/2-inch border. Top each with 1/4 cup shredded Gouda. Add 1/2 cup roasted sweetpotato cubes, leaving open space in center of pizzas.

Carefully crack one egg into center of each pizza; bake 15 minutes until crusts are golden brown on bottom, cheese is melted and egg whites are fully set. Carefully remove pizzas from oven.

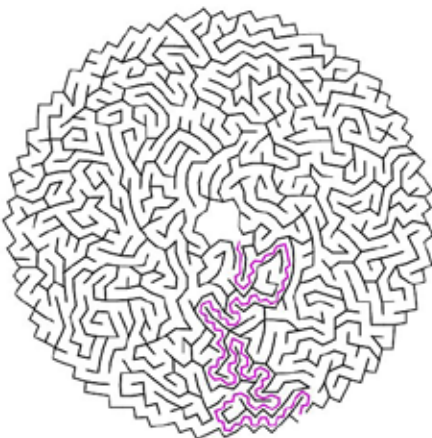
Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Top each pizza with 1 tablespoon diced chives.

## PUZZLE KEYS:



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8	1	6	7	5	9	3	4	2
5	7	9	3	2	4	6	1	8





## CONSTITUTION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

prominent commentators, such as Chief Justice John Marshall and Justice Joseph Story, who had referred to the suspension power as congressional. Third, Taney argued that the framers would never have given the president more power to suspend habeas than the English king had.

Taney concluded by emphasizing that Merryman was entitled to be “discharged immediately from imprisonment.” The chief justice’s decision created a sensation. The clash between a justice and the president highlighted a major test in our nation’s system of separation of powers. Lincoln did not follow Taney’s order to release Merryman, but he didn’t ignore it entirely either. Instead, he delivered a special message to Congress. Lincoln noted that his order authorizing the suspension of habeas had been exercised “very sparingly” and only on the supply line between Philadelphia and Washington DC.

Lincoln further contended that it was nonsensical to let all the laws of government perish to save only one law. Lincoln rejected the notion that he should let the Union fall to preserve habeas. But he also did not concede that he was violating the law. He argued that no law was violated because the Constitution does not specify who may suspend habeas. Thus, it did not make sense to interpret the Constitution to vest the suspension power solely in Congress. The clause clearly applied to dangerous emergencies that might prevent Congress from even meeting. In such instances, the president needed to be able to act to protect the country.

In 1861, legislation was introduced in Congress to ratify the suspension of habeas retroactively, but it was not enacted. But in March 1863, Congress did pass a broader habeas corpus act authorizing the president to suspend habeas during the war.

In April 1861, the same month Union troops marched through Baltimore, Lincoln proclaimed a naval blockade of Southern ports. This would deprive the Southern economy of the benefits of trade. The South depended on ocean commerce to obtain manufactured goods and sell its principal crops. Blockade is a legal term of art under the international law of war that recognizes the use of armed force to stop ships from leaving and entering enemy ports. Under international law, naval forces enforcing a wartime blockade had the right to stop and search all ships entering or departing enemy ports. Ships failing to respect the blockade would be attacked. If captured, such ships and their cargoes would be condemned as governmental property.

Under Lincoln’s instructions, in mid-1861, the US Navy captured four merchant ships that had attempted to run the blockade

off the Southern coast. In each case, a district court granted a decree of condemnation, transferring ownership to the US government. The former owners of the ships appealed the condemnation decrees. The cases ended up in the US Supreme Court under the consolidated title the Prize Cases.

Though international law recognizes the legitimacy of wartime blockades, it wasn’t clear this was a war at all. The ship owners argued that because this wasn’t a war, the international law of war didn’t apply. Thus, the blockade and seizures had been illegal. The ship owners wanted compensation. Their arguments, however, had potentially profound consequences. If the court ruled that this was not a war, the blockade and Lincoln’s other efforts to resist secession were illegal. The case called into question Lincoln’s power to fight the Confederacy at all.

The Constitution vests the sole power to declare war in Congress, and Congress hadn’t declared war. Moreover, Lincoln had refused to recognize the new Confederacy as a sovereign country. For the international law of war to apply, there would need to be war between two sovereign nations. Despite these complications, the Supreme Court upheld Lincoln’s blockade by a five-to-four vote. The court conceded that Congress alone had the power to declare war but added that the president is authorized to use American military forces to repel invasion or suppress insurrection. The fact that the hostile forces in this case were rebellious states didn’t change matters. This was still a war.

Thus, when the Southern states seceded, the court found that the circumstances could give rise to a state of war, even when Congress had not officially declared war. The court majority clarified that recognizing a state of war did not implicitly concede the legitimacy of the Confederacy. The Union had been reluctant to call its conflict with the South a war. This was partly because that would suggest that it recognized that the Southern states had formed a new entity under international law. But the Supreme Court explained that this wasn’t necessary to trigger the law of war and justify the blockade.

The four-justice dissent focused on Congress’s inaction. It argued that only an act of Congress can change the legal status of the government from that of peace to a state of war. Congress hadn’t acted prior to the ship seizures in question. Thus, the blockade and seizures had been illegal. But the dissent found significant the fact that in mid-July

1861, Congress did authorize the blockades and empower the president to respond generally to the insurrection. This congressional action effectively brought about a state of war, even though Congress did not officially declare war. As a result, the court unanimously agreed that

the president enjoyed substantial power to execute the war moving forward.

The Lincoln administration greeted the court’s decision with relief. An adverse ruling could have indicated that the president lacked the power to prosecute the war. This would have put the administration into a difficult position: The North would have needed to continue the blockade to weaken the South. But a continued blockade would have violated international law and possibly inspired foreign, especially British, sympathy for the Confederacy.

British support for the slaveholding Confederacy may have seemed improbable. After all, Parliament had abolished slavery in 1833. But the Union’s blockade of Southern ports had cut off Southern cotton exports to England. If Lincoln had continued a blockade ruled illegal by his own Supreme Court, it might have nudged Britain into the war on the Confederate side. The court’s ruling relieved Lincoln of the need to deal with this problem. It also embraced a strong view of executive and commander-in-chief powers, particularly in times of war.

Join us for our next installment:

*Emancipation and The Thirteenth Amendment*



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