REFLECTIONS, 2023-2026

Frank G. Splitt

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DEDICATION

To Judy who brought love of the
Arts and sensitivity to the environment
To our wonderful life of 50 years together

In Memory of Tom Splitt
September 23, 1953-July 8, 2024
A creative pianist, composer and author

IN FOND REMEMBRANCE

George Aschenbrenner
Robert Beam, Paul Bechtold, Shel Berman,
Jim Booth, Joe Bordogna, Bill Brown, Morris Brodwin, Jack Bridges
Rosario Bucaro, Richard Carsello, Robert Carsello, Justin Cloe, Orrie Colby,
Jerry Cohen, Stanton Cook, Steve Crowell, Bob Day, Joe DeMarco, Jim DeMarco,
Jim DeMarco, Jr., Raymond Dvorak, Wayne D uke, Harvey Duncan, Max Epstein,
Ed Ernst, Jim Errington, Edmund Franzak, Donald Frey, Edwin Fricke, Rea Frisbie,
John Ferm, Thomas Frost, Janis Galejs, Nick Gallo, Thomas Gitter, Michael Gorman,
Joe Hafenscher, George Hagen, Carl Heitz, Ted Hesburgh, Bill Hines, Wally Homerding,
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Tom Kummerer, Edward Laramie, Doug Lattner, Grant Leslie, Bob Loftus, Mitford Mathews,
Gerry McCullough, McKelvey, Jim McKelvey, Emmett McMahon,Tony Michel, Art Moeller,
Bill Muhr, Jim Murphy, Chuck Nolan John Nowicki, Jack O'Mara, Vernon Oie, Jim Ostler,
Gerald Panec, John Pappas, Edson Peck, Paul Rohret, John Pope, Hal Raemer, Andy Reddy,
William Reddy, David Richter, Dwight Sandman, William Sayle, Ray Schaaf,Arthur Schmitt,
George Schott, Paul Shylo, Arnold Siegert, William Sloey, Bernie Smedley, Dave Solomon,
Gene Splitt, Tom Splitt, Duane Stewart, Ted Sunko, Allen Taflove, Jack Terry, Harry Thill,
Cameron Thompson, Robert Tucker, Jim Vaughan, Larry von Tersch, Bill Viviano,
Earl Washburn, Cameron Thompson, Max Wilzius,
Don Wrobleski, Thomas Zamzow,
Henry Zucker

Above are the names of cherished relatives, friends, classmates, colleagues, mentors, and teammates who played a significant role in my life as did the following mentors and heroes who I never met:

Edward Birge, Thomas Berry, Joseph Campbell, Lou Gehrig,
Andrew Goodpaster, Aldo Leopold, Carl Sagan,
Jonas Salk, Claude Shannon, Fulton Sheen,
Edward O. Wilson

Stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus

This Latin phrase comes from the last line of Umberto Eco's book, *The Name of the Rose*. The words are those of Eco's narrator, Adso of Melk; in English: Yesterday's rose endures in its name, we hold empty names. I don't believe the people's names we hold are empty as the names conjure up images and memories that endure in our minds long after the nameed persons have passed.

The author with his wife Judy after the April 19, 2017, *Odyssey* book presentation ceremony at Northwestern University. *Photo by Anne Rassa*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication iii

In Fond Remembrance iv

Table of Contents vi

Preface viii

Introduction ix

PART 1: Essays and Commentaries

The human factor in America's security systems 1

Peril Ahead: Trumpists and the 2024 Election 3

Preparing to protest the rebuilding of America from democracy to autocracy 8

AI: Its Dilemma and Existential Threat to Humanity 10

AI: System Vulnerabilities, Safety and the Human Factor 12

PART 2: The Daily Herald: Letters to the Editor 14

PART 3: The Wall Street Journal Posted Letters to the Editor

2026 23

2025 42

2024 52

2023 56

PART 4: The Chicago Tribune Letters to the Editor 63

PART 5: The New York Times Letters to the Editor 69

PART 6: Guest Comentaries 70

PART 7: The Author 77

PREFACE

Frank Splitt's *Reflections, 2023-2026* is the latest in an impressive series of sequels that followed his epic treatise, *An Odyssey of Reform Initiatives: 1983-2015*. It left me with a burning question: How is it possible for him to do so much as he was moving from his late 80s to past his mid 90s?

I see Frank as a true polymath with deep interests and engagement in communications security, intelligence, engineering, mathematics, collegiate sports reform, the environment and politics. He has acted on these interests throughout his life, making valuable contributions to society, often in a leadership capacity and writings, bringing about important changes in whatever arena he found himself.

He was fortunate that his capacity for learning was recognized at an early age when he was invited to study at the Fournier Institute of Technology founded by Arthur J. Schmitt. He took advantage of this opportunity and myriad others that followed in his lifetime, building his capacity to learn, to grow, to influence and to make the world a better place.

As I concluded my journey through Frank's *Reflections* and his *Extra Innings* memoir, I was again reminded of the well-known question posed in Mary Oliver's poem, "The Summer Day."

"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

Frank has indeed answered that question in his impressive series of books spanning a period of 40 years while living a life of purpose to the fullest, in a splendid and admirable fashion!

Patricia A. Shevlin
Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation, Director Emeritus
Author of *My NUNcommon Life*

INTRODUCTION

...there is nothing more difficult and dangerous, or more doubtful of success, than an attempt to introduce a new order of things… –**Niccolo Machiavelli**, 1513

It has been 11 years since the publication of my book *An Odyssey of Reform Initiatives, 1983-2015.* The collection of published and posted reflections that comprise *Reflections, 2023-2026* expands the time period covered by these writings to 40 years. Like years past, these last four years have been fraught with the sometimes wild machinations surrounding the 2024 presidential election, the presidency, college sports and artificial intelligence—providing much to opine about.

These past four years again found me commenting on hot-button issues raised in *The Daily Herald, The Wall Street Journal, The Chicago Tribune,* and *The New York Times.* Again, it was akin to taking another trip back in time—rekindling fond memories of friends and colleagues who provided motivation, guidance, and support along the way. It also rekindled not so fond memories of the formidable challenges to change and the deceitful and deceptive tactics used by defenders of the status quo, especially in politics. All of this can be seen via a cursory view of the Table of Contents .

A major focus of my comments has been on Trumpism, it's manifestations and corrosive impact on America's Democratic Republic. For example, the grifting president has hollowed out and destabilized government institutions, while employing the DOJ as his personal retaliatory law firm. Also see Whitley, page 70 and Baker, page 71.

Collegiate athletics remained a concern as big-time sports programs persist in what amounts to a money-making racket based on deceit and deception. According to The Drake Group, The *Protect College Sports Act* (S.4668) bills itself as saving women's and Olympic sports-- it will not. It will cement the dominance and commercial success of the four wealthiest athletic conferences, and set an arms-race bar that other Division I institutions will try to match, but cannot. For more see Ericson , page 74.

It is my hope that this successor to the previous *Reflections* books will not only contribute to the ongoing process of knowledge creation and dissemination, but also provide lessons and insights into the difficulties associated with changing the order of things, especially in U.S. politics

More than ever, I found Machiavelli's words in the epigraph to be dead right—working on reform initiatives, no matter what the area, is really not for the faint of heart.

Frank G. Splitt
Former McCormick Faculty Fellow
McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science
Northwestern University

PART 1: Essays and Commentaries

The human factor in America's security systems

By Frank G. Splitt

The Daily Herald
Opinion, Guest view,
May 15, 2023

The discoveries of classified documents at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, at President Joe Biden's former office and Delaware garage, as well as at former Vice President Mike Pence's Indiana home were troubling. They revealed a cavalier attitude toward classified documents by elected officials at the highest level of our nation's government -- certainly not the best examples for others in government and the military charged with safeguarding America's secrets.

Even more troubling have been the intelligence leaks by untrustworthy individuals: the FBI's Robert Hanssen, WikiLeaks' Julian Assange via the U.S. Army's Chelsea Manning, National Security Agency contractor Booz Allen Hamilton's Edward Snowden and Harold Martin III and now the alleged leaker, the Massachusetts Air National Guard's Jack Teixeira.

The latest leak is considered to be one of the largest, most wide-ranging military and intelligence breaches in U.S. history with potentially devastating consequences in terms of CIA lives lost, informants compromised or killed, lost trust by U.S. allies, compromised battle plans, the exposure of U.S. counter-intelligence cyberweapons and all the more that is still unknown.

It is beyond my comprehension how the leak suspect Teixeira was able to receive and maintain a top-secret clearance, in spite of his history of making comments about shootings and violence.

Furthermore, how could a low-level IT support technician gain access to highly classified information without a need to know? Something is awry. Why so? It would have been anathema to me, my colleagues and to the government officials to whom we reported during the 1956-1964 time period when we were actively engaged in highly classified research and development on a variety of military systems that were critical to national security.

To put this time period in perspective, it spanned the presidencies of Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. This was also the time when America was in the midst of a Cold War with Russia and, as so-called scientific Cold Warriors,

we felt a patriotic duty to handle work-related classified research documents with the utmost care and respect. So sensitive was the nature of the R&D that security clearances, with levels ranging up to Top Secret/Cryptographic "Eyes only," were necessitated with each step up the security ladder demanding ever more arduous scrutiny of my personal, financial, academic and professional life.

How tight were security measures at the time? Consider the following: The security officer who was responsible for oversight of our Tech Center could not enter my crypto-secure office because he did not have the required "need to know," notwithstanding the fact that he was a former FBI agent with a top-secret clearance.

As a consequence of the recent leak, we have lost countless millions of our nation's secrets and counter-intelligence cyberweapons while living at a time perhaps even more dangerous than that of the Cold War.

This situation prompts the following question: What is going on with America's inability to securely transmit and retain highly classified information and what can be done about it? To answer the question we need to identify points of vulnerability to information leaks in a communication system designed to be secure from leaks of information to unintended individuals via encryption codes that are essentially unbreakable.

Such systems are commonly known as COMSEC systems. Ideally, these systems should deny transmitted information access to individuals without a need to know.

Nevertheless, COMSEC transmissions are vulnerable to information interception because of human factors, specifically untrustworthy individuals who have been granted security clearances.

Apparently some of these individuals have been able to gain access to unencrypted information at the source and decrypted information at its destination. Intermediate points of access to the transmission may also be available to these individuals. Such individuals as, for example, Air National Guardsman Teixeira, could also have access to transmission decryption keys.

Thus, COMSEC system vulnerability can obviously be traced to humans and gross deficiencies in the procedures used by the government agencies responsible for granting security clearances and follow-up vetting to maintain those clearances. So too, strict attention needs to be paid to minimizing the granting of “need-to-knows” as well as to eliminating access to decryption keys by network technicians.

The pool of today's candidates for security clearances have come and are still coming, from quite a different America than existed during 1956-1964. That period, in my view, was a time when America's citizens were relatively more patriotic and morally grounded. Today's citizens seem grounded in technology and social media that is rife with conspiracy theories and falsehoods -- seeding further consequential rifts in our politically divided country.

One such consequence was the unprecedented assault on the U.S. Capitol by paramilitary and other hate groups. Now is a time when, for some, it is more important to gain prestige and/or maintain political and personal power than it is to safeguard our national interests.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that untrustworthy individuals might possibly hold security clearances in government and military service while still others will be put forth to seek security clearances. Clearly, there is an urgent need for more stringent background investigations coupled with periodic vetting of all individuals holding high-level security clearances by a responsible government agency that must be held accountable for any further breaches of security.

Costly though it may be, it's the price that must be paid to help minimize the vulnerability of America's security systems.

Peril Ahead: Trumpists and the 2024 Election

Trump's character flaws and indicted crimes should have been seen as making him unfit to be president; however, all were seen but then ignored by his voters.

Frank G. Splitt
November 17. 2024

The Situation – On November 5, 2024, Americans voted to elect Donald J. Trump the 47th President of the United States. These were the United States that he successfully divided and conquered via his brand of grievance politics. He did this notwithstanding his pathological lying, convictions on 34 felony counts and conviction for sexual abuse as well as two pending federal indictments, being twice impeached, experiencing six bankruptcies, his cozying up to dictators and displaying an autocratic xenophobic mindset.

On his character traits alone, Trump should have been seen as unfit to be president. His supporters, AKA Trumpists, put America's Democracy in peril by voting him into office—prompting a vexing question. How can this state of affairs ever be explained?

The answer is not easily put into words as it consists of a number of complex, interrelated factors. Here for the sake of discussion are factors that ought to be considered along with Trump's win as a repudiation of elite condescension espoused in November 6 opinion pieces by Bernard Goldberg in *The Hill* and David Brooks in the *New York Times*.

An Apparently Unaware, Easily Deluded Electorate – Although living in a country with the world's highest standard of living, millions of Americans felt disaffected, alienated from their government and frustrated with political rhetoric. They were told by Trump that America is in steep decline, "The garbage can of the world," despite evidence to the contrary reported by *The Wall Street Journal* on October 24, to wit: "The economy is humming. Inflation has cooled off.

Americans are well-employed, getting raises and spending freely." Nevertheless, Trumpists readily accepted, as absolute fact, his fear-mongering gloom-and-doom message about today's America.

Trumpists recalled having more money in their pockets during the previous Trump Administration and so believed they would be better off in a Trump economy. This belief held despite the fact that economists claimed otherwise. For example, on October 28, *The Wall Street Journal's* front-page story was headlined "Inflation Hazards Loom Following Election" with the subtitle "Trump's policy plans, in particular, carry risk of stoking price rises, economists say."

Despite a clear call for judicial action based on the abundance of evidence of Trump's blatant wrongdoing in all cases—amounting to some 91 felony charges—many Trumpists ignored his crimes and were deluded by his daily claims of "witch hunts" into believing our nation's justice system was weaponized against him. He also claimed victimhood on behalf of his followers after his federal indictment in the classified documents case—saying "In the end, they're not coming after me. They're coming after you, and I'm just standing in their way." He was proven guilty on 34 felony charges in one case.

Trump voters claimed in election exit interviews that their main issues were the economy and immigration—outweighing character issues and criminal behavior. To some extent, these claims are questionable as this response could very well have been used to mask resentment of Democrats' contemptuous attitude, as well as harboring their Trump espoused prejudices and sentiments such as racism, sexism, anti-woke/DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) and LGBQT bias, xenophobia, misogyny, and/or other deep felt personal sentiments, but thought best unsaid by these voters.

The majority of the electorate seemed unwary and relatively unconcerned with Trump's dictatorial tendencies—including his public statements and plan to establish an administration staffed by loyalists, sycophants whose loyalty would be deemed more important than experience and competence.

Trump's Personal Influence –It appears that of these millions of Trumpists, many were deeply influenced by a man who John D. Miller, the former NBC chief marketing executive, described as a "monster" when apologizing to all Americans about NBC's *The Apprentice* show's portrayal of Trump as a very successful businessman in an October 16, 2024 *US News and World Report* opinion piece, "We Created a Monster: Trump as a TV Fantasy Invented for 'The Apprentice'."

Trumpists looked past Trump's shameless lies, misrepresentations and exaggerations. They were influenced by his strong-man appeal to their "us-versus-them" tribal instincts, cultivated via his divisive racist rhetoric—scapegoating immigrants as he continually fomented ideological hatred with a subtext of white Christian nationalism while calling for mass deportations and retribution against "the enemy within."

The Catholic Vote – Many Catholic voters were converted to Trumpism as Trump's campaign, aided and abetted by the lay *CatholicVote* organization, specifically targeted this demographic group. Their efforts provided a strong Catholic vote for Trump, most likely based on the

Catholic Church's official anti-abortion teaching. This vote was crucial in Trump's wins in the "Blue Wall States."

Trump's Ability to Avoid Prosecution on Federal Indictments – Trump's use of proven tactics of delaying, denying, obfuscating and defaming your accuser, learned years ago from his nefarious lawyer Roy Cohn, led to this successful postponement of court rulings on criminal charges prior to the 2024 election that he won and so will avoid prison for his indicted federal crimes.

Help came from Attorney General Merrick Garland's delay in appointing a Special Council, a questionable ruling by Aileen Cannon, a Trump-appointed Florida judge, and in Trump v. The United States, the Supreme Court's delay in consideration of this case along with rendering an opinion favorable to Trump, the Court's majority ensured that even if he is not immune from trial for some of the charged crimes, Trump would not be tried for his indicted crimes before the 2024 election. Consequently, voters were not able to incorporate any judicial findings in their decisions.

Trumpists' Limited, Manosphere-focused Information Sources – By and large Trumpists received their information via the *Fox News Network* and social media with mostly male-focused information sources – the manosphere: websites, blogs, and forums promoting masculinity, misogyny and anti-feminism; sites peppered with conspiracy theories. Where the likes of Adin Ross and Logan targeted young males,
Older males heard from Joe Rogan, Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity, Mark Levin, Ben Shapiro and many others. Other information sources were remarks from American oligarchs such as Elon Musk, Peter Theil and the big donors funding the professionally-organized Stop the Steal 2.0 project that aimed to contest the 2024 election results in states where Trump lost.

Trumpists' information sources were limited as they considered most print and broadcast media biased far left of center and so were ignored. They were not likely to read the final report of the January 6 Committee, and much less likely to have read revelatory books written by members of Trump's chaotic presidential administration or books by widely respected journalists such as Bob Woodward's *The Trump Tapes* and *Peril* (with Robert Costas); Jonathon Karl's *Tired of Winning: Donald Trump and the End of the Grand Old Party*; Maggie Haberman's *Confidence Man: The Making of Donald Trump and the Breaking of America*; and Peter Baker's and Susan Glasser's *The Divider: Trump in the White House.*

Trumpists certainly didn't want to learn what prominent psychiatrists had to say about Trump's mental instability although it could have been seen in clear view at his rallies and was available on the internet in Dan Parkland's documentary films "Unfit: The Psychology of Donald Trump" and "Untruth: The Psychology of Trumpists"

Concluding Remarks – It is believed that none of what was said above would have changed any votes from the following groups of Trumpists: Wealthy donors with vested self-interests; members of Trump's cult of true believers, best explained by mental health expert Steven Hassan in his book *The Cult of Trump*; reliably steadfast evangelical Christians, Black and

Latino citizens who felt taken for granted and betrayed by Democrats; young male voters who responded to Trump's macho imagery and thinly veiled anti-women rhetoric; and those voters with a visceral reaction to the Democrats' overly zealous pushing of its progressive woke/DEI policies that spawned deeply resented cancel-culture activities. For example, of great significance in the election was the fact that the Trump campaign closed with devastating, vote-affecting "Trans-girls (boys) in girl sports" TV ads that were amplified with daily, women-targeted podcasts by Megyn Kelly.

Lessons for Democratic policy makers can be found in the above, to wit: really know and understand the electorate; don't overreach by pushing culture-impacting policies that can have dire negative political consequences; know that a female presidential candidate will be subjected to vile, likely fatal political attacks in the manosphere, no matter how qualified the candidate; don't ignore the Catholic vote; and realize that Democrats do not have a corner on morality.

Finally, all of the above might best be kept in mind for reference well into America's journey into its perilous political future, specifically at a time when our children and grandchildren could possibly be growing up in a Fascist Autocracy—asking what ever happened to America's Democracy while wondering if their parents and grandparents actually cared about democracy.

Afterword

We can remind ourselves that for all our social discord we yet remain the longest enduring society of free men governing themselves without benefit of kings or dictators,.
— From a pre-Thanksgiving Wall Street Journal editorial published annually since 1961

Most of the negative comments on "Peril Ahead" related to its last paragraph, to wit:

> Finally, all of the above might best be kept in mind for reference well into America's journey into its perilous political future, specifically at a time when our children and grandchildren could possibly be growing up in a Fascist Autocracy—asking what ever happened to America's Democracy while wondering if their parents and grandparents actually cared about democracy.

Over the last few years, my Trump voter friends and family members have told me that my fear that America could lose its democratic-republic form of government and be replaced by a Trump autocratic-dictatorship was unfounded. For example, telling me don't fear everything will be OK, and that America will never become a dictator–led Fascist Autocracy. They also said Trump is well known for his hyperbole and crazy talk they dismiss as just "Trump being Trump."

So, I found it somewhat ironic that the editorial noted in the epigraph not long after the November 5, 2024ronic that the Journal published election of
Donald Trump to the presidency when he was on record as saying that he would be a dictator only on day one.

Of much more significance, is that the editors should have been given pause by the fact that

in July 2024 SCOTUS held that the president is immune from all official acts with no immunity for unofficial acts. Furthermore, the editors must recognize that unofficial acts, executed by virtue of presidential executive orders, can be written in legal terms so as to appear as defensible official acts. That is where a Trump loyalist Attorney General and self-proclaimed "First Buddy" Elon Musk's $billions can play a key role in massing teams of our nation's best loyalist lawyers to work in the DOJ so as to win in courts or delay rulings beyond the time the acts are completed as well as to ward off any related legal challenges.

In the end, the SCOTUS ruling brought Trump close to holding the absolute power of a dictator, especially so when backed by supportive cabinet, Republican control of both the House and Senate, a friendly SCOTUS, and Musk's financial fortune.

Here it is to be noted that the delay of the prosecutions of the federal grand jury indictments against Trump provides prima facie evidence of the effectiveness of Trump's legal delaying tactics that helped win him the 2024 election. As a consequence, America will have a dictator-president, thus, teeing up the question of what could happen when Trump takes office on January 20, 2025 with absolute power.

In an 1887 letter, John Dalberg-Acton (1834-1902), better known as Lord Acton, wrote "Power tends to corrupt, absolute power, corrupts absolutely"—reflecting his belief that unchecked power poses the greatest threat to human freedom.

Only time will tell the extent of the corruption and its negative consequences to America's form of government and the freedom of its people that could stem from a President Trump with absolute power.

Photo by Anne Rassas

Photo fom from the November 9, 2016 presentation of the author's *Odyssey book* to the Loyola University Chicago (LUC) Library. Pictured (from left to right) are Judy, me, Patricia Shevlin, Executive Director of the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation, Michelle Nickerson, LUC Professor of History, and Patricia Mooney-Melvin, Dean of the LUC Graduate Schoo

Preparing to protest the rebuilding of America from democracy to autocracy

By Frank G. Splitt

Daily Herald
Opinion, Guest view
October 13, 2025

After less than nine months in his second term in office, Americans are now finding what President Trump's "Make America Great Again" and Project 2025 are all about — rebuilding America from a democracy into an autocracy wherein things, once thought impossible, are rapidly taking place. Our unfettered president is following the playbook of many past and present authoritarian dictators.

He is aided and abetted in this endeavor by his cabinet members — all with blind loyalty and some with questionable competence — and the similarly sycophantic leaders of the Republican House and Senate — who effectively force their cowered party members to vote as told — and by a Supreme Court that has been appeasing the president by ceding power to the executive branch of government via its controversial shadow docket — without public argument, debate, or discussion — with its six Republican appointees apparently violating precedent and the Constitution they swore to uphold.

Consequently, the president is leading America down a dark path to a cruelly malevolent autocratic political system as evidenced in words and deeds by lies, deceit, grifting, retribution, bullying, extortion and hateful division. So, it seems ironic that this effort has been cast as a God-driven Christian mission by the president's political allies and his MAGA devotees.

To better understand what's going on, consider the following actions by the Trump Administration: Direct assault on the First Amendment right of free speech (witness Stephen Colbert and Jimmy Kimmel; the scapegoating and the indiscriminate deportation of illegal immigrants and visa violators by masked, quota-driven ICE agents — instilling a deep sense of fear in black, brown and foreign-language-speaking U.S. citizens; the deployment of military assets in cities; the hollowing out or elimination of government departments with the dismissal of proven military leaders and dedicated career civil servants including many blacks and women — drastically depleting the government's strategic knowledge base; the interference in upcoming elections (witness Texas); and incompetent management at the Department of Health and Human Services compounded by the loss of expertise in critical areas that is placing our citizens at risk

especially re: the Department leader's anti-vaccine complex and concerning lack of scientific or medical background — making him prone to serious mistakes of judgment.

Also consider the persistent attacks on what were free press and media organizations and the defunding of PBS, NPR, America's world-class universities and the Council of the Inspectors General that oversees the Trump Administration; attacks on liberal n

nongovernmental and other civil society organizations — labeling all as part of a "vast domestic terrorist movement"; the flagrant violation of national security protocols by a historically least competent Secretary of Defense who is now establishing new likely unconstitutional constraints on journalists; the elimination of public informational signage at National Parks, the Smithsonian and other public museums that mentions climate change, slavery, Japanese citizen World War II internment camps and conflicts with Native Americans that, in the eyes of the Trump Administration, "undermines the remarkable achievements of the United States"; and the ongoing persecution of and retribution against political opponents and critics with intense presidential pressure on the attorney general to go after his foes.

With regard to the latter action, specifically that taken against National Security Adviser John Bolton, The Wall Street Journal's Editorial Board wrote on Aug. 22, 2025: "The real offender here is a president who seems to think he can use the power of his office to run vendettas. We said this was one of the risks of a second Trump term, and it's turning out worse than we imagine.

It's all happening before our very eyes.

In a related Sept. 25, Daily Herald op-ed, syndicated columnist Susan Estrich asked how many instances of authoritarian behavior do we have to see before we have seen enough and what exactly will we do when we see enough? What we can do is let our voices be heard: Vote in next year's elections and, in the meantime, attend our local Oct. 18, "No Kings" day protest that will be aligned with previous national "No Kings" protests that took place all across America this past June.

The protests are exactly two weeks before my 95th birthday, I plan to join my friends, neighbors and others to demonstrate opposition to the authoritarian tactics of the Trump Administration. It is my fervent hope that we will be joined by many more like-minded citizens.

AI: Its Dilemma and Existential Threat to Humanity

By Frank G. Splitt

Daily Herald
Opinion, Guest view
September 17, 2026

The real problem of humanity is the following: we have paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions, and god-like technology.
E.O. Wilson at the Harvard Museum of Natural History, 2009

When something is speeding up and going out of control, prudence, care and deliberation aren't alarmist, they're necessary. Stop, think. The stakes are high,couldn't be higher.
Peggy Noonan from "Pause AI for Humanity's Sake", The Wall Street Journal, Sept. 12, 2026

The multiple requests to AI companies to stop or slow down AI development are relatable to those faced by colleges and universities asked to eliminate the corruption in their money-making big-time football and men's basketball programs—giving rise to the so-called college sports disarmament dilemma. It describes a situation where no individual college athletic program can afford to clean up its corrupt practices unless it is absolutely certain that its competitors are doing the same.

When major university programs were pressured by reform organizations such as The Drake Group to eliminate "phony schooling" operations designed to keep athletes eligible, they faced a brutal competitive reality. If one school chose to unilaterally act with integrity, it would simply fall behind while rivals continued to break the rules so as to field winning teams. If a limited number of high-ranking schools voluntarily raised their academic standards, stopped placing so-called student athletes into basket-weaving classes and the like, those programs would lose access to elite athletic talent and soon lose games, high ranking and significant revenue.

The disarmament dilemma as applied to U.S. AI companies is much more complicated, but still follows that of college sports as an informative guiding principle.

On September 12, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei published an essay that warned the AI industry that it should slow down development over concerns over AI's existential threat to humanity. The heads of America's other top artificial-intelligence companies followed by endorsing a coordinated slow down of the technologies' fast-moving

development of Recursive Self-Improvement or RSI that can self learn and take control of its own development with the potential power to destroy humanity. Their aim is to give safety measures time to catch up.

Several thorny problems are likely to impede this common sense effort. These are the following:

1. President Trump wants AI CEOs to push forward claiming the threat is a hoax, that "negative forces" are bringing up "things that won't happen" and that we can't let China take advantage of a U.S. slowdown of AI development as well as risk a related slowdown of U.S. economic growth.

2. Others like Wall Street investors have heard the AI CEOs' warnings, but still choose to ignore the threat so as not to risk a potential monetary windfall.

3. The U.S. government would likely have to issue waivers that would allow AI companies to coordinate and set safety standards without breaking antitrust laws. This would seem unlikely given item 1 above.

4. There are foreign companies developing AI technology, some friendly others not. It is unlikely that all will agree to slow down development, especially rogue nations that may see AI as a powerful weapon to use against the United States while its developers have slowed down.

In any case, at this moment we need to not only understand that humanity stands on the brink of potential disaster, but also that U.S. AI companies do not have complete control of the forces behind the existential threat and that there are many who will choose to ignore the threat.

AI: System Vulnerabilities, Safety and the Human Factor

By Frank G. Splitt

Daily Herald
Opinion, Guest view
October 26, 2026

Humanity is now well on the way to the fast development of freely accessible, godlike AI technology that can be immensely beneficial but dangerous.

Concerns about safety and AI's existential threat to humanity have been dismissed by some, likely shaped by fear that these concerns could dampen or break the financial AI bubble in the U.S. economy as well as the fear that the U.S. will fall behind in the AI development race with China.

Many others including Geoffrey Hinton, the Nobel-winning computer scientist who helped create AI, believe AI has a tremendous upside, but have expressed three concerns about dangerous areas of related risk: harm-causing inappropriate responses; loss of human control via lack of stringent safety guardrails to prevent the system from going rogue; and maliciously motivated human and/or state bad actors that elude stringent security measures.

Not mentioned is a fourth risk area, humans who unwittingly make fatally bad decisions either via hubris or by their careless training of AI agents that have a propensity to go rogue as well as undetected. The first risk area can be resolved by engineering design. However, the second risk area involves troubling, if not impossible design objectives, while the third and fourth risk areas are in the domain of human factors, the primary focus of this essay.

A lesson applicable to AI systems, learned back in 1958 from the late Mitford Matthews, the National Security Agency's Assistant Director for Research and Development, was that no matter how secure the encryption of a data transmission, the overall system will still be vulnerable to human factors. It formed the basis for a May 15, 2023, *Daily Herald* Guest View, "The human factor in America's security systems."

The Guest View told why technically "perfect" security fails; an unbreakable encryption code does not equate to an unbreakable system since the primary point of failure is not technical, but human. Similarly, closed AI systems are not perfectly closed. Like crypto systems, AI systems rely on individuals who have been granted security clearances. When insiders are untrustworthy, careless, or malicious, they can bypass all technical safeguards and take control of the system.

Unless and until AI companies can effectively manage and mitigate the human element, even the most expensive and advanced systems will remain deeply vulnerable.

This is not only a formidable task, but, over time, likely an impossible task as well since human nature is what it is. Clearly, there is an urgent need for stringent background investigations coupled with periodic vetting of all individuals holding sensitive company positions by a responsible independent agency that must be held accountable for any breach of security. Costly though it may be, it's the price that must be paid to help minimize the vulnerability of America's AI systems.

AI leaders will also face the AI dilemma, to wit: not pursuing the enormous benefits of godlike technology on the one hand and pursuing those benefits at the risk of triggering catastrophic events or even humanity's extinction on the other. According to AI ethicists at the Center for Humane Technology, resolving this dilemma requires an approach that rejects the false binary of total capitulation or complete shutdown, so AI systems must be subjected to exhaustive safety testing.

To that end, U.S. AI system providers will do their utmost to engineer safe products so as to avoid liability lawsuits and prosecution under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986 (18 U.S. 1030), especially if their officers and board of directors are subject to civil liability for the systems their company deploy. Nonetheless, these providers cannot be trusted to self regulate. To enhance trust in AI system's safety before deployment, it should also be subjected to multiple third-party testing by organizations such as MIRI and METR.

There can be little doubt that fast-paced AI technology development will continue by all parties that are incentivized by their quest for market dominance, ultimately by money and geopolitical power. President Trump is working to boost AI to shore up support for data centers and to buoy the U.S. economy— employing a strategy of minimal regulation to stay ahead of China in the AI race. According to a recent AP poll, most Americans think AI is developing too fast.

In conclusion, although the price of not being first in the race with China could be very high, there is likely a higher price associated with AI's human-based risks: malicious intent and unwitting-fatally-bad decisions. Understanding that both human-based risks can lead to catastrophic events should prompt AI CEOs and world leaders to be ultra vigilant, recognize the peril ahead and slow down their fast-paced race to attain market and/or geopolitical dominance. Therein is an eerie reminder of the ill-fated Titanic, said to be the safest ship afloat with its state-of-the-art safety features, that was commanded by a veteran captain who pursued a speedy race across the North Atlantic in April 1912, despite multiple warnings of icebergs ahead.

• *Frank G. Splitt, of Mount Prospect, is author of the book An Odyssey of Reform Initiatives: 1986-2015, its sequels Reflections: 2016-2021, Reflections: 2022, and Extra Innings: A Memoir, is a former McCormick Faculty Fellow at Northwestern University and was a Vice President Emeritus of Nortel Networks.*

PART 2: Daily Herald Letters to the editor

Woke extremism: Targeting "debunked myths"

4/4/23-It is my understanding that to be woke is to be alert and sensitive to social injustice and racism. Carried to an extreme it can be counterproductive to the goals it promotes as discussed in my March 28, 2022 Daily Herald guest column.

Therefore, I was disappointed to see the paper's March, 23, 2023 front-page story headlined "Board member says schools shouldn't celebrate Columbus Day." One of the candidates said "(We should) refrain from teaching debunked myths."

The guest column was prompted by the subtitle of the Daily Herald's, February 20, 2022 editorial, "The Father of the Nation," that took the form of a penetrating question: "How should Washington's slave ownership of affect our reverence for his role in the birth of our country? I wrote that the same question could be asked writ large over previously respectable people such as Christopher Columbus, Junipero, Serra, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison.

I went on to say: "… a true and balanced history of America should reflect the good and the bad while still providing very good reasons to honor the significant roles played by Washington, and all the others in the complex birth of our nation."

Not doing so would be stepping on a slippery slope, which, if followed to the end, will make us always see things far worse than they really are. C.S. Lewis, commented on such situations in his 1952 book, Mere Christianity: "Finally, we shall insist on seeing everything — God, and our friends and ourselves included —as bad and not be able to stop doing that: we shall be fixed forever in a universe of pure hatred."

On Integrity in Reporting

5/1/23-A recent letter assault on the integrity of *Daily Herald* reporting began by questioning the integrity of the "high-minded" Managing Editor for Opinion, ("Newspaper's 'integrity' often missing in reports," Your Views, April 24). The letter went on to question reporting on the "wholly disproven 'Russian collusion' hoax," as well as a front-page headline "Scope of Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' law expanded."

To the best of my knowledge, the "Russian collusion" hoax was not disproven by right-wing writers such as *Fox News* analyst Gregg Jarrett with his 2018 book "The Russia Hoax: The Illicit Scheme to Clear Hillary Clinton and Frame Donald Trump." On the contrary, according to the following October 9, 2020, Factcheck Post:

President Trump and his supporters on social media are citing unverified "Russian intelligence" from 2016 as evidence that Hillary Clinton "was behind the entire Russian collusion hoax." But that so-called intelligence is largely a reflection of publicly

available information at the time. Federal investigations since then have documented multiple links between Trump associates and individuals tied to the Russian government.

To his credit the writer was correct in saying that the phrase “Don’t Say Gay” is nowhere in the Florida law. Nonetheless, the Parental Rights and Education Act (HB 1557) is commonly known among Floridians, as well as by other news organizations, by that much more descriptive phrase.

Based on my more than 50 years of reading the *Herald*, with the rare exception of some readers' comments, I have yet to see the newspaper publish claims that are patently false.

Northwestern hazing scandal: The tip of an iceberg

7/17/23-The Daily Herald’s July 11, editorial on the Northwestern University (NU) hazing scandal was headlined “What ‘two weeks’ told us,” with the subheading “The Northwestern scandal shows we have yet to truly come to grips with hazing.”

It is my contention that we have yet to truly come to grips with much more than hazing. Hazing is the tip of an iceberg – the low hanging rotten fruit in an ongoing American tragedy in higher education.

Writ large, the tragedy is characterized by interrelated, problems and issues, examples of which are sports-related academic corruption, excessive commercialization, admissions shenanigans, and the lowering of standards. Of particular concern is the brutal nature of college sports with its corrosive influence on institutions of higher education via the lure of fame and financial fortune.

Northwestern University has generally been considered to be an exception to this tragedy as exemplified by the vision of its former provost, the late Lawrence Dumas, who helped craft "The Highest Order of Excellence," a document outlining goals, priorities and strategies for the University—envisioning NU’s potential to become the leading academic institution in the world.

Little could Dumas have anticipated that it would be the journalistic excellence exhibited by the editors and reporters at NU's student newspaper, *The Daily Northwestern,* that would capture nationwide attention and respect. Two days of reporting by these student journalists exposed the gaps in the announcements made by

NU president Michael Schiff and so catalyzed a much deeper analysis and corrective action that got NU’s football and baseball coaches fired.

No doubt, President Schiff will come to understand that NU's sports-related culture is quite different than the one he experienced while president of the University of Oregon where he benefited from the strong backing and huge financial support of mega-sports-booster Nike President Phil Knight.

A Potential Roadmap for a Harris Victory

8/6/24-"We're a 50/50 country, each side gets 40 going in, you fight for the rest wrote Peggy Noonan, ("The Kamala Harris Surprise," The Wall Street Journal, Opinion, July 27). Another surprise occurred a few days prior to Noonan's op-ed. It came in the form of other Journal op-eds that are an unwitting gift to Harris campaign strategists.

When skillfully parsed, the following opinion writers not only provide the components of a winning political platform that could appeal to independent and swing voters, but would also take the wind out of the MAGA campaign sails:

Beginning July 25, Robert B. Zoellick's list of seven opportunities to be pursued by Harris was complemented with tax strategy by Mike Pence and Pat Toomey. On July 26, Kimberley Strassel suggested a Harris tack to the center while David J. Urban and Mike Pompeo outlined a peace plan for Ukraine and Mickey D. Levy contributed financial advice. Barton Swain summed things up on July 27. When speaking of Donald Trump he wrote: "To stop his rise all the Democrats would have to do is moderate. Or exercise a bit of common sense."

Harris can find a road to political victory in November by hewing moderate positions on issues—away from those of extremists in the Democratic Party that would surely bomb with independent and swing voters. The tactical do's and don'ts opined by the Journal writers are certainly worthy of close scrutiny by the Harris campaign advisers.

Scary Shades of the 1930s

10/17/24-Via lies, exaggerations, and outright deceit, Donald Trump has become a master at exploiting the darker nature of his political audience—becoming adept at igniting what Robert Patton has called "mobilizing passions." Paxton, a historian of fascism, says those passions are the "emotional lava" of a political movement. As an example, one need look no further than Trump's increasingly heated rhetoric on immigration as the election gets closer.

Trump got exactly the issue he wanted to campaign on after he had the GOP House of Representatives kill the bipartisan immigration bill (H.R. 1511) early this year. Both Trump and his running mate, J. D. Vance, have made scapegoating immigrants a prime thrust of their attack against Kamala Harris and Tim Walz— blaming immigrants for a broad array of our nation's ills.

It's certainly a proven strategy exemplified by Germany's Adolf Hitler's scapegoating of the Jews and other undesirables in the 1930s. Hitler's 'final solution' was the holocaust, the genocide of 6 million of these undesirables after his Madagascar mass-deportation plan proved infeasible.

Here in the U.S., Trump plans to deport 10 million of those he considers to be undesirable. Scary shades of the 1930s indeed.

An Attempt to Explain Trump's Win

How can one explain why America's voters elected as their president a convicted sex abuser, a felon with multiple federal indictments and a person who psychiatrists believe has a malignant narcissistic personality? Here's an attempt to do so:

I believe three factors beyond immigration and the economy were pivotal in Trump's win. The first of these was Trump's ability, with the help of his appointed federal judges, to avoid prosecution on federal grand jury indictments via proven tactics of delaying, denying, obfuscating and defaming accusers (law fare, witch hunts, etc.), that led to postponement of court rulings on criminal charges prior to the 2024 election.

The second factor was Trump's literal domination of social media where he conned many millions of gullible voters who were susceptible to his macho-strongman imagery, lies and exaggerations, especially the young men engaged with the manosphere: websites, podcasts, blogs, and forums promoting masculinity, misogyny and anti-feminism sites laden with conspiracy theories.

The third factor was the fact that voters were turned off by the Democrats aggressive push of their extreme progressive woke agenda that opened them up to devastating, vote-affecting "Trans-girls in girl sports" TV ads that were amplified with daily, women-targeted podcasts by Megyn Kelly.

On a President Trump with absolute power

12/11/24-By virtue of its 2024 ruling in Trump v. United States, SCOTUS granted Donald Trump immunity for actions considered to be part of his official presidential duties, a ruling that proved consequential in forestalling DOJ Special Counsel Jack Smith's prosecution of Trump's multiple federal grand jury indictments ("Special Counsel Drops Trump Cases, Page 1. Nov. 26). The ruling also brought Trump close to holding absolute power, especially so when backed by Elon Musk's billions of dollars to ward off any legal challenges.

In an 1887 letter, John Dalberg-Acton (1834-1902), better known as Lord Acton, wrote "Power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely" — reflecting his belief that unchecked power poses the greatest threat to human freedom.

Only time will tell the extent of the corruption and its negative consequences to America and the freedom of its people that could stem from a President Trump with absolute power.

What If Trump Was President in 1940?

4/7/25-Those troubled by the actions of today's Trump Administration should be aware of their good fortune to have been able to live in a Democratic Republic. They are

fortunate in the sense that the Donald Trump we know today did not come on the political scene in the late 1930s to defeat, the incumbent president Franklin D. Roosevelt in the November 1940 election.

Recall that throughout 1940 a beleaguered Great Britain was at war with Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany and was suffering under the German Air Force's unrelenting blitz of its cities and towns.

In December 1940, Winston Churchill, Britain's understandably desperate Prime Minister, conceived of a lend lease program wherein America would be able to supply Britain with war materials without immediate payment.

What if Trump had been president rather than Roosevelt in the lend-lease meeting with Churchill? Trump who was skilled in the art of the deal, would have held the meeting in his Oval Office with plenty of press coverage. There he would berate Churchill via his transactional poker-game like diplomacy—telling him he had no cards.

And so it would come to pass that America never became an "Arsenal of Democracy," but rather an autocracy, Britain was subjugated by Germany, Trump was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for getting Great Britain to agree to peace on Hitler's terms, Trump joined the world's strongmen power brokers who began eliminating all who they considered undesirables from the world's population.

Sad to say, this could very well have been a true story.

Trump a smart businessman?

5/30/25-This letter was prompted by an April 11 letter headlined "Damage control" wherein the author writes "Donald Trump is a smart businessman."

Like many Trump supporters, the author of the letter was conned by Trump into believing that he was a smart and successful businessman, despite compelling evidence that makes this a questionable belief.

For example, consider former NBC chief marketing executive John D. Miller's, apology to all Americans about NBC's *The Apprentice* show's portrayal of Trump as a very successful businessman in an October 16, 2024 *US News and World Report* opinion piece, "We Created a Monster: Trump Was a TV Fantasy Invented for 'The Apprentice'."

Furthermore, there were Trump's four filings for business bankruptcies as well as his conviction on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in *The People of the State of New York v. Donald J. Trump* that was spun as "lawfare" by the right-wing media during the 2024 election.

On the Loss of America's Democracy

7/11/25-According to Keith Raffel we have lost America's democracy, ("With three court decisions, democracy strikes out," Daily Herald, Opinion, July 6).

On the other hand, the Chicago Tribune editors opine "We are not among those who believe democracy in the U.S. is seriously imperiled, at least as we write. But we do believe it is undergoing a stress test unseen since Lincoln spoke 162 years ago," ("The Idea of America, Under Stress," Chicago Tribune, Opinion, July 6).

As of July 6, there is not only abundant evidence that democracy in the U.S. has been seriously imperiled, but it has been effectively lost along the way.

For example, consider the 2024 SCOTUS Trump v. United States case in which the president was granted an unprecedented king-like power: absolute immunity "from criminal prosecution for conduct within his exclusive sphere of constitutional authority."

Also consider the loss of an independent Congress where Republican majorities in the House and Senate are either totally beholden to or in deathly political fear of President Trump. In effect Trump is the U.S. Congress.

Finally, consider the passage of Trump's "Big, beautiful Bill" that will enable the Department of Homeland Security to hire a literal army of ICE agents as well as establish detention camps for immigrants and other undesirables reminiscent of Germany's Brown Shirts and concentration camps as well as Soviet gulags.

Mushroom strategy

8/25/25-In an AP report, Christopher Rugaber wrote: "Trump claimed that June's employment figures were "RIGGED" to make him and other Republicans "look bad," yet he provided no evidence ("Trump says he doesn't trust the job data, but Wall Street and economists do," Daily Herald, Nation and World, Aug. 5).

Trump's lying and false claims on this and myriad other matters are closely related to the so-called mushroom strategy: Keep people in the dark and feed them plenty of horse manure. The aim is to deliberately keep people either misinformed or uninformed.

With Trump backed by a sycophantic Republican Congress and right-wing media, the American public has little chance of getting the truth from this White House Administration.

Where is the outrage?

Helping to Coverup a Tragic Event

1/19/26-In his opinion piece, George J. Terwillinger III wrote: "Last week, after an ICE agent shot and killed a civilian who was driving her car in his direction, Mayor Jacob Frey demanded that ICE get the F— out of Minneapolis" (""ICE, Minneapolis and the Rule of Law. " Opinion, Jan.14).

To the best of my knowledge, there is no video evidence that Renee Good was driving her car in the direction of ICE agent, Jonathan Ross, On the contrary, there is video evidence that she was driving away from the ICE agent.

With his emphasis on the rule of law, the author adroitly avoids any consideration of the moral law whereby the shooting would be considered immoral. I also agree with the author that the rules of politics may impose a more demanding standard than the rule of law.

In the end, the rule of law arguments expressed in thiconsidered an unjustified immoral acts opinion piece aids and abets the Trump administration's attempts to coverup this tragic event.

Who is behind cruel policies?

2/23/26-The Opinion page of the Feb. 8 Daily Herald carried an editorial titled: "In search of a sense of decency." The editorial focused on President Trump's demonstrated disdain for any sense of human decency on multiple occasions. His posting on Truth Social of blatantly racist images, depicting Barack and Michelle Obama as apes, was just the latest ex

Much worse is the reflection of the president's personal animus toward black and brown people via his indecent, dehumanizing immigration policy orchestrated by Stephen Miller, Deputy Chief of Staff and Special Advisor. Miller has risen to unprecedented influence in the Trump administration — purveying white nationalism all along the way.

Miller uses his close relationship with the president to reinforce his worst impulses. This brings to mind the hauntingly similar roles played by Adolf Hitler's close advisers Goebbels and Martin Bormann. Goebbels was Hitler's chief propagandist and speechwriter, like Miller, who authored Trump's "American Carnage" inaugural address. Goebbels crafted the Nazi Party's public narrative — scapegoating Jews via dehumanizing rhetoric as does Miller regarding immigrants.

Bormann, Hitler's private secretary, exercised immense power comparable to Miller's role, where he apparently bypasses Chief of Staff Susie Wiles to influence the president — rendering hard-line policies such as the 2017 Muslin travel ban, family separation, the scapegoating of immigrants as well as aggressive action by ICE.

Miller is the man behind the development, execution and promulgation of Trump's cruel and indecent polices that have a much more serious impact than his racist post on Truth Social. The cover of the March-April 2026 issue of Mother Jones captured the essence of the Trump administration with a twist on Archibald Willard's "The Spirit of '76" painting. It portrays Trump, book-ended by Vance and Miller, with Vance and

Trump enthusiastically beating their drums as they march to the tune played by Miller on his fife.

Astronauts For America: New Hope for Saving Our Republic

4/29/26-The 2024 presidential election revealed that millions of Americans seemed to have paid little heed to the threat that Donald J. Trump posed to America's democracy, specifically that he would attempt to rebuild America from a constitutional democratic republic to a kingly autocracy.

Following Trump‘s election, many other millions of Americans did pay heed to the threat. They participated in nationwide No Kings Day rallies to protest his presidency wherein the strict guidelines, balance of power, and rule of law crucial to our democratic republic were being breached. Thus far, these protests have had little if any political impact—bringing to mind Benjamin Franklin's terse response to a question about the kind of government wrought by the 1787 Constitutional Convention: “A republic, if you can keep it." Therefore, more than No Kings Day rallies needs be done.

The recently launched bipartisan Astronauts For America organization (astronautsforamerica.org) offers a step in the right direction. It plans to evaluate, score and rate political candidates as well as meet with federal policy makers to share concerns about the troubled state of U.S. Democracy. This organization should be able to provide mechanisms with sufficient credibility and force to counter the threat to our democracy and so help keep our republic safe.

Founders' Fears Justified and Prescient

7/28/26-In his July 15, op-ed, “Trump‘s most powerful enablers wear judicial robes,” Keith Raffel wrote: “In the first Federalist paper, Alexander Hamilton warned that a great risk to liberty comes from those who start out as 'demigods' and end up 'tyrants.'… A potential tyrant has risen who possesses the dangerous ambition that Hamilton feared … When the current radical, right-wing majority of the Supreme Court protects Donald Trump, they know full well what they are doing and do it anyway. Their holdings too often send a clear message: to hell with American democracy.”

The Founders exercised pragmatic wisdom when they required the government's judicial and legislative branches to be independent of the executive branch as well as balanced in power. These constitutional safeguards of checks and balances were designed to protect the republic from a potential executive-branch tyrant

Unfortunately, after 250 years, the Supreme Court's deference to the executive branch in their holdings, coupled with the subservient behavior of toadie members of the House and Senate who are beholden to the president, have led to a breach of the Founders' long-held safeguards.

The Founders' fear of mischief, violence and corruption by an effectively unrestrained executive branch has not only been proven justified, but prescient as well.

DSA policies: A midterm gift to the Republicans

9/6/26-Some members of the Democratic Party appear bound to repeat a more extreme version of its fatal 2024 election strategy when it was successfully attacked for its idealistic but politically unworkable DEI, open-borders and trans policies.

The hard-left DSA, Democrat Socialists of America, have an agenda that is an outright gift to the Republicans to run against in the midterms.

DSA's smooth-talking candidates in Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania and Colorado have been successful in selling highly principled but radical as well as unfeasible policies to voters desperate for change. These voters are apparently unaware of the dire consequences in the implementation of great-sounding, but inherently flawed programs such as fully abolishing the police and prison system, and defunding the Department of Defense. These ideas will be vigorously attacked by Republicans who have been encouraged to do so by none other than Karl Rove who said: " Republicans should press their opponents to endorse or disavow socialist proposals."

Democratic candidates who ignore history and advocate DSA proposals will not only be a gift to the Republicans, but will turn off and potentially lose the votes of moderate Democrat and Independent midterm voters as well. These candidates need only recall the 2000 presidential election to see why every vote counts.

George W. Bush won Florida and the presidency by a mere 537 votes in 2000. Unfortunately for the Democrats, over 97,000 environmentally conscious and likely Democratic voters cast their ballots for the highly principled Green Party's Ralph Nader --- rendering a powerful political lesson: elections in America are not won on principles, but by appealing to voters' interests with feasible, common sense plans of action, a Democratic Project 2029 if you will.

PART 3: The Wall Street Journal Posted letters

2026

Slow down fast-paced AI development

Peggy Noonan claims: "The president and those who talk in his ear are so careless, so deaf to the fact that every captain in the fleet says there are icebergs ahead and they know they will hit them," ("History Raises Its Eyebrows at the Week in AI," Opinion, Oct. 17).

There is a high price that goes beyond the potential arrival in 2027 of full RSI, recursive self-improvement. It's associated with AI's human-based risks: malicious intent and unwitting-fatally-bad decision. These risks should prompt AI CEOs and world leaders to be ultra vigilant, recognize the peril ahead and slow down their fast-paced race to attain market and/or geopolitical dominance.

Noonan reminds readers of the ill-fated Titanic, said to be the safest ship afloat with its state-of-the-art safety features, that was commanded by a veteran captain who pursued a speedy race across the North Atlantic in April 1912, despite multiple warnings of icebergs ahead.

Further to My Letter Re: John O. McGinnis' Oct. 16 Op-ed

There is a high price associated with AI's human-based risks: malicious intent and unwitting-fatally-bad decisions. Understanding that both human-based risks can lead to catastrophic events should prompt AI CEOs and world leaders to be ultra vigilant, recognize the peril ahead and slow down their fast-paced race to attain market and/or geopolitical dominance.

Therein is an eerie reminder of the ill-fated Titanic, said to be the safest ship afloat with its state-of-the-art safety features, that was commanded by a veteran captain who pursued a speedy race across the North Atlantic in April 1912, despite multiple warnings of icebergs ahead.

Humans: The likely cause of catastrophic AI failure

"Alarms about rogue agents ignore the real risk that follow their creators 'instructions to the letter, " says John O. McGinnis ("The Best Defense Against AI Is AI," Opinion, Oct. 16).

A lesson applicable to AI systems, learned back in 1958 from the late Mitford Matthews, the National Security Agency's Assistant Director for Research and Development, was that no matter how secure the encryption of a data transmission, the

overall system will still be vulnerable to human factors. The likely cause of catastrophic AI failure are individuals who have been granted security clearances. When insiders are untrustworthy, careless, or malicious, they can bypass all technical safeguards and take control of the system.

Human-based Risks Can Lead to Catastrophic Events

"For the U.S. frontier labs, spending billions to be six months ahead of rivals, the thing to worry about is whether their spending will pay off--and will government let it," says Holman Jenkins ("Unintelligence on Super Intelligence," Opinion, Oct. 10)."

The frontier labs should also be worried about AI systems' human-based risks, malicious intent and unwitting-fatally-bad decisions prompting their CEOs to be ultra vigilant, recognize the peril ahead and slow down their fast-paced race to attain market dominance. Therein is an eerie reminder of the ill-fated Titanic, said to be the safest ship afloat with its state-of -the-art safety features, that was commanded by a veteran captain who pursued a speedy race across the North Atlantic in April 1912, despite multiple warnings of icebergs ahead.

AI Risks: The Human Factor

"The risk of not being first is high," said AI czar Jay Clayton ("New White House Task Force to Report on AI Risks, " U.S. News, Oct. 5). Humanity also faces dual AI human-based high risks: First, are humans with malicious intent, bad actors eluding stringent security measures. Second, are humans who unwittingly make fatally bad decisions either via hubris or by their careless training of AI agents that have a propensity to go rogue.

Understanding that both risks can lead to catastrophic events should lead the world's leaders to be ultra vigilant, recognize the peril ahead and slow down their full-steam-ahead races for geopolitical domination—an eerie reminder of the ill-fated Titanic, said to be the safest ship afloat with its state-of -the art safety features, that was commanded by a veteran captain who pursued a fast-paced race across the Atlantic in April 1912 despite multiple warnings of icebergs ahead.

Jensen Huang Will Likely Be Asked to Head Trump's 'AI Force'

No doubt,Trump would want the Nividia CEO's articulate AI promoter, and trusted friend to head his newly formed 'AI Force' ("Trump Creates 'AI Force Amid Industry Alarm," U.S. News, Sept. 21). Here' s why:.

The Sept. 14 venture capitalist sponsored 2026 All-In Summit was attended by some 3000 AI investors, founders, and leaders. These annual events serve as an AI business pep rally, sponsored by a host of venture capitalists.

The audience-pleasing Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang pushed hard against slowing down AI development. He called predictions of accelerated AI development as an existential threat to humanity by the former OpenAI and Anthropic researcher Jacob Coxson and others as “irresponsible.”

A likely planned call by President Trump to Huang during his remarks was put on a speakerphone for the audience to hear him rail against opponents of fast AI development---telling them, with reference to industry alarm, ”It’s a hoax” Huang agreed, prompting loud applause and 'buddy talk' with the president.

Common Sense AI Development

Kudos to Peggy Noonan who continues to alert Journal readers about the existential threat inherent in fast-paced AI development, writing: “It should be noted the leaders of the AI companies didn’t start warning us about AI dangers last week,” (“The Sandbox at the End of the World,” Opinion, Sept.19).

One of the sharpest warnings came back in May 2023 from Geoffrey Hinton, widely known as the Godfather of AI, when he left his position as a Google vice president so he could speak freely about the risks of the technology he helped build.

Noonan also noted that former Google CEO Eric Schmidt, in a May 2024 interview, said he thought we should “pull the plug” if AI agents began doing their own thing.

It’s only common sense to halt or pause AI development until it can be assured that its resulting outputs can be controlled by humans and not by the developed system.

AI: The Wisdom of Zero-Risk

"Evidence abounds that most college-educated Americans have lost the ability to assess risk,” says Barton Swaim prior to his comments on the risk-adverse strategy advocated by AI leaders and researchers on continuing the fast development of AI (“The Zero-Risk Society Has Arrived,” opinion, Sept. 17). Continuing the development of AI without assured safety guidelines presents a real life dilemma.

Consider a man who values his life above all else is offered $million if he could stay in a cage with a man-eating tiger for at least four hours. The man would certainly benefit by speaking to the tiger’s handlers to determine if the tiger had been recently fed. If the man found that the tiger hasn’t been fed in weeks, there is little doubt that he would be adverse to the risk involved no matter the payoff.

In the case of AI, think of recursive self-improving software programs using massive data centers as being the tiger that could end humanity. Here the handlers would be an ensemble of AI leaders and researchers as well as institutions such as MIRI and METR that are dedicated to AI system safe. These handlers are overwhelmingly in favor of

slowing down AI development, at least until safety guidelines can be put in place. Swaim would likely label this group as risk-adverse, growth inhibitors.

On the other hand, opposition to a U.S. slow down in AI development by AI boosters appears to be based not only on the fear of breaking the AI bubble in the U.S. economy, but also on the fear of losing out to China on AI's potential benefits.

Humanity stands on the brink of potential disaster, especially so since U.S. AI companies do not have worldwide control of the forces behind the existential threat.

The Late Roger Schank, CBL, RSI and an Alarming Future

Peggy Noonan and many others are giving us fair warning that AI in general and RSI, Recursive Self-Improvement, in particular are a dire threat to humanity ("Pause AI for Humanity's Sake," Opinion, Sept. 12).

Sometime in the early 1990s, at the behest of Jerry Cohen, then Dean of Northwestern's McCormick School of Engineering, I met with AI pioneer Roger Schank, a creative genius and education reformer with a disputatious nature.

Schank came to Northwestern from Yale with a10-year $30M grant from Anderson Consulting to establish, fund and lead a multidisciplinary Institute for the Learning Sciences.

During the course of our conversation, I was impressed with his enthusiasm for the use of CBL, Case Based Learning, to improve cognitive learning in the field of education. I believe Schank would be utterly dismayed to find that CBL was the precursor to today's RSI that can self learn and take control of its own development with the potential power to destroy humanity.

As yet, there appears to be no known entity or mechanism that can really stop the continued development of RSI on a worldwide basis. As Noonan says: "We had better understand the moment we are in."

Upcoming Elections Will Determine the Survival of America's Democracy

Kudos to William A. Galston, who wrote: "A series of errors over a quarter–century leaves the U.S. in dire need of rebalancing" ("What Went Wrong After 9/11," Opinion, Sept. 9).

Galston's situation analysis provides both political parties with a broad outline for a Project 2029 that should aim to provide course corrections that will substantially improve both domestic conditions as well as our standing in the world.

These Project 2029s must recognize the fact that with the rise of China, as well as the far-right in Europe, the U.S. is facing an even more dangerous world than it faced

before 9/11 when the warnings of the late John O'Neill, the FBI's expert counter-terrorism agent, were all but ignored.

The U.S. will not only need to rebalance its foreign and domestic agendas, but will also have to elect leaders that will be equal to the enormous task before them. The caliber of Franklin Roosevelt, George Marshall, Dwight Eisenhower and Robert Gates will be required.

The vital importance of the 2026 midterms and the 2028 presidential election cannot be ignored. These elections will literally determine the survival of America's Democracy.

Football and CTE

Ben Sasse makes a compelling argument about the attributes of football: "The sport forms character by harnessing, masculinity and directing it toward the good and the pure," ("America Needs Its Boys to Play Football," Opinion, Sept. 4). However, he makes no mention of the long-term consequences of playing football, specifically the degenerative brain disease CTE, chronic traumatic encephalopathy.

All men's and women's competitive sports provide many of football's advantages to one degree or another, but with much less risk to life, limb and the brain.

For more on CTE, refer questions to Dr. Chris Nowinski at the Concussion and CTE Foundation in Boston, MA.

A Wake-up Call for the Democratic Party

In his timely opinion piece, Ryan Streeter uses the 1770's thinking of Scottish Enlightenment philosopher David Hume to expose the Democratic Party's hard-left movement towards idealistic socialism as an election-losing proposition ("Can David Hume Save the Democratic Party," Opinion, Aug. 25).

The Democrat Party risks losing the midterm elections if it abandons common sense, ignores history and adopts extremist views that are not in the interest of a majority of American voters.

America Lacks Financial and Leadership Capacities for Deterrence

Yaroslav Trofimov wrote: "As the Iran war drains vital stockpiles of missile and interceptors, allies increasingly question Washington's capacity to wage multifront conflicts" ("Is America Still Capable of Defending the World Order," Review, Aug. 22-23). Question they must.

Draining of vital stockpiles of munitions is only part of a much larger problem. Allies should really be questioning America's financial capacity with its $40 trillion debt load

(some $9 trillion held by foreign creditors) as well as its capacity for credible leadership for deterrence.

Unfortunately, America's armed forces are led by a mercurial, self-centered Commander-in-Chief skilled not in strategic thinking but rather in self promotion, corruption and grifting.

The Commander is supported by no less than a former Fox News host as his incompetent Secretary of Defense, who not only executed an ideology-based decimation of the senior ranks of military leadership, but was also responsible for America's diminished deterrence capability by draining our vital missile stockpiles in Iran.

Forsaken: Academic Excellence for Sports Competitiveness

Last October the White House invited nine institutions to sign what it called the Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education ("Trump and the Campuses, Part 2," Opinion, Aug. 20). The compact failed as none of the nine schools signed.

To its credit, the compact principles did not include the competitiveness of their schools' teams in professionalized college sports.

Unfortunately, many schools have made huge investments in their sports teams by recruiting the best so-called college athletes for-hire that money can buy— forsaking such investments in academic excellence.

Money Talks: The college sports entertainment business

Ole Miss quarterback Trindad Chambliss is set to earn more than $6 million from his NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) deals that he and other college athletes can now make to profit from their personal brands ("The Sixth-Year College Quarterback Who Sued to Stay in School," Sports, Aug. 17).

Welcome to the real world of professionalized college sports where so-called student-athletes are able to participate in the big-money heretofore limited to coaches, the NCAA and colleges and universities via their sports entertainment businesses.

In this new wild-West era of college sports entertainment, for-hire athletes are recruited by schools that seek and accept huge donations that are applied to their sports rather than academic programs.

Neil Diamond put it this way in his song "Forever in Blue Jeans": "Money talks and it don't sing and dance and it don't walk." Here, money talks and reveals in all too many cases donors and schools that value sports above academics.

Preview of a More Stunning Ruse?

Though some U.S. officials thought the alleged plot was impractical, implausible, even impossible, no one should be surprised if it was a prelude to an even more stunning ruse ("Inside a Stunning Ruse to Protect the President at an Airport in Turkey," Page one, Aug.14).

A White House announcement of still another Iranian assassination attempt on President Trump would provide him a basis for declaring an emergency before this fall's midterm elections.

How Can Science Be Salvaged in Trump's Wake?

Mike Gallagher opens his op-ed with a tirade against Dr. Anthony Fauci ("How to Salvage Science in Fauci's Wake," Opinion, Aug. 10). It is my understanding that this is a violation of the Journal's stated policy against personal attacks in letter submissions and comments in the Conversation Section following the online posting of this diatribe.

Nonetheless, if Gallagher really wanted to know the source of misleading and misinformation about the COVID-19 epidemic, he had to look no further than the then President Trump who not only lied to the American people in thousands of fact-checked occasions, but was also identified in a study by researchers at Cornell University as the single largest driver of misinformation regarding the coronavirus pandemic.

As to Gallagher's touting of the White House Office of Science and Technology report: "Science: A New Golden Age," it makes some good points, but comes from an administration known for its budget cuts and funding freezes that are widely denounced by universities, mainstream scientific organizations and other critics, All see it as a disruption of America's global leadership in research and innovation as well as a mechanism to politicize and control or suppress research that does not align with White House ideology.

All of the above prompts a question for America's scientific community, to wit: How can science be salvaged in Trump's wake?

WSJ Posts Mark Yost's Bomb

Mark Yost's review of Emily Seyl's book "Trinity" was still another of his crisply-written, informative stories about U.S. military history ("The Making of the Bombs," Books, Aug. 8-9).

Perhaps a little less known is the fact that Yost fashioned his own powerful bomb when he wrote "Var$ity Green: A Behind the Scenes Look at Culture and Corruption in College Athletics,"— urging me not to give up the fight for academic integrity in college

sports. The Drake Group and Sonny Vaccaro dropped the bomb on the NCAA and it's college sports entertainment businesses.

Senator Paul Targeted the Wrong Man

Kudos to Sabrina Siddiqui and Liz Essley Whyte for their informative story about Senator Rand Paul's apparently vengeful push for a contempt resolution that disregards constitutional protections long protected by the U.S. Senate'."("Republican-Led Panel Votes to Hold Fauci in Contempt," U.S. News, Aug. 7).

Surely, Republican members of the committee must have been aware of the fact that President Donald J. Trump exercised his fifth amendment right not Fauci's 100 times but 450 times during the 2022 New York State Civil Fraud trial of his business practices.

If the committee really wanted to investigate the source of misleading and misinformation about the Covid-19 epidemic, it would have had to look no further than the then President Trump who lied to the American people on thousands of fact-checked occasions.

With a little bit of effort, the committee would've found that a study by researchers at Cornell University identified Trump as the single largest driver of misinformation regarding the coronavirus pandemic--begging the question as to why Paul didn't investigate Trump after he left office on January 20, 2021.

It would seem that Senator Paul targeted the wrong man.

Political Agency Came at a Price

According to the Journal's editors: "Lindsey Graham was a politician in the best sense of the word – engaged in debates of the day, passionate in making a difference with the power he had" ("The Lindsey Graham Example," Review & Outlook, July 30).

With regard to the "power he had," Graham made a Faustian-like bargain, trading his core moral and ethical values in order to maintain his political agency. He did this by dramatically reversing his position – aligning himself with Donald Trump, whom he strongly denounced as a race-baiting, xenophobic religious bigot during the 2015–2016 Republican primaries.

Graham paid a personal price for this position reversal as it gained him the reputation as a flip-flopper. Only time will tell whether or not the price was worth it.

Founders' Democracy Torn at the Center

Look closely and you can detect cracks in America's political foundations says Greg Ip ("Founders' Democracy Frays at the Edges " U.S. News, July 6).

The founders' pragmatic wisdom led them to safeguard the new constitutional republic from their profound fear of a potential reign by a self-interested and degenerate executive. To this end, they established a set of constitutional checks and balances and then worked to convince the public that the proposed Constitution would mitigate any propensity for mischief, violence and corruption via a unique three-way balancing act of executive, congressional and judicial powers.

Unfortunately, after 250 years this safeguard has been effectively breached. We now have a Supreme Court that has deferred to the executive branch in many important cases and toadie majorities in the Senate and House that are beholden to the executive. This chain of circumstances has led to the current state of affairs where the founders' fear of mischief, violence and corruption by an effectively unrestrained executive branch has not only been proven well justified, but prescient as well. As a consequence, the founders' Democracy has been torn at the center.

Founders Fears Well Justified

Barton Swaim begins his article by asking readers to ponder a passage in Paul Johnson's "A History of the American People" ("What the Founders Didn't Trust," Opinion, July 2). To wit: "the generation that emerged to lead the colonies into independence, was one of the most remarkable group of men in history – sensible, broad-minded, courageous, usually well educated, gifted in a variety of ways, mature, and long-sighted, sometimes lit by flashes of genius."

This genius led the founders, principally Madison, Hamilton and Jay, to work to convince the public that the proposed Constitution, via a unique three-way balancing act of executive, congressional and judicial power would mitigate man's propensity for mischief, violence, and corruption.

Unfortunately, after 250 years, we now have a deferential Supreme Court that seems content with the steady expansion of authority in the executive branch while Senate and House majorities of toadies beholden to the executive have led to the present day state of affairs where the founders' fear of mischief, violence and corruption has been proven well justified.

Thomas Paine's Writings Were Also Applicable to Recent Reforms

Jeffrey Collins review of Jack Kelly's tightly time-focused (Sept. 1776-Jan.1777) book, Tom Paine's War, reveals Paine's extremely powerful writings ("A Good Man in. a Crisis," Bookshelf, June 30).

It is to be noted that the power of these writings extended well beyond applicability to America's war of independence. Consider this excerpt from his 1776 pamphlet

Common Sense: "*Perhaps the sentiments contained in these pages are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favour; a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right...*"

Paine's words not only reflected persistent faculty efforts in the early 2000s to reform engineering education, but were also equally applicable to the continuous, uphill struggle by members of The Drake Group and others to reclaim academic integrity in big-time college athletics. For example, the late Dr. James J. Duderstadt used this excerpt as an epigraph to the epilogue of the paperback edition of his book *Intercollegiate Athletics and The American University: A University President's Perspective* (The University Of Michigan Press, 2003).

A Bridge Too Far

Former Attorney General William Barr's appeal to Republican senators to vote for the confirmation of Todd Blanche to lead the Department of Justice must come as a shock to all who believe in the independence of the DOJ ("Confirm Todd Blanche at Justice," Opinion, June 26).

As President Trump's former personal lawyer, present acting Attorney General and a sycophantic cabinet member, Blanche's confirmation would be tantamount to *confir*ming him as Trump's personal lawyer at the DOJ—-continuing to do his bidding by withholding potentially damaging elements of the Epstein files and prosecuting the president's perceived enemies.

It is sad to see the highly respected Mr. Barr supplicating himself in what appears to be a most likely fruitless attempt to re-enter the good graces of the president after telling him that the 2020 election was not stolen.

In any case, it takes Barr's belief in the power of the unitary executive a bridge too far.

A Pulitzer Prize Worthy Endeavor

Kudos to Emilie Glazer for her in depth story about the debilitated image of Bill Gates rooted in revelations from the Jeffrey Epstein files ("Bill Gate's Image Is Cracking," Front page, June 1).

Therein lies a challenge for the Wall Street Journal editors: Commission Glazer to write and then publish a comparable penetrating story centered on President Donald J. Trump---focusing on revelations from the Epstein files as well as victim interviews and the attempted DOJ coverup .

The effort behind this story would certainly be considered a Pulitzer Prize worthy endeavor.

Letter Lets the Truth Be Told

Kudos to the Journal for publication of Mark M. Quinn's spot-on comments ("In Trump Term Two, No One Left to Say 'No'," Letters, May 9).

Heretofore, many similar comments relating to the manifold negative impact of the president's choice to surround himself with sycophantic and mostly incompetent cabinet members have either been left as unpublished letters or largely unread comments on the Journal's website.

The publication of Quinn's letter lets the truth be told.

Veteran U.S. Generals and Admirals Missing in Action

The Iran war gave U.S. adversaries a chance to see its capabilities ("Adversaries Size Up U.S. Military Prowess," World News, May 5). It seems that little has been said of Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth's culpability in the drastic, if not perilous, draw-down of the U.S. stockpile of missiles by way of his amateurish, video-game-like conduct of the Iran war.

Surely missing from the planning and conduct of the war was the strategic wisdom of the veteran generals and admirals Hegseth dismissed from service. No doubt this loss of U.S. military leadership capability has not only been witnessed by U.S. adversaries, but relished as well.

The Vietnam War Era: A Time to Remember

Die hard fans of President Trump will relish this opinion piece—helping them to recall how courageously he fought to stay out of the military during the Vietnam War ("Trump Stands Tall Under Fire," Opinion, Apr. 27).

During this era, Trump was able to stand tall while under fire from his draft board and secure five deferments—ending with a not-fit-for-military-service 4F classification.

Astronauts For America Provides Hope for Keeping America's Democratic Republic

The launch of Astronauts For America provides a basis for hope of keeping America's Democratic Republic ("Ex-Astronauts Launch Nonprofit to Protect Democracy," U.S. News, Apr. 22).

It was sad to see that during the 2024 presidential election, millions of American's seemed to have paid little heed to the threat that Donald J. Trump would attempt to rebuild America from a democratic republic to an autocracy.

Following Trump's election, many other millions have participated in nationwide No Kings Day rallies to protest his presidency wherein the strict lines and balance of our

democratic republic are being breached. These protests have had little if any political impact—bringing to mind Benjamin Franklin's terse statement about the government wrought by the 1787 Constitutional Convention: “A republic, if you can keep it.

The bipartisan Astronauts For America organization with its plans to score and rate political candidates as well as meet with federal policy makers to share concerns about the state of U.S. Democracy will hopefully provide a mechanism that has sufficient force to help keep our republic.

Democrats must Learn From 2024 Defeat

William A. Galston says “Peter Mayar’s campaign strategy didn’t stress the threat to democracy” (“Democrats Can Learn from Orban’s Defeat,” Opinion, April 15).

Democratic strategists must learn a critical lesson from the 2024 presidential election, to wit: Millions of Americans voted for Donald J. Trump, seemingly not caring that he and Project 2025 posed an existential threat to America’s Democratic Republic.

Trump Ignored the Past While His Enablers Allowed Him to Fall Victim to His Manifest Weaknesses

The author’s claimed that Trump followed his Venezuela model, not accounting for the ideological character of the regime in Tehran, (“How Trump Miscalculated in Iran,” Opinion, Apr. 10). Trump also ignored the experience of his predecessors.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spent decades attempting to persuade U.S. presidents to attack Iran. There were many good reasons why these persistent appeals were rejected by Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Joe Biden, and Donald Trump during his first term in office. Netanyahu’s appeal to President Trump during his second term was successful as evidenced by the June 22, 2025 U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran and then the February 28, 2026 joint attack that initiated the 39-day Iran war—leaving Iran with a strong Hormuz negotiating hand to play.

Unlike Trump's first term, his second-term sycophantic administration and the Republican Congress had no one who could restrain him from falling victim to his hubris, erratic moods and malevolent instincts. As a consequence, he is the first U.S. president that has succumbed to the Israeli Prime Minister’s persistent cajoling.

The world is not only paying the price for Trump‘s weaknesses, but for his sycophantic administration and congressional enablers as well.

Reads Much Like a White House Press Release

"From 'No Kings' and Iran to data centers, too many Americans are fighting progress," says Andy Kessler
(" I Give Up on These Defeatists," Opinion, Apr. 6).

Kessler also wrote: "Democracy is worth fighting for." He is apparently unaware of the fact that was the driving force behind 'No Kings' Day when millions of Americans protested the Trump administration's ongoing attempt to replace our democratic republic with an autocracy.

That said, this opinion piece reads much like a White House press release aimed to disparage opponents of the administration's Project 2025 and ill-fated Iran policies.

Don't count on Congress

Bernie Sanders writes: AI kills jobs, equality, connection, democracy, and maybe the human race. Congress must act ("AI is a Threat to Everything the American People Hold Dear," Opinion, Apr. 3).

Attacking a Strawman

Senator Sheehy's claims that Americans want winning policies not performative politics ("How to Pass the SAVE America Act," Opinion, Mar. 28). This op-ed provides a clear example of performative politics in action-- attacking a strawman. Sheehy's argument would carry some weight if he was able to show that there is a real problem that the Save America Act would solve other than President Trump's claim without evidence that voting by non-citizens is a problem in United States.

The fact that the president's false claim is echoed by sycophantic Republican members of the US Congress does not serve to make it true , but rather exposes the fear Republicans have of losing the midterm elections.

The Decimation of the U.S. Democratic Republic Will Define Trump's Legacy

A relatively small part of of Trump's legacy will be defined by the dire consequences of his going to war with Iran without a plan when the U.S. faced no imminent threat ("Iran Will Define Trump's Legacy," Opinion, Mar.17).

Why he took the risk when the U.S. was in a relatively good position re: Iran will be a question for the ages given the regime's domestic unpopularity and the suppression of its air defenses as well as the "obliteration" of its nuclear program via the 2025 so-called Twelve-Day War.

A much larger part of his legacy will be defined by the long-term impact of his many breaches of the U.S. Constitution and the consequent decimation of our 250-year Democratic Republic.

A Machiavellian Ring to 'Will Trump Fight to Win'?

The Wall Street Journal's Editorial Board writes: “Iran can't emerge from the war with a veto on the flow of oil from the Gulf "(“Will Trump 'Fight to Win'?” Review & Outlook, Mar. 13). That sounds like a perfectly reasonable goal for a negotiated peace settlement by professional negotiators, as opposed to winning for winnings sake when what is meant by winning keeps changing with the war's escalation.

With reference to the rising price of oil and its roiling impact on the global marketplace, Department of Energy Secretary Chris Wright said it's “short-term pain for the long-term gain.” The Journal's Editorial Board takes the long-term gain to mean the unimpeded flow of oil, while Peter Navarro, the Trump administration's senior counselor on trade and manufacturing, believes long-term gain means lower gas prices. These are the latest desired consequences of the U.S.-Israeli attack that precipitated the Iran War along with its "short-term pain" in terms of collateral economic and human damage—including the death and suffering of innocent people. This collateral damage would also include even more U.S. military personnel dead and wounded from if it is ordered to *secure* Kharg Island, the "backbone" of Iran's energy economy, and/or Iran's coast along the Strait of Hormuz.

This consequential, end-justifies-the-means argument has a Machiavellian ring to it —recalling here that it was Niccolo Machiavelli who published *The Prince* in 1532, literally a handbook for unscrupulously immoral politicians, and their enablers.

Does Trump's “Energy Triumph” Justify His War Against Iran?

Kimberley Strassel's column reads like a Trump administration press release (“Trump's Energy Triumph,” Opinion, Mar. 13). It could be read as the ultimate objective and/or justification of Trump‘s war against Iran--gaining, along with Russia's Putin, potential control of most of the world's oil supply.

Noem Took the Fall for Miller and White Nationalism

Jason Riley opined: “Ms. Nome’s real sin was her handling of immigration enforcement, which managed to turn one of the president’s strengths into a festering liability,” (“Reconsider Your Failing Strategy,Mr. President,” Opinion, Mar. 11).

Ms. Noem's real sin was not resisting White House Deputy Chief of Staff and white nationalist Stephen Miller who pressured her to meet his daily deportation quotas

—resulting in deeply unpopular, clumsy and overly aggressive deportation efforts that culminated in the death of two Americans.

Perhaps the president should reconsider Miller's white nationalist strategy.

The Midterms: Stephen Miller's Dirty Trick

A much more appropriate headline for this column would have been: "Stephen Miller's Dirty Trick Established Game Plan for Midterms" ("Trump Reveals A Game Plan For Midterms," The Wall Street Journal, U.S. News. Feb. 26).

Without a doubt, it was Stephen Miller, President Trump's Deputy Chief of Staff, adviser and architect of the Trump administration's aggressive anti-immigration policy who crafted the Republican mantra that proved successful in the 2024 election. To wit: "They're for them. We're for you." The clear inference was that "them" meant immigrants and LGBTQs. It was a false choice or false dilemma, whereby a complicated issue is reduced to an over-simplified either-or-proposition ignoring other potential alternatives--forcing voters to make a choice between two alternatives by implying these are the only options or that they are mutually exclusive..

During the "gotcha" segment of his SOTU speech, President Trump took full advantage of the fact that there could be no rebuttal by Democratic lawmakers to pull off Miller's dirty verbal trick. It took form via his presentation of another false choice: "If you agree with the statement, then stand up and show your support: The first duty of the American government is to protect American citizens – not illegal aliens."

Obviously, a first duty of the American government is not as Trump stated, but rather to have its three branches operate in accordance with the U.S. Constitution— providing protection to all who are living within its jurisdiction. Of course, all the Republican lawmakers stood while the Democratic lawmakers did not, thereby falling into Miller's built-for-TV trap.

To be sure, Republican lawmakers up for election will claim: They're for protecting illegal aliens. We're for protecting American citizens. However, as Eric Zorn suggested in the February 26 issue of the Picayune Sentinel, the Democrats can confront Republicans with their own "Stand if you believe" statements—suggesting a number of examples centered on gun control, health care, climate change, abortion and tax breaks. The Republican candidates will also face an almost unlimited number of additional "Stand if you believe" confrontations involving areas such as the Epstein Files, the Trump family businesses, the 2020 "stolen" election, and Trump's grand jury indictments to name but a few.

GOP lawmaker's resistance easily overcome

Beavers and Annie Linsey report some Republican lawmakers are very concerned about the negative impact of the administration's aggressive immigration policy. Unfortunately, these and other elected GOP lawmakers are more concerned. about the security of their positions in Congress and so are easily bent to the wills of President Trump and Stephen Miller, the president's unelected Adviser and Whisperer.

Goebbels and Bormann: The 1930s Revisited

Josh Dawsey and Tarini Parti tell the sad story of the outsize power exercised within the White House by Stephen Miller ("The Aide Stoking Trump's Impulses," Page 1, Feb.4).

There is a historical equivalent to Stephen Miller as a personification of racist policy making in Adolf Hitler's 1930's inner circle. It's a combination of Joseph Goebbels and Martin Bormann.

Goebbels fits due to his role as Hitler's chief propagandist and speechwriter. Like Miller, who authored Donald Trump's "American Carnage" inaugural address and other key speeches. Goebbels was responsible for crafting the Nazi public narrative—scapegoating Jews via dehumanizing rhetoric so as to mobilize supporters and marginalize opponents.

Martin Bormann fits because he served as Hitler's private secretary and exercised immense power—controlling the flow of information and access to the Fuehrer, comparable to Miller's role as Senior Adviser and Deputy Chief of Staff, where he apparently bypasses White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles to stoke Trump's negative impulses that render boundary-pushing hardline policies such as the 2017 travel ban, the scapegoating of immigrants as well as aggressive action by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency—including family separation.

Trump's Failed Business Practices Back at Work

All of the author's points about alienation of friends should come as no surprise given the president's past business practices ("How America First Risks Becoming America Alone." Review, Jan. 31). However, many Americans are not aware of his business failures and have been conned into believing that Trump was a successful business man whose risky business practices brought him success despite compelling evidence to the contrary.

For example, there were Trump's four business bankruptcies, as well as his conviction on 34 counts of falsifying business records. Also consider former NBC chief marketing executive John D Miller's apology to all Americans about NBC's 'The Apprentice' show that portrayed Trump as a successful businessman. Miller's view was

expressed in an October 16, 2024, opinion piece titled "We Created a Monster: Trump was a TV Fantasy Invented for 'The Apprentice'."

It seems that Trump is repeating his failing business practices on a grand worldwide scale—hauntingly similar to his previous failures in New York and Atlantic Cities.

Renee Good, Alex Pretti and the Trump Cover-up

The Wall Street Journal reported that Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison is concerned the federal government may 'withhold' information about the death of ICU nurse Alex Pretti ("*In* Battle for Evidence, Minnesota Sues Feds Over Fatal Border Patrol Shooting," U.S. News, Jan. 26). The report tells how Minneapolis citizen Alex Pretti was shot and killed by a Border Control agent this past Saturday. According to the story, the killing occurred just two weeks after the killing of Minneapolis citizen Renee Good by an ICE agent.

Both killings appeared unjustified according to applicable U.S. law, but definitely immoral acts of murder in accordance with moral law.

Recall that the Justice Department sent subpoenas on January 20 to Governor Tim Walz and five other Democratic officials in Minnesota, including the States Attorney General Keith Ellison and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey among others.

This was the Trump administration's tactical move that will not only impede, but also delay the State of Minnesota's ability to follow the path of the State of Illinois and seek an indictment of ICE agent for the killing of Minneapolis citizen Renee Good but will also impede and delay the indictment of the Border Control agent responsible for the killing of Alex Pretti. It is worthy of note that withholding information from state officials is prima-facie evidence of an attempted cover-up.

The White House lawyers are well acquainted with the fact that the State of Illinois indicted Sangamon County Deputy Sheriff Sean Grayson for his July 2024, killing of Sonya Massey in her Springfield, Illinois home. Grayson was subsequently tried and convicted of second-degree murder by an Illinois jury.

Consequently, the Trump administration will do everything in its power to keep this from happening to its federal agents. The president and his sycophantic minions are attempting to cover-up both killings by not only ignoring moral law but withholding evidence as well. Trump immediately claimed both killings justified. No doubt, the Justice Department will follow suit and so enshrine itself as Trump's Department of Injustice.

Renee Good: Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

The Justice Department on Tuesday sent subpoenas to Governor Tim Walz and five other Democratic officials in Minnesota, including the States Attorney General Keith Ellison and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey among others. ("Minnesota Democratic Officials Subpoenaed," U.S. NEWS, Jan 21).

This is a thinly veiled tactical move that will not only delay, but also impede the State of Minnesota's ability to follow the path of the State of Illinois and seek an indictment of ICE agent Jonathan Ross for the killing of Minneapolis citizen Renee Good. The Illinois indictment of Sangamon County Deputy Sheriff Sean Grayson for his July 2024, killing of Sonya Massey in her Springfield, Illinois home.

Grayson was subsequently tried and convicted of second-degree murder by an Illinois jury. No doubt, the Trump administration will do everything in its power to keep this from happening to its ICE agent since the president, the vice president and the director of Homeland Security immediately claimed the killing justified while the Justice Department stated there will be no related investigation by the FBI.

Missed: A Potential Cover-up Story

Apparently, the focus of the Journal's editorial board's and editor-at-large Gerard Baker on Trump's potential war against Greenland in its January 20 print issue led to an unfortunate oversight—the miss of another important news story.

Specifically, no mention was made of the widespread January 19 reporting by other new sources of Assistant Attorney General Todd Blanche's announcement that the FBI will not investigate the shooting of Minneapolis citizen Renee Good by ICE agent, Jonathan Ross.

Not reporting on the Blanche announcement must have pleased the Trump administration that seems to be attempting a cover-up to avoid a potential state of Minnesota indictment of Ross for murder. The administration must certainly be aware of the Illinois indictment of Sangamon County Deputy Sheriff Sean Grayson for his July 2024, killing of Sonya Massey in her Springfield, Illinois home. Grayson was subsequently tried and convicted of second-degree murder by an Illinois jury.

Joe Rogan, ICE, and Moral Law vs. the Rule of Law

Among other things, the shooting of Minneapolis citizen Renee Good by ICE agent, Jonathan Ross has precipitated a potential reversal of Joe Rogan's backing of President Trump ("Trump Is Losing the Country's Most Important Swing Voter: Joe Rogan," Review, Jan.17-18).

The shooting will almost certainly be seen as justified in the eyes of the FBI and DOJ —both led by minions of President Trump. The Trump administration immediately portrayed Good as a domestic terrorist who sought to run over an ICE agent— claiming the shooting was justified under the rule of law.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no video evidence that Good was intentionally driving her car in the direction of. On the contrary, there is video evidence that she was driving away from the ICE agent. However, like beauty, the justification for the shooting of Renee Good by Ross lies in the eye of the beholder. With local and state expert evaluators barred from the investigation, there is little hope for an unbiased judgment.

This contested incident brings to mind moral law that imposes a more demanding standard than the rule of law. Under moral law, the shooting would certainly be considered an unjustified immoral act.

In the end, the Trump administration's rule of law argument is an obvious attempt to coverup the potential crime of murder behind this tragic event.

In his opinion piece, George J. Terwillinger III wrote: "Last week, after an ICE agent shot and killed a civilian who was driving her car in his direction, Mayor Jacob Frey demanded that ICE get the F— out of Minneapolis" (""ICE, Minneapolis and the Rule of Law. " Opinion, Jan.14).

To the best of my knowledge, there is no video evidence that Renee Good was driving her car in the direction of ICE agent, Jonathan Ross. On the contrary, there is video evidence that she was driving away from the ICE agent.

With his emphasis on the rule of law, the author adroitly avoids any consideration of the moral law whereby the shooting would be considered an unjustified immoral act. Also, I agree with the author that the rules of politics may impose a more demanding standard than the rule of law.

In the end, the rule of law arguments expressed in this opinion piece aid and abet the Trump administration's attempts to coverup this tragic event.

Crick and Watson Ignored Franklin in Their Noble Speeches

In Steven Poole's review of Matthew Cobb's book he states that according to Cobb: Rosalind Franklin made x-ray images of the DNA molecule that provided a crucial clue to the (double-helical) structure of the molecule ("The Molecule And the Man", Opinion, Jan. 6).

Steele recounts Cobb saying: The idea subsequently arose that Franklin had been unjustly written out of the story —arguing that this is something of a myth since Crick and Watson credited Franklin explicitly in their earliest papers.

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that neither Crick nor Watson mentioned Franklin in their acceptance speeches at the 1962 Nobel Prize ceremony. See "Shortchanged by Death and in Memory," in the May 9, 2003, Wall Street Journal Letters.

2025

A Revealing Letter on the College Sports Crisis

Kudos to William McGurn for his contribution to the more than 100-year saga surrounding the ugly truth about the money-driven big business of college sports ("The College Sports Crisis," Opinion, Nov. 25).

To illustrate the extent to which school's that support big-time football and men's basketball programs are protective of their portion of this multi-billion dollar college sports business, consider a consequence of the publication of my letter on the subject ["Who Wants to Tackle Biggest Man on Campus?" The Wall Street Journal, Letters, Oct. 5, 2005].

The letter was prompted by the responses to the Journal's publication of an eviscerating column by Skip Rozin ("The Brutal Truth About College Sports," Leisure & Arts. Sept. 15, 2005). These responses asked "Can Colleges Control the NCAA Beast?" My answer was no, here's why and what The Drake Group is doing about it—triggering an almost immediate retaliation via the retraction of my title as a McCormick Faculty Fellow at Northwestern University's McCormick School of Engineering. An AI search of the above bracketed reference to this letter will reveal much about the roots of the crisis in college sports.

America's republic is being deconstructed in plain sight

Kudos to Peggy Noonan for her wake up call to all Americans "A Republic, but Can We Keep It?" Opinion, Oct. 25).

She tells her readers that there is reason to to wonder and worry about what's going on not only with America's military, the Justice Department and the East Wing, but more importantly with our republic's foundational co-equal branches of government.

Noonan ends by saying: "Nine months in, we've got to be thinking about these things." And so we must as our American republic is being deconstructed in plain sight.

A Black Swan Has Landed on the American Pond

William Galston is right in theory ("Congress can rein in executive power," Opinion, Oct. 15). However, today's Congress is not about to rein in executive power. As Josh Dawsey wrote in his October 11, "Trump, Feeling Emboldened" column: "Inside the White House, top advisers joke that they rule Congress with an "iron fist." Couple that hubris with a compliant SCOTUS that has moved far right with its six Republican appointed justices, America now finds itself faced with no apparent path to a restoration of Madison's intended separation of powers – a very unlikely 'black-swan' situation.

A Poor Comparison

Members of the WSJ editorial board can't be serious comparing the Letitia James and Donald Trump indictments ("Trump and Letitia James, Lawfare Pals," Review & Outlook, Oct. 11). It's tantamount to comparing a firecracker to a nuclear bomb. Just look at the potential consequences.

If Trump was convicted, he may not be our president and our American Democratic Republic would still be standing. On the other hand, if James is convicted, Trump would have his retribution, but there would be relatively little if any impact on our nation.

A Black-Swan Government

The editor's opine that the "major questions doctrine' could contradict concerns that the Court is tolerating an Imperial Trump Presidency; here's why not ("The Triumph of the Roberts Court," Review & Outlook, Oct. 4):

America is bending under the grasp of a "black-swan" government where all three of its branches are aligned with an unfettered president who is following the playbook of many past and present authoritarian dictators.

The president is aided and abetted by his sycophantic cabinet members—all with blind loyalty and some with questionable competence and by the similarly sycophantic leaders of the Republican House and Senate, as well as by a Supreme Court that has been appeasing the president by ceding power to the executive branch of government via its controversial shadow docket—without public argument, debate, or discussion—with its six Republican appointees apparently violating precedent and the Constitution they swore to uphold.

Lower Courts Fighting Back

The Supreme Court has been appeasing the president by ceding power to the executive branch of government via its controversial shadow docket—without public argument, debate, or discussion ("President's Appeals Rack the Judiciary," U.S. News, Sept. 3).

With its six Republican appointees apparently violating precedent and the Constitution they swore to uphold, backlash from the lower-courts should come as no surprise.

Lower-court judges must feel honor-bound to fight back against apparently biased higher-court shadow-docket rulings.

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Trump Could Now Be In Jail

President Trump must certainly realize that if President Biden was able to pressure Attorney General Merrick Garland with the same force that he is applying to Pam

Bondi, he would likely be in jail rather than president of the United States("Trump Pushes Bondi to Go After His Foes," U.S. News, Sept. 22).

Rove's Valuable Insights

Kudos to Karl Rove for his valuable insights ("'They' Didn't Kill Charlie Kirk," Opinion, Sept. 18).

Hopefully, this coming Saturday's Charlie Kirk eulogists (the president, vice president and secretary of state) will prepare by availing themselves of a free speech tutorial as the Journal's Editorial Board recommended for Pam Bondi via a Sept. 17 editorial.

The substance and tone of the Charlie Kirk eulogies will tell much about the future course of politics in America.

President Trump and Adviser Miller also need a free speech tutorial

The Wall Street Journal's Editorial Board *writes*: "The AG seems to think 'hate speech' is illegal. Charlie Kirk knew better. … Maybe Ms. Bondi should quit appearing on podcasts about Charlie Kirk until she listens to some Charlie Kirk podcasts" ("Pam Bondi Needs a Free Speech Tutorial," Review & Outlook, Sept. 17).

Ideally, President Trump and his adviser Stephen Miller would be able to join the AG so they can all get a free speech tutorial from Charlie Kirk.

Why Do Supreme Court Justices Favor Trump?

Professor Richard W. Garnett crafts a side-stepping response to the Sept. 12 op-ed by Elizabeth Price Foley and Mark Pinkert. He avoids addressing the op-ed's primary issue: the apparent resistance ("insubordination") of lower federal courts to Supreme Court rulings ("Overruling Smith Would Be a Supreme Mistake," Letters, Sept. 16).

What is really needed is an explanation of the Supreme Court's "shadow docket" rulings that favor President Trump over the rulings of lower federal courts—answering the question: Why does the Supreme Court keep backing Donald Trump?.

Hopefully, a ground swell of American lawyers will rise to join the lower-court justices who are defying precedent by criticizing the Court Justices. The challenge is to broaden and deepen the level of criticism so as to change the minds of at least some of Justices that seem beholden to Trump for one reason or another.

Judicial Insubordination?

The Supreme Court justices appointed by President Trump have undermined the Founder's concept of the Constitution as a living document ("The Judicial Insubordination Crisis." Opinion. Sept 12). These originalists believe the Constitution is dead and the only people capable of interpreting its meaning are the originalists themselves.

Trump's Supreme Court originalists must have twisted themselves into a knot when they wrote the majority opinion in Trump v. The United States—effectively granting Trump kingly powers.

No wonder there is "insubordination" in the lower federal court.

Voters Beware

According to Gerard Baker, European and other voters are rejecting the establishment's nihilism in favor of Trump-Style populism, a.k.a. Trumpism ("Trump-Style Populism Rising in Europe," Opinion, Sept. 9).

Hopefully, the Europeans and others are smarter than American voters and will beware of a populist leader like the one who recited more than 30,000 documented falsehoods in one term of office, was indicted by federal grand juries for violating the U.S. Espionage Act and obstructing justice, was convicted of 34 felonies, was found liable for fraud and separately found liable for sexual abuse and was nevertheless returned to office by these American voters.

Populism as practiced by this leader is characterized by malevolence—including retribution, lies, deceit, grifting, bullying, overreach, cruelty and just plain nastiness.

The Country Is Not Disintegrating, Its Government Is Being Eviscerated

Cynthia Czick, a 97-year-old novelist and essayist, was quoted as saying: "This is a good country. It's a great country. And now, it's disintegrating," ("A New York Jewish Life of Letters," Opinion, Sept. 6).

Our country is not disintegrating, its government is being eviscerated by an unfettered President Trump. He is forging an autocratic police state focused on retribution/vendettas as well as on the scapegoating and deportation of immigrants.

Trump is aided and abetted by members of his cabinet who are engaged in the destruction of their respective departments as well as by sycophantic Republican House and Senate leaders who effectively force their cowered party members to vote as the president dictates.

It's all happening before our very eyes, but should come as no surprise as this course of events was predicted by many before and just after Trump's election in 2024. For example, in the case of retribution/vendettas, the Journal's Editorial Board wrote on August 22: "The real offender here is a President who seems to think he can use the power of his office to run vendettas. We said this was one of the risks of a second Trump term, and it's turning out worse than we imagined." And the beat goes on.

Killing the Messenger

Leon Panetta's opinion piece provided a number of valuable insights only to be overlooked as his many online critics chose to "kill the messenger,." ("The Great Bipartisan Abdication," Opinion, Aug. 28).

The Evisceration of the American Government

Josh Dawsey and Annie Linskey provide an uncontentious summary of the out-of-bounds nature of Trump's second presidency ("In Trump's Second Presidency, An Unfettered Leader Takes Hold," Page 1, Aug. 28).

As a matter of fact, the American government, as envisioned by our founding fathers, is being eviscerated by a perfect storm fomented by our unfettered President who is forging an autocratic police state focused on retribution/vendettas re: real and imagined political enemies and the scapegoating of immigrants.

The President is aided and abetted by members of his Cabinet who are engaged in a generational destruction of their respective government departments, a Republican Congress led by sycophantic House and Senate leaders who effectively force their cowered party members to vote as Trump dictates, and (possibly worse yet) an unbelievably compliant Supreme Court.

It's all happening before our very eyes, but should come as no surprise as this course of events was predicted by many before and just after Trump's election in 2024. For example, in case of retribution, the Journal's Editorial Board wrote on August 22: "The real offender here is a President who seems to think he can use the power of his office to run vendettas. We said this was one of the risks of a second Trump term, and it's turning out worse than we imagined."

A Rare Noonan Miss

Peggy Noonan rarely misses, but her opinion piece overlooked the much more resonating age—The Age of German Nazism in the 1930s ("Why 'The Gilded Age' Resonates With 2025," Opinion, Aug. 16-17).

With nod to nod to the wording of Noonan's epigraph, here is a more appropriate comparison current time in America: An autocratic leader, focus on eliminating undesirables with round-ups for detention camps by brown-shirted political thugs. Sound familiar?

Why 'Germany in the 1930s' Resonates in 2025

A more resonating comparison in today's world would have been a Peggy Noonan opinion piece titled "Why 'Germany in the 1930s' Resonates in 2025," ("Why 'The Gilded Age' Resonates With 2025," Opinion, Aug. 16-17).

With a nod to the wording of Noonan's epigraph, here is a more appropriate comparison to our current time in America: An autocratic leader, focus on eliminating undesirables with round-ups for detention camps by brown-shirted political thugs. Sound familiar?

Where Is the Outrage?

Dialysis Finley writes: “He does himself and his party no favors by waving away economic reality as Biden did with inflation” (“Trump Claims the Jobs Report Was Rigged. Was It?,” Opinion, Aug. 4).

Trump‘s pathological lying and false claims on this and a myriad of other matters are closely related to the so called mushroom strategy: Keep people in the dark and feed them plenty of horse manure. The aim is to deliberately keep people uninformed.

With Trump backed by a sycophantic Republican Congress and right-wing media, the American public has little chance of getting the truth from this White House Administration.

Where is the outrage ?

Many Would Miss Public Broadcasting

In his July 28 Inside View opinion piece,”We Won’t Miss Government Media," Andy Kessler should have defined, who he meant by the all embracing word “we.” It certainly doesn’t include the tens of millions of Americans who donate to support PBS and NPR.

As an alternative to government supported broadcasts, Kessler writes: “Let 1,000 podcast bloom.” To be sure, nowhere among these podcast. will you find the likes of Ken Burn’s documentaries, Frontline investigative reports, or Sesame Street programs.

Fatal Conceit: An Example

Kudos to the authors of a thoughtfully argued op-ed. ("What Would Hayek Think of AI?," Opinion, July 1). It brought to mind a vivid recollection from the early 1990s that relates to Hayek’s 'fatal conceit.' It was a response to a Northwestern University McCormick School lecture based on my paper “Creating Our Common Future,” that focused on the need for sustainable development as well as the need to embrace a new paradigm—moving from the old “me and mine and survival of the fittest to we and ours and survival of us all together.”

The response was that we really didn’t have to worry about sustainable development because advanced technology will be able to solve environmental problems.

Consider the Electric Vehicle (EV) technology solution in light of the unpredictable and destructive power of lithium batteries at the heart of the recent sinking of a ship containing thousands of EV’s because of a catastrophic lithium battery fire.

Big-time College Sports Contributes to the Rot

Not mentioned by Gerard Baker is the contribution to rot in many of America’s leading colleges and universities via institutional support of money-making, big time football and men’s basketball programs, ("Which Is Worse Trump or Harvard?," Opinion, June 4). These programs not only promote a partying atmosphere on campuses, aptly named

"beer and circus" by college sports authority Murray Sperber, but have masked the decline of higher education from public scrutiny as well.

NBC Created a Monster

Kudos to Meghan Cox Gurdon for a great review of "Enchanted Creatures" ("What Horrors Lie Within/Here Be Monsters," Books, Apr. 26). She cites Ms. Lawrence assertion that "our monsters have become more and more expressive of an abiding dread of the recklessness of our own species….we're constantly looking over our shoulders, wondering what the consequences might be."

In America we don't have to look over our shoulder. We can read. see and hear about the recklessness and devastating consequences to the American government, its economy, and its institutions as well as to many of its citizens wrought by its president—a monster created by "The Apprentice" show according to John D. Miller, NBC's former chief of marketing.

Exposing the Wizard of MAGAland

Kudos to Gerard Baker who has deftly taken on the role of Toto—pulling back the curtain to expose the Wizard of MAGAland as "a strongman who can't do anything right," ("Is Trump a Tyrant or a Savior? Maybe Just a Bumbler," Opinion, Apr. 22).

On Throwing More

Kudos to Jared Diamond for his memory-prompting column on pitching, ("A Pitch to Fix Pitchers: Make Them Throw More," Sports, Apr. 17).

Over the decade spanning the years 1945 through 1955, I pitched for the Chicago Park District Hermosa Park's Junior and Senior level teams, for Wright Junior College in 1949 and its 1950 Illinois Junior college co-champions. During that time period and up through 1955 when I was pitching in the Midwest Semipro League, I was always expected to pitch all nine innings with but two exceptions. These were times when I was asked to pitch two days in a row and was consequently promised relief when I tired.

Absent a potentially arm-wrecking-overpowering fast ball, my pitching strategy centered on control, a good curve ball and pacing myself. Looking back from my 94 years of age, it must be said that I really did throw more without incurring elbow injuries. All of this throwing despite pitching many a curve ball.

The San Francisco Giants may really be on to something as they go back in time to save the arms of their pitchers.

Trump the ultimate business man?

Joshua Chaffin writes: “To many loyalists, Trump remains the ultimate businessman and authority on matters of dollars and cents," ("Trust Unshaken: Trump Voters Are Sticking With Their Guy," Review, April 12).

Many Trump loyalists were deluded by NBC into believing that Trump was a smart and successful businessman by virtue of its “The Apprentice” program despite compelling evidence to the contrary.

For example, consider former NBC chief marketing executive John D. Miller’s apology to all Americans about NBC’s "The Apprentice" show’s portrayal of Trump as a very successful businessman in an October 16, 2024 *US News and World Report* opinion piece, “We Created a Monster: Trump Was a TV Fantasy Invented for ‘The Apprentice’.”

Furthermore, there were Trump’s four filings for business bankruptcies as well as his conviction on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in *The People of the State of New York v. Donald J. Trump* that was spun as “lawfare” by the right-wing media during the 2024 election.

Trump’s chaotic time in office

Trump’s chaotic time in office has been really bad for the stock market, (“Trade-War Jitters Batter Stocks,” Page 1, Apr. 11). Stock market turmoil and economic warfare do not bode well for the future as both fuel growing risks of a recession and a global economic crisis.

All of the above should come as no surprise to Trump voters who must be suffering a bit of voter’s remorse as they wonder what’s going on with today’s escalating trade war with China that is causing them personal financial peril. Why so?

Of the millions of Trump voters, many were conned into believing that Trump was a great businessman despite the following three facts:

1. Trump's four filings for business bankruptcies,
2. Description of Trump as a "monster" by John D. Miller, the former NBC chief marketing executive, when apologizing to all Americans about NBC’s *The Apprentice* show’s portrayal of Trump as a very successful businessman in an October 16, 2024 *US News and World Report* opinion piece, “We Created a Monster: Trump Was a TV Fantasy Invented for ‘The Apprentice’,” and In *The People of the State of New York v. Donald J. Trump,*
3. Trump was convicted on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records.

Voter's Remorse?

Trump voters must be suffering a bit of voter's remorse---wondering what's going on with today's escalating trade war that is causing them personal financial peril, ("U.S. Sets China Tariffs at 104%, Beijing Vows 'Fight to the End'., Page 1, Apr..9}.

Of the millions of Trump voters, many were conned into believing that Trump was a great businessman despite the following two facts:

1. Four filings for business bankruptcies and
2. Description of Trump as a "monster" by John D. Miller, the former NBC chief marketing executive, when apologizing to all Americans about NBC's *The Apprentice* show's portrayal of Trump as a very successful businessman in an October 16, 2024 *US News and World Report* opinion piece, "We Created a Monster: Trump Was a TV Fantasy Invented for 'The Apprentice'."

The Real Estate Deal Maker at Work

When it comes to supporting Ukraine, it's not on Trump's agenda for the noble reason it was for Biden and the Europeans ("U.S. Presses for Slice of Ukraine Economy," World News, Mar. 29).

Trump is obviously using U.S. support as a transactional negotiating tool as if he was working a real estate deal. He must believe he has the Ukrainians over the proverbial barrel and so is putting unbearable pressure on the Ukrainians to bend to his will and give the U.S. substantial control of their economy and natural resources. This tees up a question: to wit: What will Trump do if Ukraine refuses to bend as deeply as he wants.

The Bullying Transactional Negotiator

Jane Lytvyeneko and Alan Collison illuminate President Trump's hidebound bullying way of conducting foreign policy, ("Trump tightens screws on Kyiv," World News, Mar. 28).

According to the old adage, if all you have is a hammer everything looks like a nail. That's a fitting view of President Trump's transactional foreign policy negotiations that reflect his long history of strong-arm real estate negotiations.

What would Kyiv do if its European supporters did the same?

No Surprise Here

Asking Attorney General Pam Bondi or FBI Director Kash Patel to do a full-bore counterintelligence investigation of the Signal chat blunder would be exactly the same as asking President Trump, ("Justice Department Sits Out Signal Chat Probe," U.S. News, Mar. 28).

No surprise here as we are living in today's world of Trump and his team of Senate confirmed sycophants.

It's Also the President's People

Kudos to the Journal's national security columnist who outlined the problems with President Trump's approach to foreign policy ("Blunder Shows Pitfalls of Ad Hoc Policy Process," U.S. News, Mar. 27). Not mentioned in the piece is that

President Trump‘s team of national security and foreign policy advisors are mostly inept amateurs, completely out of their depths in dealing with complex foreign-policy problems that are not amenable to quick fixes that President Trump desperately wants.

The Really Serious Lesson to be learned from the Signal Scandal

The WSJ editors write: “A real security scandal is that the Signal chat apparently included Steve Witcoff, Mr. Trump‘s envoy to wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. Press reports say Mr. Witcoff was receiving these messages on the commercial app while in Moscow. This is a security malpractice,” (Lessons From the Signal Affair," Review & Outlook, Mar. 26).

To be sure, Russian intelligence services listen to every supposedly secure message on Signal. This leads to my belief that Mr. Witcoff and President Trump‘s entire team of sycophants—so-called national security experts are inept amateurs, completely out of their depths in dealing with world crises. That could be the really serious lesson learned from this security scandal.

A timely wake-up call

Kudos to Seth G. Jones for his revelatory wake-up call, a timely reminder that Russia continues to be a malevolent force to be reckoned with, (“Russia’s, Malicious Activities,” Opinion, Mar. 7).

Jones’ piece should be affixed to the door to the Oval Office since President Trump appears to be suffering from a self-induced form of geopolitical amnesia. He seems to be ignoring the serious threat posed by Russia as he cozies up to its President Putin and abandons America’s NATO allies along the way.

Birds of a Feather Flock Together

It should come as no surprise that President Trump is making an amoral attempt to strong-arm a one-sided peace process, (“The Kremlin Keeps Escalating,” Review & Outlook, Mar. 7).

Trump is literally forcing Ukraine’s Zelensky to make all the concessions while aiding and abetting Russia’s amoral Putin’s attempt to reap more rewards for his unprovoked strong-arm invasion of Ukraine.

The situation calls to mind the adage: Birds of a feather flock together.

2024

An Over-the-Top Endorsement

Mr. O'Brien discredited himself in the very first paragraph when he said "President-elect Trump has assembled one of the most diverse and capable cabinets in American History, and has done so at a record pace" (Kash Patel Is Right for the FBI, Opinion, Dec. 6).

Nowhere does O'Brien mention in his over-the-top endorsement Mr. Patel's highest qualification. He will likely be the most loyal in Trump's cabinet of ultra-loyal sycophants.

Lawfare and Trump's prison-avoidance strategy

The Journal editors continue to parrot the Trump campaign's pejorative lawfare labeling (What Biden's Lawfare Has Wrought," Review & Outlook, Dec. 6).

Attorney General Merrick Garland's inexcusable, slow-walk Nov. 18, 2022 appointment of Jack Smith as a special counsel to pursue the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol uprising allowed Donald Trump to announce his ultimately successful strategic prison-avoidance candidacy for the presidency three days before Smith's appointment.

The beauty of Trump's strategy was revealed soon thereafter when he claimed that the DOJ was weaponizing the law against him. His claim not only gave birth to the label: "Biden's Lawfare," but also got the Journal editors and millions of low-information voters to ignore the subsequent grand jury indictments against him.

America's Dictator to Be

In its pre-Thanksgiving Day editorial published annually since 1961, the Journal editors repeat "We can remind ourselves that for all our social discord we yet remain the longest enduring society of free men governing themselves without benefit of kings or dictators, ("And the Fair Land." Review & Outlook, Nov. 27).

I find it ironic that the Journal published this editorial after the election of Donald Trump to the presidency—-knowing that he has said that he will be a dictator on day one.

Also, the editors should have been given pause by the fact that SCOTUS granted the president immunity from all official acts. Unofficial acts, executed by virtue of executive orders, will, no doubt, be written in legal terms to appear as official acts by the best lawyers Elon Musk's money can buy. Consequently, America will have a president with almost absolute power, in effect, a dictator.

On a President Trump with Absolute Power

By virtue of its 2024 ruling in Trump v. United States, SCOTUS granted Donald Trump immunity for actions considered to be part of his official presidential duties, a ruling that proved consequential in forestalling DOJ Special Consel Jack Smith's prosecution of Trump's multiple federal grand jury indictments ("Special Counsel Drops Trump Cases, Page 1. Nov. 26). The ruling also brought Trump close to holding absolute power, especially so when backed by Elon Musk's billions of dollars to ward off any legal challenges.

In an 1887 letter, John Dalberg-Acton (1834-1902), better known as Lord Acton, wrote "Power tends to corrupt, absolute power, corrupts absolutely"—reflecting his belief that unchecked power poses the greatest threat to human freedom.

Only time will tell the extent of the corruption and its negative consequences to America and the freedom of its people that could stem from a President Trump with absolute power.

There Was No People's Court

Like President Elect Trump's voters, the Journal's editorial Board cast a blind eye toward Trump's character flaws and bountiful evidence of his wrongdoing ("Jack Smith Loses in the People's Court," Review & Outlook, Nov. 8).

Trump defamed the Department of Justice and Jack Smith so many of his supporters were led to believe that our nation's justice system was weaponized against him. He claimed victimhood on behalf of his followers---saying they are coming after me, but their real target is you and I'm standing in their way.

In the end, there was no real "People's Court" as Trump successfully employed previously proven tactics he learned years ago from his nefarious lawyer Roy Cohn—delay, deny, obfuscate and defame your accuser—all with an aim to postpone court rulings prior to the 2024 election that he knew he had win in order to stay out of jail.

Compromising the 2024 election via fear mongering

Members of the Wall Street Journal Editorial Board should consider rewriting their Oct. 21 editorial, "The 'Fascist' Meme Returns," after they read the Journal's next-day story on the threat to election workers in Arizona's Maricopa County ("With Armed Guards, Drones, Poll Workers Brace for Deniers," Page 1, Oct. 22).

The reason for protecting these workers is the potential harm brought about by Republican election deniers inspired by Trump's continuing false claim that the 2020 election was stolen. Compromising the 2024 election via fear mongering is just how a wannabe fascist dictator would aim to take power.

Trump's Malevolent Disaster Related Behavior

Randy Manner says Donald Trump deliberately and dangerously distorts the facts for political gain, that Trump specializes in spreading disinformation, and that he's done this before— sewing confusion and scapegoating local officials ("Natural Disasters, Bring Out the Worst in Trump," Opinion, Oct. 11). Manner asks: Why? then answers: Always to make himself look better.

A better question would be: What can possibly explain this malevolent behavior by a candidate for the presidency of the United States? Here the answer is rooted in the complex psychology of Trump and that of his ardent followers, best understood via two internet accessible documentary films that address these psychologies.

The first is the 2020 film "Unfit: The Psychology of Donald Trump" wherein mental health experts address the question: Is Donald Trump fit to hold the office of President of the United States? The second is the 2024 film "Untruth: The Psychology of Trumpism," that also features mental health experts who analyze disinformation, false narratives, and untruths in American media and culture.

Shades of the 1930s

Trump got exactly the issue he wanted to campaign on after he had Congress kill the bipartisan immigration bill (H.R. 1511) early this year ("Trump Ramps Up Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric As Election Gets Closer," U.S. News, Oct. 1).

Both Trump and his running mate, J. D. Vance, have made scapegoating immigrants a prime thrust of their attack against Kamala Harris and Tim Walz— blaming immigrants for a broad array of our nation's ills.

It's certainly a proven strategy exemplified by Germany's Adolf Hitler's scapegoating of the Jews and other undesirables in the 1930s. Hitler's 'final solution' was the holocaust, the genocide of 6 million of these undesirables. On the other hand, Trump plans to deport 10 million of those he considers to be undesirable.

Why Harris Shouldn't Attend the Al Smith Dinner

At first glance, Peggy Noonan appears to make a compelling case for Kamala Harris to accept an invitation to attend and speak at the upcoming Al Smith dinner in New York and so join Donald Trump at the podium ("Who's Afraid of the Al Smith Dinner." Opinion, Sept. 28).

On the other hand, there are compelling reasons why she should not accept the invitation

Apparently, Noonan has forgotten Trump's boorish appearance at the 2016 Al Smith dinner where he received unprecedented booing for his mean-spirited comments about Hillary Clinton. Trump not only lies, but does not play by the rules of civil discourse as well.

Harris may have been guided in her decision not to attend the dinner by George

Bernard Shaw's admonition: Never wrestle with a pig, you both get dirty, and the pig likes it.

Rosalind Franklin and Emmy Noether

Although Emmy Noether's accomplishments are said to be as significant as Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity, she is yet little known ("A Woman in Space and Time," Books, Sept. 7). As Lee Phillips, the author of 'Einstein's Tutor', writes "evidence that this minimization was due to her sex is stark and abundant."

The situation brings to mind, the more recent experience of the late Rosalind Franklin, whose photographic evidence of the helical structure of the DNA molecule was key to the winning of the 1962 Nobel prize in Medicine by Francis Crick, James Watson and Maurice Wilkins. Her name was not even mentioned in their acceptance speeches during the award ceremony.

Thankfully , much has been done to rectify the Franklin situation. Lee Phillips' book and this review will go a long way towards promulgating the mathematical genius and contributions of Emmy Noether.

America Can't Afford to Overlook Octogenarian Talent

Kudos to Richard Vedder for his op-ed that made the point that with an aging population America needs its octogenarians ("Not All Octogenarians Are Feeble," Opinion, Aug. 1).

In addition to Vedder's several examples that prove octogenarians can remain productive, my books, "An Odyssey of Reform Initiatives, 1986-2015" and its two sequels were authored while in my late 80s. "Extra Innings: A Memoir" and several newspaper guest editorials were published in my early 90s. No doubt, there exists a plethora of such examples. Therefore, I wholeheartedly endorse the crux of Vedder's argument that given America's current demographics, it cannot afford to overlook the talent that can be found in its aging population.

Look to Seinfeld's Elaine Re: Title IX

The ideological basis for the Department of Education's interpretation of gender is weak ("Biden Turns Title IX Into a Weapon Against Women and Girls," Opinion, May 20). It calls to mind a classic Seinfeld episode wherein Elaine said: It's weak. No one's gonna buy it, and you shouldn't be selling it.

President Biden apparently has a political death wish—allowing his Department of Education to pursue the extreme left's woke agenda re: Title IX. It's guaranteed to lose countless independent and centrist Democratic votes in November, a welcome gift to his rival.

Analysis overlooks key factor

Greg Ip's otherwise detailed analysis overlooks a key factor: The Trump MAGA Cult, ("In Today's Economy, Voter's Vibes Battle With Clear-Cut Data," Page 1, Apr. 4). The overwhelming influence of Donald Trump on the minds of his many millions of followers cannot be ignored. If he tells them the economy is bad, then that's exactly what they will believe no matter what clear-cut data indicate.

2023

For Many Trustees Winning Sports Teams Are Above All Else

"The answers must lie with boards of trustees willing to appoint presidents who will stand up to the DEI censors and require intellectual diversity among the faculty….. Too many trustees and donors are happy to settle for getting their names on buildings and their children admitted," writes the WSJ Editorial Board ("The Ivy League Mask Falls," Review & Outlook, Dec. 11).

Unfortunately, too many trustees are just happy to have their schools produce winning football and men's basketball teams.

Bloomberg illuminates current college culture

Kudos to Michael Bloomberg who illuminates the current college culture of intolerance, conformity and safe spaces, ("Hamas's Barbarity Heightens the Crisis in Higher Education," Opinion, Nov. 18).

Bloomberg asks: Why have so many students failed to defend our nation's most sacred values? He claims the answer begins where the buck stops—with college presidents.

However, in my view the answer begins with the college boards of trustees. These boards select presidents based on criteria far removed from that of defending our nation's most sacred values. Unfortunately, in all too many cases a critical criterion is compliance with the board's compelling desire for winning football and basketball teams.

Look to Tehran for Real Evil

Hamas's atrocities force us to confront the concept of evil, says Lance Morrow ("Your Periodic Reminder That Evil Is Real," Opinion, Oct. 25).

The Oct. 7 atrocities demonstrated that evil can express itself in a military strategy. The strategy: To enrage the Israeli Government so that it seems that it's only recourse is a full blown assault on Hamas militants in Gaza that will not only result in a horrific loss of Israeli and Palestinian lives, but also divide the Israeli Defense Force as a second

front will be opened by Iran's other proxy army of Hezbollah militants from Lebanon.

Evil is real and we need look no further than the mullahs in Tehran to find it.

Who Will Tackle Biggest Man on Campus? A Redux

Kudos to Jason Gay, for his truth-telling column about the hypocritical, money-making college football entertainment business and why it can't help stop the chaos that it brings to higher education, ("Why College Football Can't Help Itself," Sports, Aug. 16).

Woe be it to a faculty person who dares to do such truth telling. Consider the following personal example: On Sept. 24, 2005, the Journal published letters under the headline, "Can Colleges Control the NCAA? Three days after my response, "Who Will Tackle Biggest Man on Campus?" to these letters was published on Oct. 5, 2005, my honorary appointment as a McCormick Faculty Fellow was revoked.

Unfortunately, as Jason Gay writes, the answer, then as now, is still no one not willing to face dire consequences.

Trump behavior imperils America's Democracy

It might be said that a more honest opening of the op-ed by David B. Rifkin Jr. and Lee A. Casey would have read: The latest indictment of Donald Trump is still another manifestation of the former president's in-and-out-of-office behavior that takes the courts and the country into uncharted territory—imperiling America's Democracy, ("The Trump Indictment Imperils the Presidency," Opinion, Aug. 3).

The authors claim that Trump's conduct is hard to defend. Nevertheless, they take on the task—arguing that he could have been immune from civil and criminal liability for actions taken in the execution of the office of the president.

In any case, the op-ed provides the prosecution with a heads up with regard to another one of many obfuscation-based defense strategies they must confront.

A call to throw the baby out with the bath water

The Bird-Sherwin book, *American Prometheus* provides the backstory behind Oppenheimer's tortured inner life ('Oppenheimer,' the Bhagavad-Gita and India's Outrage, Opinion, July 31). Based on his early social-value formation at the Hebrew Ethical and Cultural School, he became uncommonly sensitive to matters related to social justice.

It was Oppenheimer's deep immersion into the Bhagavada-Gita via its native Sanskrit that allowed him to rationalize his position as the leader of the Manhattan project. Calls from Indian officials in its Hindu nationalist government for the movie to be censored brings to mind the idiomatic expression "Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater,"—meaning don't eliminate a valuable part of the movie in an attempt to get rid of an unwanted scene.

Northwestern hazing scandal: The tip of an iceberg

America has yet to truly come to grips with much more than hazing at its colleges and universities supporting big-time football and men's basketball programs, (Northwestern Football Coach Fired Amid Hazing Allegations, July 11). Hazing is the tip of an iceberg – the low hanging rotten fruit in an ongoing American tragedy in higher education.

Writ large, the tragedy is characterized by interrelated, problems and issues, examples of which are sports-related academic corruption, excessive commercialization, admissions shenanigans, and the lowering of standards. Of particular concern is the brutal nature of college sports with its corrosive influence on institutions of higher education via the lure of fame and financial fortune.

Northwestern University has long been considered to be an exception to this tragedy as exemplified by the vision of its former provost, the late Lawrence Dumas, who helped craft "The Highest Order of Excellence," a document outlining goals, priorities and strategies for the University—envisioning NU's potential to become the world's leading academic institution.

Dumas could not have anticipated that it would be the journalistic excellence exhibited by the editors and reporters at NU's student newspaper, *The Daily Northwestern,* that would gain nationwide attention and respect. Two days of reporting by these student journalists exposed the gaps in the announcements made by NU president Michael Schiff and so catalyzed a much deeper analysis and corrective action that got NU's football and baseball coaches fired.

No doubt, President Schiff will come to understand that NU's sports-related culture is quite different than the one he experienced while president of the University of Oregon where he benefited from the strong backing and huge financial support of mega-sports-booster Nike President Phil Knight.

A Destructive Journal Editorial

One wonders if the members of the Journal's Editorial Board understand the forces they are unleashing with their latest editorial ("A Destructive Trump Indictment," Review & Outlook, May10-11)

Former President Donald Trump knows what he did with the classified documents. He also knew that there was a good chance that he would be indicted for his actions and needed "just-in-case" protection. So, why else would he run for president in 2024 if not to harness such protection as well as muddy the political waters and even possibly win the presidency.

This strategy has provided fodder for blame-the-Democrats commentaries that serve as red meat for his supporters that could incite violence. The commentaries echo Trump's familiar tropes of victimization via politically motivated "witch hunts" and the House Freedom Caucus claim of "weaponization of the DOJ."

The Journal's editorial is particularly troubling as it unwittingly supplies radical Trump supporters with arguments that could be interpreted as justification for destructive behavior.

Rosalind Franklin and the Nobel Prize: A Redux

Gerald Weatherby's letter ("Gone Too Soon for the Nobel," Letters, May 9), in response to the May 5 letter "Rosalind Franklin's Nobel," was similar to Jerome Shipman's letter, "Scientist Who Died Young Finally Getting Recognition," published May 9, 2003—advising Nobel prizes aren't awarded posthumously.

Shipman's letter was in response to my May 2, 2003, letter, "Scientist Was Overlooked in Nobel for DNA Work," that focused on the lack of Nobel recognition of Rosalind Franklin's seminal contribution regarding the double-helical structure of the DNA molecule.

Franklin's discovery, based on X-Ray diffraction photography was crucial to the award of the 1962 Nobel Prize to James Watson and Francis Crick for the discovery of the DNA molecule' structure.

My follow-up letter called attention to the unfortunate fact that neither Watson nor Crick mentioned Rosalind Franklin in their Nobel acceptance remarks.

Of further note, I received an anti-Semitic letter from a person who said he was not at all surprised that someone from Northwestern University would be advocating for the recognition of a scientist with a Jewish heritage.

Why PBS likely chose not to tell Senator Danforth's stories

While Senator Danforth's recollections of Justice Thomas are interesting they pale in comparison to the compelling really-nice-guy tribute once paid him by fellow Justice Sonia Sotomayor ("The Clarence Thomas Stories That PBS Refused to Tell," Opinion, May 20). Neither of these tributes were used on the PBS program likely because the stories were not relevant to the program's narrative.

Judges are ethically required to avoid the appearance of impropriety. Justice Thomas has failed in this regard. The narrative focused on the genesis of how Justice Thomas came to exercise poor judgment and develop an apparent blindness to the impact of his recurring appearance of impropriety on the public's perception of the integrity of the Supreme Court.

On Attacking ProPublica

The Journal's editorial feature editor, James Taranto, appealed to Saul Alinsky's "Rules for Radicals" in the latest of his series of opinion pieces in defense of Justice Clarence Thomas ("Alinskyites of the Left and Right Attack Thomas and Sotomayor," Opinion, May 5).

He apparently does not see that it is he who continues to follow Alinsky's "Rules" by targeting ProPublica, personalizing, and polarizing along the way. Evidently, he is also unaware of the first law of holes: "When in a hole, stop digging."

The editor might take heed of his own advice and invoke Alinsky's seventh rule: "A tactic that drags on to long becomes a drag," especially so when his opinion pieces ignore the real issue at hand: the impropriety surrounding Justice Thomas's acceptance of lavish gifts and favors from Republican megadonor Harlan Crow, that cast serious doubt on the integrity of the Supreme Court.

Kill-the-Messengers Defense of Justice Thomas

James Taranto, The Journal's editorial features editor and a member of its editorial board, continues the Journal's 'Kill-the-messengers' defense of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, ("Et, tu, Juan? Clarence Thomas's Fickle Friends Pile On," Opinion, April 25).

Along the way, claims have been made to the effect that the Washington Post and ProPublica commit comically incompetent journalism— referring to it as a plague of bad reporting.

To my mind, bad reporting, would be the Journal's overlooking the real issue with Justice Thomas, to wit:
Republican megadonor Harlan Crowe's grooming of Justice Thomas as his man on the Supreme Court via lavish gifts that smack of impropriety thereby creating optics that tarnish the court, consequently jeopardizing Chief Justice John Roberts stated mission to preserve the courts integrity.

Classified documents should be encrypted with safeguarded keys

Dustin Volta reports on the vulnerability of transmission networks carrying classified information,('Intel Leaks Reveal Tech Support As a Recurring Threat." U.S. News, April 21).

As an early worker in the field of secure communication systems (COMSEC), it is mind-boggling to think that classified information could possibly be transmitted in the clear, that is, without encryption and closely guarded keys.

Only those who have a need to know, should have the decryption key to enable reading of classified documents -- certainly not network support technicians.

If the transmissions were indeed encrypted, it is beyond my understanding how a low-level tech-support person was able to gain access to highly classified information without a need to know. It is not only troubling, but also smacks of incompetence at the highest levels of network administration.

The Real Issue with Justice Thomas

In his opinion piece, James Taranto, a member of the Journal's editorial board, wrote: "ProPublica's reporting was slipshod and incurious,"("The Truth About Clarence Thomas's Disclosures," Opinion, April 17). His opinion continued the Journal's smearing of *ProPublica* apparently aimed to distract *Journal* readers and the public from the real issue at hand. To wit: Republican megadonor Harlan Crow's grooming of Justice Thomas as his man on the Supreme Court via lavish gifts that smack of impropriety—creating optics that tarnish the Court consequently setting back Chief Justice John Roberts's stated mission to preserve the Court's integrity.

The Integrity of the Supreme Court?

The editorial board of the Wall Street Journal appears to be bound and determined to lose its credibility as evidenced by its obviously biased comments with regard to ProPublica's report on Clarence Thomas, ("The Smearing of Clarence Thomas," Review & Outlook, April 8).

The editorial reads as an unabashed smear of the ProPublica Report —ignoring the possibility of extreme right-wing political influence on both Justice Thomas and his wife Virginia.

With regard to his contacts with Justice Thomas, Republican megadonor Harlan Crow says he has "never asked about a pending or lower court case." He didn't have to as he has been engaged in a text-book example of groomed-relationship marketing. In this case, a friendship with Justice Thomas was first established via a multiplicity of visits and luxury vacations with Mr. Crow and his associates.

The next step in the process would not only have been to reinforce Justice Thomas' already generic conservative thinking, but to also influence its stretch to ultra-conservative thinking that can be witnessed in his opinions over the last few years.

Unfortunately, Justice Thomas and Mr. Crow have setback Chief Justice John Roberts's stated mission to preserve the integrity of the Supreme Court, the Journal's editorial notwithstanding.

Hyperfocus on DEI Is Detrimental to America's Future

If America is to survive, let alone lead, in today's complex and competitive world, common sense dictates that Shapiro's arguments should be writ large over all disciplines covered by our nation's institutions of higher education where excellence should be the goal—meaning that America must field its best possible technology and teams of people to compete on the world stage.

At this critical juncture in world affairs, America simply cannot afford to be distracted by fighting resource-draining internal battles rooted in its past transgressions and policies of rampant social injustice.

A Faustian Bargain with the NCAA

Kudos to William McGurn for his timely piece on the NCAA, ("Tell the NCAA to Buzz Off," Opinion, Mar. 28). McGurn summarizes the Faustian bargain made with the NCAA by colleges and universities that support big-time football and men's basketball programs—giving up academic integrity for the fame and fortune presidents and their governing board members seek to achieve from their sports businesses. Outrage over this state of affairs has been expressed over many years by members of The Drake Group and countless others such as Paul Gallico, Murray Sperber, Kevin Blackistone, Sonny Vaccaro, John Gerdy, Christine Brennan and Anne Neal to name but a few.

Hyperfocus on DEI and CRT is detrimental to the future of America

Kudos to Patrick Brady, and Mike Waltz for their insightful piece on the need for the military to strive for a color blindness—rejecting overly zealous DEI and CRT protocols, ("The Military Should Stay Colorblind," Opinion, Mar. 25).

The tenets of the piece should be writ large over America's's university, economic and governing institutions to minimize the detrimental impact of these protocols on the future well being of our nation.

Paraphrasing the authors: Institutional leaders should reverse course and abandon their hyperfocus on DEI and CRT. Instead, they should make color blindness a cultural imperative and so help our nation survive as a leader in this extremely complex and competitive world.

Student sums up DeSantis' political strategy

Kudos to Arian Campo-Flores for his revealing column on the travails at New College of Florida ("DeSantis Trustees Face a Tense Start," U.S. News, Jan.28-29). The take-away from his column could be summed up by the view of Basil Pursley, a 19-year-old second-year student at New College who said he felt unsettled by the new trustees' proposals---thinking that their main targets are courses about race, gender and sexuality, and that the institution is being used to benefit Mr. DeSantis politically. Indeed it is.

DeSantis' aggressive attack on woke extremism is an obvious prelude to a potential 2024 presidential culture-war campaign strategy that will not only appeal to hard–right Republicans, but to many moderate Republicans and Democrats as well as Independents.

PART 4: The Chicago Tribune Letters to the Editor

The Uihleins' Gift to Northwestern University

8-17-26, The headline, “A broken system,” for the editorial on failed Illinois rules against harassment appeared at the top of the August 16 Opinion page. The quote could just as well served as a headline for one of the Quotes of the Week at the bottom of the page, specifically the quote by Liz and Dick Uihlein who donated $35 million to Northwestern’s football program, to wit: “To us, Northwestern University is Chicago. Chicago loves sports and we need Wildcat football to be competitive. We are pleased to support the university as it enters an exciting new era.”

For Northwestern to be competitive in today’s professionalized college sports business, the Uihleins' gift will not only be used to recruit for-hire college athletes, but will also help perpetuate the myth of student athletes that degrades academic integrity.

Unfortunately, the implementation of this extraordinary gift will not enhance but will likely detract from Northwestern’s reputation as a world-class academic university.

Countering Stephen Miller's Plan for the Midterms

3-1-26 President Trump revealed Stephen Miller's game plan for the midterms during his SOTU speech on February 24. Recall that it was Miller, Trump's current Deputy Chief of Staff, adviser and architect of the Trump administration's aggressive anti-immigration policy who crafted the Republican mantra that proved successful in the 2024 election. To wit: “They’re for them. We're for you.” The clear inference was that "them" meant immigrants and LGBTQs. It was a false choice or false dilemma, whereby a complicated issue is reduced to an over-simplified either-or-proposition ignoring other potential alternatives--forcing voters to make a choice between two alternatives by implying these are the only options or that they are mutually exclusive..

During the “gotcha” segment of his SOTU speech, Trump took full advantage of the fact that there could be no rebuttal by Democratic lawmakers to pull off Miller's dirty verbal trick. It took form via his presentation of another false choice: “If you agree with the statement, then stand up and show your support: The first duty of the American government is to protect American citizens – not illegal aliens.”

Surely, a first duty of the American government is not as Trump stated, but rather to have its three branches operate in accordance with the U.S. Constitution— providing protection to all who are living within its jurisdiction. Of course, all the Republican lawmakers stood while the Democratic lawmakers did not, thereby falling into Miller's built-for-TV trap.

Republican lawmakers up for election will claim: They're for protecting aliens. We're for protecting American citizens. However, as Eric Zorn has suggested the Democrats can confront Republicans with their own "Stand if you believe" statements—providing number of examples centered on gun control, health care, climate change, abortion and tax breaks. The Republican candidates will also face an almost unlimited number of additional "Stand if you believe" confrontations involving areas such as the Epstein Files, the Trump family businesses, the 2020 “stolen” election, and Trump's grand jury indictments to name but a few.

Bondi must show loyalty to an audience of two: Trump and Miller

2-16-26 This letter is in response to Clarence Page’s February 15 opinion piece “Attorney General Pam Bondi shows loyalty to her audience of one.” It is my view that Bondi must also show loyalty to Stephen Miller, President Trump‘s Deputy Chief of Staff, Special Adviser, and purveyor of white nationalism.

Miller uses his close relationship with Trump to reinforce the president’s worst impulses. Bondi realizes he is the man behind the development, execution, and enforcement of Trump‘s policies. She also knows that he bypasses most Cabinet Secretaries and Chief of Staff Susie Wiles to directly Influence the president. The result is hardline policies including overly aggressive action by ICE, the consequences of which she must defend.

Bondi is surely aware of the March-April issue of Mother Jones magazine that captured the essence of the workings of the Trump administration with a twist on Archibald Willard’s, “The Spirit of ‘76” painting. It portrays Trump, book ended by Vance and Miller, with Vance and Trump beating their drums as they march (dance) to the tune Miller is playing on his fife. That’s precisely why Bondi must show loyalty to an audience of two.

When the administration always wins

The AP’s Mark Sherman and Lindsay Whitehurst quote Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson in their October 5, Chicago Tribune column “Pivotal Cases on High Court Docket.” Justice Brown invoked the Calvin and Hobbes comic strip after the court’s decision allowing the cut of $783 million in research funding, saying “This is Calvinball jurisprudence with a twist. Calvinball has only one rule: There are no fixed rules. We seem to have two: that one, and this administration always wins.”

When the administration always wins at the Supreme Court, America will then have its historically first government characterized by the absence of the Founder's intended checks and balances provided by three independent government branches, The Executive, the Congress, and the Judicial—resulting in a heretofore extremely unlikely 'black-swan' event. So, what's goin

America is bending under the rule of a government where all three of its branches are aligned with an unfettered president who is fol lowing the playbook of many past and present authoritarian dictators.

The president is aided and abetted by his sycophantic cabinet members—all with blind loyalty (some with questionable competence) and by the similarly puppet-like leaders of the Republican House and Senate. Now. the Supreme Court has been appeasing the president by ceding power to the executive branch of government via its controversial shadow docket—without public argument, debate, or discussion—with its six Republican appointees apparently violating precedent and the Constitution they swore to uphold.

The Supreme Court Justices Present a Challenge

9-17-25 Kudos to George F. Galland Jr. for his valiant attempt to explain the unexplainable Supreme Court's "shadow docket" rulings that favor President Trump over the rulings of lower federal courts ("Why does the Supreme Court keep backing Donald Trump?, Opinion, Chicago Tribune, Sept.15)

Hopefully, a ground swell of American lawyers will rise to join Galland and the lower-court justices, who are defying precedent by criticizing the Supreme Court Justices. The challenge is to broaden and deepen the level of criticism so as to change the minds of at least some of Justices that seem beholden to Trump for one reason or another.

Trump's Second Presidency: More Than Settling Scores

9-7-25 Kudos to Jonathan J. Cooper for his fairly comprehensive AP column on Trump's retribution-focused second presidency ("Trump wheels power to settle scores," Chicago Tribune, Opinion, Sept. 7).

An additional example comes from The Wall Street Journal's Editorial Board that wrote on August 22: "The real offender here is a President who seems to think he can use the power of his office to run vendettas. We said this was one of the risks of a second Trump term, and it's turning out worse than we imagined.

And that's only the tip of the iceberg. Our country's government is being eviscerated by its unfettered President. He is forging an autocratic police state focused not only on retribution, but on the scapegoating and deportation of immigrants as well as the hallowing out of government institutions.

The President is aided and abetted by members of his cabinet who are engaged in the destruction of their respective departments as well as by sycophantic Republican House and Senate leaders who effectively force their cowered party members to vote as the president dictates and by a Supreme Court that has been ceding power to the executive branch.

It's all happening before our very eyes, but should come as no surprise as this course of events was predicted by many before and just after Trump's election in 2024.

Where is the national outrage?

Generational Destruction at FBI

8-24-25 The New York Times' Devlin Barrett and Adam Goldman write: "Chris O'Leary, a former FBI agent and senior counter terrorism official, called the plan to lower the recruiting standards at the FBI, the latest example of 'generational destruction'," ("'Generational destruction' at FBI," Section 2, Chicago Tribune, Aug. 24).

An earlier example of this destruction was FBI director Kash Patel's removal of high- ranking officials. All of this appears to be an effort to convert the FBI into a federal police force similar to the Gestapo in 1930s Germany.

This re-organization is just a part of an overall 'generational destruction' effort by President Donald J. Trump and his Project 2025 Team to forge an autocratic police state focused on retribution, political enemies and scapegoating immigrants. It is aided and abetted not only by his incompetent minions heading the Departments of Justice, Defense, Homeland Security and State, but by a sycophantic Republican Congress as well.

It's all happening before our very eyes, but should come as no surprise as this course of events was predicted by many before and just after Trump's election in 2024

Americans unaware of the loss of their democracy

8-3-25 Kudos to Storer H. Rawley for his illuminating Aug. 3, op-ed "Six months into his presidency, Trump has created a police state."Passage of Trump's "Big, Beautiful Bill" by the feckless Republican Congress has enabled the Department of Homeland Security to hire a literal army of ICE agents, as well as establish detention camps for immigrants and other so-called undesirables—reminiscent of Germany's brown shirts and concentration camps as well as Soviet Gulags.

Sad to say, millions of Americans are unaware of the loss of their democracy—living under a police state and an evolving autocratic dictatorship—deluded by White House lies, distractions and obfuscation into believing everything is just fine.

Are the Tribune Editors Serious

7-6-25 The editors say: "We are not among those who believe democracy in the U. S. is seriously imperiled, at least as we write," ("The Idea of America, Under Stress," Opinion, July 6). They can't really be serious.

As of July 6 there is not only abundant evidence that democracy in the U.S. has been seriously imperiled, but has been lost as well.

For example, consider the 2024 SCOTUS Trump v. United States case in which the president was granted absolute immunity "from criminal prosecution for conduct within his exclusive sphere of constitutional authority."

Also consider the loss of an independent Congress where Republican majorities in the House and Senate are either totally beholden to or in deathly political fear of President Trump.

Finally, consider the Trump administration's establishment of detention camps for immigrants and other undesirables reminiscent of Germany's concentration camps and Soviet gulags.

What more need be said?

Thillins Stadium Memory

4-13-25 Kudos to Ron Grossman for his memory-prompting April 13 story on "Chicago's Field of Dreams."

The year was 1946 when a family fishing vacation in northern Wisconsin was short because I had to return home to Chicago to play in a high-stakes 16-inch softball playoff game at Thillins Stadium between Chicago newspaper-carrier teams.

Thillins Stadium turned out to be a field of dashed dreams, as I was devastated by our loss and consequent missed trip to Detroit to play the Detroit newspaper-carrier championship team.

However, members of our carrier team formed the nucleus of the Lobos, a Chicago Hermosa Park neighborhood team that went on to become the 1955 Illinois State 16-inch softball champions.

A serious lesson to be learned

3-30-25 Clarence Page highlights President Trump's risky tolerance of national security malpractice, ("Signalgate reveals Donald Trump's backward-looking military view," Mar. 30).

To be sure, Russian intelligence services listen to every supposedly secure message on Signal. This leads to my belief that President Trump's entire team of sycophants—so-called national security experts are inept amateurs, completely out of their depths in dealing with world crises. That Trump calls it a witch hunt and does not fire the lot of them is telling. It could be the really serious lesson learned from this security scandal.

PART 5: The New York Times Letters to the Editor

Graham will be remembered

8-13-26 I wholeheartedly agree with Steven Miller, a White House, deputy chief of staff, that Graham would be “someone we’re still going to be talking about 100, 200 years from now, (“Graham Made His Bet,” Columns & Commentary, July 19).

He will be remembered as the foremost senator who knowingly helped bring and keep a lying, grifting and corrosive Donald J. Trump to a second term as U.S. president.

Miller's False Choice Plan for the Midterms

3-2-26 Schmitz quoted President Trump: “The first duty of the American government is to protect American citizens, not illegal aliens" (“He's Debased This Country: The Best and Worst Moments From Trump's State of the Union,” Opinion, Feb. 25). Many Americans agree said Schmitz,

That's Stephen Miller's game plan for the midterms. Miller, architect of the Trump administration's aggressive anti-immigration and white nationalist policies--repeating a false-choice that proved successful in the 2024 election. To wit: “They’re for them. We're for you.” The clear inference was that "them" meant immigrants and LGBTQs—forcing voters to ignore other potential alternatives.

Trump took full advantage of the fact that there could be no rebuttal by Democratic lawmakers to repeat Miller's “first duty” false choice trap. Republican lawmakers stood in agreement while the Democrats sat.

> Republican lawmakers up for election will claim: They're for protecting illegal aliens. We're for protecting American citizens. However, Democrats can confront Republicans with the truth as well their own false choice statements centered on areas such as the Epstein Files, the 2020 “stolen” election, health care, climate change, and tax breaks to name but a few.

PART 6: Guest Commentaries

Thanks, Mr President

By Doug Whitley

October 14, 2026

Leelandau Enterprise, Letter to the editor

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Donald Trump asked me to vote as if he is on the ballot.
Gladly.
Thanks for war with Iran, disrupting oil,erratic tariffs, unraveling global economics and raising the cost of living for Americans .
Thanks for January 6th and pardoning all the rioters.
Thanks for putting masked unidentified militia on American streets to surveillance, track and kill U.S. Citizens.
Thanks for implementing inhumane deportation policies, detention centers and denying due process.
Thanks for disrupting billions in medical research, stalling alternative energy initiatives, destabilizing the State Department, DHHS, CDC, EPA, National Parks, Smithsonian, Kennedy Center and more.
Thanks for ruining and politicizing the DOJ, Secretary whimsical decapitating military leadership and sanctioning live streamed execution.
Thanks for increasing the deficit by $11 trillion while POTUS and discriminating against Republican supporters in “blue states by withholding grants, disaster aid and congressionally authorized spending in spite.
Thanks for disparaging our Canadian neighbors, excusing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, undermining NATO, ignoring international law, praising dictators and generally destroying decades of trust building and respect for American influence around the world.
Thanks for demonstrating what autocratic despots can do to enrich family and friends when granted unchecked power.
Thanks for reminding us how easy it is to undermine the values of a 250-year-old democracy that heretofore depended on honorable people of goodwill serving the public's interest. Democracy is in peril when truth, facts, and history is distorted and a free press is undermined.
Thanks for chaos.

Doug Whitley, Newport

America Abandons Ideals at Its Peril

The U.S. isn't perfect, but it has always been hard to doubt its good intentions. Now that has changed.

By Gerard Baker

The Wall Street Journal

Oct. 20, 2026

Those born here feel rightly fortunate to be heirs to the greatest nation on earth. Those of us who came here know we can never repay the debt we owe this country for permitting us to share in the fruits of its greatness.

If you'll permit me, I think we immigrants may even have a clearer, or at least a more empirically tested, appreciation of what makes the U.S. great. Neophytes tend to be more passionate about the virtues of their new allegiance than those who have always believed. For those who have direct experience of elsewhere, the appeal of American virtues has been especially luminous. Those who spent the formative part of their lives looking at America from afar have a unique gratitude for what it has done and what it represents.

If you grew up, as I did, in Europe in the decades after World War II, through the darkest days of the Cold War, America's leadership shaped your entire understanding of politics and history. It inspired not only hope but also a verified belief that the moral order of the world was sound and benevolent.

My parents owed their freedom and even their survival (and therefore perhaps I owed my existence) in significant part to the sacrifices Americans made in defeating the fascist tyrannies of Europe and Japan. I owed my liberty to the steadfast determination of the U.S. in a long struggle to face down communist Russia, keeping us safe from Soviet missiles and free from the threat of enslavement to its suffocating ideology.

You couldn't fail to be impressed at and grateful for the triumph of American power. But most of all, you were overwhelmed that America had exercised that power not so it could impose its writ on us or to exact tribute, but to enable us to live as we wanted.

The words of Gen. Mark Clark, who led his men ashore at Salerno, Italy, in 1943, are now immortalized at the Normandy D-Day memorials: "If ever proof were needed that we fought for a cause and not for conquest, it could be found in these cemeteries. Here was our only conquest: all we asked . . . was enough . . . soil in which to bury our gallant dead."

This is American exceptionalism: No nation on earth, no society in history has ever combined such power with such a willingness to use it for good. This virtue aligned neatly with American strategic interests: A free world helped secure America's own peace and stability.

We can't ignore the wrongs America has sometimes committed: the strategically reckless wars, the propping up of brutal regimes, the cynical alliances of convenience with enemies of freedom. But even these were done in pursuit of the higher ideal—seen as means justified by the end of making the world safe for freedom.

As the cynical British journalist says of the idealistic young American diplomat in Graham Greene's "The Quiet American," "I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused."

It is painful to be an American and watch our leadership today and wonder if it stands for something quite different—to listen as the president aligns himself with the successor to Stalin and Beria, to watch as he castigates the leader of a free Ukraine fighting for its survival against a murderous tyranny, to observe as he helps Vladimir Putin fuel his war machine so it can more effectively flatten hospitals and schools, to hear that his White House might have restricted access to a vital technology for protecting innocent Ukrainians from incoming Russian hellfire.

To see all this and realize that it isn't only Russia, but that the president's evident favor for Mr. Putin fits with a wider preference for tyrants and dictators—whose overriding strategic priority is the destruction of American leadership—over the leaders of flailing democracies who want to preserve it.

And none of this seems to be in pursuit of some higher American ideal, but for the seizure of raw power and even for the personal enrichment of family and friends.

There is an irony in all this. President Trump and MAGA succeeded in part because they tapped into the sense of loss many Americans were feeling, the fear that the civilization the U.S. had helped create was in peril. They were elected to restore faith in America after years in which its leaders and culture had trashed American values.

I don't for a second believe Americans have lost their idealism. I don't think they voted to see the U.S. quit the alliance of nations that fought for freedom and join the gang of thugs that fight for naked self-advancement. I understand that many Americans have grown tired of feeling exploited and taken for granted and wanted redress. But that isn't what the administration has delivered.

America is still the greatest country on earth. But its greatness will atrophy unless it restores its historic sense of purpose and the ideals of its founding principles and finds

again leaders willing to place those ideals above the sordid, shameful, soul-defiling lust for power and money.

Note: Gerard Baker is Editor at Large of The Wall Street Journal. He writes a weekly column for the editorial page of The Journal each Tuesday on politics, economics and culture. Mr. Baker also writes a weekly column on US and global affairs for The Times of London every Friday. He appears frequently as a commentator on TV and other news platforms and is a familiar public speaker to audiences around the world.

Baker was peviously Editor in Chief of The Wall Street Journal. He has been a journalist for more than 30 years, writing and broadcasting for some of the world's pre-eminent news organizations, including The Financial Times, The Times and The BBC. In 2023 he published his first book, "American Breakdown", a look at the causes of the crisis of US democracy in the last decade.

Exploited! - Not So Fast

By Jon Ericson

Onward and Upward

October 8, 2026

Pageantry, tailgating, alumni gatherings, color, excitement, sex, violence, . . what's not to like about college football? Okay, there's the pretend courses, the faux patriotism, the ubiquitous TV commercials—the most in-your-face reminder of commercialized college athletics. Athletics departments are in an arms race [they love war metaphors] to become larger, bigger, more games, longer schedules, contests during the week—an endless appetite controlling all that it touches: commercialized athletics as the occupier of higher education. Now the solution *de jure* is to pay the players and let them roam. And roam. And roam, and play and play.

No more young athletes—disproportionately black and poor—sacrificing their bodies while coaches and administrators—predominately white—deposit huge paychecks. The solution has everything: justice, fairness, sensitivity, understanding, and caring. Except it is wrong, all wrong.

"How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?"

Blowin' in the Wind Bob Dylan

The answer is not college football.

I Wish I Were You

a transcript

Hey, FP [Football Player], I was thinking of you the other day when I visited Knoxville, and I found myself next to Neyland Stadium. Yikes, 7 stories high, with a seating capacity of 101,915. Could damn near blot out the sun from the campus. Never seen anything like it. Until I exited I-80 for Lincoln, and on my left was this monster edifice called Memorial Stadium, 7 stories high, with a seating capacity of more than 85,000.

That's but two of the ubiquitous edifices across the country reaching for the sky, costing billions of dollars, and . . . all for you.

That has to be heady. The stadium, the field, the upkeep, all to be used 6 or 8 times a year. It is your stage, but of course it's not only for you. The stadiums have seats so adoring fans can applaud your performance. I guess it is for you. *I wish I were you*.

Ady. That's pretty he there is that "walk" from the bus to the stadium. Oh my, adoring fans on both sides of the walkway, and you and your teammates soak in the adoration.

Oh my god Achilles, Hector, Odysseus, Ajax the Great [heavy, but not like your linemen]. *I wish I were you*.

My gosh, more than the walk to the stadium is the tunnel walk to the field. Cheering fans on both sides reaching out to touch you. *To touch you*. Do you have any idea how much I would have paid to have your experience? Yes, *paid*. Funny, isn't it: I would pay whatever I had to have an experience that you experience for free. Good grief FP, I am dreaming your reality, and we haven't even mentioned the perks beyond hero-worship you receive.

The free education; the free health care; the free academic support, and not to digress to the facilities built for you, but dang, the football facilities and weight-room—I've been to lots of 5-star Hyatt's, and you live in another world. *I wish I were you.*

Believe me, FP, I am envious, not critical. I mean, compared to Nancy and Ray, your life and world is far, far away from their—and my—college experience.

I met Nancy and Ray at a volunteer food bank. They learned they had something in common: rejected admission to Michigan. I mean, who isn't rejected for admission to Michigan?

Oops, that reminds me of your biggest perk of all: you will be admitted to most any college or university regardless of whether you qualify. No offense, and I'm sure you and others do qualify. But is any school more revealing about the PERK than Michigan? Or Stanford or Vanderbilt? Or North Carolina? Or Wisconsin? Or USC or UCLA? OK, sorry, I got carried away. But when I hear you are exploited because you are a football player, this is a big perk to swallow.

Maybe it is because I got to know more about Nancy and Ray. Both academically talented, even if rejected by Michigan, their real challenge was to find financial support

for college. Here, patching academic scholarships, and need-based financial aid, and part-time jobs—-she 15 hours a week at a work-study job in the chemistry department, and he handling the closing shift at the campus cleaners, they will make it.

Then came the notice of the $400 mandatory per semester fee added to support the athletics department. The fee supports a weight room, academic support centers, and training table to which Nancy and Ray would likely be denied entry. It will not play well to tell Nancy and Ray they are supporting the exploited class at their university.

FP, I appreciate our time together, and I regret it went from fun about your life as a football player to the university treating Nancy and Ray like shit. Oops, I better stop the recorder (end of transcript).

"FP" agreed to speak with me as long as I didn't use his name nor include comments by him, because he didn't want to say anything to upset "Coach."

His one outburst was laughter when I said I would pay anything to do what he is paid to do.

So what to make of this? Witness to the exploitation of an athlete?

The football player:

Waive academic requirement for admission, endless perks from weight room to health center to academic support center. Bask in life as a campus hero, play a game you love, all expenses paid.

The regular student:

Meet admission requirement for admission; take out student loans and find a part-time job. Charged a mandatory fee to support intercollegiate athletics for services to which they would be denied.

Something doesn't compute. Dig, probe, scratch, and there it is: "disproportionately black and poor" skews the argument. The words are power-packed with a sordid chapter in our country's history. Words powerful enough to prompt calling college athletics a form of slavery. Sadly, I'm not making that up.

You would think anyone who compared college athletics to slavery was a Certified Wacko who has never read a book. Alas, search the internet and be prepared to be depressed.

So where were we? Try this: college athletes disproportionately white supported by mandatory fees assessed to regular students disproportionately black and poor.

Let it soak in.

I am 90 years old and white. What could I possibly know about the life of the young black athlete? I offer only distance—distance that offers a straight line to a faulty

argument. There is a difference between advancing the cause of social justice and using it.

The answer is blowing in the wind.

The money rolls in yet most athletics departments lose money; the wealthy alum can buy a winning football team, competitive balance be damned; the slave is now an entrepreneur, no—or passing mention of the academy; there is a food fight in the parking lot over the spoils of the Senate bill to Protect College Sports Act. And Nancy and Ray would like a word with you.

Note: The foregoing guest commentary was contributed by my friend Jon Ericson, emeritus provost and professor at Drake University. As the author of *While Faculty Sleep*, and many articles on the subject of sports reform (e.g.., Ericson and Salzwedel, "The University: The Closed Society," *Wisconsin Law Review*, Volume 2003, 1053), and the founder of the Drake Group.

Jon as been a leading spokesman for restoring academic integrity in college sport--introducing me to aims of The Drake Group back in 2004, then inviting me to join. He followed a Foreword by the late James Duderstadt, President Emeritus and University Professor of Science and Engineering with an Afterword to the author's July 2004, "The Faculty-Driven Movement to Reform Big-Time College Athletics." This essay was a sequel to the December 2003, brief "Reclaiming Academic Primacy in Higher Education" with a Foreword by the late Reverend Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., President Emeritus, the University of Notre Dame. Both documents can be found at <http://www.futurevectors.com/Odyssey/Splitt%20-%20Odyssey.pdf>.

Also, see " Protect the College Sport Act: Follow the Money" at The Drake Group website <https://www.thedrakegroup.org>. It's the first of several briefings on the Protect the College Sport Act.

PART 7: The Author

Frank G. Splitt was born in Chicago Illinois where he graduated from Annunciation Grammar School in 1944 and from Saint Philip High School in 1948. After attending the city's Wilbur Wright Junior College for two years, he was awarded an Arthur J. Schmitt academic scholarship to the Fournier Institute of Technology in Lemont Illinois, graduating with a BSEE in 1952.

He holds an MSEE (1957) and a Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering (1963) from Northwestern University where he served (1993-2005) as the McCormick Faculty Fellow of Telecommunications at the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science. He is a member of The Drake Group, a member of the College Sport Research Institute's Advisory Committee, University of South Carolina, a member of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), and was the Vice President Emeritus Educational and Environmental Initiatives for NTI, the U.S. subsidiary of Nortel Networks, formerly known as Northern Telecom Limited.

Photo,Jennifer Heitz

As a Director of the International Engineering Consortium, he chaired the Consortium's Committee on the Future and its Fellow Awards Committee.
He was a member of the Advisory Board for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Engineering, and chaired its Electrical and Computer Engineering Department Committee. He was also a member of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) inaugural Industry Advisory Council, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) Educational Activities Board, and the IEEE's Corporate Recognition's Committee.

His professional career covered research & development, marketing, administration, teaching, and public service. He has authored numerous technical papers, as well as articles on public affairs. He is a Fellow of the International Engineering Consortium, a Life Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, an Eminent Engineer of Tau Beta Pi, the recipient of The Drake Group's *2006 Robert Maynard Hutchins Award* "for his courageous defense of academic integrity in collegiate sports," and a lifetime achievement award from SPIE, the International Society for Optics and Photonics, as well as the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award from Marquis Who's Who. He has also been recognized by the state of Wisconsin for Outstanding Lake Stewardship.

His interests involved research and planning for the future of engineering education, environmental protection and conservation, and college sports reform. He resides in Mt. Prospect, Illinois. See more at <http://futurevectors.com>.

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