



NEWSLETTER
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Mercer We the People of Hopewell Valley is a steady source of news to heal the accelerating erosion of our fundamental freedoms nationally and locally.

Embrace our First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Source: <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/bill-of-rights>

Kind regards,
Publius Bonhomme Richard, Editor

HOW TO CONTACT US:
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Please email us to be included for future newsletters.

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MercerWe the People of Hopewell Valley is looking for contributors to write articles, especially informing the community about what is happening at local meetings. If you're interested in writing for us about that or any other topic, whether it is monthly or as needed, please reach out to us at info@mercervethepeople.com

Providence! Trump WINS With MAGA Mandate! American Experiment Continues, Rejects DEI & Marxism!

Donald Trump, George Washington, Character, And Providence

By Scott Powell, July 22, 2024 in Town Hall (Opinion)

Only a few months ago, many of my Christian friends were bemoaning America's fate and could not understand how evil could be so ascendant over our country's inherent goodness. Some concluded that the spiritual vacuum that ensued from driving God out of American culture during the last sixty-plus years had been filled by evil spiritual forces that are now manifest in taking America to new lows of depravity.

But we should never forget that God is in control. Proverbs 19:21 reminds us that man's waywardness will be corrected, for "it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand." It may be that God has allowed what He previously let happen in ancient times, with the Israelites' Babylonian captivity because of sin, idolatry, and faithlessness.

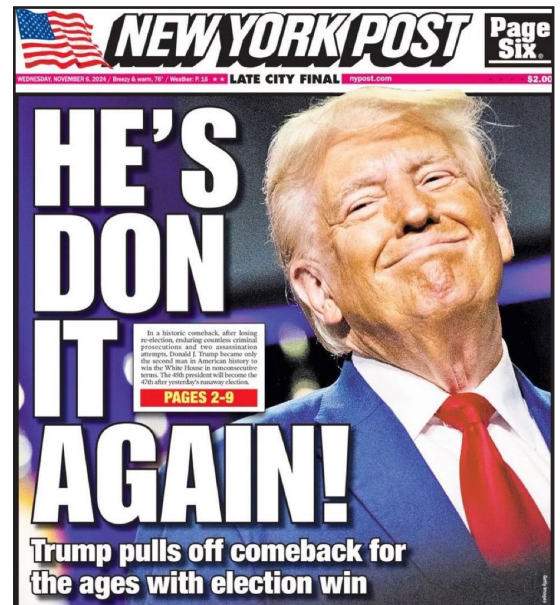


Photo: New York Post Front Page November 6, 2024

With the United States presently passing through an extremely dark and corrupt period of dishonest and deceitful rule, God is crying out to wake up the American people. Americans have been slow in that awakening because of their relative affluence combined with their complacency, normalcy bias, and denial.

But now things are quickly changing, as we see in the events of the last few weeks. The hidden hand of God appears to have been working in unexpected ways.

First, the Democrat Party is self-destructing. The party and its deep state puppet masters chose a compromised, doddering, and senile candidate to be their flag-bearer and presidential candidate—a man so corrupt that he could be easily controlled...

Second, on July 12, Federal Judge Aileen Cannon dismissed the classified documents felony case against Trump...

Third, only a day later, the assassination attempt on Trump at the Butler, Pennsylvania rally changed everything, with the world seeing Trump getting up bloodied from a wound from a bullet that would have taken his life, but for Heaven's timely turning his head, causing the bullet to pierce his ear rather than his skull that had been in the line of fire a fraction of a second before...

Fourth, a few days later, the Republican National Convention began. On display was a GOP that showed greater diversity and unity than ever before—something no one would have thought possible only five months ago.

When it is obvious that even the smartest and most prescient could not begin to orchestrate this amazing turnaround, we must consider that the Almighty has been at work—through imperfect people, as those are all He has to work with. And now, even more people here at home and around the world recognize that Donald Trump has been uniquely raised to lead America through a dangerous and tumultuous time such as this.

In several vital ways, despite contrasts in style, the 45th and soon-to-be 47th President Donald Trump and the two-term 1st President George Washington have a great deal in common in qualities of character to lead effectively against impossible odds.

Washington experienced Providence's protective intervention twenty years before he was chosen as the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army in 1775. At that time, Washington was 22 years old and serving as the junior-most officer under British General Braddock during the French and Indian War.

Marching and riding through an open field surrounded by trees, Indian sharpshooters ambushed their battalion of about 1400 troops, training their rifles first on all the officers on horseback. In short order, Braddock and every one of his officers were on the ground, dead or dying, while Washington continued under continuous fire on his third horse after the first two had been shot out from under him. Try as they would, the Indians could not take Washington down as he persisted in organizing a retreat. In a letter to his brother composed later that evening, Washington wrote, "...by the miraculous care of Providence, that protected me beyond all human expectation; I had four bullets through my coat... yet escaped unhurt."

This experience shaped the rest of Washington's life, making faith and trust in God a permanent part of his persona, giving him the courage to always lead his Revolutionary War troops from the front, confident that he had the protection of the Almighty.

Now, Trump has also experienced the protective hand of God in preventing bullets from taking his life, augmenting his faith, and reinvigorating his courage. Washington persisted for six long years leading the Continental Army, ultimately winning surrender by the British, although he lost more battles than he won.

As for Trump, who is now in his ninth year fighting the deep state, his persistence record exceeds that of Washington. No matter—faith, courage, and persistence are the essential leadership character qualities needed now for the rebirth of American liberty, just as they were in assuring the victory of American independence in 1781.

Read and access the full article: <https://townhall.com/columnists/scottpowell/2024/07/22/donald-trump-george-washington-character-and-providence-n2642311>

"Providence" – Divine Intervention In The Life Of George Washington

By Valerie Protopapas, July 15, 2024 in Abbeville Institute Press

There is an old saying that rejects not only the concept of the "randomness" of history but of mankind's involvement in that history. It identifies situations addressing external forces acting on human beings and in so doing influencing history itself. This maxim states that, "Man proposes but God disposes." For there is overwhelming evidence of the existence of something other than the activities of men or the workings of random happenstance that validate this belief even by those embracing a purely secular worldview.

Furthermore, throughout history there have been individuals whose lives seem almost immersed in occasions testifying to the intervention of things beyond their – or anyone else's – control! These people appear directly connected to circumstances providing them with moments of "Divine intervention" or "Providence" far beyond the ordinary. Often they are famous for doing things that few others do and, perhaps as a result, they are gifted with such "providential assistance" for that

very reason! One of these unique individuals is the man known to us as “the Father of His Country,” George Washington. Indeed, Washington’s relationship with, to use his own word “Providence,” is so extraordinary and well documented as to be undeniable in its evidence, astounding in its largesse and awe-inspiring in its frequency!

Read and access the full article: <https://www.abbevilleinstitute.org/providence-divine-intervention-in-the-life-of-george-washington/>

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PILOTs and School Referendum

It’s So Sad When Hopewell Township Committee Actions Result In Regional Lawsuits

By Dufresne

The word “unprecedented” is somewhat overused these days, although when it applies locally, I suppose that we should all take some notice.

In what must be a first, both Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough sued Hopewell Township many months ago. That lawsuit was found in favor of the Township, but the boroughs have appealed what was a very narrow ruling.

The combined lawsuit relates to the Township’s recent entering into PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreements with the developers of affordable housing on the West Side of Scotch Road.

The story is amazing. Here is the public letter penned by Pennington Mayor James Davies. All residents of Hopewell Valley should read this amazing document:

Dear Taxpayers of Pennington Borough,

Some questions have been raised about school district funding. In an effort to keep you informed, I’m sharing some facts with you.

School District’s Request for a Contribution from Hopewell Township for \$87-Million Referendum

As you know by now, the Hopewell Valley Regional School District (District) has proposed an \$87-million referendum for capital improvements. What you may not know is that the District asked Hopewell Township to make a voluntary contribution related to the addition to the Bear Tavern Elementary School, because the need for the addition is precipitated by an increase in students from the new 1,077-unit housing development on Scotch Road.

You should also know that the Hopewell Township Committee granted this same development a tax abatement known as a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) that over the next 30 years will generate \$387 million for the Township and shift an estimated \$25 million of tax burden to Pennington and Hopewell Borough taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the Township Committee refused the District's request, saying that because the Township was in litigation over the PILOT with the Boroughs, they could not even consider such a contribution.

Pennington Takes Legal Action to Stand Up for Taxpayers

PILOTs can be valuable tools for local governments to attract development where developers need added incentives, which does not appear to be the case for the 190-acre Scotch Road development. PILOTs in shared school districts are challenging because unless they are crafted thoughtfully, they can result in an imbalance in the financial responsibilities across a region. This is particularly troubling when the PILOT development itself generates additional burdens on a shared school district. This is exactly the situation we find ourselves in here in the Hopewell Valley.

This tax abatement agreement effectively removed approximately \$332 million of assessed valuation from the Township's taxable ratable base. So, instead of paying property taxes, which is the conventional vehicle for funding the Hopewell Valley School District, county government, municipal government, and the fire district, the agreement called for the developer to make an annual payment in lieu of taxes that goes almost entirely to Hopewell Township.

Pennington applauds the fact that this project will bring affordable housing units to the Valley. Twenty percent of the units have been designated for affordable housing. I want to emphasize that neither Pennington Borough nor Hopewell Borough challenges nor objects to the affordable housing component of this development.

Rather, our joint legal action challenges the tax abatement agreement itself, because it adversely affects Pennington and Hopewell Borough taxpayers, costing them millions.

PILOT Will Cost Pennington and Hopewell Borough Taxpayers \$25 Million

Since the formation of our Hopewell Valley Regional School District and in accordance with State law, the municipalities of Hopewell Township, Pennington Borough, and Hopewell Borough have shared in the cost of education based on the ratio of each of their assessed valuations to the total assessed valuation of the three together. So when, by virtue of its tax abatement agreement, Hopewell Township removed approximately \$332 million of assessed value from its tax rolls, it effectively shifted a greater portion of the school property tax burden to Pennington and Hopewell Borough taxpayers.

As alluded to earlier, based on a cost analysis by the Boroughs' financial expert and consultant, the property tax shift from Hopewell Township to Pennington and Hopewell Boroughs over the next 30 years will be approximately \$25 million. These are dollars that will need to be raised through your property tax bills.

Hopewell Township to Get \$387 Million

To be clear, the developer's PILOT payments will solely benefit the Hopewell Township municipal government; not the School District or the Fire District. Under the State's redevelopment law, the County government will receive a mere 5 percent of the allocation. So, while a \$25 million burden will shift to Pennington and Hopewell Borough taxpayers, Hopewell Township will generate approximately \$387 million in funds from the developer, which is almost 6 times the amount it would otherwise receive from conventional property taxes. Further, the PILOT monies Hopewell Township will receive are "unrestricted." In other words, the Township Committee can use the money any way they want. Meanwhile, costs for the District will expand as the new development generates new students. This is what makes the Township's refusal of the District's request so disappointing.

Why the District Requested Funds from Hopewell Township

When the Township approved the Scotch Road housing development and entered into the tax abatement agreement, it represented, based on the Township's analysis, that the housing project would have no impact on the Hopewell Valley Schools and that there was plenty of unused classroom space in the schools to accommodate any children from the new housing development. The District has concluded otherwise and anticipates a significant impact on the school system. As a result, the District included a major addition to the Bear Tavern Elementary School to accommodate new students as part of its upcoming \$87-million capital referendum.

Summing it Up

In conclusion, the purpose of the Pennington/Hopewell Borough lawsuit is to contest the basis for the tax abatement and PILOT agreement; not to challenge the Township's attempt to produce affordable housing. We contend, based on the facts, that the tax abatement was not necessary as an inducement to build the project. By the developer's own estimate, the projected return on investment will be approximately 68 percent. Even this estimate would appear to be low given the current listing of prices for homes in this development. We also believe that when a community partners in a regional school district with other municipalities, a PILOT agreement must consider the negative impacts it will have on the partnering towns and account for them. This has not happened here.

While the Boroughs lost their case against the Township in Superior Court, we have appealed to the State Appellate Court. We are currently moving through the process. Please know that the Borough Council and I will continue to advocate on your behalf and to protect the interests of Pennington's taxpayers.

Sincerely,
James M. Davy
Mayor – Pennington

Education

What's Happening in HVRSD Schools?

HVRSD Board Of Education Meeting October 14, 2024

By The Wall of Ed

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWTcE-_rjCE

The next BOE meeting will be on December 16, 2024, at 6:30pm at the board office 425 South Main St. Pennington.

Update on \$87 School Bond Referendum Failure: Next Election Not Expected to Occur Until Fall 2025

The \$87 Million school bond referendum was defeated on September 17, 2024, with an overwhelming majority of the community voting no, signaling that the community is unhappy with the high tax burden placed on families. Superintendent Dr. Treece said that they expect to present an updated version of the referendum at some point in the future, with the next election not expected to happen until the fall of 2025.

Dr Treece attributed the referendum's failure to be due to voters relying on misinformation when making their decision. She said that she plans to go out to the community and do a listening tour to find out how the district could have communicated better because "the voices of misinformation may have drowned out ours." She did not expand upon which of the community's concerns were misinformation.

She added that the board will do it's best to maintain the programs that they district has come to expect but she noted that we will be facing a very tough and challenging budget this year and we will have to make some cuts and possibly increase class sizes. Treece stated "The referendum failing is not the reason for all of the cuts, but we know that did not help."

Board President William Galiano echoed Dr. Treece's comments and added that district will continue to be THE source for the latest and most critical information for what is plaguing us infrastructurally. In other words, the people in charge are deciding what you can know about what they are doing.

In an effort to stop districts from raising our taxes indefinitely, the state has a 2% cap on public school's ability to increase their budget year over year, causing school districts to resort to holding bond referendums to circumvent the tax cap.

Special Education Budget Presentation

Between now and March, each department with a substantial portion of the annual budget will present an update to the board before next year's budget is unveiled. Paulette DiNardo, who oversees our special education program that services the over 800 students eligible for services, gave an update on the challenges that she faces this year, including a surge of new students requiring services. We normally average around 10 new students entering these programs, but so far this year we have had 29 new students added who require some kind of service, which was not anticipated in the budget and is very costly. Dr Treece said that this huge influx is partly due to families moving to our district specifically for the esteemed program Ms. DiNardo runs.

High School Representative to the Board of Education Policy

Policy 0143.2 authorizes the appointment of a minimum of one high school student to serve as a nonvoting student representative on the board for one school year. The policy is being revised to expand the responsibilities and it will include asking the representative to attend committee meetings when matters that directly impact students are on the agenda. The district typically only has one student representative, but the board would like to see more than one representative, including students from more diverse backgrounds. If approved, these changes would take effect next school year.

HVRSD Board Of Education Meeting November 18, 2024

By The Wall of Ed

Recording: <https://youtu.be/F5iwtl-kVDg>

The Wall of Ed will submit a more thorough recap of the November meeting, but wanted to share this critical update to the Board's Review of Policy 5756.

Review of Policy 5756: Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students Policy

At the BOE meeting on September 16, 2024 a member of the community spoke during public comment and requested that the board review and revise the definitions section of Policy 5756: Transgender and Nonconforming Students. The purpose for the request was to facilitate clearer communication.. No suggestion was made to repeal the policy or change any other sections of the policy.

The 3 requests were:

1. Add the definition of "sex" to the policy. The National Institutes of Health states that "understanding sex and gender is critical to understanding human health and disease. Although 'sex' is often incorrectly thought to have the same meaning as 'gender'...the terms describe different but connected constructs".
2. Revise the phrase used to define the term "gender identity". The policy states "All people have a gender identity". Not all people ascribe to this theory which was developed in the 1950's-1960's by John Money, Robert Stoller and lately by Judith Butler. In academia it is known as "Queer Theory" and this theory suggests that all categories relevant to sex, gender and human sexuality are meaningless. Using "Some people believe they have a gender identity" would be more inclusive and respectful.
3. Replace the phrase "sex-assigned at birth" with "sex observed and confirmed at birth". Sex is a biological reality that is determined when a human sperm fertilizes a human egg at conception. Sex is identifiable using sonogram technology around 18 weeks into a pregnancy. A non-invasive pre-natal blood test screening can also determine sex 10 weeks after conception.

Several members of the community spoke during Public Comment and stated that those changes in definitions would cause our schools to be "unsafe" and create a hostile environment for students who identify as transgender or gender expansive. The board agreed with these public comments and declined to make any changes in the definitions section of the policy.

Note: Policy 5756 contains Definitions as well as guidelines on Privacy, Names/Pronouns, Restroom Availability, Locker Room Accessibility, Sports and Physical Education Classes, etc.

There are active NJ court cases involving several school districts and boards over transgender school policies.

Here is a copy of HVRSD Policy 5756: <https://mercerwethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/5756-Transgender-NonConforming-Students-2016-06-20.pdf>

The Satanic Temple's Infiltration Of America's Schools

By Werner Graf

The advent of "High School Satan Clubs" at high schools across America highlights an interesting dilemma for local districts, including my own home town Michigan City Area School system (MCAS). Schools never had to deal with overtures like this in the past because 1) no one would have thought it appropriate to even suggest and 2) the overture would have been dismissed out of hand as destructive. But in today's world, concepts which historically would have been disregarded as absurd are now legitimized and ultimately, under legal threat, often allowed.



School Districts are essentially state-sanctioned stewards of children and, with the trust & permission of parents, charged with developing the intellect, positive mindset, and critical thinking skill of future good citizens. Like any organization, the District's "customers" are those who pay the bills—local tax payers (granted a captive market). Anyone who pays property taxes has a stake in the School System's performance and therefore has a relevant opinion.

What is the Product? Our kids. Upon graduation, we expect them to have the skills, knowledge and cultural pride to operate, contribute and improve their community.

Schools, therefore, represent the community's investment in the future via the positive development of our children. Any curriculum, media or sanctioned activity which strays from this mission, should be questioned and any activity which smacks of degrading children will predictably cause angst if not outrage in the community.

We inherently understand that it is not a sufficient standard to say “just because you can have a certain club, you should”, just as not every book, topic or opinion is appropriate to socialize with kids.

This is certainly subjective in nature. One part of society might be comfortable with a certain school event, book or club, while others feel it is out of bounds, invasive and not contributory to the school’s mission. In the case of the recent focus on sexuality, for example, the books condoned by local school districts like Lawrence meet the definition of pornography. This give-and-take is not simply a legal matter but also a societal one: what is legally acceptable vs what is improper.

Such is the plight of School Systems when agitators push the envelope. The proponents will cite court decisions claiming a constitutional right for club sanction. Unfortunately, that is to say that the school system can’t impose any standards whatsoever and that anyone who wishes to promote an absurd idea should have access to its facilities. Indeed, we all have a constitutional right to free speech and worship as you wish. The courts appear to have extended these rights, however, to violate standards deemed reasonable by local schools reflecting the mores of their communities, sometimes imposing distasteful, even destructive, views onto the taxpayers’ invoice, under the guise of free speech.

That said, ideas, even distasteful ones, should be considered in the social marketplace and weighed. We should all strive to be unwavering defenders of free speech rights, even with regards to people, groups or organizations with which we strongly disagree. The key question which then needs to be: Does the book, event, topic or club meet school standards or is it offensive or even possibly detrimental to your child? Schools are entrusted to make that decision on a case by case basis, even under threat of litigation.

Back to my home town of Michigan City where the High School Satan Club, sponsored and encouraged by the Satanic Temple of Salem Massachusetts, has recently been approved. In this case like many others across the US, the MCAS Leadership does not want to waste resources, attention nor time on what many view as a stunt. They have bigger concerns and responsibilities and need to remain focused on elevating district test scores (some of the lowest in northern Indiana, driving graduation rates and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our kids.

On practical grounds, therefore, it is an understandable course of action. The Satanic Temple looks for confrontation and rejections so that they can litigate. Their most recent settlement was with a school district in Memphis in which the board caved and paid their legal fees. During my time on the Hopewell Valley School Board, we dealt with any number of frivolous lawsuits during where the cost of litigation far outweighed potential damages or the value of precedent. Unfortunately, the legal precedent has been set allowing their participation, a precedent which frankly the courts got wrong as it removes local control of standards demanded by a model based on subsidiarity. Unscrupulous lawyers view this dynamic as an ATM machine and no doubt the MCAS would rather focus on hard and positive work already underway, regardless of their assumed position on this issue.

So given this, we must win through the culture. Local communities should weigh in forcefully on the prudence and propriety of the Satanic Temple’s establishment of the club in light of each school’s mission. Why is it wrong?:

1. **Purposeful Antagonism**: Not all people believe in a devil figure, or Satan, but the three major American religious congregations (Christians, Jews and Muslims) do. Hinduism, for example, acknowledges “saddripu” (bad deeds) and even “sadatetayi” (deathly deeds), but does not recognize an analogous devil-like figure but most religious folks in our country do believe in Satan, (or “adversary”) in some form as the embodiment of evil.

Let’s take Christianity where Satan represents complete evil and degradation. Not only is Satan considered real, it is the Catholic Church’s stated mission to save people from his temptations. Catholics are baptized to reject him. The many references to the devil in Christian scripture underscore a belief in his existence. The following are just a few:

- “Be sober, be watchful! For your adversary, the Devil, like a roaring lion, goes about seeking those to devour. Resist Him,…” (1 Peter 5:8-9).
- “Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of the light” (2 Cor.11:14)
- “ I have done for your sakes, in the person of Christ, so that we may not be defeated by Satan; for we are not unaware of his devices” (2 Cor. 2: 10-11).

This point is not to convert and in made with full acknowledge that not everyone shares these views, **but rather** to establish a stark acknowledgement that to Christians (and many others), elevating Satan to a place of respect and legitimacy is a purposely antagonistic act. Symbolism is important. It forges identity in groups and sets tone. This is not the harmless picking of a mascot, like the playful selection of Duke’s “Blue Devils”, this is a promotion of a figure which embodies degradation.

Think of it this way, most clubs are FOR something (knowledge building, acquiring a skill, hobby enjoyment, etc). These clubs imply no intended offense to other groups (this is why a KKK group, though legal, would assumably not be allowed). Why would a group purposely pick something viewed by most as repulsive, evil and destructive as it’s moniker?

The Satan Club Proponents will say their symbol is “fictional”, symbolizing only rebellion, critical thinking, and a host of other virtues---not evil. Before buying that, ask yourself: why then not call it something less metaphorically offensive—the James Dean Club, the Critical Thinking Society, the Independence Association, etc.? Or, apply that argument to an equivalent club and see if it holds. If students chose “Hitler” as a debate club moniker, claiming he embodied only great persuasion and oratory skills, would it be allowed ignoring the outrage of our Jewish neighbors?

The "Satanic Temple" proclaims "Seven Tenets" all of which sound reasonable enough, but are clearly intended to persuade people to look past their unfortunate worship of Satan as simply cosmetic. Boiled down, the tenets are: Empathy, Justice, Bodily Autonomy (ie promotion of Abortion), Individual Liberty, Scientific Integrity, Repentance & Restitution, and finally a hodgepodge of wisdom/nobility/compassion.

But, in the end, there is a reason they chose Satan which cannot be ignored nor explained away: it is an overt, purposeful and unnecessary provocation to many in our religious communities whose life work is to protect people from Satan. It is distasteful and improper to promote an overt, platitude-wrapped symbol of evil to children.

2. **Based on Lies:** Promoters of the school clubs on social media often use a coordinated and interesting tactic in its justification: mendacity.

- As noted, the first lie is that the promotion of Satan isn't really a promotion of Satan. It is--or if not, simply prove it by removing it.
- The second lie, is that the choice of Satan is not meant to offend. Satan is, of course, inherently offensive to many and yet they are callously indifferent, if not purposeful, to that offense.
- The third lie is that opposing the club's existence is akin to disregarding a constitutional right to worship or free speech. It is not. Here they argue two points to confuse: 1) they don't worship Satan and conduct no rituals but 2) they are a religion and as such are deserving of all courtesies extended to religions (such as an after school Bible Study club). Their message changes depending on the forum--they have approached the courts on a religious basis yet come to school districts often claiming the opposite. Clever and deceitful but cutting through it, the school should ultimately set a standard based on its mission and positive impact on kids. The Satan Club doesn't make the cut on either front as we will see.
- The final mendacity on social media is that the club's purpose is NOT to recruit other kids to either the club nor Satanism. This is as laughable as it is brazen.

Think about it: Does ANY other school club wish to die out by not enticing other members? Every collective, from a government agency, to the Long Beach Country Club, to a high school knitting club takes on a life of its own and wishes to propagate. The German Club wants to promote interest in German culture & language. A club promoting drone technology or cooking wants more kids to learn about and enjoy those hobbies. All of these are no brainers because **they are inherently positive** and supportive of the school's mission. Clubs which don't support the school's mission of uplifting and developing kids with positive wholesome intent need not command the same consideration.

Why else would the Satanic Temple seek school acknowledgement, resources and legitimacy? You could have this club on the side without demanding ratification from the schools. **The ONLY reason to lobby the school system for status is to generate a platform to attract other kids.**

Religious groups believe elevating Satan, "The Great Deceiver", is detrimental because he promotes dishonesty so it is supremely ironic that proponents of the Satan Club use lies to defend its application. Catholics, in particular are taught that Satan enters lives with the "lie" that he isn't real, knowing his work in this world is much easier if we simply think he does not exist. Reason? How do we fight an adversary if we don't even know he exists? Proponents of high school Satan Club choose a mascot they claim doesn't exist.

The theologian Thigpen writes: "The reality of demonic powers has been a constant doctrine of the Catholic Church ever since it was founded by Christ through his apostles. They and their ancestors spoke and wrote about Satan repeatedly. Through the centuries, the great teachers of the Church have consistently affirmed that Satan is real" (MSW page 6). "Satan himself always disguises himself as an angel of the light" (2 Cor.11:14)

Again, this citation is not to convert anyone to believe Satan is real, Rather it is to point out that the proponents elevating Satan are doing so with **the exact same arguments** that the Catholic Church warns its constituents about when Satan recruits!

Therefore, the community and any School Administration should have no illusions of why this Club is so offensive to religious communities---and why these arguments used by the Satan Club agitators don't hold water with Christians in particular.

3. **Outside Agenda:** There are countless outside groups which wish to influence our kids through the School System. It is a privilege to work with the school system, not a right. First and foremost, the agenda of the organization should support the mission of the District.

Most school district missions center on the intellectual and character development of the children. My home town District's Mission is no different:

According to the MCAS 2023-24 School Year handbook: "The mission of the Michigan City Area Schools, the unifying force of our diverse community, is to ensure that each student will be able to achieve any goal to which he or she aspires and

contribute positively to society through a system characterized by:

- learning as a continuous experience of excitement, opportunity, and achievement;
- clear goals and high expectations for students' success;
- supportive families and community;
- staff with pride and purpose leading by positive example; and
- a student prepared for and enthusiastic about his or her future."

Clubs do this typically by showcasing an interest or skill in a particular subject matter which inherently improves the student's prospects through growth, **without violating the District's mission of being a unifying force**. Certainly, anyone can claim offense of some other group and rational judgements must be made—are political clubs such as "Young Republicans" or "Young Democrats of America" unifying for example? Not necessarily, but they are indeed productive and positive forums where kids learn the governance structures of our two-party system, while they forge/refine political policy opinions and learn to defend them. These clubs prepare youth to participate in our constitutional republic, regardless of which side of the aisle they fall.

More to the point, politically oriented clubs typically have substantial community support, are not antagonistic nor do they endorse degrading symbolism. The Satan Club is a rarity—demanding stature and resources by local districts with a clear intent on normalizing a symbol associated with vice, thereby in fact driving disunity contrary to most school missions.

Furthermore, The Satan Club, as named, does NOT contribute to the primary school mission of preparing students for the future nor improving student prospects because, let's be honest, it's not the kind of resume fill which positions kids for a job or college application. Net, the only value of the Satan club being sanctioned by the school is for the Satan Club.

Legitimacy is really all the Satanic Temple wants. The Satanic Temple is self-serving, not organic to the communities where they recruit and install high school clubs. They do this largely to draw attention to the temple's political and legal activities, with the implied threat of filing lawsuits to try to gain access. They abhor religion, and wish to use school systems to diminish teachings of Country's historically Christian beginnings, criticize religion's role in American society and ensure public schools scrub any reference to this positive legacy. They sell shirts with upside-down crosses, which could easily be construed as hate-speech.

Net, a child's time is a zero-sum game and the goal of a club should be the child's wellbeing, not the wellbeing of the Satanic Temple. If a kid spends time with the Satan Club, it is time the child could have used to learn the piano, understand French, or build drones. Clubs should have inherent value versus distracting kids from other more productive endeavors. The Satan Club siphons a child's time and attention for itself and its political agenda, not for the betterment of the child. In the end, school sanction provides the credibility they crave so as to normalize Satan with children (Christians might call it seduction) and promote their mission, not the school's.



In summary, when confronted w this assault in your own schools here are "7 Tenets" of your own to form challenging arguments as a bulwark to the cultural erosion of the Satanic Temple:

1. Students have the right to apply for club establishment. **Support this right.**
2. **Call out the use of Satan as a moniker is distasteful**, purposefully antagonistic and done in bad faith to solely bring attention to an outside political organization.
3. **Condemn the Satan Club (& it's sponsor, the Satanic Temple) openly as divisive**, offending many, based on mendacity and distracting children from more productive activities. Net-- it is detrimental to kids who could be engaging in more positive activities which form character and resume.
4. **Point out that School Clubs should be evaluated/considered on the based of its fit with the school's mission**, including community unity, and best interest of students. Clubs which incorporate symbols of hate or evil, like the "Satan Club" or a "Hitler Club", would be disqualified.
5. **Acknowledge your School's predicament:** reject the Club application and risk a drain on resources should the Satanic Temple or others litigate OR acquiesce and allow the Club given the cost and improbable support from the courts in the end decision. Support School Board members which understand this reality based on practicality.
6. **Reject, admonish and oppose School Board** members who support Satan Club on the merits whether it be because of their political leanings (pro abortion, whitewashing historic Christian historic influence on America's founding, etc) or their ignorance of it's intent (agitation, divisiveness, normalizing the Satanic Temple).

7. **Acknowledging the legal precedent, demand the Club remove all reference to Satan from its Club Name and disassociate from all sponsorship of outside agitators such as the Satanic Temple.** The School is NEVER obligated to promote detrimental content or images which can degrade kids.

The Satanic Temple organization is clever in its self-serving grasp for legitimacy through our schools. But always be clear---it is an agitator organization, fueled primarily by a disdain for the positive role religion has played in our country's founding and its culture. It seeks to equalize good and evil, thereby confusing young minds by salting its intention with habits of character like empathy and defending individual liberty. Evil's first tactic is to proclaim it doesn't exist, that it is fictional, a figment of the unscientific mind. It always looks to deceive as it recruits, especially during a time where kids are most vulnerable and most in need of guidance and role models. Satan is no role model, no hero, and the Satanic Temple isn't fooling anyone.

Skrmetti: The "Sleeper" Case That Could Shift The Tide In The Culture War

By Monica Harris, November 4, 2024 in Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism (FAIR)

Today, the justices will hear oral arguments in United States v. Skrmetti, a case that may finally force the nation's highest court to address transgender rights head-on.

Until now, the Supreme Court has mostly refrained from addressing a hot-button issue that's roiled communities and even played a pivotal role in the final weeks of the 2024 presidential election: transgender rights.

In 2023, the Court issued a temporary order allowing an 11-year-old transgender girl to compete on her school's girls' track and cross-country teams, despite a West Virginia law barring boys from participating in girls' sports in public schools. In April, the justices temporarily allowed Idaho to enforce a state ban limiting gender-affirming care for transgender youth.

In both cases the Court acted on an emergency basis while litigation proceeded in lower courts, thereby avoiding a ruling on the constitutionality of the laws themselves. In the absence of clear guidance, there has been mounting confusion about the scope of rights and protections afforded to transgender Americans.

That could change soon. Today, the justices will hear oral arguments in United States v. Skrmetti, a case that may finally force the nation's highest court to address transgender rights head-on.

At issue in Skrmetti is a Tennessee law (SB1) banning medical treatments for transgender minors. According to the state's attorney general, the law's purpose is "to ensure that potentially irreversible sex-transition interventions of uncertain benefit are not performed on minors who may not be able to fully grasp their lifelong consequences and risks."

Most legal observers have focused on the impact Skrmetti might have on 25 states that have adopted similar bans. However, a deeper reading of the issues raised in this case suggest that it could have broader implications. The Court's decision could either herald the beginning of the end of the culture war—or a widening of fronts on its battlefield.

FAIR believes this case is so important that it was compelled to join GENSPECT in submitting an amicus curiae brief in support of SB1. Nikki Johnson, MD, DNBPAS, Interim Director of FAIR in Medicine, and Candice Jackson, a member of FAIR Legal's network of attorneys, will also speak today at a rally in Washington, D.C. to highlight Skrmetti's significance.

The Biden administration, along with the American Civil Liberties Union and other advocacy groups, argue that SB1 violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment because it discriminates on the basis of sex. The law allows minors who identify with their natal sex to receive medication for on-label purposes, yet denies off-label use of the same medication for youth who identify with the opposite sex.

The question the Court will consider for the first time is: Are sex and gender synonymous under the Constitution?

The Court has already addressed this issue tangentially in the context of employment. In 2020, a 6-3 majority found that a Georgia county improperly fired a social services coordinator because he was gay. The justices reasoned that the protections under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sex also apply to gender and sexual orientation. It's a premise most Americans would find morally sound; no one should be denied the opportunity to earn a livelihood based on any social stereotyping.

By contrast, Skrmetti implicates the Equal Protection Clause, which encompasses a broader range of sex-based protections that extend beyond employment, which is why this case could be a game changer. **If the Court determines that sex and gender are equivalent under the Constitution, it opens the door to the erosion of a wide swath of legal protections that have safeguarded biological females, an historically marginalized group.**

It's important to note that sex-based rights guaranteed by the Equal Protection Clause are intended to provide relational boundaries to counter social stereotyping and universally recognized biological differences that have disadvantaged women.

The right to women-only spaces in prisons protects female inmates against pregnancy and physical assault by men who are, on average, stronger than women.

The right of battered women to be housed in sex-segregated shelters reduces the risk that biological females will suffer retraumatization.

The right of women and girls to participate in sex-segregated sports reflects a need to provide a safe and equal opportunity to compete with peers who are physically comparable.

Sex-based data is gathered to assist policymakers in assessing changes in conditions and behaviors of biological females so they can create policies and laws that are tailored to meet their specific physical and psychological needs.

Sex-based protections aim to alleviate the harms women experience due to verifiable and innate differences in biology. Males, even if they identify as women, are not the intended beneficiaries of these protections because they do not face the same inherent risks and challenges.

If the Court equates sex with gender identity for Equal Protection purposes, it will erase recognized differences that compelled the need for sex-based protections in the first place. The fallout could extend far beyond bans on gender-affirming care; it could also eviscerate legal safeguards for women in a plethora of other spaces, potentially resurrecting the very oppression that these laws were intended to eliminate.

Erasing distinctions between sex and gender could also undermine the rights of gay women because sex, not gender, defines sexual orientation. Suppose the Court accepts the Biden administration's interpretation of the Equal Protection clause. Might a lesbian dating site be found guilty of discrimination if it restricts membership to women who identify with their natal sex while excluding biological males who identify as female? Such a ruling would negate a fundamental premise of same-sex attraction and undermine the sexual preferences of lesbians, an outcome that would be profoundly regressive, not progressive.

On the other hand, a decision by the Court to reject the conflation of sex and gender would embrace the reality of sex-based differences and the need to protect biological women whose rights have been diminished by the growing pressure to accommodate transgender individuals. Many of the gender-based conflicts that have divided our country and communities would be resolved or rendered moot, thereby encouraging more common sense solutions that promote equality for all rather than equity for some.

The stakes in Skrmetti couldn't be higher. The Court has the opportunity to provide much-needed clarity around the protections that the Constitution does (or doesn't) contain for gender identity. Let's hope its decision ensures that women and lesbians continue to enjoy the rights and safety they deserve.

Read and access the article: https://news.fairforall.org/p/skrmetti-the-sleeper-case-that-could?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=415200&post_id=152569240&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=v5y4h&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email

Local News

Hopewell Township Committee Announces New Safety Improvements At Pennington-Harbourton Road Intersection

Article as posted on Facebook – December 2, 2024

At Monday night's Hopewell Township Committee (HTC) meeting, two resolutions were passed supporting Mercer County's implementation of two critical safety improvements in the Township at the intersection of Pennington-Harbourton Road (County Route 623), Scotch Road, and Burd Road. These improvements come at the urging of the HTC in response to a tragic fatal crash at this intersection and are part of an ongoing effort to enhance road safety and prevent future incidents.

"We are pleased that the County Executive Dan Benson and the Mercer County Board of Commissioners are acting swiftly to address our concerns," said Hopewell Township Mayor Courtney Peters-Manning. "Now that the HTC has passed the resolutions of support, this issue will be taken up by the County Commissioners."

4-Way Stop Installation

The upcoming Mercer County Board of Commissioners action will establish a 4-way stop at the intersection of Pennington-Harbourton Road, Scotch Road, and Burd Road.

This new stop control requires all vehicles approaching the intersection to stop, ensuring safer conditions for drivers and pedestrians alike. The HTC strongly supports this initiative, and is appreciative of the County's partnership in making this critical improvement.

Speed Limit Reduction on Pennington-Harbourton Road

In addition to the 4-way stop, the Mercer County Board of Commissioners will reduce the speed limit along Pennington-Harbourton Road between County Route 579 (Trenton-Harbourton Road) and NJ Route 31. The speed limit will be set at 35

MPH, a move the HTC has long advocated for to improve safety along this heavily traveled route.

These actions reflect the Township's ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of those who live, work, and travel in Hopewell Township. The members of the Hopewell Township Committee remain deeply sympathetic to the family and loved ones of the victim of the recent crash and hope that these changes will help prevent future tragedies.

Related Resolutions found on page <https://www.hopewelltp.org/749/2024-Resolutions>

- 24-389 Supporting an Ordinance by Mercer County 4-Way Stop Penn-Harb, Scotch, Burd Roads
- 24-388 Supporting an Ordinance by Mercer County Speed Limits Along Penn-Harb Rd

Long-Awaited Four-Way Stop Finally Brings Safety to Hazardous Intersection

By Jennifer DiDonato

On a warm and radiant Columbus Day afternoon, October 9th, 2023, a 24 year old young man set out on his motorcycle to savor the final golden breezes of the season. Paris Basile was more than just a name to those who knew him—he was a beacon of light, a kind and gentle soul whose infectious smile and sparkling eyes could melt even the hardest of hearts. He carried an energy that drew people in, making strangers feel like friends and friends feel like family.

Paris was deeply loved, cherished by his family, adored by his friends, and respected throughout his community. But on that bright afternoon, as he made his way home, tragedy struck. At the intersection that had long been a source of concern, his motorcycle collided with a car that was making a left turn from Pennington Harburton Rd onto Scotch. The other driver never saw his motorcycle coming in the opposite direction. Had there been a 4 way stop this potentially could have been avoided. In that instant, a life filled with so much promise was taken, leaving a void that forever changed our community.

His family, closest friends, and former Mayor John Hart, have been working with the township to advocate for vital changes to the perilous intersection. John Hart has been a vocal public champion for this change since 2016, long before the incident took place.

While this loss was an unimaginable tragedy for our community, we find solace in the hope that the proposed four-way stop will stand as a safeguard, preventing another senseless and heartbreaking loss in the future.

In our grief, we found purpose. Together, we mourned. Together, we stood, united in Paris's memory, advocating for the safety changes needed at that dangerous intersection. It is our hope that through these efforts, his light will continue to shine—guiding us toward a future where such a loss may never happen again.

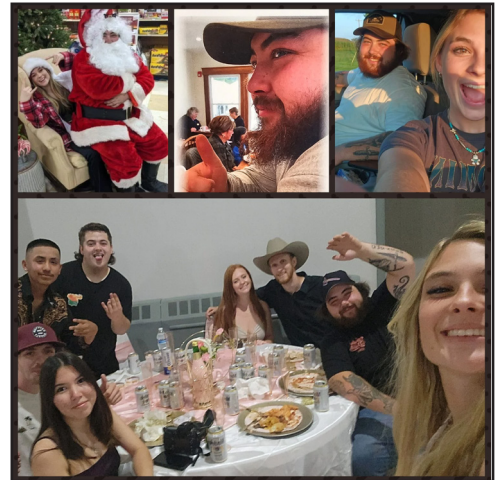
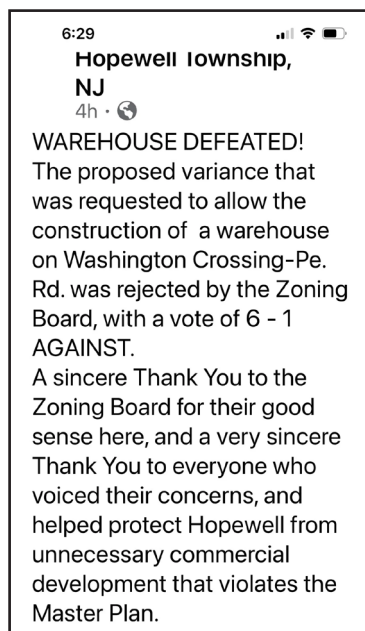


Photo courtesy of Jennifer DiDonato

Warehouse Defeated!



Election Integrity

Mercer County's Voting Process: Some Progress Made, Many Challenges And Issues Remain

By Mark Demo

Mercer County has made strides in improving its voting process as evident during this past election cycle, earning positive comments from citizens for its early and mail-in voting transparency, preparedness, and public engagement. However, accounts from actual voters across the county highlight lingering issues that must be addressed to ensure continued improvement and a smooth experience for all.

Steps in the Right Direction

- 1. Transparency in Vote Reporting** - Mercer County continues to demonstrate its commitment to transparency by publishing daily updates on early voting and vote-by-mail activity on the county website. This initiative helps keep voters informed, ensuring public confidence in the election process.
- 2. Increased Voting Machines** - The county's decision to deploy additional voting machines at polling locations on Election Day is a positive proactive measure to accommodate anticipated high voter turnout. This approach reflects a better understanding of voter needs and a desire to minimize Election Day bottlenecks.
- 3. Improved Communication with Voters** - The Board of Elections has indicated a much greater willingness to engage with citizens on voting issues and be responsive to their concerns.

Challenges Identified by Voters

Despite these advancements, voter feedback reveals operational and procedural issues that still need attention:

Wait Times and Processing Efficiency

- At some polling stations (e.g. Hamilton), the average wait time to vote was still unacceptable at times, exacerbated by long lines inside and outside the polling locations.
- Even with no line, the average time from check-in to ballot scanning was 6 minutes, which many voters feel is too long.

Equipment Setup and Training

- Some voters reported various scanning issues. Machines occasionally rejected ballots with a "paper jam" error before eventually accepting them upon rescan. The County needs to do a better job training its poll workers in anticipation of when things go wrong during in-person voting.

Ballot and Voter Registration Concerns

- One voter noted she has received ballots for her deceased husband for five years. While poll workers provided her with a form to resolve the issue, the prolonged inaccuracy raises concerns about maintaining updated voter rolls.

Provisional Ballots and Protocols

- Provisional ballots are still being processed incorrectly. For example, when voters successfully check into the pollbook, but the voter experiences a voting machine failure, some poll workers are still defaulting to a provisional ballot instead of spoiling the original ballot and re-issuing a new ballot.
- Some 70 plus percent of all provisional ballots issued are caused by people who are on the vote by mail list who attempt to vote in person, this continued inaccuracy causes delays and confusion at the polls.

Accommodating Poll Challengers

- The county can be much more open and accommodating to Poll Challengers who are only there to help observe and document any issues in the voting process to ultimately provide feedback for self-improvement.

Sharing Election Information via OPRA

- Mercer County still ranks at or near the bottom of all New Jersey counties at sharing election data such as poll book logs, ballot images and system logs. The county continues to delay access to important data that other counties using the same poll book and voting machine technology regularly share freely and without cost.

Balancing Progress with Action

Mercer County has made notable improvements, from increasing transparency to enhancing poll worker guidance. However, voter feedback highlights areas that need continued attention, particularly in processing efficiency, adherence to ballot-handling protocols, and resolving systemic issues like outdated voter rolls.

As the county evaluates its performance this past Election Day, addressing these challenges will be critical to ensuring a seamless voting experience. By combining proactive measures with rigorous training and oversight, Mercer County can build on its progress and further strengthen trust in the electoral process.

Election 2024

The Trump Counterrevolution Is A Return To Sanity

By Victor Davis Hanson, November 21, 2024

American Greatness

We are witnessing a historic counterrevolution after Trump's victory, far different from his first election in 2016.

The orthodox and the supposed scripted future are now suspect. And they are likely to be dethroned—from the trivial to the existential.

Critics claim Trump has no mandate to stage such a counterrevolution. They argue that he did not win 51 percent of the popular vote or achieve a Reaganesque landslide in the Electoral College.

Yet all the initiatives he advanced and won on polled landslide public approval.

Despite being the target of Democrat lawfare for years, a defiant Trump promised to end an open border, massive illegal immigration, rising crime, and soaring prices. He pledged to slash government and its administrative state, terminate racial and gender identity politics, and restore deterrence abroad.

The people overwhelmingly wanted those messages but were waiting for an unorthodox messenger who would actually deliver them.

The Trump messenger reassured weary citizens that they were not crazy.

Instead, they had good cause to be sick of being talked down to by a media, academic, bureaucratic, and political elite that never earned nor deserved such self-appointed status.

The FBI, the CIA, and the DOJ, not the massive crowds at rallies, were the ones truly out of control.

President Joe Biden was really suffering from dementia, not those who said he was.

Criminals with weapons are as deleterious to society as law-abiding citizens deprived of them.

It is not a thought crime to believe there are two sexes—not three or four or more. No one should be forced to buy an electric vehicle, disconnect their natural gas stove, or submit to racial or gender indoctrination sessions.

Americans should speak their minds and write what they wish without worry of being censored, blacklisted, ostracized, doxxed, or shadow-banned—or jailed.

Campuses are not oases of tolerance, disinterested inquiry, and free expression.

They instead increasingly became overpriced indoctrination centers that shred the Constitution and graduate indebted students who know less—but are far more biased—than when they enrolled.

Trump and his MAGA appointees promise to slash over a trillion dollars from the annual federal budget, disbanding entire agencies.

Is the objection that an ever-expanding government—\$37 trillion in debt, running nearly \$2 trillion in annual deficits—should keep growing?

Trump pledges to reform the Pentagon—ending DEI Pentagon commissars and revolving-door corporate generalship.

He vows to hold the 4-star class responsible for the catastrophe in Afghanistan and to reenlist soldiers who were driven out due to draconian vaccination mandates or woke intolerance. Trump envisions changing the entire system of military procurement.

Does the status quo object on the grounds that our military leadership has been winning our wars abroad?

Is the Pentagon currently awash in eager recruits?

Has it stockpiled a huge surplus of shells, bombs, and rockets?

Trump promises historic deportations of the 12 million who destroyed the southern border and surged in without health or criminal audits.

Trump vows to rescue swamped social services and stop crimes by illegal alien felons.

Is that really worse than the Biden administration's original massive importation of millions of illegal aliens, empowered by drug-importing and sex-trafficking cartels?

Who are the culpable? Those flagrantly mocking and breaking the law, or those vowing to enforce it?

Trump says he will deter enemies without bogging America down in "endless wars"—and did just that in his first four years as president.

Is the current alternative preferable to convincing enemies that there are few consequences to their aggression, sandbagging allies like Israel, or feeding the war in Ukraine without any plan of either winning or ending it?

The Trump revolution is also cultural and social. Shared class interests have replaced race, ethnicity, and gender chauvinism.

Athletes of all races are no longer taking a knee in protest of America's supposed systemic racism during the national anthem. Sometimes they celebrate their scoring by doing honorific Trump YMCA/golf-swing dances on national television.

Enlistments to help craft the Trump counterrevolution are not always predicated on degrees, conventional resumes, or past lengthy government service. Race and gender do not determine qualifications alone. Nor does class.

Common sense, successful lives outside of government, and a desire to end the current nonsense count instead as better prerequisites.

For Trump, party identification, titles, and traditional prestige matter less as he is surrounded by an ideologically diverse cadre including Elon Musk, Robert Kennedy, Jr., Dana White, Tulsi Gabbard, and Joe Rogan.

The country no longer must apologize incessantly for its past or present but can move on—content that it need not be perfect to be better than all the alternatives.

The age of flashing pronouns, renaming iconic landmarks, statue toppling, trashing the dead, vandalizing with impunity the campus library, or spouting anti-Semitic venom is passing.

So, another name for the Trump counterrevolution is a simple return to sanity.

Access the article: <https://victorhanson.com/the-trump-counterrevolution-is-a-return-to-sanity/>

The Left's Woke Agenda Died This Week

By Mike Gonzalez, November 8, 2024 in Washington Examiner

There were many reasons that President-elect Donald Trump won in such a resounding victory this week: inflation, the bewildering open border policy, the Afghanistan withdrawal humiliation, the world on fire, etc. But let's not forget one of the top ones: This was a resounding defeat of wokeism.

Voters have rejected wokeism — defined here as an unhealthy obsession with viewing all of life as a struggle between oppressors and oppressed, or, as the woke would put it, being "awake" to the misfortunes of the marginalized.

This would still have been true even if Vice President Kamala Harris had won.

Throughout her long public career, the vice president has embraced all the woke nostrums. She was particularly adept at describing equity, the government and the private sector treating Americans differently depending on their race, and how it is different from equality.

"So, there's a big difference between equality and equity," she voices over in a 2020 animated video. "Equitable treatment means we all end up at the same place."

President Joe Biden spoke the word "equity" constantly, but he struggled with it, at times starting to say "equality" before catching himself. And he never described or defined in any way the thinking behind it — probably because he lacked the knowledge.

Harris, however, completely abandoned her views during the three months she ran for president, and the media, of course, never held her accountable.

This was a tacit admission that she understood how much the country hated the use of race to justify dismantling society or the promotion of the idea that the United States is systemically racist. Voters also happen to disagree with allowing males to use women's bathrooms and minors to surgically or chemically castrate themselves or remove other healthy body parts.

It is, of course, an open question whether Harris's sudden march to the center on these issues was a political ruse and whether she would have turned around and promoted these policies once elected.

But Trump was elected and will now be our 47th president. And we know from his time in office that he is anti-woke in word and in deed. He will take measures against this ideology — as he did in his first term with his ban of so-called diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings in the government workforce and government contractors.

And there is so much to do in his second term.

An anti-woke agenda would comprise clawing back the cultural institutions that the Left has penetrated and subverted for decades now.

This Left long ago abandoned doing things frontally, such as launching bloody revolutions, and has opted instead for infiltration and indoctrination.

Of course, as we saw with the 2020 riots instigated by the Marxist-trained founders of Black Lives Matter, this Left will also opportunistically launch street violence when it thinks it can deliver a knockout blow against society.

But violent action must be preceded by, and act in tandem with, capturing K-12 school systems, so “educators” can weave Marxist programming into standards and even curricula. It must accompany the complete takeover of the university, where many departments no longer have a single conservative, and the takeover of museums by curators and administrators who are busy “decolonizing” our cultural institutions.

So the anti-woke agenda must prioritize doing everything possible to ensure that universities can no longer compel speech, whether it is forcing students or faculty members to express or affirm the falsehood that America is “systemically racist” or to break the rules of grammar by referring to a male as “she” or “they.”

Of course, Trump must also reinstitute the ban on DEI in the government force and contractors.

Another measure that must be part of the package is taking back control of public museums and restoring them to their original mandate of increasing and diffusing knowledge and away from efforts to become a change agent that seeks to deconstruct society.

And because the lifeblood of identity politics, one of the central aspects of wokeism, are the racial categories that the Left has painstakingly created in the past five decades, the new administration would also do well to eliminate these groups from government paperwork.

Lastly, if this election has taught us anything, it’s that the Left has captured legacy media, whose bias in this election was unrelenting.

There is little the government can do about ABC News, CBS News, etc. as long as they don’t violate their license, but NPR and PBS have violated the public trust with their extreme and biased coverage of this election. They are subsidized by the taxpayer, conservatives and liberals, through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

It’s high time to yank those subsidies. The defeat of wokeism requires it.

Access the article: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/patriotism-unity/3222836/left-woke-agenda-died-this-week/>

What Now? With The Election Behind Us, Here Are Five Ways Forward

By Angel Eduardo, November 9, 2024 in Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism (FAIR)

If our goal is to protect and preserve our republic, chaos cannot be what we choose.

The morning of the presidential election, I tweeted that whatever happens in the coming days and weeks, one thing is certain: All our work will still be ahead of us. Our constant culture-warring is unsustainable, and our inability or unwillingness to communicate will end us.

Whether you’re reeling or rejoicing over the results, the critical question before us remains: “What now?”

How do we intend to engage, mobilize, and advocate in our culture? How will we contribute to and participate in our discourse? How will we choose to be, and be with each other, now that the contest is over?

Our answers will determine whether the next four years will lead to cohesion or further chaos. And if our goal is to protect and preserve our republic, chaos cannot be what we choose.

Here are five guidelines for moving forward which can make things easier—for all of us, regardless of our politics—if we heed them.

- 1. Don’t divide any further ...**
- 2. How we communicate is just as important as what we communicate ...**
- 3. Our opponents are not morons or monsters ...**
- 4. Dishonesty and hyperbole are self-defeating tactics ...**
- 5. Reject simplistic narratives about “us” and “them” ...**

We’re in this together, whether we like it or not

Years ago I heard the quote, “Right Wing, Left Wing, same bird.”

I loved it. The line perfectly encapsulated my cynical, scornful feelings about the state of party politics. At the time, I was an idealist being mugged by reality, and my way of coping with the ugliness I saw was to adopt a condescending detachment. The quote quenched my thirst to be hostile in equal measure to what I saw as leaders that didn't care about their people and caused more problems than they solved.

But in all my cynicism, I forgot about the bird.

Birds need both wings, working together, in order to fly. If either or both are broken, they're hopelessly grounded. If any one wing takes total control, as Pat Paulsen once quipped, they'll just fly in circles.

Forward flight requires balance and a unity of purpose. For us, that requires communicating across divides, acknowledging our common humanity, and recognizing that for all the difficulty that comes with living together, our fates are and will always be intertwined.

Our flawed but beautiful American experiment hinges on these realizations. That's why the quote should really be, "Right Wing, Left Wing, one bird," for better or worse.

It's up to us which that will be.

Read and access the full article: https://news.fairforall.org/p/what-now-with-the-election-behind?utm_campaign=email-half-post&r=v5y4h&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Freedom of Religion

Franklin Graham: 'Let's Pray Trump Wins'

By Anna Rees, October 23, 2024 in Premier Christian News

Franklin Graham prayed "that President Trump will win this election" at a recent gathering of church leaders.

Speaking at the 11th Hour Faith Leaders Meeting in North Carolina, the son of the prominent evangelist Billy Graham declared: "President Trump holds the greatest rallies. No one in the history of the United States has put on rallies like Donald Trump."

Graham told the crowd: "I come here as a private citizen, and a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"There's nothing like a Trump rally... people stand for hours in line. People leave excited, pumped up.

"However, rallies and positive poll numbers are not going to win this election - it's going to be God... The only hope for Trump and this country is God."

Franklin Graham recently told Premier Christian News that he believed Kamala Harris to be "almost anti-Christ in her perspectives."

He told the 11th Hour Summit that there is a "spiritual element at work" in the election campaign.

"There are dark forces that are against this man," Graham claimed, "they've tried to put him in prison, they've tried to assassinate him twice. He's attacked every day in the media."

He ended his five-minute appearance by leading the crowd in two minutes of spoken prayer, where he encouraged attendees to pray for the nation.

Read and access the article: <https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/franklin-graham-lets-pray-trump-wins>

Faith Leaders React To Trump Re-election: 'God Spared My Life For A Reason'

By Greg Norman, November 6, 2024 in Fox News

Trump references God while speaking about assassination attempts against him.

Faith leaders are saying Wednesday that they pray President-elect Donald Trump "will look to God every day for His guidance and wisdom" following his victory over Kamala Harris.

In his victory speech early this morning, Trump, referencing the two assassination attempts against him in Pennsylvania and Florida, said "many people have told me that God spared my life for a reason.

"And that reason was to save our country and to restore America to greatness. And now we are going to fulfill that mission together," Trump continued. "We're going to fulfill that mission. The task before us will not be easy, but I will bring every ounce of energy, spirit, and fighting that I have in my soul to the job that you've entrusted to me."

Franklin Graham, a Christian evangelist and the son of the late Billy Graham, wrote on X “Congratulations to Donald Trump on being elected the 47th president of the United States of America!

“I pray that you will look to God every day for His guidance and wisdom,” he added.

Former Roman Catholic Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò said on X that “I express my warmest congratulations to President Trump, while I thank Our Lord for having prevented the United States and the Western world from definitively falling into the tentacles of the deep state and globalist tyranny.”

“I urge American Catholics and all Christians to pray for President Trump, so that the Lord may protect him in this transition phase towards taking office in the White House, guiding him in the unavoidable eradication of the lobby of corrupt and perverted people subservient to the deep state,” he also said.

Jim Daly, the president of Focus on the Family, which describes itself as a Global Christian Ministry, was quoted by The Washington Times as saying his organization “is encouraged by Tuesday’s election results – a decisive electoral and popular vote triumph for President-elect Trump.”

“The outcome confirms that American families are hungry to live in a nation where they can raise their children in an environment that is physically safe, and economically viable, and where moms and dads and kids can unapologetically worship God”: he added.

Read and access the article: <https://www.foxnews.com/us/faith-leaders-react-trump-re-election-god-spared-my-life-reason>

Catholics Played A “Key Role” In Booting Kamala Harris From The White House

By Mick Farthing in Patriot Journal

The dust has barely settled, and the media is buzzing with theories about how Donald Trump managed to humiliate Kamala Harris in a sweeping victory that’s left Democrats reeling. Across newsrooms, pundits are busy debating which voter groups swung the election in Trump’s favor.

Some say Black men turned out in higher-than-expected numbers. Others point to white women in the suburbs. And don’t forget the Latino vote—once seen as safely Democratic, it showed surprising shifts this year.

But one group turned out in droves for Trump, with exit polls showing he held an impressive lead among them. This was a shocking turnaround from 2020—and could signal a major sea-change for elections to come.

From Daily Caller:

Catholic voters turned out in droves for President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday, playing a key role in propelling the Republican to the White House for a second term.

Trump held an 18-point lead among Catholics as of Thursday morning, who made up roughly a quarter of the vote, according to early exit polling by The Washington Post. Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris struggled to gain traction with Catholics who largely disagreed with her broad abortion support and apparent anti-Catholic rhetoric.

Catholics Show Up for Trump

Catholic voters—making up about a quarter of the electorate—made it known they weren’t on board with Harris. The numbers tell the story: in 2020, Biden narrowly won this demographic by a margin of 52% to 47%. This time around, Catholics shifted decisively right, giving Trump a strong boost. Why? Part of it boils down to Harris’s unyielding stance on abortion.

Harris openly rejected exemptions for religious beliefs, alienating voters who value religious freedom. Many Catholics felt she showed a lack of respect for their faith, even coming across as anti-Catholic. Meanwhile, Trump’s running mate J.D. Vance, a Catholic himself, only helped reinforce the ticket’s appeal.

Then there was the Harris snub of the Al Smith charity dinner—a longstanding event supported by Catholics to aid children in need. Harris’s decision to skip it was noted, and not in a good way. The Al Smith dinner is a time-honored tradition for presidential candidates, and her absence was seen by many as an insult to Catholic voters.

For Catholics, this wasn’t just a campaign decision; it felt personal. By contrast, Trump’s presence, along with his Catholic running mate, painted a stark difference. As the Catholic Association’s Ashley McGuire put it, Harris’s approach was “anti-Catholic,” and voters took notice.

The Faith Factor: How Religious Issues Shifted Votes

The difference in approach to faith issues between Biden in 2020 and Harris in 2024 couldn’t have been more pronounced. Biden, for all his flaws, has long been a familiar face to Catholics.

He attended Mass regularly, spoke openly about his faith, and met with church leaders in ways that signaled respect. Harris, on the other hand, didn’t have that connection. Her campaign steered clear of faith discussions, leaving a void that Trump’s team eagerly filled.

Another significant factor was Harris's stance on Israel during the ongoing Gaza conflict. Her perceived lack of defense for Israel was a red flag for many religious voters who view support for Israel as a fundamental part of religious liberty and American values.

Ralph Reed, founder of the Faith & Freedom Coalition, highlighted that this issue resonated powerfully among both Catholic and Protestant voters. It wasn't just about policy; it was a question of principles and values. For religious voters, Harris didn't come across as someone who understood or respected those values.

Religious Liberty and the Democrats' Faith Problem

The Democratic Party's ongoing faith problem became glaringly evident with Harris at the helm. Under Biden, Democrats had some footing with religious voters. But Harris's progressive stance on social issues seemed to alienate even moderate Democrats within faith communities.

This trend was evident not only in the Catholic vote but also among Protestant and Evangelical Christians, who, according to exit polls, supported Trump by a hefty margin of 63% to 36%.

Under Biden, Democrats already faced criticism for infringing on religious freedom. The Biden administration's policies, from pushing for taxpayer-funded abortions to supporting mandatory transgender surgeries for religious hospitals, didn't sit well with many faith-based voters.

Even the FBI's infamous memo describing traditionalist Catholics as "potential domestic terrorists" left a sour legacy that Democrats couldn't shake. For Catholics and other Christian voters, the Democrats' stance felt intrusive, authoritarian, and out of step with religious freedoms.

An Electoral Mandate from Catholics

As election night ended, it became clear: the Catholic vote had become a decisive factor. President Trump's double-digit margin with this group might just be the highest seen for a Republican in decades.

Brian Burch of CatholicVote noted that Catholics proved themselves a critical voting bloc that both parties ignore at their peril. For many in this community, Trump's platform aligned with core issues like religious liberty, traditional family values, and national security.

Looking ahead, the Democrats will have to rethink their approach to faith-based voters if they hope to be competitive in future elections. Harris's campaign struggled not just because of policy but because of tone and attitude.

Religious voters didn't see themselves represented, and they showed up in droves for Trump as a result. The question now is, can the Democrats bridge the gap with this pivotal bloc? For now, Trump's victory sends a clear message: faith still matters to American voters, and ignoring it comes with a price.

Read and access the article: https://pjnewsletter.com/report-kamala-harris-lost-becau/?utm_source=ogms&utm_medium=email

Colorado To Pay \$1.5 Million For Stifling Web Designer's Free Speech

By Kaelan Deese, November 19, 2024 in Washington Examiner

Colorado officials have agreed to pay over \$1.5 million to cover attorney fees for graphic designer Lorie Smith, who successfully challenged the state's antidiscrimination law at the Supreme Court.

The settlement, announced Tuesday, comes months after the high court ruled in *303 Creative LLC v. Elenis* that Colorado violated Smith's First Amendment rights by attempting to compel her to create wedding websites for same-sex couples against her religious beliefs. Earlier this year, a federal district court issued a final judgment requiring state officials to cease efforts to compel Smith's speech, a resolution that brought an end to years of legal and personal hardship.

"After enduring Colorado's censorship for nearly seven years, I'm incredibly grateful for the work of my attorneys at Alliance Defending Freedom to bring my case to victory," Smith said, referring to the religious liberty law firm that represented her. "As the Supreme Court said, I'm free to create art consistent with my beliefs without fear of Colorado punishing me anymore."

Under the terms of the settlement, Colorado's Civil Rights Division agreed to pay the hefty legal costs of Smith's attorneys from Alliance Defending Freedom, a legal advocacy group specializing in religious liberty cases. ADF President Kristen Waggoner described the payout as a necessary consequence of the state's actions.

"For the past 12 years, Colorado has targeted people of faith and forced them to express messages that violate their conscience and that advance the government's preferred ideology," said Waggoner, adding that "billions of people around the world" believe marriage is the union between a man and a woman, and that "First Amendment protections are non-negotiable."

Lawyers spent nearly a decade arguing in court that Colorado's enforcement of its public accommodations law against Smith constituted a form of compelled speech. After the justices agreed to consider the case on the merits, the Supreme Court's

6-3 decision in June last year affirmed her claim, holding that the state's actions infringed upon her constitutional right to free expression.

Justice Neil Gorsuch, the author of the 303 Creative decision, wrote that through its public accommodation law, "Colorado seeks to force an individual to speak in ways that align with its views but defy her conscience about a matter of major significance."

The Supreme Court's majority ruling was met with swift dissent by the three Democratic-appointed justices, including a dissent by Justice Sonia Sotomayor accusing the ruling of granting "business open to the public a constitutional right to refuse to serve members of a protected class."

However, Smith has argued her free speech case was never about rejecting clients based on their identity but about making sure her custom website business does not create designs or promote messages that do not conform to her religious beliefs.

"This is a win not just for me but for all Americans — for those who share my beliefs and for those who hold different views. I love people and work with everyone, including those who identify as LGBT," she said.

The settlement follows a contentious history of Colorado officials enforcing antidiscrimination measures against religious business owners. Smith's lawsuit drew comparisons to the earlier Masterpiece Cakeshop case, in which the Supreme Court sided with baker Jack Phillips, who refused to create a custom cake for a same-sex wedding.

Critics have accused Colorado of selectively targeting religious individuals, a claim bolstered by comments from state officials during litigation that suggested hostility toward faith-based beliefs. Smith's attorneys argued that these patterns highlighted the need for stronger protections against government overreach.

Read and access the article: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/supreme-court/3235378/colorado-to-pay-1-5-million-for-stifling-web-designers-free-speech/>

Hundreds Of Jews Hunted Down, Violently Beaten In 'Pogrom' On The Streets Of Amsterdam

By Breanna Claussen, November 8, 2024 in Harbinger's Daily

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dispatched rescue planes to Amsterdam on Friday after violent Arab mobs orchestrated a targeted 'Pogrom' against Jews coming out of a Europa League soccer game.

Hundreds were ambushed at different exits outside of the stadium as fans left the game, which included a match between a local Amsterdam team and an Israeli team from Tel Aviv.

Witnesses told the media that individuals leaving who were identified as Jewish were descended upon by the Muslim mob, chased with knives, and violently beaten, with footage confirming that at least one individual was intentionally struck by a vehicle. Israeli news organizations reported that Jewish fans resorted to barricading themselves in shops and nearby buildings.

According to Arutz Sheva, "One of the fans was forced to say 'Free Palestine' before he was let go," adding that three victims are currently unaccounted for.

Netanyahu's office stated that the Prime Minister "views the horrifying incident with utmost gravity and demands that the Dutch government and security forces take vigorous and swift action against the rioters, and ensure the safety of our citizens."

"The harsh pictures of the assault on our citizens in Amsterdam will not be overlooked," the statement underscored.

An Israeli witness stated that it took Amsterdam police 45-60 minutes to arrive at the scene after the attacks began. Police eventually intervened, with a spokesperson confirming the arrest of dozens involved in the riot.

Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon referred to the antisemitic riot as a "Pogrom," a term referencing violent mob attacks orchestrated for the express purpose of targeting Jews.

"We are receiving very disturbing reports of extreme violence against Israelis and Jews on the streets of Holland. There is a pogrom currently taking place in Europe in 2024," Dannon charged.

"These are the true faces of the supporters of the radical terrorism we are fighting. The Western world needs to wake up now!!" he urged. "This is the time when the UN should immediately and clearly condemn the violence of the Palestinians and their supporters. The Dutch authorities must take decisive action against terrorism now."

...

Netherlands MP Geert Wilders stated the riot had the appearance of a "Jew hunt in the street of Amsterdam," and called for the arrest and deportation of the Muslim Arabs who took part.

Lest anyone think that orchestrating a "pogrom" was not precisely the intention of the Muslim rioters, the attack was planned to occur only hours after Amsterdam commemorated the anniversary of "Kristallnacht," a vicious pogrom that occurred in 1938.

Antisemitism expert Olivier Melnick previously explained the impact Kristallnacht had in preparation for the Nazi Holocaust: “Historians agree that Kristallnacht (November 9-10, 1938) was the onset of the Holocaust, shifting Nazi antisemitism from mere rhetoric to pure violence and murder, and setting in motion the death factories aimed at accomplishing ‘the final solution to the Jewish question.’ Kristallnacht, or ‘The Night of Broken Glass,’ was a boycott/pogrom of Jewish synagogues, schools, businesses, and homes, resulting in the death of almost 100 Jewish people and the destruction of 7,500 properties.”

Tiauna Lodewyk, an intern with the Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry whose family ran a safe house in Holland during World War II, reacted to the violence in Amsterdam by pro-Palestinian rioters.

“Seeing the tragic and alarming events against the Jewish people transpiring in Amsterdam has further proved the inextricable link between Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism,” Lodewyk told Harbinger’s Daily.

“While I was in Poland this past spring, I witnessed a Palestinian ‘protest’ outside of the Auschwitz concentration camp. Why would a Palestinian protest take place outside a location of the greatest manifestation of Antisemitism—where over one million Jews were horrifically murdered simply for being Jewish? What does the death of Jews have to do with ‘freeing Palestine’?”

“Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism are one and the same,” she stressed. “They both share the same spiritual root.”

“The Lord said that those who come against His chosen people (the Jewish people) and His land (Israel) are essentially coming against God Himself,” Lodewyk described. “The violent intent to harm the Jewish people, as seen not only in Amsterdam but around the world, is rooted in the spiritual reality of Satan’s pursuit to annihilate the Jewish people—thereby rendering God’s promises void by whatever means necessary.”

Read and access the article: <https://harbingersdaily.com/hundreds-of-jews-violently-hunted-down-in-pogrom-on-the-streets-of-amsterdam/>

Public Corner

Public Local Meetings

Interested in attending public meetings? Here are a few in your area for this month.

<https://www.mercercounty.org/i-want-to/calendar-meeting-list>

HVRSD School Board Meeting

Monday - December 16th, 2024 (Regular), at 6:30pm
425 S Main St. | Pennington, NJ 08534
Or Livestream on YouTube

Municipal Township Meetings

<https://www.hopewelltpw.org/calendar.aspx?CID=32>

Monday, December 2 at 6:30pm

Monday, December 16 at 6:30pm

Meetings are in hybrid format- Township Municipal Building & Zoom

Township meetings will be held at HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING 201 Washington Crossing - Pennington Road, Titusville, NJ 08560

Board of Elections Meeting

Tuesday - December 10, 2024 at 4:00pm Regular

Board of Elections Meetings will be at 930 Spruce St., Lawrence, NJ 08648

Mercer County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Schedule -- December 2024

Tuesday December 10, 2024 6:00pm Agenda & Formal Meeting

Thursday December 19, 2024 6:00pm Agenda & Formal Meeting

Agenda and Formal Meetings will take place at the Mercer County Administration Building, Room 211, 640 South Broad St., Trenton, NJ unless otherwise stated.

In order to encourage full participation of these meetings, please submit any requests for accommodations of people with disabilities to the Clerk to the Board, Mercer County Administration Building, PO Box 8068, Trenton, NJ 08650 (609) 989-6584 {V/TTY} {Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 101-336}

TruthBTold



At the Movies, Bookstores

The Mother Of Abortion: Unveiling The Roots Of A Cultural Collapse

The 1916 Project reveals the untold story of Margaret Sanger, Planned Parenthood's founder, exposing her dark legacy and the profound influence her eugenic ideologies continue to have on abortion, family breakdown, and societal confusion today.

The 1916 Project (Documentary), 2024, 1h 16m

Director: David Coonradt

Writers: David Coonradt, Seth Gruber

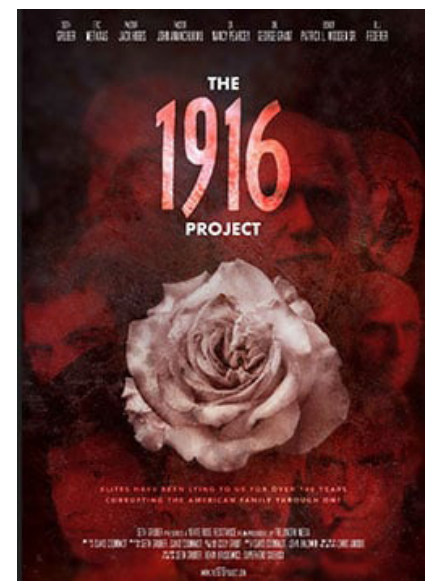
Film Synopsis:

The 1916 Project is a powerful documentary that uncovers the disturbing legacy of Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, and her deep ties to the eugenics movement (a harmful pseudoscientific belief aimed at "improving" humanity by controlling who could reproduce. This ideology targeted marginalized groups—especially people of color, the poor, and those with disabilities—justifying horrific policies like forced sterilizations and treating human lives as disposable). Through compelling historical research and expert analysis, the film reveals how Sanger's racist and elitist ideologies have shaped the modern cultural landscape. From the promotion of abortion to the breakdown of family structures and the rise of gender confusion, The 1916 Project exposes the enduring impact of her influence, particularly on communities of color. The film serves as a call to action for those seeking to understand the origins of America's moral decline and the forces at play in today's culture war.

WATCH ON X:

Watch the trailer, buy the book, attend and/or host a screening: <https://the1916project.com/press/>

Press release: <https://the1916project.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/1916-release.pdf>



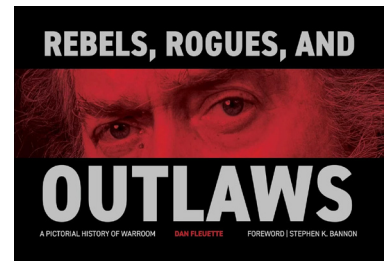
Rebels, Rogues, and Outlaws: A Pictorial History of WarRoom

By Dan Fleurette (Author), Stephen K Bannon (Foreword) – 464 Pages, October 29, 2024

As an artist, Dan Fleurette has always identified with the marginal, the rebels, those at the margins of society. Traditionally, these characters have been artists, musicians, filmmakers, and writers. Since the dawn of woke culture, where many of today's artists march in lockstep with the dominant, politically correct corporate news and political space, these marginal characters have taken a different look. Today's rebels would have been considered quite mainstream just a few years ago. Included in their ranks are the scorned, mocked, ridiculed and canceled—those who risk everything to dare to speak their mind and run counter to mainstream narratives.

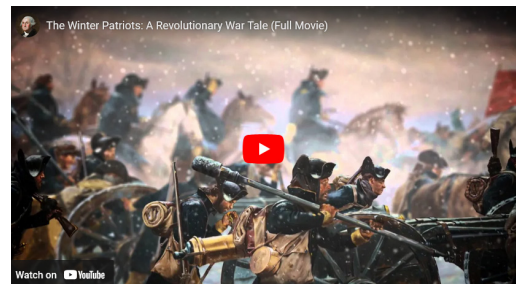
These are the people captured in *Rebels, Rogues, and Outlaws: A Pictorial History of WarRoom*. This is not just a portrait book, it is also a WarRoom historical document showcasing the brave souls who are courageous enough to stand up against a ceaseless and powerful battering of politicians, woke social media tyrants, school boards, editorial pages, and polite society in general. This book is Fleurette's small attempt to honor these people, who show us, day in and day out, what real courage is.

Book available at: <https://www.amazon.com/Rebels-Rogues-Outlaws-Pictorial-History/dp/1648210627>



The Winter Patriots: A Revolutionary War Tale

Watch this 25-minute film: *The Winter Patriots* explores one of the darkest moments of the American Revolution and how the Continental Army, under the command of General George Washington, was able to save the cause of independence through one brilliant military campaign at the end of 1776 and the beginning of 1777. Follow Washington's forces as they cross the icy Delaware River on their way to their surprise victory at the Battle of Trenton. Watch as Washington crosses the river once more and fights the British and Hessians on the Assunpink Creek and at the Battle of Princeton.



Watch the full movie: <https://www.mountvernon.org/education/videos/films/the-winter-patriots>

Watch the film and explore the primary and secondary resources associated with it to learn more about path towards independence.

The Crossing Reenactment: Witness The Crossing That Saved The Revolution

Each December, thousands of people gather on the banks of the Delaware River to watch the reenactment of George Washington's daring 1776 Christmas night river crossing.

During the event, several hundred reenactors in Continental military dress listen to an inspiring speech by General Washington and then row across the river in replica Durham boats.

The public has two opportunities to view the reenactment at Washington Crossing Historic Park. Located at: 1112 River Road Washington Crossing, PA 18977



For The Crossing Reenactment details: <https://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/cross-with-us/>

Washington Crossing Historic Park offers more than 500 acres of American history, natural beauty and family fun. The park preserves the site where George Washington crossed the Delaware River and turned the tide of the Revolutionary War. Learn more and Help us save our national heritage: <https://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/>

We the People of Interest

Greater Performance - Less Of Me & More Of Him

By Carolyn McDonough (Pennington, NJ) November 19, 2023 in Kingdom Runners

We live in a world that is geared and wired from the innermost fibers of society with performance.

Society has an undercurrent that says that the value of a person in a company, in a school, and even in the arena of sports, is influenced and determined by their performance.

Performance is an avenue that God created for Him to be glorified. However, performance can become a dangerous pressure-cooker for individuals who make it their foundation, their identity, and their source of worth.

So how do we navigate through the beautiful tension of working toward greater performance for God's glory as athletes while having a sure and firm foundation in the greatest performance of Jesus's finished work on the cross?

I want to highlight five practical steps that can lead to greater performance as an athlete while emphasizing the greatest performance that our worth, value, hope, and confidence can rest in. Specifically, these points below are geared more to what we can do as athletes off the track, the road, and the trails to reach a higher level of performance.

1. Recovery – As I'm writing this, I'm currently in Boston, Massachusetts getting ready to row in the Head of the Charles Regatta, the world's largest three-day regatta and the oldest head race in the United States.

As a former collegiate rower, my coach explained to our team about the importance of the "recovery" in the rowing stroke and how a good recovery helps to move the boat forward.

After every stroke that we take in a boat, as we slide back up to the "catch" where we put our oars back into the water to take another stroke, we have a quick "recovery", where we can relax our bodies for a moment before applying power and force for the next stroke.

This recovery is critical for advancing the board forward.

The better and more balanced the recovery is, the faster the boat can move.

Recovery is critical to our lives.

Rest is necessary, required and created by God to help us move to a greater performance in life.

Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God."

There are moments in our lives that we need stillness, rest, and recovery.

Take a moment to pause and examine if your life needs more rest.

Sleeping, resting, and recovering physically, emotionally, and spiritually is critical for a greater performance in sports and life.

2. Fuel – Many of us know the phrase, "Garbage in, garbage out!"

We would never put the wrong kind of gasoline into our cars, yet many of us put foods and things into our bodies that are not truly fueling us for greater strength.

1 Corinthians 6:19 shares how as followers of Christ, our bodies are a temple for the Holy Spirit within us and we are called to glorify God in our bodies.

Taking care of your body is an act of worship to God and you can, "present your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." (Romans 12:1)

Eating healthy foods and fueling your body well is critical to perform well as an athlete.

May we be mindful of not only the foods that we put into our bodies, but also the things that we let our eyes see and our ears hear.

Fueling our bodies with what is good will enable us to perform even greater for His glory.

3. Attitude – In Proverbs, Solomon revealed a powerful and sobering truth when he wrote, "As he thinks in his heart, so he is." Your mind is incredibly powerful and can be the rudder that determines the direction of your life.



Craig Groeschel, a pastor, author, and leadership mentor to many, stated, "Our life is always moving the direction of our strongest thoughts. Most of life's battles are won or lost in the mind."

Training our minds is just as important as training our bodies.

Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica that God's will for us is to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks in every circumstance. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

You have the power to choose your attitude in any situation.

May we train our minds to live with an attitude of gratitude, joyful expectancy, and dependency on God as athletes and also throughout our lives.

4. Flexibility – Two rhythms that I have incorporated into my athletic life are stretching and foam rolling.

Flexible muscles overall are stronger muscles.

Being flexible as an athlete and in life leads to greater performance and a lower likelihood of injuries.

A basketball coach from my area said, "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall never be broken."

Staying flexible physically, emotionally, and spiritually is important for greater performance.

Allow God to stretch you and get ready for greater flexibility and performance!

5. Consistency – Consistency is key.

Doing the small things consistently leads athletes to greater endurance, greater power, greater strength, greater health, and greater performance.

Creating rhythms and keeping them in your life is extremely valuable in sports and in life.

"Be steadfast..." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Examine to see if there are any new rhythms you want to incorporate into your life and also if there are any habits you want to remove to get to a greater performance.

Ultimately, as we talk about performance, the greatest performance that we can find our worth, value, hope, and confidence in is the perfect sacrifice that Jesus gave for us on the cross.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."
John 3:16

Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the grave.

God has given us a sure and firm foundation that we can build our lives upon in Jesus.

Whatever you do, whether it is training for a race, recovering, fueling well, or anything else, remember that our greater performance is for God's glory and not for the praises of man.

Prayer and Reflection:

- Reflect and determine what your life's foundation is built upon? Is it your performance? Is it God? Or is it something else?
- What do you want to become more consistent in? What steps can you start taking today to make that something consistent that you do?
- What ways can you fuel yourself better physically, emotionally, and spiritually?
- When examining your thoughts, what are your strongest thoughts focused on in your life? Are these healthy and life-giving thoughts?

Read and access the article: <https://kingdomrunners.net/greater-performance/>

Central High Graduate And Athlete Carolyn McDonough Inspires Local Students With Christian-based Coaching

Carolyn McDonough is the Central Jersey West Director for Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) in New Jersey, overseeing Hunterdon, Mercer and Somerset Counties. FCA was started in 1954 by Don McClanen who was born in Trenton and it has grown to 115 countries around the world. FCA works to inspire students in middle school, high school, and college with the transforming power of Jesus Christ. Carolyn is a graduate of Central High School and has been involved with FCA since she was 13 years old when a student invited her to come to an FCA huddle. She is an endurance athlete—she rode her bike across America, rowed in college and represented Team USA at the Triathlon World Championship. She uses her gifts to serve the Lord and currently enjoys coaching girl's lacrosse locally. She also loves time at the beach in the summer and skiing in the winter.

- Hopewell Valley Central High School: FCA currently has a club that meets Thursday's during lunch.
- Timberlane Middle School: FCA just started at TMS this year and the FCA club meets every Wednesday during Lunch/ Recess.
- FCA currently has 14 school clubs in the area, with more in the process to start.

Carolyn was also recently featured in Hopewell Valley Neighbors September 2024 magazine in the article "Running the Race of Life" by Jennifer Amato. Read and access the article: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/McDonough-HV-Neighbor-article-2024-09.pdf>

Donate to and Learn more about FCA at: <https://my.fca.org/?form=carolynmcdonough>

Contact Carolyn McDonough with any questions or to find out where the CHS and TMS clubs meet: cmcdonough@fca.org

Editor's Note:

Mercer We the People was blessed in 2024 to have launched this newsletter, sustain publishing monthly issues, and looking forward to continuing our local work in what is guaranteed to be an eventful 2025.

This has been done at no cost to our readers and only been made possible by a small (and hopefully growing) diligent inspiring group of local community contributors, who voluntarily and regularly have given their time and effort to bring awareness to local news and information.

Mercer We the People is humbled, remains so grateful and thankful for the generosity and dedication of our contributors.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and may God's blessing and mercy be with you and yours.

We close our newsletter and year with the emotional inspiring forward-looking words from Laken Riley a beautiful soul senselessly and tragically taken from our physical world in 2024. A passage from one of her last journal entries that was dated two months before her death in which she was writing a letter to her future husband.

"To my future husband, I want you to know that I'm thinking about you and working every day to become the best wife I can be by working through my current relationships to best prepare me for ours and our kids one day," her stepfather said tearfully as he read her journal entry about her vision for her future life. "I'm focusing on God and what He defines as a faithful, Christian life and so that I can best embody those characteristics. I pray that you know that it is with my full faith and trust in God that I know that this relationship has been handcrafted by Him. I pray that we continue to glorify the Lord, prioritizing him in every aspect of our lives, and raise our family, our future family to be God-fearing Christians as well."

"I pray God is the center of our relationship, as it is a gift from Him. I thank Him for you before I even know you, and I can't wait to love you in the best way I know how for the rest of our lives. I pray you know and feel the importance of my love and hopes for our relationship. No matter what challenges we face, I pray that our trust in God and love for one another overrules the obstacle. May our relationship last forever. Your future wife, Laken."

Dear Laken Riley may you rest in eternal peace and may your dreams, hopes and faith live on to be realized in American's now and for generations to come.

Mercer We the People of Hopewell Valley Newsletters:

Access previous issues at: <https://hvrageop.org/hvra-top-issues/>

To report a correction or share feedback, please email us at info@mercervethepeople.com

Mercer We the People
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United States of America