

# HYDE PARK

Got something to share with fellow Democrats?  
Now's the time and here's the place!

Occasional Virtual Soap Box

October 12, 2021

In 1953 Ray Bradbury published a dystopian science fiction novel titled *Fahrenheit 451*. It depicts a future *America* in which books have been banned. Not some books—*all* books. Not restricted—*totally* banned.

The protagonist is a fireman. That doesn't mean as you might expect that his job is to extinguish fires; rather, it's to set them—not to burn things indiscriminately, but only to burn books.

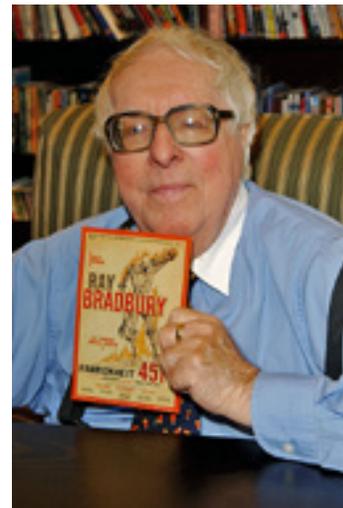
Many people refuse to give up their books, and they find ingenious ways of hiding them. Firemen find these books and incinerate them. *Fahrenheit 451* is the temperature at which the pages of books will ignite and burn. And, yes, that's the allusion Michael Moore was making in the title of his film *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

As it happens, of course, our world has developed in exactly the opposite direction. Instead of too few books, we have too many. Books and every other source of information. Information plus misinformation and disinformation.

There are exceptions, of course. As we're seeing in the VA governor's race and the ad attacking Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, GQP parents are determined to protect the fee-fee's of their tender offspring by

preventing their ever learning how their ancestors treated indigenous *Americans*, kidnapped and enslaved *Africans*, *Japanese* internees, etc.

With this issue I'll begin a series of articles on how we might try to cope with this surfeit of information, misinformation, and disinformation, focusing on the internet. As I urged last time, please chip in by sharing your questions, suggestions, and even articles.



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## Note

The content of this newsletter has not been approved by the Volusia County D.E.C. Each item is the responsibility of its author. Questions and comments are welcome. Direct them to [wayne@looking4light.com](mailto:wayne@looking4light.com).

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# Feature

## While awaiting his subpoena from the I/6 committee...

Wayne Dickson



### Legal expert calls Jim Jordan's school board rant 'embarrassing ignorance' for a congressman

“Threats against public servants are not only illegal, they run counter to our nation’s core values,” the attorney general said in a statement Oct. 4. “Those who dedicate their time and energy to ensuring that our children receive a proper education in a safe environment deserve to be able to do their work without fear for their safety.”

Jordan unleashed a loud rant seeming to claim that the *DOJ* is retaliating against states and parents angry about things like critical race theory or wearing masks. He went on to probe the *AG* on whether the *White House* told him to write his memo, which Garland said it didn’t, and demanded to know what contact he or his staff had with the *White House*.

Conspiracy theories claim that *FBI* agents will be at school board meetings to curb free speech, but Garland dispelled the myth, saying that it wasn’t happening. Jordan then tried to

claim that the *DOJ* press release for the Oct. 4 memo said that the task force to review the threats would include “representatives from the department’s *Criminal Division*, *National Security Division*, *Civil Rights Division*, the *Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys*, the *FBI*, the *Community Relations Service* and the *Office of Justice Programs*, to determine how federal enforcement tools can be used to prosecute these crimes, and ways to assist state, Tribal, territorial and local law enforcement where threats of violence may not constitute federal crimes.”

Jordan attempted to use the fact that a *National Security Division* staffer being on the task force meant that Garland was going to make parents into terrorists.

“Now are you said earlier to a question to one of my colleagues on the *Republican* side that parents aren’t domestic terrorists, we’re not going to treat them that way,” said Jordan, reading the press release. Garland explained he didn’t say that in his letter, but Jordan shouted that it was in the press release about his letter.

It became clear that Garland was fed up.



I've read and heard from people in a position to know that Rep. "Gym" Jordan isn't really as stupid as he pretends. When he's behind closed doors, he can apparently speak and act respectably. Once the TV cameras are on him, however...!

In this case he's playing variations on two of the right wing's favorite themes. First, there's the perpetual sense of grievance. They are *always* the victims, *never* the victimizers. ("Hey, officer! Did you see that jerk poke my fist with his eye?") Second, there is the ceaseless determination to turn every issue into a conspiracy.

In response, I'll turn to one of my own favorite themes: *projection*:

Projection is the process of displacing one's feelings onto a different person.... The term is most commonly used to describe defensive projection—attributing one's own unacceptable urges to another. For example, if someone continuously bullies and ridicules a peer about his insecurities, the bully might be projecting his own struggle with self-

esteem onto the other person. [**Psychology Today.**]

I'm neither a psychiatrist nor a psychologist, so I don't pretend to be making a diagnosis here. I'm just saying that, to me as a lay person, this sure as heck seems to be what's going on.

Jordan is smart enough to understand this. (Please note, though: understanding something does not protect one from being subject to it oneself.) The thinking runs like this: "If I were in this situation, this is the sort of stunt I would pull. So this is no doubt what my enemies are doing."

Or, "If the obvious explanation here contradicts what I deeply believe, then the obvious explanation must be wrong. The true explanation must involve something more devious, more conspiratorial."

The psychological games being played here are confined to the *GQP* fanatics' own heads. But the damage caused by those games is shredding our social fabric and destroying our entire democracy.

# Feature

## Mainstream media mislead America

Robert Reich



### Even the mainstream media is misleading America about Biden's plan.

Congress is back this week, so you can expect more of the “we can't afford it” bullsh\*t from every *Republican* member of Congress and two *Democratic* senators (Manchin and Sinema) — aimed against Biden's and the *Democrats'* social investment bill.

Let me use my Friday interview with *CNN's* Erin Burnett as Exhibit A.

We are the richest country in the world, but we haven't made investments in the basic needs of children and families in years. Meanwhile, the military budget is out of control.

It's absurd we're talking about the debt and deficit right now.

Note that she starts by asking me: “The big question is whether *Democrats* can afford all of this.” By making this her first question, she's already framing the debate around the cost of the plan. And by

phrasing it as “whether *Democrats* can afford,” she's making it a partisan issue.

Let's be clear: Every rich country other than the *United States* already provides childcare, pre-K, child assistance, paid family leave, subsidized college, decent housing, and health coverage extending to vision and hearing. Every other rich country is taking measures to reduce climate change. We are the richest of the rich. Of course *America* can afford these.

In fact, there's a good argument that making these investments will grow the economy (childcare will free more people to join the workforce, pre-K and community college will make our workforce more productive, and so on), while not making them will create huge costs down the line (the tab from wildfires and floods due to climate change is already mammoth).

Erin Burnett's other guest, a former *Republican* governor, then argues we can't afford these things because the national debt is too high.

This is a slight-of-hand. The national debt isn't at issue. There's no reason for the debt to grow if we tax the wealthy and big corporations to pay for the plan, as Biden and most *Democrats* — and the vast majority of the public — want to. Simply repealing the Trump-*Republican* tax cut to the rich and big corporations would pay for almost half the cost of the plan.

# Feature

## Lapado shows more and more clearly why “Death-Spreader” DeSantis chose him for Surgeon General.

Wayne Dickson



### Florida GOP leader slams state attorney general for refusing to wear mask around lawmaker with cancer

According to another report from *Florida Politics*' Christine Jordan Sexton, *Florida Surgeon General* Joseph Ladapo was harshly criticized by *Florida State Senate* leader Wilton Simpson—a *Republican*—for putting the life of an immunocompromised *Democratic* state senator at risk by refusing to wear a mask when meeting with her.

On Saturday, Jordan Sexton reported that Ladapo and two aides refused to wear masks when meeting with Sen. Tina Polksy (D) even after she told them she is just starting radiation treatment for breast cancer. During the meeting, Ladapo made light of the situation before finally leaving as instructed.

Now, according to Jordan Sexton, Simpson has stepped into the controversy and upbraided Ladapo for his actions.

“Simpson sent a memo to all members and Senate staff calling the incident ‘disappointing’ and said that ‘it shouldn’t take a cancer diagnosis for people to respect each other’s level of comfort with social interactions during a pandemic,” she wrote.

He continued, “What occurred in Senator Polksy’s office was unprofessional and will not be tolerated in the Senate. While there is no mask mandate in the Senate, Senators and staff can request social distancing and masking within their own offices. If visitors to the Senate fail to respect these requests, they will be asked to leave.”

Jordan Sexton noted that Simpson seemed to hint that Ladapo’s nomination to be the new Florida surgeon general—still to be voted upon—now may be in jeopardy.

You may remember that I wrote this about Dr. Lapado in the 2nd issue of the new series of *Hyde Parks*: “[D]ecisions he’s making and comments he’s releasing will lead to the unnecessary deaths of many, many Floridians. ‘First, do no harm’? How can that be reconciled with Dr. Lapado’s telling Floridians that vaccines are overrated? Masks are overrated? Quarantine is unnecessary? If that isn’t doing harm, then I’d like to know what is.”

# Feature

## Excerpt from *The Conversation* 10/22/2021

**Maurizio Valsania, University of Turin**

**The American founders didn't believe your sacred freedom means you can do whatever you want.**

President Joe Biden has mandated vaccines for a large part of the American workforce, a requirement that has prompted protest from those opposed to the measure. [A] similar move in *New York City* to enforce vaccinations has resulted in more than a dozen businesses' being fined for flouting the rules.

The basic idea behind the objections: Such mandates, which also extend to requirements to wear masks and quarantine if exposed to COVID-19, are a breach of the *Constitution's 14th Amendment*, which states that "no state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the *United States*."

The objectors ask: Aren't mandates un-American?

As a scholar who has spent decades trying to unravel the hurdles that mark the beginning of this nation, I offer some facts in response to that question – a few very American facts....

No vaccination foe, no latter-day fan of the *Gadsden Flag's* "DONT TREAD ON ME" message, would ever gain the posthumous approval of the American founders.

George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton and the rest of the group cultivated different visions about *America*. But they agreed on one principle: They were unrelenting on the notion that circumstances often emerge that require public officials to pass acts that abridge individual freedoms.



Most of the founders, to begin with, were slave owners, not especially concerned about trampling over and abridging the rights of the persons they held in bondage.

In 1777, during the *American Revolution*, Washington had his officers and troops inoculated against smallpox. The procedure was risky. But for Washington, the pros outweighed the cons. It was an order, an actual mandate, not an option that individuals could discuss and eventually decide.

“After every attempt to stop the progress of the small Pox,” Washington explained to the *New York Convention*, “I found, that it gained such head among the Southern Troops [ironic, wouldn’t you say!], that there was no possible way of saving the lives of most of those who had not had it, but by introducing inoculation generally.”

One John Coverdale, from *Henderskelfe, Yorkshire, England*, wrote President Washington a long letter. He advocated more drastic measures, including three weeks of quarantine and policemen strategically placed in every corner to hinder people from passing from zone to zone; and he wanted people “to carry with them certificates either of their coming from places not infected or of their passing the line by permission.”

***In other words, a quarantine, lockdown and vaccine passports.***

The argument that individual rights trump the greater good is un-American, or at least out of step with American tradition. It’s an attitude

that the founders would have put under the encompassing banner of “ambition.”

“Ambition” comes when individuals are blinded by their little—or large—egotisms and personal interests.

When facing a quarantine, a mandate, or similar momentary abridgments of their liberties, many Americans today react the same way [Alexander] Hamilton did. Like Hamilton, they look beyond themselves, their opinions, their interests. They don’t lose sight of the public good.

Others remain ambitious.



*Alexander Hamilton*

# Feature

## Online resources

### Wayne Dickson

#### Some of what's available...

Polly and Paul Steeves of the *NWV Dem. Club* recommend “Heather Cox Richardson’s **Letters from an American**.”

Paul and I loved her book, *How the South Won the Civil War* and read her blog each morning. We’re sort of on a crusade to get our friends to read it. It’s progressive, of course, and in each “letter” she encapsulates the day’s important political news items while at the same time embedding them in a broad historical perspective.

I’d add that Richardson posts on **Substack**, where you’ll find the work of many serious writers. You know, *Twitter* limits you to 255 *characters* (not words). On *Substack* you’ll find ideas more fully explored and arguments more fully developed.



The article just above this, on the *American Founders*, is from **The Conversation**,

*The Conversation* is a nonprofit, independent news organization dedicated to unlocking the knowledge of experts for the public good. We publish trustworthy and informative articles written by academic

experts for the general public and edited by our team of journalists.



The articles on Jordan and Lapado are from *Alternet*. *Alternet* does reprints. It’s associated organization, *Raw Story*, does original reporting.



The article on mainstream media and Biden is by Bill Clinton’s *Secretary of Labor* Robert **Reich**. Check his website to see the various stuff he publishes in various places.





**A bit of an aside story, just for fun.**

*Common Dreams* is a great organization, independent, and thus counting on readers seeing it in their newsfeed, checking it out, and potentially subscribing or contributing. I've contributed to them myself.

Just after the 2020 election, they found their hits from *Facebook* subscribers dropped significantly, causing them real pain. Just recently they learned the dropoff was due to *Facebook's* having changed their algorithm to point readers toward sites promoting hate, fear, conspiracies, *etc.* *Common Dreams* is **not** such a site.

So, to deal with the bad press arising from the whistleblower revelations and leaked documents proving their attack on democracy, *Facebook* decided to change their name. You know. Fried food turned out to be bad for you, so *Kentucky Fried Chicken* became "*KFC*." After the oil drilling disaster, *British Petroleum* became "*BP*." After being caught murdering innocent Iraqi civilians, *Blackwater* changed names twice.

The name *Facebook* chose was "*Meta*." Today the lead story on the *Common Dreams* website is this:



**'Hands Off,' Varoufakis Tells Zuckerberg After Facebook Steals 'Meta' Name From Anti-Capitalist Think Tank**

"You, and your minions, wouldn't recognize civilization even if it hit you with a bargepole," said the former Greek finance minister, slamming Facebook's CEO for the social media giant's new name.



***Shameless self-promotion!***

I created my first blog just after the 2004 election. You know, the one that elicited the *Daily Mirror's* famous headline, "How can 59,054,087 people be so dumb?"

The current version was so corrupted by malware that I trashed it completely, and I've had a devil of a time

getting it back up. But up it is, though still in primitive shape!

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