

# HYDE PARK

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

Submit contributions to [wayne@looking4light.com](mailto:wayne@looking4light.com).

Occasional Virtual Soap Box

November 19, 2021

In Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*, the Russians have developed a *Doomsday Machine*. If anyone attacks them, the device will automatically explode nuclear weapons all over the globe. The device is already in place, but has not yet been announced. Unfortunately, a US Air Force general has gone totally QAnon and is about to bomb Russia. Hearing about the device for the first time, Dr. Strangelove goes medieval on the Russian ambassador.



In a later movie, *The American President*, the *Democratic* president is being attacked ruthlessly by the *Republicans*. He complains about the public's listening to his opponent's unfair attacks. His chief speech writer

responds that they have no choice. His is the only voice they're hearing.

In what unfortunately is not a movie, the current *Democratic* president is being ruthlessly attacked by *Republicans* and shamelessly misrepresented by the media. Consequently and not surprisingly, he is being hammered in the polls.

*Democratic* policies and programs are favored by a majority of *Americans*. But *Democrats* have not been doing a very good job of telling them about these positives. Most of what the public hear are lies, accusations, misframing, misrepresentation.

But, as Elizabeth Warren might say, here in *Volusia* we have a plan for that! I'll describe the plan in the next issue, but you can start contributing right now. Starting with the day President Biden was inaugurated, what good things have *Democrats* provided for the people of our county? What additional good things are on the way?

Let us hear from you!

Wayne's blog: <https://looking4light.com/scarab/>.

Back issues of *Hyde Park* can be found there.

## 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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# Editorial

## Reality in today's America is a nightmare.

**Wayne Dickson**

Some years back I saw a short video featuring a Scottish comedian complaining about how he hated hearing other people tell him about their dreams. I'm not going to do that to you—beyond saying what the dreams were about, that is. But I am going to speculate about the significance of my dreams.

Guests on late night TV shows often introduce clips of a movie in which they've acted by saying something like, "Let me set this up for you." The other night my wife Jewel reminded me that my memories never involve triumphs or successes. They always involve failures or moments when I've treated others or been treated myself with what I considered great injustice.

For example, I never remember scoring a winning goal or catching a touchdown pass. Instead, I remember something like that time when I grabbed a rebound, middle of the keyhole, 4 feet from the basket...choked and missed the final shot, right at the buzzer, losing the game for the faculty intramural team. (True story!)

When I opened my email today, the first message I received was a petition from *Change.org*. A 15-year-old girl attending a school in North Carolina called *Hawthorne Academy* had been raped by a classmate. She reported the incident to the police, who investigated. The boy confessed to what he had done. So how did the school respond? They exonerated the boy; suspended the girl; and forced her to take

a course titled "Sexual Assault Is Preventable." The boy raped a girl, but the school authorities are treating him as a victim and her as guilty.

The Kyle Rittenhouse trial is on the front pages. The 17 year-old bought a semi-automatic rifle illegally (because "it looked cool," he said), took it to another city in another state, killed two men and left a third with a lifetime disability. He's being treated as a victim and a hero, not just by the right-wing nut caucus, but by the judge himself! The boy murdered two men (in my opinion), but the judicial authority is treating him as a victim and the men he killed as guilty.

Perhaps not totally coincidentally (call me cynical!), Tim Mak's book *Misfire: Inside the Downfall of the NRA* was published this week. One of his first sections deals with the horror at *Columbine High* where two teenage students bought guns illegally; took them to school; and killed 12 fellow students, 1 teacher, and themselves.



The *NRA* leadership held an emergency conference and decided not to express sympathy, not to offer assistance, but instead to tell the world, “F... you!” How? Within days they held their annual conference just a few miles away in *Denver*. This was where *NRA* President Charleton Heston gave the speech Michael Moore made infamous. You know, the one where the actor who had played the voice of God, Jesus, Moses, and Ben Hur held up a rifle and said that if authorities wanted it, they’d have to take it out of his “cold, dead hand.”

Right this minute (@4:15 p.m. on Thursday afternoon) Nicole Wallace said something like, “We begin this segment with stories about threats to kill members of *Congress* and school boards, thugs wearing masks and body armor attending local board meetings, and school boards wanting to burn books.” A.G. Garland

seems to be allowing Steve Bannon to get away with defying a subpoena and giving the middle finger to the federal government. Earlier this week we had stories about how *Florida’s* governor is suing President Biden for trying to keep *Floridians* from killing themselves or others. *Florida’s Surgeon General* is a *QAnon* conspiracy theorist who treats his fellow human beings with utter contempt.

So what have I been dreaming about? Waking up feeling trapped, gasping for breath, feeling deep despair? Yeah. I dream about incidents of terror, innocent people (including those I know) suffering unjustly...and being utterly, entirely incapable of making even the slightest difference in protecting others, seeing justice done, and most of all saving our fast vanishing democracy.



*The Miami Herald’s Editorial Board:*

“New state Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo represents the pompousness, the wackiness and the disregard for life and community that have become the hallmarks of *Florida’s* response to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

He’s shown here with colleagues from the wack-a-doodle group calling themselves “*America’s Frontline Doctors.*”

*Florida’s* taxpayers will pay this guy a salary of \$437,000 a year.

# Feature

## Book Burning

### Wayne Dickson

A common aphorism runs like this:

There's some people that, if they don't know, you just can't tell 'em.

The aphorism articulates a principle that sophisticated authoritarians understand quite well. They use it to manipulate those who follow them and to dominate those who refuse to follow them. Historical examples are easy to locate.

Every state of the antebellum *American South* passed laws forbidding anyone to teach slaves to read (though teaching them to do arithmetic was acceptable). This, for example, was the law in *North Carolina*:

AN ACT TO PREVENT ALL PERSONS FROM TEACHING SLAVES TO READ OR WRITE, THE USE OF FIGURES EXCEPTED

***Whereas the teaching of slaves to read and write, has a tendency to excite dissatisfaction in their minds, and to produce insurrection and rebellion, to the manifest injury of the citizens of this State:***

Therefore,

I. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of *North Carolina*, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That any free person, who shall hereafter teach, or attempt to teach, any slave within the State to read or write, the use of figures

excepted, or shall give or sell to such slave or slaves any books or pamphlets, shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in this State having jurisdiction thereof, and upon conviction, shall, at the discretion of the court, if a white man or woman, be fined not less than one hundred dollars, nor more than two hundred dollars, or imprisoned; and if a free person of color, shall be fined, imprisoned, or whipped, at the discretion of the court, not exceeding thirty nine lashes, nor less than twenty lashes.

II. Be it further enacted, That if any slave shall hereafter teach, or attempt to teach, any other slave to read or write, the use of figures excepted, he or she may be carried before any justice of the peace, and on conviction thereof, shall be sentenced to receive thirty nine lashes on his or her bare back.

Source: "Act Passed by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina at the Session of 1830—1831" (Raleigh: 1831).



The best known victim of this system is the great American orator Frederick Douglass, whose portrait as a very young man is at the bottom of the previous page.

## Slavery and Escape

Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was born into slavery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in February 1818.... When he turned eight years old, his slaveowner hired him out to work as a body servant in Baltimore.

At an early age, Frederick realized there was a connection between literacy and freedom. Not allowed to attend school, he taught himself to read and write in the streets of Baltimore. At twelve, he bought a book called *The Columbian Orator*. It was a collection of revolutionary speeches, debates, and writings on natural rights.

When Frederick was fifteen, his slaveowner sent him back to the Eastern Shore to labor as a fieldhand. Frederick rebelled intensely. He educated other slaves, physically fought back against a “slave-breaker,” and plotted an unsuccessful escape.

Frustrated, his slaveowner returned him to Baltimore. This time, Frederick met a young free black woman named Anna Murray, who agreed to help him escape. On September 3, 1838, he disguised himself as a sailor and boarded a northbound train, using money from Anna to pay for his ticket. In less than 24 hours, Frederick arrived in New York

City and declared himself free. He had successfully escaped from slavery.

[Being lazy, I've cited this from the *Wiki* entry. Every entry in *Wikipedia* should be preceded by the warning *caveat lector* (“let the reader beware”). But the facts here are well attested, and are recounted in Douglass's best known book: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. 1845. Wonder if it's available in *Volusia County* school libraries?]

If an autocrat cannot prevent people from learning to read, his or her next best strategy is to control *what* people are allowed to read. One obvious way to do this is simply to destroy “undesirable” books and to close “undesirable” publishers. A recent example of the latter approach has been seen in *Hong Kong* over the past couple of years. Regarding the destruction of books, we're all familiar with the *Nazi* book burnings during the 1930s.



In the contemporary *U.S.* the authoritarians' playbook has been adopted by the group that still calls itself *Republican*, though of course it has almost nothing in common with *Republicans* of the past. This was made clear in the governor's race in *Virginia*.

**'Throw those books in a fire': Virginia conservative school board members call for book burnings**



In the present context, the key phrase and image of that book is that of the “Memory Hole.” This is a hole in the wall opening into a chute that leads down to an incinerator. When the government’s policies have changed, alliances have altered, or history has been rewritten, bureaucrats take the existing books that are no longer relevant and simply toss them down the “Memory Hole.”



Like so much else we are experiencing today, this was foreseen by George Orwell, who wrote about it in his novel *1984*.

Click the image to see a brief video about this.



# Feature

## Copper, politics, and justice.

Wayne Dickson

In my response to the unpaid political ad the *Daytona Beach News-Journal* published for Michael Walsh on the pretext that it was a “guest column,” I noted that I was baffled by Walsh’s riff on copper mining. I mean, *Florida* doesn’t have any copper deposits. Phosphate? Oh, yes! But copper? No.

But I finally figured it out.



*The Oak Flat sacred tribal land as it is today.*



*The way landscapes like Oak Flat look after being subjected to open-pit copper mining.*



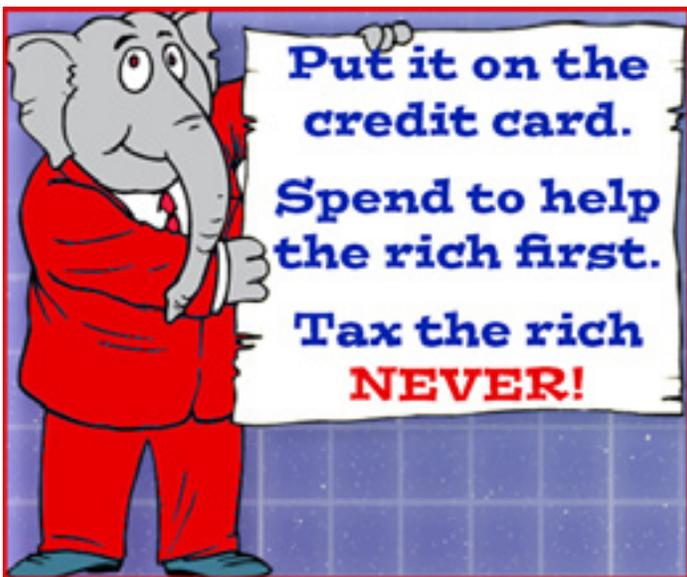
Chair Grijalva and colleagues sent a letter to acting Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Shea on February 19 urging reconsideration of the [*Oak Flat* sacred tribal lands]], given its rushed timing and clearly political nature. Grijalva has been leading the issue since the insertion of an unrelated provision in the *2015 National Defense Authorization Act* mandating the federal government transfer 2,422 acres of *Tonto National Forest* land to *Resolution Copper* in exchange for less valuable land elsewhere.

This press release from Grijalva’s office doesn’t mention the name of the person who put the “unrelated provision” in the bill. It was John McCain.

“The *San Carlos Apache* never asked for this land to become a political issue, but this is not a fight we’re going to lose,” Grijalva said today. “I will work to move this bill forward, this land is going to be protected, and we’re going to establish that you don’t get to push around Native American communities just because you can make a profit...”

“Too many times our Native American brothers and sisters have seen the profits of huge corporations put ahead of their sovereign rights,” said Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), author of the Senate companion bill. “It is wrong that a backroom deal in

*Washington* could lead to the destruction of a sacred area that is so important to so many. We must defend the hundreds of thousands of *Americans* who are standing in opposition to this giveaway of our natural resources to foreign corporations.”



# Feature

An organization worth knowing about.

Created by co-founder of *Ben & Jerry's* ice cream, Ben Cohen.



The 2022 budget is projected to be \$768 billion, another \$23.9 billion over this year's budget. As a point of comparison, we could replace every lead pipe in America for \$45 billion, end homelessness for all 580,466 people in the United States for \$20 billion. Power every one of the 127.59 million households in the United States with clean wind and solar energy for \$80 billion, and provide 12 weeks of paid family leave for new parents or people caring for a sick parent for \$58.2 billion. And we would still have \$564.8 billion left over for the Pentagon — more than double what any other country in the world spends on “defense.”

Congress is turning its attention to the National Defense Authorization Act this week, the massive budget legislation that funds the Department of Defense. Despite the end of the 20-year war in Afghanistan, Congress is angling to boost the Pentagon budget by over \$20 billion dollars.

