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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Beautifully written, Joyce. I moved the last piece on the other events and the GOP stuff, which made the impact peter out. This way, we can end with Pieciak saying “never, ever give up.”

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

A joyful noise

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

More than 3,000 fill the Brattleboro Common with
songs, signs, inflatable creatures, and fiery speeches for ‘No Kings
2.0’

####END SUBHED####

TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

“Honk for Decency,” said the sign, and, oh, honk they
did.

It was a beautiful fall afternoon on Brattleboro’s Town
Common, where a joyous No Kings 2.0 protest on Oct. 18
pushed against the presidency of Donald Trump.

11 More than 3,000 people came out and filled the Town
12 Common in Brattleboro to protest that declaration. They were
13 among nearly 2,700 other marches, vigils, and protests that
14 spanned the U.S. from coast to coast, and drew an estimated 7
15 million people. Similar events were held around the world.

16 As in the previous events in Brattleboro, demonstrators
17 wore costumes, carried witty homemade signs, waved both
18 American and Gay Pride flags, listened to speeches, chanted,
19 sang, and danced.

20 Afterward, they marched down the sidewalks of Main
21 Street holding even more signs and filling both sides of the street
22 while more cars honked their horns in solidarity.

23 Speakers included Vermont State Treasurer Michael
24 Pieciak, state Rep. Emilie Kornheiser, and Brattleboro Union High
25 School graduate and current Columbia University student Django
26 Grace, all three of them from Brattleboro.

27 Also in the crowd were state Reps. Mollie Burke and
28 Mike Mrowicki, and former state Sen. Jeanette White.

29 **Frogs, unicorns, and Moses**

30 Costumes were worn in honor of Portland, Oregon,
31 where Trump recently deployed federal troops against protestors.
32 In response, Portland protestors whimsically turned out in
33 costume — mainly as inflatable frogs and unicorns.

34 Brattleboro certainly had its share of frogs, but it also had
35 a bald eagle, a Statue of Liberty, an inflatable pink shark with a
36 red bow tie, a unicorn, a mushroom, a hot dog, and a multitude
37 of cartoon characters. A Moses wore long robes, a white wig and
38 beard, and carried two pink tablets: one saying “No” and the
39 other saying “Kings.”

40 As for the signs, they were everywhere.

41 “First they came for the immigrants and we said not
42 today, Motherf—er,” said one. “White Supremacy Is Terrorism,”
43 said another. “No Kings, No Trump Gestapo, No Occupation

44 Army." "I Love My Country, That's Why I'm Here." "Due Process
45 for All." "We have a Constitution, not a King!"

46 Roger and Ann Allbee of Brookline carried a sign that
47 read, "Trump Is a Danger to Democracy."

48 "Every Republican I used to know is probably rolling
49 over in their graves about Trump," said Roger, once Vermont's
50 Secretary of Agriculture. "Remember when the Republican
51 leadership told [President] Richard Nixon he had to resign over
52 Watergate? This guy Trump is a hundred times worse than Nixon."

53 As streams of people converged on the Common from
54 every possible path, street, and roadway, the crowd was
55 entertained by the 100-plus members of the Good Trouble Street
56 Choir, backed by The Peoples Resistance Marching Band.

57 Among the protest songs the choir sang, one, "No Kings
58 Here," was specifically written for the day by Tom Paxton and
59 Cathy Fink. One stanza goes: "We had a king once, years ago /
60 Back in days of yore / He showed us what kings were like / So we
61 showed him the door."

62 **Rallies in BF and Wilmington;** 63 **Republicans speak in Chester**

64 Meanwhile, nearly 500 people turned out in Bellows
65 Falls, lining the sidewalks on Westminster and Church streets for
66 a noontime rally and march. Approximately 200 people attended
67 a rally in downtown Wilmington near the Route 9 and 100
68 intersection.

69 As with the Brattleboro rally, the events were peaceful.

70 In Chester, approximately 100 people gathered during
71 the No Kings rally on the Town Green for the Chester GOP's first
72 "Red on Green" event to listen to four speakers: former U.S.
73 Senate candidate Gerald Malloy of Weathersfield; Rep. Tom
74 Charlton, R-Chester, Greg Thayer, a former candidate for
75 lieutenant governor from Rutland, and Hank Poitras of

76 Brattleboro, producer of the “Planet Hank” podcast and the new
77 chair of the Brattleboro Republican Town Committee.

78 An estimated 10,000 people showed up at the Vermont
79 State House in Montpelier, where U.S. Sen. Peter Welch, and
80 U.S. Rep. Becca Balint, both Democrats, were among the event’s
81 speakers. A Burlington rally also drew an estimated 10,000
82 people.

83 **Speakers on showing up,** 84 **fighting, yet finding common** 85 **ground**

86 Back in Brattleboro, Kornheiser spoke first, saying that
87 “no one is going to save us, we have to save ourselves.”

88 “You’re doing it today by showing up,” she said. “We
89 need to build the future we want to live in.”

90 She emphasized that building community was crucial to
91 the resistance to monarchy and fascism. She said that caring for a
92 neighbor, organizing with a union, or even standing on an
93 interstate highway overpass with a sign “all build a community
94 where we can take care of each other and build a government we
95 can trust. This government is ours to shape.”

96 Grace, 19, gave the audience a high-energy speech that
97 began, “I am angry and I am terrified.”

98 He, too, emphasized community as an antidote to
99 fascism and called for common ground with all Americans — not
100 just the ones who agree with you politically.

101 Grace said that beneath Trump’s antics is a much graver
102 problem, something “that is ripping America in half.” He said the
103 billionaire class encourages Americans to divide and fight against
104 each other “so money can move in the shadows” as they siphon
105 off America’s riches for themselves.

106 “If we have the courage to look deep into the heart of
107 America, I’m afraid that we will find a disease,” Grace said. “We

108 will find something that is much more powerful, much more
109 lethal than the actions of one man and his cronies.”

110 This “force of polarity” or “bipartisan stupidity” is not a
111 natural state of affairs, Grace said.

112 “I see Americans losing the ability to talk to one
113 another,” he said. “And we need discourse. We need to engage
114 with the people who oppose us because this is how we find
115 common ground. And common ground is the only way that we’re
116 going to get out of this mess.”

117 He especially called for people to leave social media —
118 Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X — which are owned by some of
119 the richest men in the world. He called social media an “activism
120 echo chamber.”

121 Instead, he urged people to build on the Vermont Town
122 Meeting style of democracy, where neighbors can talk to each
123 other and work out problems face-to-face.

124 “Disagreement does not mean hatred,” he said.

125 Pieciak, the keynote speaker, talked movingly about the
126 lessons he learned from his late mother, Carolyn Pieciak, the
127 founder of Brigid’s Kitchen and Pantry at St. Michael Catholic
128 Church. She died in May at the age of 79.

129 Pieciak said he learned about social justice at his
130 mother’s knee.

131 “Every time I was with her in this community, serving
132 food to somebody that had been forgotten about or who was shut
133 in, without fail she was always kind and patient and loving to
134 every single person she encountered,” he said.

135 Although his mother urged him to be compassionate, she
136 also urged him to continue to fight.

137 “I was with my mom in the last few weeks of her life,
138 and she asked me, ‘Michael, are you going to continue to stand
139 up to Donald Trump?’” Pieciak said. “And I said, ‘Yes, Mom. I
140 am.’”

141 That is one reason why, he said, he recently started the
142 Vermont Immigrant Legal Defense Fund.

143 "It's so that every immigrant who faces ICE [the U.S.
144 Immigration and Customs Enforcement] in court has a lawyer
145 standing with them," Pieciak said.
146 He is trying to raise \$1 million for the fund.
147 "The movement we are building is bigger than
148 Republicans and Democrats," he said. "It's about right versus
149 wrong. We need anyone with a backbone, anyone who is willing
150 to say clearly, 'This is wrong.'"
151 Taking health care from veterans, taking food from low-
152 income families, sending the National Guard into U.S. cities, or
153 taking away a woman's reproductive freedom — all actions
154 Trump has taken — are wrong, Pieciak said.
155 "They're moral failures," he said. "We need all our
156 elected leaders to clearly say what is right and what is wrong.
157 Brattleboro, keep fighting, and never, ever give up."

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

158 With additional reporting by Robert F. Smith of *The*
159 *Commons* and by [VTDigger](#).

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

163

####END LOGLINE####