

—Slug:.....COMM-0848.opin.view.dewalt
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—For section.....Voices/Viewpoint
—Format.....Opinions
—Dateline.....Newfane
—Article Number:.....42890

[REDACTED]

Notes from editor (not for publication):

[REDACTED]

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

#####BEGIN HED#####

1 Can we stop pretending now?

#####END HED#####

#####BEGIN SUBHED#####

2 What will it take for America to fully realize that we, like
3 the proverbial frog, are now treading simmering water that will
4 soon boil us to death?

#####END SUBHED#####

5 TEXT BODY:

#####BEGIN TEXT#####

6 TRUMP HAS GONE off of the deep end: freeing a convicted
7 narcoterrorist Latin American president; choosing instead to
8 murder over 80 Venezuelans and kidnap another Latin American
9 president and charging him with narcoterrorism; recruiting his
10 own personal militia, under the guise of ICE, which he is using to
11 terrorize and murder Americans who oppose his efforts to deport

12 millions of people living legally in the USA; building massive
13 detention centers, where he plans to jail all who oppose him;
14 having a bromance with war criminal Netanyahu as they both
15 continue genocidal actions against Palestinians; threatening war
16 against NATO if he can't "take" Greenland.

17 Every week, a new set of horrors are rolled out,
18 overwhelming us with stories of state insanity, making us fear for
19 our own safety and lives, and keeping us unbalanced and unable
20 to muster a united force to oppose his unconstitutional and illegal
21 actions.

22 Trump's cabinet of sycophants and zealots are foaming at
23 the mouth, accusing every person murdered by ICE to be a
24 "domestic terrorist," advocating state policies that echo and are
25 aligned with the likes of Hitler and Putin, and lying through their
26 MAGA-whitened teeth about their conduct and its consequences.

27 And although "We the People" are largely opposed to his
28 actions and even claim to abhor them, we are willingly financing
29 and strengthening his position.

30 Trump would not be able to get away with his
31 destruction of our Republic without the active support and
32 financing of the billionaire oligarchs who are profiting from his
33 policies.

34 Zuckerberg, Bezos, Musk, Singer, Schwarzman, and Thiel
35 are just a few of the billionaires who have jumped on the MAGA
36 bandwagon. The media moguls have fired or denied access to
37 voices of dissent. The profiteers who benefit from the Trump
38 agenda kick back millions to Trump and his organization, a
39 regular orgy at the feeding trough of the pigs of capitalism.

40 No crime or assault against the Constitution is too great
41 for these oligarchs to stomach, as long as they can grow their
42 already-obscene piles of money.

43 * * *

44 ALTHOUGH TRUMP is enriching them, the oligarchs
45 ultimately depend on us to buy and use their products. Without
46 our dollars, they would wither and die on their golden vine.

47 Our consuming habits are our superpower; are we
48 willing to flex our muscles? Can we all please take a moment to
49 analyze our spending and to move away from supporting the
50 corporations that are killing our Republic?

51 Here is a partial list of those who are supporting Trump
52 in various ways:

- 53 • Meta (owner of Facebook and Instagram)
- 54 • American Eagle
- 55 • Tesla
- 56 • Home Depot
- 57 • Walmart
- 58 • Palantir Technologies (which enables government
59 spying and oppression of dissent)
- 60 • Amazon
- 61 • Apple

62 If Americans stopped using the services and products of
63 these corporations, their support for Trump would dry up
64 overnight. But Americans seem to think that we can't live without
65 our corporate masters.

66 How could we share photos of our grandkids without
67 Facebook or Instagram? How could we buy whatever we want
68 and get it quickly without Amazon? How could we go find a
69 regular hardware store instead of going to Home Depot? How
70 would we ever get a chance to become rich as a social
71 influencer?

72 In short, Americans seem to be saying, "We don't
73 approve of the destruction of our political system, but we are not
74 capable of doing anything to change our own conduct, because
75 we are so busy and they make our purchasing easier. If we can't
76 do it with a click on the screen, then it's more than we can
77 handle right now."

78 * * *

79 WE ARE FACING a violent coup d'état, but we want it to
80 end without any real effort on our part.

81 Stopping Trump will require that we boycott MAGA-
82 supportive corporations and that we will go on consumer strikes
83 where we buy nothing at all. It will require us to harass our
84 politicians daily until they shed their lethargy and their
85 attachment to the corporate money stream. And it will require
86 some of us to be arrested, injured, or killed in the line of duty,
87 which is to stand up for our country and each other.

88 We have been spoiled in this country. Since the Civil
89 War, we have not had any armed conflicts on our soil. We gave
90 up having a political consciousness to live by as we were
91 mollified by small handouts from the money powers, like
92 workplace health insurance, the eight-hour work day, and
93 modern conveniences hyped to make our lives easier (as long as
94 you didn't think about the consequences of living perpetually in
95 debt to those from whom your convenience was bought).

96 Are we up to the task before us? Are those of us who
97 have been demonstrating willing to take the next step to blockade
98 the streets, disrupt business, and make ourselves ungovernable?

99 (If we don't want our National Guard overseas, being put
100 in jeopardy of conviction for war crimes, then we can make
101 enough of a ruckus here at home that they will have to come
102 back to deal with us.)

103 Are those of us who have yet to do more than signing a
104 petition or calling a politician willing to step up our game and
105 serious study the boycott lists and see where we can stop
106 spending dollars that support the Trump coup?

107 Can those of us who still are paying our taxes take a
108 long, hard look at this habit and see if we might find the fortitude
109 to hold our taxes back this April?

110 Can those of use who are wage earners change our W-2s
111 so that no tax money is withheld during the year (denying the
112 government an interest-free loan to do its dirty work)?

113 * * *

114 WHAT WILL IT TAKE for America to fully realize that we,
115 like the proverbial frog, are now treading simmering water that
116 will soon boil us to death?

117 It's time to stop pretending that this is anything other than
118 an emergency. It is time to accept that if we don't act, we will all
119 be living an unfree life where neighbor is pitted against neighbor,
120 prejudices are encouraged and inflamed, trust is destroyed, and
121 the American dream is not just a difficult distant goal, but will
122 instead be a nightmare of greed, violence, and race hatred.

123 The breathtaking pace at which we are barreling down
124 into this rathole should convince us that this grim prediction is
125 not something that lies in our children's or grandchildren's future,
126 but is just around the corner. Each one of us will be bearing the
127 full effects of our failure to act. Our current discomfort will be
128 nothing compared to what lies ahead.

129 For generations, we have embraced the myths of
130 Americans' can-do attitude and our indomitable defense of our
131 freedom in the face of adversity. Can we step up and actually
132 take actions that align with these myths? Or will we find that we
133 are just as hollow as our claims of a classless society and of
134 freedom and justice for all?

#####END TEXT#####

Bio/COATTAIL:

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

135 **DAN DEWALT**, a frequent contributor to these pages and
136 one of the founders of this newspaper, writes that if he didn't love
137 his country, he "wouldn't spend so much time trying to get it to
138 live up to its purported principles."

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

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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LINKS:

#####BEGIN LINKS#####

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#####END LINKS#####

VIDEO:

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#####END VIDEO#####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

#####BEGIN LOGLINE#####

142

#####END LOGLINE#####