

OPINION

Your Vote in November Helps Determine New Hampshire's Course

Informed voting requires researching facts

Ken Wells
Candidate for State Representative

Over the past several years, we have been witnessing New Hampshire's political system fracture into a three-party system, made confusing because two of the parties (the traditional GOP vs Free State/Liberty Alliance) claim the same "Republican" title. My grandfather was an Eisenhower Republican who founded an important national patriotic organization in Valley Forge. But grandfather's traditional "Grand Old Party" of Eisenhower and Lincoln has little in common with today's New Hampshire "liberty" extremists who also claim his party's name. Some of these extremists attempted to hamstring public education in Croydon and our own Merrimack Valley, dismantle Gunstock ski area as a revenue-maker serving Belknap county taxpayers, and some even agitated for New Hampshire breaking away from the United States of America.

New Hampshire is a small state, but a heavyweight in United States politics because you, small-town New Hampshire voters, are independent and engaged in our beautifully messy town-hall, first-in-the nation democratic tradition. Be very, very careful how you vote in November, or we could lose our viable two-party democracy in New Hampshire, and a bad New Hampshire election result could have consequences nationwide!

One of my favorite songs - and perhaps yours too - has deep roots in New England. The lyrics of *Amazing Grace* are attributed to Englishman John Newton (1750-1807). Astonishingly, the songwriter was the captain of a British slave ship, trading African captives for raw materials such as molasses and cotton. Those materials were sold to New Englanders who converted them into rum and textiles, which were sold in Europe and the cash was used to purchase more human beings from the so-called "Gold Coast/Slave Coast/Ivory Coast" of West Africa. (It is undeniably true that some of the 10 to 15 million Africans sold in the Americas were auctioned off in slave markets as close to us as Portsmouth. Andover's own Richard Potter of Potter Place was the son of an Ashland, Massachusetts slave.)

While plying his repugnant trade, Newton was driven to deep introspection by a furious, near-fatal storm in the Atlantic. As a result of his crisis, he repented, became an Anglican minister and an influential anti-slavery spokesperson who played an important role in abolishing the slave trade in England,

long before our own Civil War. He - one person - repented, and it made an important difference.

Newton's version of "Amazing Grace" has the lyric "He shall my shield and portion be...". Regardless of one's religious belief (or non-belief) many of us in dire circumstances take comfort in beseeching a more powerful entity to protect us (shield) and provide us the fair share we need to survive (portion). For ages, people around the world have looked to their monarch or government to provide that "shield and portion". On this practical level, we Americans have a community-oriented, traditional and long-standing agreement among ourselves to support our American democratic form of government, to ensure the secular source of our "shield and portion". An important part of that "shield" is our government providing a court system that is a fair ultimate authority, and to provide each of us equal protection under the law - rich or poor, male or female, Christian or non-Christian, etc. That "shield" is not working for many of us now. The "portion" speaks to an equitable share of our collective prosperity...but your gasoline and New Hampshire electric energy rates doubled, at the same time that energy giant Exxon-Mobil reports its highest profits in 40 years! Imagine which way that river of dollars is flowing. What determines who gets a portion of that prosperity? Our government plays a vital role in ensuring economic fairness and non-monopolistic behavior.

I truly believe in our two-party system, because two parties, no more, seem to be crucial to the function of our democracy. We need to be able to steer our "ship of state" carefully to both the left and to the right, if we want to navigate a course that leads to the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Ours is always a stormy voyage, with meeting the vital demands for all our people on one side, and stoking the economic engine that generates (but also unfortunately concentrates) prosperity on the other. Although the demands of steering are often at odds, our democracy can't have either one without the other. The way to accomplish that "careful steering" is not by one party exterminating the other, with the absolute triumph of one narrow ideology (I invite you to look up the definition of "fascism"), but by re-establishing a respectful legislative tradition of negotiation and compromise between competing interests. If our democratic scheme for steering fails, "we the people" will no longer command our own destiny, but we will become the ship's enslaved

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DANBURY WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Nov 5, Dec 3,
Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4,
Apr 1, May 6
9am-Noon

Breakfast & Lunch
Farms, Artisans,
Specialty Foods

Baked Goods, Syrup, Jams,
Goat's Milk & Soap, Candy, Eggs,
Beef, Pork, Chicken,
Sewn, Carved & Dyed Crafts

\$20 Vet Bucks/month
SNAP Benefits Doubled

NO ONLINE PREORDER THIS YEAR.

Blizzard Date will be the following Saturday

Blazing Star Grange Hall
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603-768-5579, text 512-676-7722

Nov 12th Chicken Pie
Supper is Cancelled

The REFINERY

RESTAURANT - MARKET

MARKET

Featuring BBQ, salads,
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Wed - Sat: 12 PM - 9 PM

RESTAURANT

Reservations Encouraged
Wed - Sat: 12 PM - 9 PM

TAKE-OUT

Wed - Sat: 12 PM - 9 PM

May be limited
during peak hours

Kitchen closes nightly at 9 PM

Closed for Thanksgiving Day 11.24.22

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