

**Report from page 15**

that “helping beer is good”, even when they disagree on whether “helping business is good” or “helping people is good”. Infuriating.

An interesting schism appeared in the Republican ranks, somewhat highlighted by the seating arrangement that placed those of a libertarian stripe who refused to don a mask in their own seating section. One member of the libertarian caucus seated in the stands had proposed a bill to end the Governor’s State of Emergency order (which is within the power of the House to do) because, he said, the stay-at-home order violates rights guaranteed in the United States Bill of Rights. The floor-seated Republicans were not willing to end the Governor’s ability to assign federal and New Hampshire taxpayer dollars on no-bid contracts (as reported in the Concord Monitor), and

to use non-democratic, and unconstitutional means (see my previous article about GOFERR and the Joint Fiscal Committee) to circumvent the House’s constitutional control of the “purse-strings”. Most Democrats did not support ending the Emergency either, because federal unemployment benefits to New Hampshire families will end if the State of Emergency ends, even as reopening cautiously happens before the end of the Emergency is declared. When so many are unemployed and collecting these benefits, ending them would reduce their spending power among New Hampshire businesses trying to reopen, deepening and extending the economic downturn in our state.

As the session neared the end, Minority Leader Dick Hinch addressed the House, saying that his party had blocked these bills (see <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1chUSylSh34f79vJVeu1GvflxC>

and would continue to obstruct all bills, because the majority “had wasted so much time” (was it only one afternoon?) pursuing reprimands of those House members of his party who refused for a whole year to attend sexual harassment training required by their employer. The party that Hinch leads failed to “do their job”, because they put ideology before their responsibility to the people of New Hampshire. This kind of cynical political maneuvering puts our democracy in peril.

Both party’s ideological “purity” hyperbole must end if our nation will again aspire to true greatness by embracing its core principles of democracy, forbearance and compromise. New Hampshire, birthplace of Daniel Webster, should understand and revere the pragmatic value of forging a compromise even if that is, as one wag put it, “an agreement between all parties that none are happy with”.

One hundred and two years ago, the world was in the grip of the 1918 influenza pandemic, in which 195,000 Americans died in the single month of October during the second wave of that virus. Eighty-nine years ago, environmental damage transformed America’s “breadbasket” into a “dust bowl” and triggered the employment and economic collapse known as the Great Depression. Fifty-five years ago, riots erupted in Los Angeles and spread to D. C. in protest over the repeal of fair housing policies, unequal employment and housing opportunities for black America. Our country has seen these troubles before, but not all simultaneously as we do today. We must learn from our own history, and strive to do better and become our best selves.

Above all, I am a moderate who believes in democracy, and the principle that every native and naturalized American may participate in our de-

mocracy by voting (and voting only once!) Beware that small factions at every extreme are working hard to amplify and take advantage of the chaos of recent days. I dare you to become well-informed by subscribing to the views and news feeds of those who oppose your views, as well as those who reinforce them. There is only one verifiable truth, even though there is usually an element of truth in every point of view. Think with your head, not your “gut”. Put yourself in the other guy’s shoes, and see if your “truth” looks valid from that point of view. Could it really be truth if it changes relative to your viewpoint? Is all this really about “us” versus “them”? I think it must be about “we”!

This pandemic is not over by a long shot, nor will the equality issues that have bubbled up again from one hundred and fifty five years ago be solved overnight. We in Andover are disappointed that our Fourth of July celebration has been put on hold. But remember that the battle at Gettysburg also ended on July 4, and it was a somber turning point towards a new and better future. We should think of this date as a point when we turned our expectations anew toward becoming a great nation “with liberty and justice for all”, as Lincoln envisioned. Lincoln’s call reaches out not just to the divided nation of his day, but to us across the future as well, that we are charged to do our part for true Freedom for all of us by supporting democracy, “that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

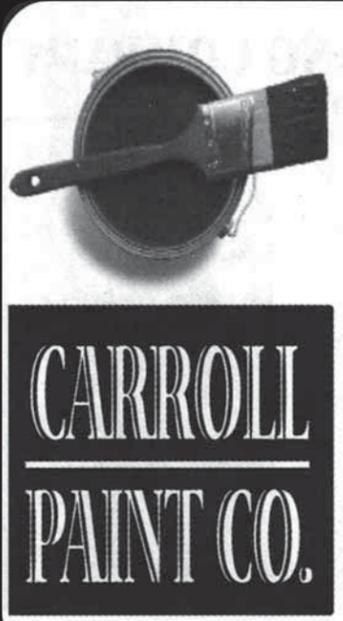
Be strong, but don’t be afraid to call for help if you need it. If you’d like to talk to me about anything that concerns you, or if you’d like to be part of the solution, you can reach me at 735-5756 or at [KenWells3@gmail.com](mailto:KenWells3@gmail.com).

**Concert from page 15**

Currier, who’ll be joining the August 2 concert. Their signature song, Hippie Hill, can be heard on the group’s website at [LindseySchustRaggedMtBand.com](http://LindseySchustRaggedMtBand.com).

Especially for the concert, Grace Schust has written a new gospel song called Slow Train, and Lindsey has written a love song called Parallel Lines.

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