

The bright promise of winter and political storms

NORTH CONWAY, N.H. — The snow, soft and silent, fell overnight, leaving this old ski village covered in white, recasting the landscape, altering the view, adjusting the mood, transforming the outlook. Now we know why the Aubuchon Hardware store over in nearby Center Ossipee has been advertising snow blowers, shovels, firewood and heating-stove pellets on its roadside sign. Now we know why the migratory birds have fled, the drizzles have had an icy edge, the storm warnings in these parts suddenly have taken on an air of peril.



DAVID M. SHRIBMAN

And while the winter solstice — traditionally regarded as the time the season changes — is still nearly three weeks away, meteorologists (and political scientists) have their own perspectives and calendars. “Meteorological winter” — yes, that’s a thing — officially began Friday. Political winter begins just about now as well. If the old crooner Andy Williams were still with us — he held a campaign event with Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in the very Los Angeles hotel where the 1968 presidential candidate would be shot three days later — he would tell us that we are now in “the most wonderful time of the year.”

At least, we political columnists feel that way.

In this new season, as Ralph Waldo Emerson, who knew these hills, put it in 1847, “the whited air/Hides hills and woods.” Though the snow provides a baby-powder application over the lake ice rime, writers and voters alike get to see the candidates with fresh clarity.

We also get to ponder one of the mysteries of winter life, along with why the planar surfaces of snowflakes defy any logical architecture or even explanation: the perennial, or rather quadrennial, question of why the American presidential election season begins in Iowa, where the average January low temperature is 6 degrees Fahrenheit in the town of Cresco, and here in New Hampshire, where the average January low temperature on Mount Washington is minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit. (The average low for the state capital of Concord, New Hampshire, for Jan. 23, the date of this year’s primary, is 10 degrees.)

But now the political season takes its cue, if not its rhythmic upbeat, from Frosty the Snowman, who, after all, was “alive as he could be.” And so, with the new perspective that winter brings, here is a look at the altered political landscape:

- Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida has won two important endorsements, one from Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds (a political force in her state) and another from Iowa evangelical leader Bob Vander Plaats (whose support has boosted the last three contested Republican Iowa caucus winners to victory). Those are important, and they both infuriate Donald Trump. DeSantis’ volunteers and paid staffers have knocked on nearly three-quarters of a million Iowa doors and have assembled some 30,000 commitments to support him in caucuses. But something feels hollow in the DeSantis campaign. He seems for all the world like the Tin Man of this season, lacking a heart and feeling. If he fails, it will be because voters sense that.

- Former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley is soaring right now, but the question is whether her campaign has a ceiling. Her moderate profile seems to resonate among traditional Republicans, but truly, how many traditional Republicans are there anymore? Among her supporters are the sort of people who used to be regarded as public influencers, but their influence hasn’t prevented Trump from maintaining his strong position despite 91 indictments, charges of rape, increasingly intemperate behavior and rhetoric, and the sort of post-election vision that terrifies even the old Republican establishment.

- Vivek Ramaswamy is moving rightward at supersonic speed. The other day, he scheduled an event at the Granite State Indoor Gun Range and Gun Shop in Hudson, New Hampshire, with a special offer: The first 50 people showing up were offered a free full-day pass at the range. (Helpful caveat: “This does not include weaponry, firearms, ammunition or safety equipment.”) Purpose of the event: Celebrate the Second Amendment, which he argues is the one that “gives teeth to every other amendment in the Constitution.” Ramaswamy is both enfant terrible and agent provocateur of the Republican undercard. He seems to be gunning to be Trump’s running mate. As a New Hampshire political observer put it to me: Why vote for Vivek Ramaswamy if you can have the real thing in Donald Trump?

- Former Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey is everyone’s favorite Trump basher, and he clearly has the range and intelligence to be an American president, but neither of those characteristics is a prerequisite for the nomination. Look for him to endorse Haley in the period between the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. Indeed, the two might team up just then and say they will run together, she for president, he for vice president, and consolidate their vote — and maybe appeal to some GOP undecideds.

- Trump remains the front-runner and the beneficiary of the Damon Runyon theory: “The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong, but that’s the way to bet.” Here’s one reason why: What would happen to the anti-Trump forces if DeSantis, who has made a deep investment in Iowa, does well there, while Haley, who is gathering support in New Hampshire, wins that state — and each comes in second in the other’s strong spot? Does that guarantee that the two of them continue in the race, essentially fighting each other rather than Trump, and as a result defeat each other and ensure the nomination of the man they both would like to see dethroned?

Every campaign has a mystery, and this one, along with the persistent appeal of Trump, is how the anti-Trump forces sort themselves out. All these candidates cannot continue their campaigns without assuring that they all lose.

Now a meteorological update: That early snow that hugged the trees and garlanded the mountains here — the “frolic architecture of the snow,” in Emerson’s characterization — was beautiful to behold. But then the snow turned to rain, and the roads were clogged with sloppy residue that in some spots was impassable.

What started out with wintry promise — how bright the white, how festive the scene through the frosted windows! — turned out to be a forbidding mess. The road ahead was obscure until the slush was cleared away. So, too, with the Republican presidential field in Iowa and here in New Hampshire.

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Letters to the Editor

Veterans program was very compelling

To the Editor:
I would like to thank DeKalb High School staff and students for the awesome Veterans convo.
The speaker from Wounded Warriors was very compelling. Every detail from the posting of the colors by Post 97 of Auburn, the patriotic songs by the DHS choir, the pledge and Taps were very heartwarming.
What we found the most touching was the total attentiveness of the student body and the greetings and handshakes from them afterward. Well done Barons.

**Jon and Sharon Payne
Auburn**

When one door closes another opens

To the Editor:
As Commissioner Watson put it “Voting no to solar may have closed the door to opportunity” or his first version, before pulling the article from the paper to revise, “County will suffer from denial of solar project”. The substance of his letter did not change but the tone was softened. Is that what happened? Did we tell the world that DeKalb is not open for business? Perhaps, instead, a line was drawn telling the state, country, and world that we will not support ill-conceived wealth transfer schemes, that we will not sit idly by as our officials feed us the states marching orders, and that DeKalb is open for sustainable growth and responsible business that benefits the people!

A couple truths to consider. The Ag community was not targeted during the solar discussions. As a matter of fact, most of our biggest supporters were hard working farmers. This fight was about the protection of all DeKalb citizens. We, Stop Solar, were not calling people loudmouths or one-acre Karens, we were not the ones stealing signs, and we were not the ones perpetuating unrest. I personally had things left under my mailbox, neighbors drove by with children on flat beds screaming at me, and someone started fake dating profiles with my commissioner announcement photo and used them to say lewd things to women in our county. Any way you spin this no one lost property rights. I checked. You can do with your land exactly what you could before solar. No one lost money on land, in fact they have been receiving payments for years on options to lease. The land value remains as it was before solar or possibly increased due to other market factors. The problem is phrasing, and Commissioner Watson, as a true politician, is good at it. A question to consider, when is a local official no longer working for the people? At what point, how many boards, how many positions until the only thing left is a politician?

Consider the following quote,

“Every taxpayer in DeKalb County will pay more in property taxes than they would have if the project had been approved”. Commissioner Watson fought for abatements for the solar companies going so far as to be the middleman and scheduling to meet individually for their agenda. The abatements would have made the taxpayers worse off yet Commissioner Watson fought for them. As it currently stands nothing has changed. Consider another, “The opinions of many were ignored or drowned out by louder voices”. Stop Solar DeKalb has approximately 1200 followers on Facebook. Sculpin Solar has 55. I believe the voices and opinions of the people were served.

Commissioner Todd Sanderson and Commissioner Bill Hartman listened to both sides of the argument, deserve a thank you, and should be commended on standing up to protect this county.

**Andrew Provinces
Butler**

Would Jesus identify with Cultural Marxism (wokeness)?

To the Editor:
Cultural Marxists claim biblical Christians lack love and tolerance.
The Cultural Marxist understanding of love and tolerance demands affirmation of unbiblical sexual behaviors, supporting the delusions of unstable individuals, and submission of children to the State for indoctrination.
It is fundamentally anti-Christian.
Here are some fundamental differences between biblical Christianity and Cultural Marxism:
• Christianity upholds God’s moral law as revealed in Scripture as the standard of behavior. It exposes man’s sin and the universal need for forgiveness and spiritual cleansing. Cultural Marxism denies God’s moral law and the authority of Scripture. It applauds sinful behavior.
• Christianity reveals men as image-bearers of God whose purpose is to be conformed to the image of Christ. Cultural Marxists claim men define their own identities through their interpretation of their lived experiences.
• Christianity teaches radical corruption occurred in the Fall. Man is unwilling and unable to liberate himself from spiritual bondage to sin. Cultural Marxists believe oppression of the hegemonic system enslaves humanity. Achieving critical consciousness provides liberation.
• Christianity teaches true liberty is found in the pursuit of virtue by the regenerate man in union with Christ. Cultural Marxism promotes autonomous freedom, which includes freedom to pursue evil.
• Christianity views favoritism and abuse based upon ethnicity as sin. Cultural Marxism views favoritism toward the oppressed class and abuse toward the oppressor class as virtuous.
• Christianity upholds individual

property rights and values diligence and wise stewardship. Generosity is encouraged. Cultural Marxists demand forceful redistribution of property, power and privilege by the State to achieve equity without respect for individual merit.

- Christianity views men as individuals with virtues and vices. Cultural Marxists group men into woke-defined oppressor or oppressed classes based upon immutable characteristics like skin tone and ethnicity.

- Christianity teaches universal corruption by sin through the Fall. This corruption manifests itself in acts of malice and evil. Cultural Marxism categorizes those deemed as oppressors as uniquely evil and those deemed as oppressed as uniquely virtuous.

- Christianity teaches alienation from God, other men, nature, and the body occurred at the Fall. Cultural Marxism claims alienation is due to deprivation of wealth, power, and privilege by the hegemonic system.

- Christianity teaches male family leadership (patriarchy). Cultural Marxism rejects male family leadership and undermines the natural family, the bedrock of society.

- Christianity values children as gifts from the Lord and views abortion as murder. Cultural Marxism views children as burdensome and considers abortion as reproductive justice.

- Christianity acknowledges biology as a revelation of God’s will, with the bodies of male and female designed to interact with one another sexually and uniquely equipped to care for their offspring. Cultural Marxists reject these truths. Their rejection is reflected in practices like gender affirmation procedures conforming the appearance of the person’s body to their delusion and the promotion of male breastfeeding.

- Christianity trusts God for guidance, provision and protection. Cultural Marxists trust the State and the elite class.

- Christianity maintains an eternal perspective of justice. Cultural Marxists maintain a temporal perspective of justice. This perspective justifies acts of violence to achieve political objectives.

Cultural Marxists demand universal affirmation of their ideology across the nation. They demand the right to indoctrinate all children into wokeness and gender ideology. Non-affirming parents are threatened with removal of children. Pastors face potential criminal charges related to hate speech for counseling members on these matters.

The Biden administration and the Democrat Party have allied with the left in enacting these objectives.

See my blog at christiannewsjunkie.com (no hyphens) for an expanded version of this letter.

**Robert Sparkman
Rome City**