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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Does Paul Revere belong in the Fourth of July parade?

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 Messages about our upcoming elections in a community  
3 celebration are uncomfortable — but patriotic and necessary

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 I HAVE RECENTLY encountered some polite, yet  
6 transparently concealed, expressions of discomfort with the  
7 inclusion of the Defend Our Vote (DOV) project of Greater Falls  
8 Indivisible in the Saxtons River Fourth of July parade this year.

9 While I take exception, I nevertheless appreciate the  
10 concern.

11 In the context of our supercharged polarized context,  
12 calling attention to the very real possibility that one side of this  
13 toxic duality — President Trump and his MAGA minions — could  
14 very likely reprise their shameful Jan. 6 insurrection attempt in  
15 this November’s midterm election is contrary to the holiday’s  
16 typical celebratory character.

17 In the latter’s scenario, we are a nation of freedom,  
18 equality, justice, and democracy for all — incontrovertible norms  
19 enjoyed by every citizen — rather than the challenged, often  
20 contradictory works-in-progress they have always been. They are  
21 never more so than they are at present.

22 Not only do I get it, but there is part of me that is not  
23 unsympathetic to their concern.

24 I remember the mixed feelings I experienced a few years  
25 ago when, during one of the annual Strolling of the Heifers  
26 events in Brattleboro, a group of courageous Brattleboro Union  
27 High School student activists laid down in the middle on the  
28 street, bringing the parade to a sudden halt.

29 They provided dramatic attention to the gathering about  
30 their legitimate concerns around the climate crisis. As the founder  
31 of and activist with Post Oil Solutions, I couldn’t help but  
32 resonate with feelings of solidarity for my younger comrades.

33 At the same time, however, I was not able to dismiss the  
34 anger voiced by those — especially parents whose children were  
35 visibly upset — by the day of fun and joy that had been  
36 unexpectedly and alarmingly interrupted. Though not my primary  
37 concern at that moment, this did not make theirs any less valid  
38 and worthy of being recognized as such by me.

39 \* \* \*

40 AS IT IS WITH most things in life, the question of the DOV  
41 contingent’s legitimacy in a Fourth of July parade does not have a  
42 simplistic, black-and-white answer. There are credible positions  
43 by all concerned; however, they may be judged by one side  
44 about the other. All I can do is make my decision based upon my  
45 values, and lay them out for others to consider.

46 As I was discussing this issue recently with a friend, I  
47 spontaneously blurted out with the notion that DOV enjoyed a  
48 modest kinship with Paul Revere. Minus the fact that our attempt  
49 to awaken people isn't occurring in the middle of the night and  
50 certainly doesn't involve riding a horse, it seemed to me that the  
51 project was attempting to alert the citizenry that the fascists were  
52 coming to shanghai the heart of a functioning democracy: free  
53 and honest elections.

54 Trump and his minions are engaging in the very  
55 corruption they accuse their opponents of: devising ways to  
56 suppress our votes and steal the election. This is precisely why  
57 DOV is encouraging our fellow citizens to "be aware and be  
58 prepared," as our slogan suggests.

59 This especially includes what happens on Nov. 3 and the  
60 days thereafter. If the blue wave materializes — as polls  
61 increasingly indicate is possible — and if the House and Senate  
62 acquire Democrat majorities, Trump would be facing the very  
63 real prospect of impeachment, conviction, and loss of the  
64 presidency.

65 Do any of us believe that our malignant narcissistic,  
66 Christ-impersonating president, when confronted with such a  
67 fate, would just fold his tent and quietly walk away?

68 To entertain such belief would necessitate either being  
69 an incurable true believer of the MAGA faith or one suffering  
70 acute amnesia about Jan. 6. It would require being blind to the  
71 serial efforts he has been engaged in during the last of 18 months  
72 to suppress, obstruct, and otherwise fix November's midterm  
73 election.

74 \* \* \*

75 TO CONSIGN THE FOURTH to a celebration of democracy's  
76 virtues without including expressions of opposition and  
77 resistance to authoritarian efforts to undermine those same  
78 blessings — especially its foundation, the right of every citizen to  
79 freely exercise their franchise — directly contradicts the

80 democracy we're otherwise exalting and trying to restore to some  
81 semblance of reality.

82 As it is in so many other instances in life, democracy is  
83 real and alive only when we the people go beyond the  
84 platitudinous rhetoric of the Fourth: to act and be truth to power,  
85 standing up for our virtues when they're under assault.

86 As they are today.

87 Yes, the Defend Our Vote project will be a modest, yet  
88 necessary presence on the streets of Saxtons River this July 4,  
89 joining with and providing a living instance of the other  
90 celebratory expressions of democracy.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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

91 **TIM STEVENSON** ([bereal@vermontel.net](mailto:bereal@vermontel.net)) is a  
92 community organizer with Post Oil Solutions and is the author of  
93 *Resilience and Resistance: Building Sustainable Communities for*  
94 *a Post Oil Age* (Green Writers Press) and *Transformative Activism:*  
95 *A Values Revolution in Everyday Life in a Time of Societal*  
96 *Collapse* (Apocryphile Press). He is working on a book about  
97 mutual care communities.

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

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