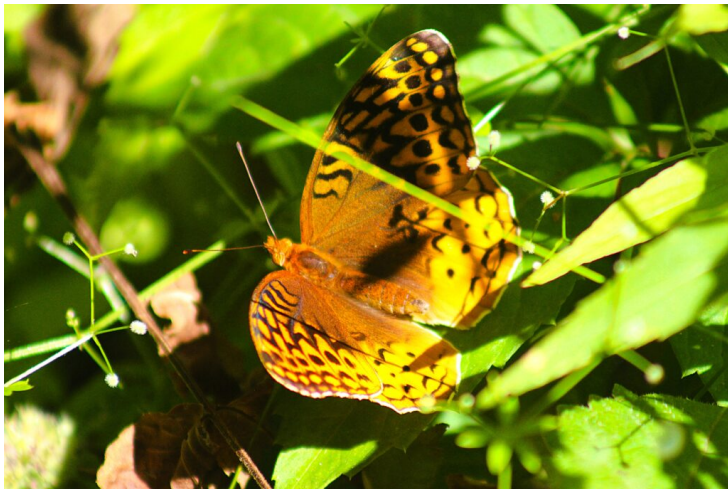


List, what list? Nothing to see here, folks



By Nate Smelle

A good friend recently asked me why I spend so much time writing about U.S. president Donald Trump instead of focusing on Canadian politics. He then suggested that the more time the media spends talking about him the more powerful he becomes. Acknowledging that I agreed with him that the reality TV show host and American Commander-in-Chief shares many similarities with Pennywise, the demonic evil clown from author Stephen King's novel *It*? a character that gains power by inspiring fear through kidnapping, torturing, and murdering children? I said I needed some time to think about his question before answering.

Well, I have thought about it for a few weeks now, and I'm ready to dig in deeper. However, before we get out our shovels, I should mention that I did not need time to come up with a response because it was the first time I had contemplated his question. Unfortunately, in this twisted reality we find ourselves in, this is a question I find myself asking far too often. For this reason, when I sit down to write this column each week I now begin brainstorming with a different question in mind: what is the most important thing happening in the world today that deserves a closer look?

As I have said in the past, most weeks my focus dials in on the government and/or the weather. Reporting in the age of global heating, one would be hard-pressed to find another issue that deserves more attention than the ongoing climate emergency. Not a week goes by where this hard truth is not solidified. The torrential rains that caused the Guadalupe River in Texas to rise nearly 29 feet in less than an hour on July 4? not to mention the 130+ lives washed away in these fatal flash floods? underscore the urgency of this crisis.

At the same time, in a world with so many nations at war, it would also be an injustice to look the other way when Israeli forces shoot dead 92 people while they are trying to access food, and Russian rockets are continuing to rain down on Ukrainian civilians every day.

We also live in a community, a country, and a world where the unhoused population is growing in numbers faster than the political will to build affordable housing. And don't forget that this is the same world where the greediest among us are uplifted and rewarded for their exploitation of the poorest and most vulnerable. In the end this simple but disturbing truth is, and arguably always has been, the biggest story between the lines.

Having invested so much time in shining a spotlight on the inherent corruption and racism that defines Trump's MAGA cult? and I am not using the word 'cult' lightly or for shock value? it is not a stretch or out of line in any way to acknowledge the ruinous influence of this tiny-handed tyrant has had on this world-altering intersection of crises.

Now, I could talk about how Trump has been the inspiration behind the rise of far-right fascist and white supremacist groups, or the spreading of anti-democratic disinformation and hate-fueled conspiracy theories worldwide. Or I could talk about how the MAGA cult has promoted ignorance over science in the face of an unprecedented and catastrophic climate disaster that is unfolding before our eyes.

We could also take a look at how many lives have been lost in Ukraine and Palestine as a result of Trump's cozy relationship with dictators such as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu and Russian President Vladimir Putin. What about those killed or in the line of fire of the murderous "Big, Beautiful Bill" that snatches away health-care from millions of Americans, while stealing food, water, and life-saving medicine from the mouths of another 14,000,000+ people worldwide?

Although all these atrocities are being committed on the daily with the lights on, somehow under Trump the new American oligarchy responsible for these crimes are getting away with overseeing the largest wealth transfer from working class people to the greediest billionaires on the planet, while adding nearly \$3.4 trillion to the nation's deficits. Again, another HUGE story!

Nevertheless, we have taken many deep dives into each of these issues and still the MAGA base does not seem to mind that their health and livelihoods are being compromised, as they are being robbed blind by billionaires who already have more money than they could ever spend.

As infuriating as their willful ignorance may be, recently there have been signs of hope that some Republicans are starting to see through the illusion Trump has masterfully fooled his supporters into believing. Ironically, the world's greediest billionaire, Elon Musk, planted a seed in the minds of MAGA followers when he accused Trump "the man he donated a whopping \$288-million to during the 2024 presidential campaign less than a year ago" of being on the client list of his notorious rapist friend Jeffrey Epstein, who was charged with sex-trafficking minors in 2019.

How does that old saying by singer Billie Eilish go? Something about "Birds of a feather sticking together"? Anyways, as much as Trump would like this scandal to go away, it is difficult to look in any other direction when a person as "wealthy" and "powerful" as Musk publicly implies that the President of the United States is a pedophile.

Why is it that if Donald Trump "arguably the most litigious "human being" on the planet" has not sued the "richest" man in history, Elon Musk, after he openly accused him of being at the very least connected to sex crimes with children?

No matter where you have stood on The Donald and all he represents in the past, this entire predicament he now finds himself in is highly suspicious. That said, with all that we know now, if you still happen to find yourself defending Trump you likely need to switch the brand of Kool-Aid you've been drinking ASAP.

As Stephen Stills of the iconic band Buffalo Springfield once warned a previous generation: "There's something happening here. But what it is ain't exactly clear. There's a man with a gun over there, telling me I got to beware. I think it's time we stop children, what's that sound? Everybody look, what's going down."

While Trump would like us all to believe that there is nothing to see here, only a fool "or someone who does not believe pedophiles deserve to be punished" would not question the evidence he is desperately trying to suppress.