

SCRAPBOOK
FOR A
CRISIS

危機

Danger

Crucial moments

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INTRODUCTION

Our troubles in 2025 are much, much bigger than during Trump's last years in office. Even last time many assumed from the beginning that, at minimum, the United States had made a disastrous choice. Fast forward to January 6th 2020: many, many more of us agreed that by allowing Trump to have a hand in government, this country had plunged itself neck deep into a Constitutional Crisis. The worst guesses of 2016 had come true.

Mind you, 2016's election was enough to prompt the very first of these pamphlets . . . It was mailed within a month of Trump's victory.

But compared to now, back then, three months into Trump's first term, our difficulties were minimal.

Last time we began protesting in January, wearing pink "pussy" hats because we assumed women's reproductive rights were at risk, but one could still hope that a legal precedent 40 years old would stand. It didn't.

This time, the scale of assaults on our pre-existing realities is so HUGE it has taken us most of three months even to work out how to frame our mobilization. The national Day of Action, HANDS OFF, is April 5. By the time this reaches you, we will know what transpired. No matter where it falls on the spectrum of grand —>to —> futile, our delay in "coming out" I believe is due simply to not knowing how to grapple with the scale of the troubles confronting us today. The list below is no more than a sketch.

Last time there was a Moslem ban.

This time Venezuelans were deported within days, destined for cruelty in a notorious Salvadoran jail, in violation of a direct court order from a Federal judge. The list of countries being considered for an immigration ban is huge, adding African and Afro Caribbean peoples to the existing anti-Moslem ban.

Not to mention vitriolic attacks and threats of deportation leveled at huge parts of the "approved immigrant" and the undocumented labor force on which our entire economy depends, with whom many of us have very close relationships.

Not to mention intimidating public arrests of college students by unidentifiable, masked Immigration officers.

Last time there were tariffs against China — with catastrophic results for US farmers which we taxpayers had to mitigate by increasing already bloated government farm subsidies.

This time the tariffs are global, but even worse, they are also intensely local, aimed at our closest neighbors, particularly our biggest trading partner Mexico.

Not to mention the vulgar and insulting way Trump describes Canada as a "51st State."

Last time there were no strategically significant wars, though Israeli attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank were going unchallenged. The worst Trump could do back then was to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem. In 2016 he was already tightly aligned with Putin so his 2025 abandonment of Ukraine is no surprise.

This time there's the war in Gaza and the massive intensification of assaults by Settlers in the West Bank. Trump's stance? He talks about beachfront hotels and about settling Palestinians "somewhere else."

Not to mention the adverse consequences of that war on universities in the USA, as ardent zionists fire up Trump's pre-existing anti-intellectualism to mount an assault some of the oldest campuses in this country.

Last time Trump arranged a White House photo-op of himself in the cab of an 18 wheeler.

This time, the man who cannot stop raving against electric cars gave a sales pitch for Tesla in the White House driveway.

Not to mention dismantling environmental regulations as fast as he can. And dismantling safety controls on the US financial system. And dismantling DEI, those terms now spoken in derisive tones by anyone aiming for power in Washington DC.

**Added to all of the above
Greenland and Panama,
a Cabinet that including Robert Kennedy, chosen for its TV good looks,
extortion of major law firms, defiant responses to Federal Court Orders
PLUS Elon Musk.**

I am in no state to create a standard pamphlet, in which I craft a sequence of coherent, carefully formulated essays with appropriate images and snappy connecting lines.

So I am calling this a Scrapbook. It consists of snapshots, souvenirs of a few salient experiences, samples of standpoints I have adopted over the last few months. Big issues and the mundane parts of life are intermingled. Some days are fine. Others not at all. These items, in no particular order are on a list that grows almost every day.

Alternative places to go shopping
A dream
Malcolm's invitation to talk politics
Join or Die, the movie
Shame and embarrassment
Alternative international sporting events
Rotary Youth Exchange
1945 and 2025
Tend to your health

Cassandra
Varieties of action
Tikkun Olam
Insurance, FEMA and the climate
Joanna Macy & Despair Work
Making Lemon Curd is easy
California Maritime Academy
.....

A recent prophetic(?) dream

It started with me in the middle of a conversation in an airport seating area. The place was comfortable but the conversation revealed sharply differing views on public issues between me and the other person. Soon were heading over to board our plane.

AMAZINGLY there, on a side wall, of the airport, hanging nose down, is Air Force One. From my seat Air Force One is on my left. I can hear the engines revving pretty hard.



Clearly it's going to try to take off from that position. It roars down the wall. and crashes at once.

Next I am at the scene of the disaster, trying to find a pair of shoes to protect this guy from the broken glass. The guy? Donald Trump. (In my waking life I have been doing disaster response training through the Berkeley Fire Dept. Hence my focus on shoes and broken glass).

After I wake up, I realize that my job now and into the future is to keep focused on repair & recovery once the damage stops. I cannot prevent bad things happening but there will be plenty to do, perhaps even quite soon.

Already I should be offering shoes to people at risk of stepping on broken glass. For the future, I have some of the skills we will need when it is time to sweep up. Tikkun Olam

Cassandra

She's been an icon of mine since PhD days, a model of ways to keep aware and awake even in dangerous times. She's commonly described as cursed because her accurate foresight of events ahead was ignored in the besieged city of Troy.

Foresight is not a curse, and Cassandra, like my other icons in the Cold War Years, refused to succumb to fear of our own fearsome future. FDR offered the USA the very same gift. "There is nothing to fear except fear itself."

For us nowadays there remains nothing to fear except fear itself



I have just learned that Lemon Curd is SOOO easy to make I have always loved the taste. My mother not so much. I

never could persuade her to buy it at the local church fete. Now I have friends with a glut of lemons. This is California after all. Turns out making lemon curd takes about 10 minutes: eggs, lemon juice, lemon zest and sugar. Amazing. In this time of heightened stress, I am delighted that I have a new skill, and delighted that it scratches an old itch

In this crisis, fresh moments of joy seem particularly joyful.

Things can improve if friends make good suggestions. Here's one we recently followed up on. Watching *JOIN OR DIE* ... the movie

Do you remember the book *Bowling Alone*? It had a lot of press about twenty years ago and added the term "Social Capital" to our civic vocabulary.

In brief, the book says Democracy in the USA is endangered in part because far fewer of us are members of "voluntary associations" (de Toqueville's term) than used to be as recently as the 1960s. The result: we are short of Social Capital. Our problem is older and considerably deeper than Trump.

Bowling Alone's author Robert Putnam holds the center of **Join Or Die**, but it's a rich and enjoyable story that resonated particularly easily with us Evergreen State College faculty, who spent nearly 50 years living, teaching and learning in collaborative communities.

The "Die" part of the title is mostly focused on our fragile democracy but nods also towards the quite widely accepted finding that the human lifespan gets shorter the lonelier we are. For nearly 10 years UK governments, both Tory and Labor, have taken steps to tackle the health effects of loneliness. Their preferred remedy? Action in and by charitable and service groups.

If you need an evening's worth of guidance about steps worth taking to save our democracy, watching that movie will provide.

After nearly five years in the Berkeley Rotary, I can testify to joining's ability to get me out doing things I am sure will make a difference. I have a bunch of new friends too. **There's a pleasurable version of peace that only shows up in community.**

Alternative Shopping

And no I don't mean organic

My divorce from **Amazon** was gradual. Whole Foods never, once Bezos bought it. Amazon less and less often and never for books for at least 5 years.

Soon after COVID there was something I needed that I could easily get at a nearby **Walmart**, a place I'd never shopped at even online let alone in the store. Prejudiced against for several "good" reasons plus at least one bad one —class. I was a **Target** shopper not Walmart. That day, inside the local store, I saw a negative side of myself for what it was, and I met a whole bunch of exceptionally helpful and friendly staff. Ever since, when I need Amazon-style online shopping, I do it via Walmart. That company gives real people real jobs in a real place that I can visit in person. Since Target's dramatic and public retreat on inclusive hiring and sourcing, I have stopped shopping there too. Not a boycott exactly, more a decision to walk the walk.

An extra good reason to shop at Walmart came up last week.

Chrissy Walton bought a full page Public/Civic ad in the New York Times. Non-partisan of course with

words are too small for you to read here but the statue gives you a good clue.



Shame and Embarrassment Inside and outside

I live two lives these days, the me that faces inwards into the United States and the me that seeks out family, friends and colleagues around the world.

When I think inwardly my reactions blend sadness with some variety of outrage/anger. How can anyone be so cruel, so crude, so corrupt and self serving? What must life be like now for all those whose work, livelihoods, families and prospects are in upheaval?

Since I truly believe that meeting Trump's hatred of "losers" with a hatred of my own would only add damage to damage, I do my best to limit the outrage. It's a better use of my energies to focus on protecting the impacted and preparing projects that repair the damage already done.

Growing up in the UK after World War II gives one confidence that a society can recover from terrible damage. Of course acknowledging that, my comparison breaks down in a key area — they had a unity we lack. The organizations mobilizing for April 5 have chosen a good name to demonstrate they have a similar vision: **Indivisible**.

If Malcolm invites you to join him in a conversation about politics — Accept. So alarmed was I about Trump today that I was dreading having to talk to my son about our realities. Instead I came away agreeing that many of us share his two key assumptions about what is right and possible: Like him, these many believe in the equality of all people and they also hold a fundamental trust that others will do good for the world.

When I look outside, when I am direct contact with friends in Canada, with family in the UK, or traveling last month in Japan, I feel deep shame.

The damage my homeland is wreaking on the world is immeasurable. We, I and the likeminded in these United States, worked hard to defeat Trump, but we failed.

Decades of international collaboration and trust are being destroyed by a willful and shockingly advised child/leader, aided and abetted by oligarch billionaires. This photo, taken at Trump's inauguration says it so clearly: A line-up of self-important tech boys, driven indoors by weather too cold to tolerate, but also confident that together they now own the power track.



A "who's who" of tech elites settled into the V.I.P. seats at President Trump's inauguration. Photo by Julia Demaree Robinson

To Malcolm's two key values: Equality and Trust, I add a third: all humanity and the planet we live on are interdependent.

Since COVID, given its risks to people with uncontrolled blood pressure, I've measured mine every day. Ideal levels for Americans my age are said to be about 120/80 and with the right meds I used to be able to get close most days. These days my numbers are distinctly higher. There's a gap for the dates in January when we were in Japan but the message is clear.

I'm suffering a Trump health effect and it's not a good one. My doc increased the meds and the situation has improved but those numbers are evidence: There is a Trump health cost. For the millions of Americans who risk losing Medicaid, Federal jobs, Veterans benefits and other support, the risks are much, much higher.

In these times, tend to your health

The sense of disaster eases somewhat after going somewhere new, seeing something one had no idea even existed.

Last week I was at the California Maritime Academy. I'd seen the sign off the I-80 Freeway but had no idea what it signified. Turns out it's a College for trainee engine-room and "deck" maritime professionals as well as for oceanographers — biological, chemical etc.; part of the State University system and also part of the Federal/Coast Guard Licensing system. Our tour guides, both women, were a joy to behold, and the campus itself inspiring. In one room they were learning plumbing and welding. In another room they simulate running a steam engine, the kind that powers a ship or an electricity-generating turbine, or a single building's heating system. Most fun of all, the "bridge" simulator where we ourselves could take the wheel . . . I took us through the harbor in Honolulu. The Federal Job Scare has had an impact on some students; despite that they were full of energy, commitment and the aspiration to do good work.

The Cold War, the daily threat of nuclear annihilation, the bombastic accusations sent back and forth across the Iron Curtain, initiated me into the politics of terror and despair.

For a few days in 1961, thanks to the Cuban Missile Crisis, my 13 year old self was checking the news hourly . . . had the attack begun? Years later, as a young parent I knew I had to do something.

In 1977, Joanna Macy began teaching ways to redirect the immobilizing power of despair. Our generation of activists learned how to meet our despair, to experience it fully and then to redirect its power, mobilizing ourselves to act.

Once again there are all too many reasons to despair, forcing us to look at despair face to face. I find I am ready once more to say . . . "not now. I have to get to work."

Joanna Macy spelled out both theory and practice in *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age*.

Working on despair in a group is what she recommends: Chapter 5, page 87 there's a design for a Despair Workshop. Get a group together, do a workshop together and allow the opportunities for action to emerge.

In these momentous times one possibility emerging is that the ship of capitalism, currently steering us into environmental catastrophe, may changing course. US hegemony losing control of the bridge could enable the ship to head off in new and better directions.

Like Cassandra, Joanna Macy opens our eyes to the internal barriers that inhibit our actions. Set go of despair. A Great Turning may be underway.



Cal Maritime's Ship — The Golden Bear

Tuesday April 2 2025: Trump was rattling his electoral and tariff swords and I was getting a filling done. My dentist was also setting the temporary for a molar crown, so I spent an hour in quite local discomfort. That's what life is like at the moment. Mundane and massively disruptive at the very same moment. Every day is like that.

This evening we're quasi baby-sitting our cold-ridden grandson . . . he's in the front house and we're right behind in ours. He's wrapped up in his Ipad with a pile of Kleenex beside him while his parents and sister have dinner with friends nearby. I'm writing about major upheavals in the world around us. Every 20 minutes or Rob checks in on the kid. This is our first attempt at this version of care. We guessed it would work because he's so at ease wandering back here when he wants to connect. This evening he hasn't felt any need.

Also this evening I've been ploughing through admin in my work as Rotary Youth Exchange Chair for this part of Central Northern California. There's an important zoom meeting tomorrow where we pin down plans for the kids coming here — ours are from Poland and Slovakia, France and Taiwan. Given what I fear about near-term upheavals in Taiwan, that particular exchange is both mundane and tinged with intensity.

The Rotary Exchange system, about 7000 kids strong, is maintained entirely by volunteer organizers and hosts, with skilled support from travel agents and insurance companies. It exemplifies the magnificence inherent in global interdependence, the power of trust, the excitement in uncertain futures and so much more.

Like many other projects these days, we just hope it doesn't capture Trump's or Musk's attention. Because yes we need government too, as Rotary has done for nigh on 100 years. When students travel across frontiers for a whole year, they need a Visa. For the USA it is a J1, same as the college and grad students now being deported. Tomorrow we'll be talking about host families and bedrooms, schools and orientations, for ours going away and theirs coming here. We won't even mention the word visa if we don't have to.



DISTRICT 5160 ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

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1945 v. 2025

Setting aside the tariff furor, Trump has been saying and doing some simply terrible things in the international arena. Even before the Ukraine war he was capitulating to Putin and even before October 7 he was ready to give Netanyahu a pass. Trump gave himself permission to be rude to Zelinsky on live television. Then he sent JD Vance to be at least as rude to European leaders at their annual Security Conference.

Trump's obsessive talk about Greenland and Panama and Canada . . . places he alleges are or should become part of the USA is appalling. However, here Trump is not far off US traditions, most directly Andrew Jackson, the President who aggressively stripped these US lands out of the hands of their rightful Indian owners.

Trump in his election campaign kept saying that he would bring peace to Ukraine within days, and that he would bring peace to Gaza too. In office he has made it clear that there will be no US help in making peace unless the US is a direct beneficiary, metals from Ukraine and beachfront Trump hotels on the Mediterranean. I could write a rather bitter essay about similar dynamics in 1945, the US government joining the "Allied" war effort only after its long term economic and security interests were assured. Once the fighting ended in 1945, US corporations and the US military spread across the world, taking control of bases, factories and retail in war weakened economies. Roosevelt had insisted via the Atlantic Charter that there would be no US military aid without Europe's commitment to decolonization. Who was ready to step into the likely resulting power vacuum? Why the USA of course.

From that part of me which still sees international relations with a European eye, the truly new element for 2025 is that Trump makes no attempt at all to disguise his definition of US national self interest.

What hope is there in all of this? My sense is "it's too early to tell." But for sure the dynamics of international relations have been transformed.

And yet, they were already changing fast, well before our catastrophic election: China and India reshaping world affairs by sheer weight of numbers. Russia doing its part with brazen violence. Aggressive military and territorial claims creating anguish in Palestine and in Ukraine, and threatening to do so as well in Taiwan.

Trump's contribution to the situation? Vulgarly and crudeness in what was already a turbulent and dangerous situation. China is totally prepared to step right into the international power vacuum Trump has opened up.

How does this end?

It doesn't of course. Ours is just the latest iteration, the latest manifestation of society, government, family and foe, varieties of which have existed for as long as humans have inhabited this planet.

What happens now has consequences for the future.

Our experiences right now are the consequence of events now done, some recent, some hundreds of years ago.

In search of a shorthand way of bringing past, present and future into the same place, many of us toss around the Buddhist word Karma, for its implication that if we are suffering now, we brought that suffering on ourselves through our actions in the past. If we are to ease suffering in the future we must act now.

It is not clear to me that Trump has the slightest idea that his actions might be driven by Karma. Neither does he know that, based on karmic theory, his actions bode poorly for us for some time into the future.

Tenzin Palmo, the founder of a Buddhist monastery for women in the Tibetan tradition in Northern India, keeps coming back to me, specifically her assertion that to have been born a human in these times is such good luck. Not that it puts us in a high place. No it's good luck because to be born a human is to be endowed with consciousness, the capacity to be aware and to notice where we are and what we are doing, And to be born human is to be able to learn how to be awake and aware for the sake of all beings, for the sake of the whole world.

Official dramas in Washington DC are repellent enough that I have sharply reduced the amount of time I spend being aware of "news," and also changed my news sources. The mix is more Bloomberg —international and long view — and much less New York Times. This leaves me with more time to devote to other things though I haven't constructed an ideal mix yet. In the background the wires are humming. Newly constructed groups of concerned citizens are chattering via email. Email not Signal or Whats App which shows how old we all are. I am helping to reawaken the Bunting sisterhood of Fellows, still functioning 30 plus years after those amazing times when we could work side by side at Radcliffe.

My care for the world remains strong: as strong as it was when I worked on the Nuclear Freeze, as strong as it was when we joined the Community for Interfaith Celebration, as strong as it became in the first of our many visits to Japan. My love of being alive is present too.

As Joanna Macy urges us to remember: all living beings, humans included are born with a powerful survival instinct. At some moments I fear that our collective and individual survival instincts are no longer unimpaired. Tonight life feels rather tranquil. Trump's tariffs tomorrow will bring more chaos and disruption.

EARTHQUAKES AND ERUPTIONS ARE NORMAL

Our Planet is alive as well and it too has a powerful survival instinct.

Eruptions on the Big Island in Hawai'i are great teachers.
The small earthquakes and red hot bursts of lava are exciting
The big ones wipe out places I've been: communities, schools, houses and shops.
Those who live on the Island know the earth is breathing.
When it breathes deeply the lava flows



Lava flowing into the sea. Photo by Kathleen T Carr.

International chaos, autocratic leaders, China ready to step in where the USA is no more, those too are forms of planetary deep breathing. Red hot economic lava is flowing out of control. Wherever it settles, like lava it will build new land, and perhaps new opportunities to build different kinds of economic relationships.

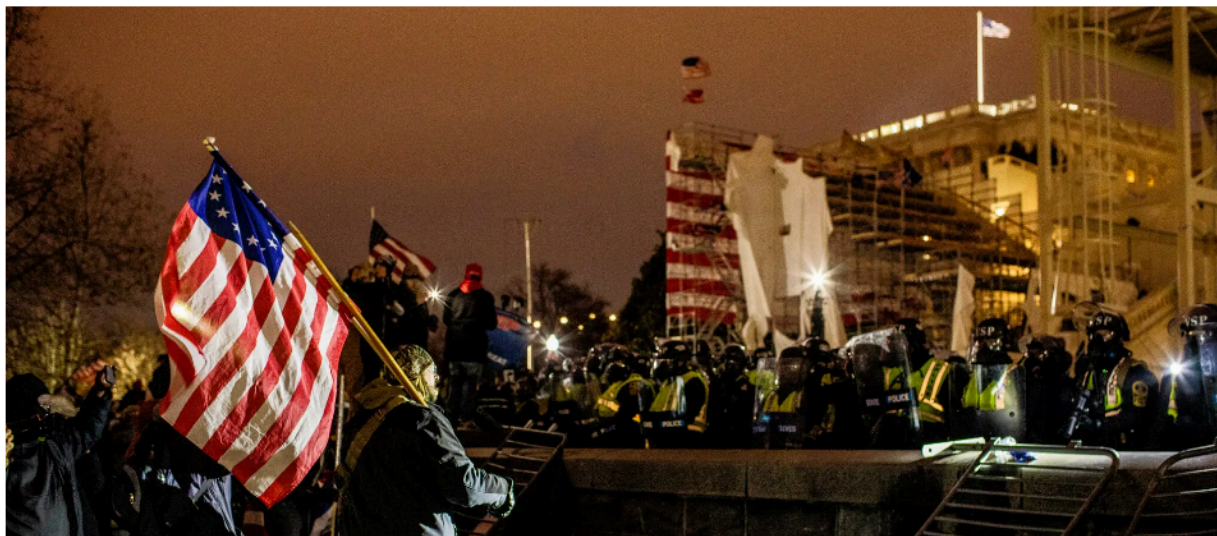
My personal yearning — that those crafting new relationships are fully aware of and guided by Climate Change. Now that Mr. Climate-Denying Trump has taken himself out of the global conversation, there might be opportunities for others to make Climate Change a priority once again.

'A Betrayal, a Mockery': Police Express Outrage Over Trump's Jan. 6 Pardons

More than 150 officers from the Capitol Police and the D.C. police were injured when a pro-Trump mob stormed the Capitol four years ago.

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U.S. Markets Plunge From Shock of Trump's New Tariffs

LIVE Just Now

S&P 500 Drops 4% as Scale of Trade Disruption Sinks In

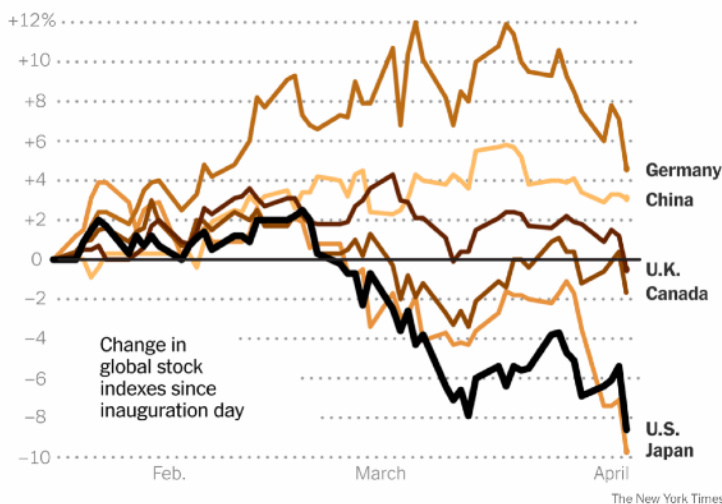
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ANALYSIS

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