



# The Buzz

Rockland Metro Journal

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*The Old School*  
Rockland

## HOW DO YOU WANT IT?

by Phil Groce

“Thank you for speaking louder,” announce two signs you see when you walk into his shop in Rockland.

And there he is, Frank Albert, cutting hair while he scoots around his customer in a comfortable rolling office chair, and sometimes stands to cut the top. The 14th of 16 children on a farm in Maine, with both parents having untimely deaths, Frank, now 84, has known about organization and work for a long time. “Not a single one of my brothers or sisters ever ended up working on a farm after they left home,” he said. He shook his head.

A large American flag decorates one wall. “Why the flag?” I ask.

“I’m a proud American citizen, and I’ve never been on welfare and always made my own way. Never unemployed, and I’ve taken care of myself and many of my brothers and sisters.” His face reddened a bit on that note, but it’s a nice face, rather full, with a trim goatee and mustache, and a formidable head completely shaven.

“Do you use that straight razor on yourself?”

“I use a safety razor. I learned to use the straight razor at barber school and practiced on myself. I’m the only one in town that gives straight razor shaves now, mostly to young people. It’s a dying art, but it will come back.”

“How did you end up going to barber school?”

“We had lots of animals on the farm, especially sheep—135 of them. I figured if I could shear sheep, I could cut hair. I decided to go to barber school one night while I was working at the paper mill, on one of the machines. It wasn’t going well, and I needed help; and there was the foreman sleeping in his little office—wouldn’t even lift a finger. I gave them one hour, then I left, after 6 years there. I was still living at home, tending the farm with my little brother. I entered barber school in Lewiston. Top of the class. When I returned, I opened a shop in Lincoln, and my brother helped. We worked together for 30 years. Then we agreed to disengage. After that I did ‘lifty’ work at Sugarloaf for one season. I still ski.” I noted two maps of Sunday River trails on the wall.

“Then I went to Camden and cut hair at Eric Marsh’s shop. By the way, I found out that it was Knox Mill across the street that ended up with all the wool from our farm. Worked for Eric 4 years before I decided to come here, and this is where I’ve been for the last 23 years.” Just south of Park Street Grill on Main street. “Been here so long I’ve given first haircuts to both fathers and their sons.”

“We love it here—me and my wife—and she helps in the shop with supplies and cleanup some, and keeps the books. We raised 2 children. Married 54 years. We’re active, like to go to country music dances, especially the Silver Spur in Mechanic Falls. Best dance floor in the State.”

“Would not have figured you for someone who liked dancing to country music,” I said. We compared notes on places to dance in Maine. Talked about some of the old time Maine country singers.

“Do you ever talk politics in the shop?”

“When I was in Lincoln, I was involved in town affairs. Decided never to do that again. I love my job, love cutting hair, love talking to people, but I won’t talk local politics. National politics, maybe, if it seems a right time. It’s fun. Got a psychiatrist who comes in for a cut, real liberal. We got a bet: double or nothing on a haircut about who’s going to win the next election. But you need to watch out. I was talking politics to a fellow in the chair once, and a guy waiting started arguing and yelling at him. Don’t want that.”

“What about talking religion?”

“Yeah, as long as there isn’t anyone else around.”

“How does religion impact your daily life, here at work?”

“It’s a big part of all our lives. Religion helps us to tolerate other people and be more conscious of their views.”

“Is that empathy?” I asked

“I don’t use words like that,” he replied. “Besides, I find that people who are not religious are not easy to get along with—especially atheists.” We both laughed.

“Do you give advice?”

continued at right



## Metro Show on the MCST Fence and the Rockland Harbor Trail

This week the Rockland Metro Show's usual suspects met with Louise Maclellan Ruff of the Harbor Trail Committee to discuss the controversy over the new fence at the Maine Coast School of Technology. The fence has been challenged by the code office and is currently under review by the Planning Commission.

Members of the MCST board and administration had been invited to join us on the show. None came, but we received a written statement from MCST Director Beth Fisher. It appears that MCST asserts, and wants to preserve, a right the control access to the shore. The City is inclined to defend the public’s right to walk along the shore. The outcome may depend on litigation, or at least on further review of the applicable law and history. Will MCST be able to exclude the public from its shore? This remains to be determined.

The discussion about MCST will continue on next week’s Metro show with a broader look at vocation education in general, and the potential for our fine new vocational school to further serve our youth. For example, should the school offer a path for students to become electricians or plumbers, or enter other trades not now offered? If you have ideas to contribute on this subected and would be willing to come join us, please do! Our studios are at 20 Gay Street.

The Metro show is a weekly open-mic conversation about issues of local concern. Democracy starts here at home, and we are doing our part.

## Contribute yourself to WRFR and *The Buzz*

We are all volunteers, and you are invited to join us.  
email [steinberger@gwi.net](mailto:steinberger@gwi.net) or call Joe at 596-0731

## HOW DO YOU WANT IT? (cont.)

“I don’t give out advice. But men come in here, and they tend to talk about their wives, marital problems. I let them vent. It’s a good thing, and if they ask me for an opinion, I say to them, ‘Do you really want my opinion?’ That stops some of them, but they got to know that I respect them, and they have to respect me.”

“Cut women’s hair?”

“Yes, not that many. I cut my wife’s hair, and she’s the fussiest person in the whole world.” He smiles at his joke. “I used to do hairpieces for men. In fact, I wore one. Lots of trouble, got to keep them clean, fluffed up nice, and you need to use makeup to cover lace at the rim. Easy to tell that lots of men wear hairpieces on TV.”

“I hear conversations in Rockland about cruise ships coming in. How do you feel about it?”

“The last cruise ship I got 5 haircuts off them (He charges \$14). They come right in even if they don’t want a haircut just to ask questions about Rockland, where to go. It’s great fun.”

“How do you start with a new customer?”

“When I sit them down, I listen to them closely, look at their hair real long. Do they want ears exposed? Hair touching ears? Maybe a skin job—like me. After all that, I have their haircut in my hands, and I use my best artistic skill to please them, and I still appreciate each and every one.

That’s how they want it.

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**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29:**

- Rockland's Festival of Lights Weekend, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with everything from Santa's arrival, the Parade of Lights, lobster-trap-tree lighting, open houses at the decked-out Historic Inns, a craft market, pancake breakfast and horse-drawn wagon rides. See the full schedule in The Free Press.
- Yuletide in St. George, this Friday and Saturday, along the peninsula, shops and galleries offer sales and giveaways, restaurants serve brunch and craft fairs homemade annual favorites. Yuletide maps: StGeorgeBusinessAlliance.com.
- Grown-Up Story Hour at Camden Public Library, 11 a.m. to noon. Volunteers stories for 30 to 60 minutes. Readers are needed: 236-3440. Also at the library on Friday, the Chess Club meets from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Players of all ages and skill levels are
- Pop Singer Holly Clough in Warren, 6 to 8 p.m. at Saint George River Cafe, 310 Main Street. The Rockland native who's recorded in Nashville, performs..
- Dyado in Camden Opera House's Blue Café Series, on the third floor, at 7:30 p.m. The folk-rock duo plays in the free series (donations go to Community Arts Fund). Cash bar.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30:**

- Tree Auction at Rockland Public Library 10 – 4. Beautiful, hand-decorated tabletop trees! Don't be without...Also a book sale at the Book Stop with many great gift ideas.
- Rockland Historical Society's Holiday Open House, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the lower level of Rockland Public Library, during Rockland's Festival of Lights. Homemade cookies, a tree decked with maritime ornaments, and authors John Bird – signing copies of "Rockland, Maine: Rise and Renewal" – and Ben Perry, signing "Lime City Humor."
- "Short & Sweet – An Evening of Short Comedic Plays," 7 p.m. at Watts Hall, 231 Main Street, Thomaston. The family-friendly performance by Watts Hall Community Players will feature three short plays by David Ives and two by other writers. Admission is free; donations go toward upkeep of Watts Hall.
- Annual Free Family Movie: "The Polar Express," at Rockland's Strand Theatre, at 3 p.m. Late on Christmas Eve, after the town has gone to sleep, a boy boards a mysterious train to the North Pole.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1:**

- Mondaynight Jazz Orchestra Holiday Concert, 1 to 4 p.m. at John Street United Methodist Church, Camden. The 18-piece big band plays a mix of modern and traditional jazz and holiday favorites, with all ages invited to listen, dance and sing. Donations support the venue.
- Festivities in Union, this Sunday include Union Historical Society's Holiday Open House at Robbins House, 343 Common Road, from 1 to 3 p.m. Staff wearing period clothes will dish out the society's Christmas tea and baked goodies made from the 1896 recipes in their cookbook. Ornaments depicting the town's historic buildings, books telling its tales of yore, T-shirts and caps, handmade bonnets and notecards will be for sale. People's United Methodist Church, behind the post office, invites everyone to view its wide array of Nativity sets in the sanctuary from 4 to 6 p.m. (and before or after the 10:45 a.m. service). The Tree Lighting on Union Common runs from 6 to 7 p.m. The free outdoor fete will offer a bonfire, cocoa, cookies, carols, the arrival of Santa by firetruck, and lighting of 30 trees dotting the common. Bring an item for Come Spring Food Pantry.
- Sunday Jams in Rockland, Sail, Power, & Steam Museum, 75 Mechanic Street, 1:30 p.m.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 2:**

- Free Adult Art Classes at Rockland Public Library, 11 a.m. Catinka Knoth leads the free Monday classes.
- Monday Jams at St. George Grange, at Wiley's Corner, 7 to 9 p.m. through October. Country, gospel, folk, bluegrass.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3:**

- "Dickens and His Carol" in Warren, 7 p.m. at Old Brick School Community Center, 44 School Street (behind Warren Baptist Church). Warren Historical Society presents the Wiley family, who sing and play piano, guitar, violin, harmonica and spoons to tell the story of Charles Dickens, his "A Christmas Carol," and life in that era. All welcome.
- Tuesday Jams in Thomaston, Federated Church, 8 Hyler Street, at 7 p.m. Folk, country, blues, gospel. FMI: 273-2914.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4:**

- Expert Tips on Winter Camping, Wednesday, December 4, at 7 p.m. at Lincolnville Community Library. Matthew Silverio – who has camped, skied, climbed, paddled and run in the Maine woods for 30 years – tells how to layer clothing to wick moisture, what to pack, and what to do if you're lost or injured in the wilderness. He is chief of Northeast Mobile Health Service's mountain rescue team and a member of Pine Tree Search and Rescue.
- Wellness Wednesdays, every Wednesday, 4:15 to 5:30 p.m., Bok Medical Building, 22 White Street. Reiki, chair massage, ear acupuncture and more. All welcome. 921-6993.
- Warren Free Public Library, offers adult coloring Wednesdays at noon, and knitting every Friday from 10 a.m. to noon and first Thursdays from 6 to 7 p.m.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5:**

- "Ten Reasons for the Decline of the Evenings News," Thursday, December 5, at 6:30 p.m. Camden Conference offers a free talk by Peter Imber – a producer for ABC News who covered the O.J. Simpson trial, Columbine school shooting and other major stories – who tells why the audience for the evening network news has shrunk so drastically. He retired to Maine in 2010 and is a past president of the Camden Conference.
- Christmas by the Sea 2019, Thursday to Sunday, December 5 to 8, with events in Camden, Rockport and Lincolnville. The packed schedule includes P.A.W.S. Animal Adoption Center's 10th annual Auction for the Animals and Rockport Garden Club's Holly Berry Fair, concerts, ballet performances, art walks, sales, horse-drawn carriage rides, a parade and tree lighting, and visits by a very busy Santa
- Thanksgiving Dinner in Thomaston, Thursday, November 28, at The Federated Church, 8 Hyler Street. Doors open at 11 a.m. and at noon dinner is served: roast turkey, stuffing, gravy, potatoes, squash, onions, peas, cranberry sauce and homemade desserts. Those who plan to attend are encouraged to call the town office at 354-6107 to help with planning, but reservations aren't required. The meal is offered by Thomaston Random Acts of Kindness.
- Thursday Jams in Warren, Saint George River Cafe, 310 Main Street, 6 p.m. and Friday Open Mics, second and fourth Fridays, at 6:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6:**

- Adopt a Family for the Holidays, contact Knox County Homeless Coalition and get a family's wish list – 593-8151, AdoptAFamily@homehelphope.org – and deliver them by December 6 to KCHC, 169 Old County Road, Rockport.
- International Carol Suites by the Living Christmas Tree Festival Chorus, at Thomaston Baptist Church, 212 Main Street, on Friday, December 6, at 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8, at 4 p.m

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7:**

- Holiday Childcare at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 15 Wesley Drive, Rockland, on Saturday, December 7, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Grownups can drop off their kids and go shopping. Kids will make pizza, watch a movie, tell stories, have their photo taken with Santa and more. For a registration form, go to the church's Facebook page or email AldersgateRockland@gmail.com.
- Open House at Carol L. Douglas Studio, 394 Commercial Street, Rockport, on Saturday, December 7, noon to 5 p.m. The party will be reminiscent of Bohemian studio parties attended by Bright Young Things, with period refreshments and music. Douglas, who relocated her studio to Maine from New York four years ago, wants to thank the community.
- Reception to Open 12th Annual Art Show at High Mountain Hall, 5 Mountain Street, Camden, on Saturday, December 7, from 5 to 8 p.m. With jewelry, photography, porcelain, prints, paintings, and assemblages. The show will be open on Sunday, December 8, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Around Town** is compiled each week by C.O.H.Gifford, Jr.

An expanded listing is online at [wrfr.org](http://wrfr.org)

Please submit Around Town items to [gowrfr@gmail.com](mailto:gowrfr@gmail.com)

Our thanks to The Free Press for sharing its calendar.

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