



The Buzz

Rockland Metro Journal

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The Old School
Community of Fellows

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Revisiting Barcelona

by Gen Birbeck

The first leg of my daughter's flight to Barcelona was scrubbed. Rather than fly from Atlanta to Paris she and 300 others sat on the tarmac getting to know one another. We had expected to arrive in the city at about the same time. A computer glitch kept me from getting her emails advising me she'd be a day late. So the first day I was on my own. I'd been in Barcelona many times before but it had changed, as everything does eventually. I had not before experienced all the electric vehicles on the sidewalks for instance. Two wheel and even single wheel devices sped around those using mere human legs. Occasionally a motorcycle would travel down a sidewalk to find a parking place inaccessible from the road. The traffic lights are starter's signals for quarter mile drag races. Pedestrians foolish enough to be in a crosswalk at the wrong time are fair game. But I learned quickly and survived.

I found a small store on a pedestrian walkway selling maps and bought one. Curious I ask the owner of the store how he felt about the recent demonstrations for independence. Knowing I was a tourist he didn't find the question impolite. Still, his response was another question. "Who, he ask, in your house decides where the money is spent?" I said, I do of course... He smiled. The meaning was clear. This province sends its money, the taxes it pays, to Madrid. Not much of it comes back. That's not the whole reason half the citizens in Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia want independence but it's a very tangible reason for the movement.

My daughter arrived and together we walked that second day. Ancient cities like Barcelona are criss-crossed with paths wide and narrow. I let her navigate with the tablet phone her generation is never without. On the ancient cobble stones we crossed I imagined George Orwell in early 1938 scrambling to avoid gun fire. Eighty two years ago factions of the left fought each other even as they fought the forces of Francisco Franco. In these first chilly days of December the factions accosting a visitor are street hustlers. They find the pickings slim. This is not the high season. It is too cold.

In the plaza Catalonia and on the Ramblas pedestrian walkway the painted street performers thrust themselves into the frame when tourists do selfies. They expect to be paid for this service. In the evening dozens of men, many from north Africa sell cans of beer from dangling six packs. I had to wonder - are there enough dry throated tourists between bars to justify this business model? Whatever income they derive from this effort is not enough to rent even the meanest lodging in the city. Living so close to subsistence means they sleep rough, in recessed doorways. The early morning stroller notices piles of blankets and dirty sleeping bags packed into the corners. It is cold. Heating grates don't exist. The contrast between this scant existence and the comfort we tourists experience is great. The \$100 a day we pay for our hotel rooms would keep one of these men going a month. It is mostly men. It makes me wonder is it isn't inevitable that a floating population with money attracts a floating population which survives on its crumbs. A symbiosis of human groups interacting while the locals try to ignore both.

On our third day in Barcelona it rained. Buckets is the adjective. Pools and streams on paving stones led eventually to the Picasso museum five blocks from the hotel. Just getting into a dry space was worth the admission. My daughter paid the full price of 14 Euros and I got the senior discount, 7 Euros. I must take after Picasso - it seems he never threw out anything. Every paper or canvas he ever touched with a brush or pen has ended up in the museum. Or so it would seem. I am not a big fan of his work but to see the evolution over his lifetime was interesting. It seemed to all be there. Work from his teens in the 1890's to his last efforts in the early 1970's lined walls and filled glass cases.

I took advantage of an old and still honored custom in European museums. I sat and sketched. This was the traditional exercise for art students for half a millennium, copying the masters. At a long table covered with books on Picasso, I drew from photos of his models taken by Man Ray, a famous photographer of his era. The gift shop was large. It had every imaginable Picasso themed item. From coffee mugs to books filled with color plates of his paintings all was on sale. When we had had enough we once more ventured outside and onto the shallow sea. We set sail and umbrellas and waded toward the nearest tapas bar. We came ashore at a well lit little place called "Buho" which means Owl in Spanish. The proprietor was Argentinian by way of Mexico. On his way to Barcelona and the Buho he had acquired an Irish wife, several languages and at least a thousand stories. There my daughter continued her research into Sangria. That night I joined her in that. The Sangria washed down the tapas, bread rubbed with garlic and tomato supporting fresh anchovies. He was a natural host. He managed to attend each of the half dozen tables, never tiring, never running out of stories. I ask him if what I'd been told was true. That the natives were tired of the twenty million tourists the city hosted each year. Yes, he said, many were...but tourism was such an important part of the city and region's economy that ways would be found, the horde somehow managed. I thought of Rockland and its experience of festivals and cruise ship visits. The same questions but on a different scale. Next week, more tapas and a day trip to France and Andorra.



from Barcelona, Glen Birbeck

Monday, December 16, at City Hall Join a Discussion on our Path to the Future

A couple of days ago we received this thoughtful email from our friend, and Rockland's newest Council member, Nathan Davis:

Hello Rockland friends,

On Monday, December 16 at 5:30pm at City Hall, the Rockland City Council will hold a goal-setting meeting. As far as I know, it will be the first such meeting in years. The Council will likely not focus on narrow policy objectives or staff direction, but rather on high-level goals that we would like to explore and pursue over the coming year. Some possible topics that came up in discussion last night include (but are not limited to) planning and development for the Camden Street and Tillson Avenue areas, the nature of public engagement and open government, and advocacy for state funding changes.

I invite you to attend the meeting and share your thoughts, goals, and ideas during public comment! I think that this meeting will be among the most consequential of the year, and I would love to have a large public turnout telling us what you think we should work towards. I of course have my own goals and priorities (as I'm sure each Councilor does), but I won't share them here because I'd rather hear yours as independent entities than as a reaction or complement to mine. If you can't or don't wish to attend the meeting or speak at it, or if you want to give me more time to consider your ideas, please feel free to e-mail or call me whenever you like.

Best, Nate

A most welcome invitation, one that has got me thinking about issues facing our city. These include, but are not limited to:

- Retail development on Main St.
- Short term housing including non-owner occupied buildings
- Affordable housing, including zoning issues such as lot sizes, accessory dwelling rules, etc.
- Re-valuation and its impact on taxes
- Relocation of City Hall into town
- Roads & infrastructure, capitol expenditures
- Our schools, and family flight to Camden

If you are unable to attend the meeting on the 16th please contact any member of the Rockland City Council by phone or email to share your thoughts and ideas.

Our ever-changing city needs a vision of its future. "You can never get anywhere unless you know where you're going".

This is your city and you can influence the direction we take. Your ideas need to be heard. So please attend the Rockland City Council's goal-setting meeting on December 16th at 5:30 at City Hall.

Hoping to see you there, Stephen Carroll

Contribute yourself to WRFR and/or to *The Buzz*

We are all volunteers, and you are invited to join us.

Host a radio show, write an essay, share your art.

email steinberger@gwi.net or call Joe at 596-0731

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6:

- Holiday Reception, Dowling Walsh Gallery, 365 Main Street, Rockland, 5-7pm.
- 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, 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, 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.
- Best-Selling Author at Lincolnville Community Library, noon to 2 p.m. Caer Hallundbaek signs copies of "Dear Little One: Thoughts to My Child in an Uncertain World" and "Inspired Relationships: 7 Saints' Real-Life Lessons on How to Live, Love and Work." She is a radio host and founding director of The Godspeed Institute, based in Lincolnville.
- Beltie Holiday at Aldermere Farm, 20 Russell Avenue, Rockport, from 9 a.m. to noon. Maine Coast Heritage Trust invites everyone to don their most festive (or hideous) holiday sweater and bring their camera for a holiday portrait with a Belted Galloway calf. Paige Pendleton will be signing her books of children's stories of the farm's cows and kids can get a free treat from the Aldermere Achievers 4-H Club bake sale while decorating a Beltie ornament to take home.. Free admission; bring a donation for Camden Area Christian Food Pantry.
- Open House at Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge's Visitor Center, 9 Water Street, Rockland, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Opening reception for a new exhibit by artists Jane Herbert of Waldoboro (seascapes of Muscongus Bay), Laurie Murray of Rockland (nature journaling) and Carla Skinder of St. George (wildlife photography). With hot drinks and a chance to make a holiday craft from pressed seaweed with helpers from Herring Gut Learning Center.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8:

- "Strand on the Air" Holiday Special, at Rockland's Strand Theatre. The Strand Family Players offer a live radio variety show with news from the team at "All Things Rescinded," comedy skits, and music by Blake Rosso Band and bluegrass quartet Playin' Possum. New this year, "Take It from Lizzie," where an audience member will be quizzed in order to win Strand merch. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. The audience warm-up is at 4:45 p.m. The show goes live on WRFR radio (at 93.3 and 99.3 FM) at 5 p.m. Admission is free. •
- "Holidays at the Museum" at Owls Head Transportation Museum, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visit Santa and his helpers at his workshop, with areas to write letters to Santa, decorate cookies and make crafts. Midcoast Community Band will deliver a concert at 1:30 p.m.
- Sunday Jams in Rockland, Sail, Power, & Steam Museum, 75 Mechanic Street, 1:30 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9:

- Free Adult Art Classes at Rockland Public Library, 11 a.m. Catinka Knoth leads the free Monday classes – with a focus on drawing in color – open to all, with materials provided. Students will draw woodland animals, wild turkeys, and Native American motifs this month.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10:

- Herring Gut Learning Center's Winter Open House, Factory Road, Port Clyde, 4 to 6 p.m. Everyone's invited to gather for hot cider and holiday cookies, learn winter facts, make winter crafts
- Talk by Author of "Rockland, Maine: Rise and Renewal," 6:30 p.m. at Rockland Public Library. Fifth-generation Rockland resident John Bird gives an illustrated talk about his book. The Rockland Historical Society program is free.
- Tuesday Jams in Thomaston, Federated Church, 8 Hylar Street, at 7 p.m. Folk, country, blues, gospel. FMI: 273-2914.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11:

- "Tech Tools @ Rockland Public Library: Online Calendars," at 10:30 a.m. Learn about popular online calendar tools and apps that can be used on any device. To sign up or borrow a laptop, call the library: 594-0310.
- 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.
- Storytelling at Beech Hill Preserve, Rockport, on Wednesday, December 11, from 3 to 4 p.m. Children's librarian Miss Amy will bring seasonal stories to the top of the hill and read aloud while attendees eat popcorn and drink hot chocolate around a fire. Bring a flashlight for the walk down the hill. The program cohosted by Coastal Mountains Land Trust and Camden Public Library is free and open to all ages. No dogs.
- Full Moon Hike at Hidden Valley Nature Center, Jefferson, from 5 to 7 p.m. The free hike (or snowshoe) will let participants listen for owls and the rustling of nighttime foragers under the Full Cold Moon, so named for the month when winter cold arrives and nights become long and dark. Meet at the gate, 131 Egypt Road, at 4:45 p.m. dressed in warm clothes and shoes with good grips. Bring a snack, drink and flashlight or headlamp. The hike to Little Dyer Pond takes about 40 minutes each way. To register (or reserve snowshoes): MidcoastConservancy.org, 389-5150.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12:

- Browntail Moth 101 at Camden Public Library, Thursday, December 12, at 7 p.m. Coastal Mountains Land Trust presents a talk about the invasive forest pest that continues to expand its range in Maine, bringing with it human health impacts. Tom Schmeelk, an entomologist with Maine Forest Service, will discuss the moth's biology, history in Maine, current range and areas at risk.
- Island Doctor to Discuss "Go By Boat," 6:30 p.m. at Rockland Public Library. Dr. Chuck Radis gives an illustrated talk on his upcoming book about his early years in medicine, when he was the only doctor on Peaks Island and traveled by boat to the outer islands of Casco Bay, averaging more than 150 house calls a year.
- "Christmas at the Chapel" at 1851 Rockville Church, at 6:30 p.m. at Rockville Chapel, 87 Old Rockland Street, Rockport. The program will feature Christmas carols, songs performed by students from Pen Bay Christian School and an Advent message by the Reverend Linwood Welch of Warren Baptist Church.
- 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 13:

- Holiday Pop-Up at Steel House North, 711 Main Street, Rockland, runs Wednesday through Sunday, December 11 through 15, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A curated selection of work by 29 midcoast artists ranges from ceramics, to jewelry to letterpress cards and handmade books. An artists' reception will be held Friday, December 13, from 5 to 7 p.m.
- Friday Open Mics, in Warren, Saint George River Cafe, 310 Main Street, second and fourth Fridays, at 6:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14:

- Rockport's 7th Annual Holiday on the Harbor, Saturday, December 14, from 3 to 8 p.m. Music and art with a fireworks finish in the village, and from 4 to 6 p.m. at Union Hall, 24 Central Street, free performances by the Suzuki Twinklers, Bay Chamber Jazz Ensemble and Odeon Allegro Ensemble, served with cookies and cider.

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

An expanded listing is online at wrfr.org

Please submit Around Town items to gowrfr@gmail.com

Our thanks to The Free Press for sharing its calendar.

**Check out the Metro Show
Wednesday, December 11, 5-6 pm**

on WRFR, 93.3 in Rockland, 99.3 in Camden

Special Guests Becca Gildred, Director of Development, and Molly Feeny, Director of Social Services, of the Knox County Homeless Coalition will join our Metro team's usual suspects for a discussion about homelessness in Rockland. Who are the homeless, why are they homeless, and what can we do to help?

WRFR and *The Buzz* are supported by our local business sponsors. Please give them your custom!

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Get *The Buzz* at these Rockland locations: Rock City Cafe * Dunkin Donuts * Camden Nat'l Bank * Main Street Market * Jensen's Pharmacy * Willow Bake Shoppe * Offshore Restaurant * Good Tern Coop * Rockland Library * City Hall * Jess's Market * Southend Grocery

The Buzz is composed and printed by the Fellows of The Old School at the WRFR studios, 20 Gay Street, Rockland. Email: wrfr93.3@gmail.com