

IT'S BLOWING IN THE WIND

by McCabe Coolidge

You must learn one thing. This world was made to be free in.

David Whyte

Michael is in the bow, paddle, paddle, pause. His words, staccato like a burst that is flung out and catches the Westerlies and then flows boldly back toward me in the stern of the canoe. His words and images linger momentarily, like the fine drips off the paddle, softly landing on lake water, trailing behind us, a wake, seen then unseen.

Michael could be of the age of a son I never had. Except that I am white skinned. Except that he cannot swim and had never been in a boat until this October. Except he is a novice, just learning how to trust this water, this canoe, this wind and me.

His mind is far reaching, Joseph Campbell, Alan Watts, Rumi all occupy space in his intellect except he doesn't see the Great Blue Heron vigiling on a maple branch over the bank, except he doesn't hear the sharp directives of a flock of Canadian Geese overhead, flying to a nearby lake, except he doesn't see the tell tale water prints of a Cormorant taking off for the dam and deeper waters. Except he has chosen me. The one who, in the weekly vigil for peace at Government Square in Greensboro, every Tuesday, coming out of a four minute silence, said, "I feel and smell the scent of the southwesterly today and I am wondering about sailing."

Except he came back the following month and walked up to me, his 6'3" body moving in close, whispering, "I heard what you said last month about sailing. I want to go with you but I am afraid of water and I have never been in a boat before."

So this bespectacled Michael and this bald headed McCabe seized the day. On our calendars we have noted Sundays, monthly, 9 am at one of the nearby lakes. At the boat house we find an extra large life jacket. I demonstrate how to paddle and we push off, stepping gingerly into my L.L. Bean green canoe. The city will not rent sailboats when the water temperature goes below 60 degrees. It will be next Spring before we can go sailing. This canoe has been a steadfast companion since heading into the Boundary Waters from Duluth back in 1988. Cane seats, wooden paddles. Lightweight. Michael turns around as we paddle into deeper water, offering a big, wide smile.

"Michael, we're going to paddle into the wind so on our return home we can rest some, allow the wind at our back to float us to the dock." He nods, paddling well, paddling deep. He gets it. Me, I am the navigator in the stern. The listener, the occasional responder as Michael sorts out who he is becoming: the son a Pentecostal minister, father of a two year old, married to a woman springing into new life as a stand-up comedian. Michael is a peace and justice leader who is torn and conflicted with his life, knowing he is at some sort of crossroad.

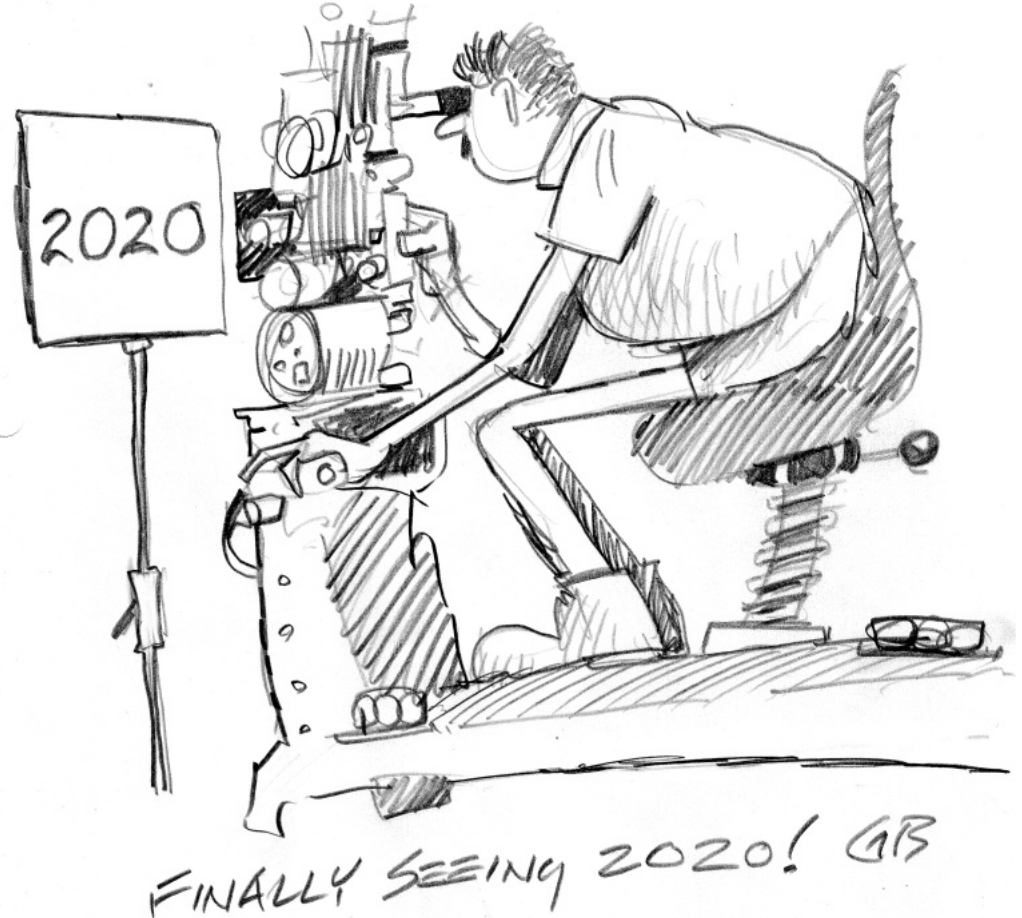
Me too. Facing the reality of turning 80 in two years, I am floundering into strange waters of weekly doctor visits, grasping at books with no answers for my soul. Michael and I so different yet facing similar storms at the crossroads of our lives.

"Michael rest your paddle on your lap," the wind is at our backs; the waves are running ahead of us.

He turns his head, about ready to say something, instead he turns back around as a couple of mallards fly up from a nearby cove and wing it across the lake.

He breaks the water with his paddle and I follow in suit. Paddle, paddle, pause. Breathing in and out, we return to this silence, releasing ourselves into the wind and water letting go of our constant need to figure things out.

An osprey is floating easily above our heads, back and forth gaining altitude and then dropping, a couple of flaps and catching another current. Michael has spotted this bird, he turns and points and I look up, briefly seizing his slight sly smile like someone caught by surprise with a new insight. Nothing he has figured out, coming to him as a gift. And to me, a gift that warms my soul, bringing tears of joy to my eyelids.



Joe - I think it hits 500 right on the money. Wanders..... but so do I - Glen Birbeck

In the waning years of the 19th century, say 1895, there were radio signals but no radios. Nature has always sent messages by spark generated radio waves, the announcement of a thunder storm on the other side of the planet. Up until those years no person had ever listened, They couldn't, there were no receivers. There WERE transmitters. Many and powerful they were in spite of a lack of listeners. They sent their waves hundreds of miles launching them from antennas many miles long. The "transmitters" were the coils and commutating brushes of thousand Horse Power motors and generators in the first generation of electric power plants, hydro and coal fired. The motors started replacing the water wheels in hundreds of mills. The sparks were inadvertent as were the resulting radio bursts. But the first amateurs, men like Marconi, Fesenden and Popov began to intentionally tickle the electromagnetic soup. The layer of atmosphere is a thin stew with a conductive lower layer, the Earth and an ionized upper layer at the edge of space. Between them is a really handy whispering gallery. A whispering gallery is cool. It focuses sound over distance such that a whisper can be heard clearly hundreds of feet away. Since sparks were easy to make with electricity these early experimenters devised ever more powerful spark transmitters. The master of this is a legend today, Nicola Tesla. This would have been heady stuff to the twelve year old techno nerd of 1905. Not just the news of it but it was stuff you could build yourself! Magazines soon appeared to show you how to build your own radio set. Before ships at sea were required to have radio and before even Navies had them amateurs did. I was twelve in 1958 but the radio bug bit me anyway. I learned the Morse code and got a "Ham" license. My cyclic interest and circumstance made for long periods of inactivity - but I'm back. Retirement means old hobbies. I have many but at the moment I'm building an antenna system. With that and an old radio I should be talking (in dits and dashes) to other hams all over the world soon. Not surprisingly the technology of high frequency radio transceivers has changed. The equipment started out "boat anchor" heavy and expensive. Now it is light and in constant dollars, inexpensive. Amateurs once could only build their stations. There was no equipment being made and when it was it was expensive. Building now is less common, most hams buy everything. Imagine how that boy from 1905 would view modern radio technology? I hope there are still amateurs in the year 2115. The curiosity of the amateur is what has produced the progress. I like to think too that listening to Morse code at 40 words per minute, visualizing letter by letter in my head, is good mental exercise. On larger and smaller scales we need to keep our grey matter healthy. But why wait for retirement?

FRIDAY, JANUARY 3:

free and open to everyone.

• “Manhattan,” 6:30 p.m. in Friday Night Films at Thomaston Public Library. January’s Woody Allen movies open with the director’s love letter to New York City.

• Friday Open Mics, in Warren, Saint George River Cafe, 310 Main Street, second and fourth Fridays, at 6:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4:

• CMCA January ArtLab for All Ages, at Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockland, from 2 to 4 p.m. Artists of all ages will take inspiration from the current exhibition, *Temporality: The Process of Time*, to create original works of art. ArtLabs are the first Saturday of every month and free of charge.

• Whitehead/Dean Group at Fog Bar and Cafe in Rockland, 328 Main Street, at 7 p.m. Mike Whitehead on trumpet, Jason Dean on drums, Glen DuBose on bass and Mitch Markowitz on guitar playing jazzy, funky covers and originals.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5:

• “A Family for ME” Foster Care and Adoption Info Meetings, for people who have wondered about the process of becoming a licensed foster parent or adoptive parent. For the location and time of the next meeting: 615-6011 or AFamilyForMEMaine.org.

• Sunday Jams in Rockland, Sail, Power, & Steam Museum, 75 Mechanic Street, 1:30 p.m.

MONDAY, JANUARY 6:

• 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. This week: evergreens in snow and papercuts.

• Closing Party for “Sacred Garden” Show at First Congregational Church, Camden, 4 to 6 p.m. Kathryn Oliver’s large icon paintings are celebrated before the show ends.

• Author Talk with John Bragg at Thomaston Public Library, 5 p.m. He’ll discuss his novel “Exit 8,” winner of the 2019 BookLife Fiction Prize, awarded by Publishers Weekly. motifs this month.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7:

• Author Talk with Robert Klose: “Life on Mars,” 6:30 p.m. at Camden Public Library. He talks about his second novel, a satirical look at evolution vs. Intelligent Design. • Tuesday Jams in Thomaston, Federated Church, 8 Hyler Street, at 7 p.m. Folk, country, blues, gospel. FMI: 273-2914.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8:

• Maine Bird Photographs by Patti Forster at Gibbs Library, 40 Old Union Road, Washington, hang from January 8 to March 3. Pieces include a portrait of the glossy ibis, which took her four years to capture on camera.

• Submissions Window for CMCA Biennial 2020 opens Wednesday, January 1, and closes Friday, April 3. The show at Center for Maine Contemporary Art, in Rockland, is open to artists at all stages of their career who have a strong connection to Maine. Work in all mediums will be reviewed. Jurors are Kate McNamara and Nina Johnson-Milewski. For guidelines on how to enter: CMCAnow.org.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9:

• “Pond Life Under the Ice?” on Thursday, January 9, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Camden Public Library. Maine Master Naturalist and lensman Edwin Barkdoll shows images of life under the ice.

• 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, JANUARY 10:

• Three-Part Building Confidence Series at Camden Public Library, Fridays, January 10, 17 and 24, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. New Ventures Maine creates an empowering environment for Maine people to define and achieve their career, financial, and small business goals. Classes are free but require registration: melinda.wildes@maine.edu or 593-7942.

An Affectionate Look Back at 2019

by Steve Carroll

Taking a long look back at our city by the bay, so much has changed since I was a child growing up here. We were a fishing community and retail center. Main Street was mostly clothing and department stores, hardware and footwear, a few restaurants and coffee shops. Today fishing has diminished and tourism is flourishing in our coastal community. Museums, galleys, and cruise ships. People come to savor our array of fancy restaurants, micro breweries and coffee shops. A bit of old grittiness still remains, but the subtle rise of “gentrification” is on everyone’s lips.

Rockland’s ever-changing face is noticeable in housing and the people you meet downtown. Homes are selling for full price, especially in the City’s south end. The buyers are spending hundreds of thousands to beautify these homes and, in turn, neighborhoods. We are seeing improvements throughout the town. Housing values are increasing and in turn causing local homeowners to feel the pinch of increased taxation. “Gentrification” is being viewed both as good and bad for our community. Seniors on fixed incomes are being forced out of their family homes. As the costs of maintaining services continue to increase, especially the costs of operating our schools, our taxes are forced upward. This ever increasing upward spiral is more pronounced because the state continues to fail in their obligation to share in the support of our schools.

Looking back at 2019 we see the ever increasing impact school budget pressures have on our tax base as well as the lack of affordable housing. So as we move into the year ahead, we must focus our attention on controlling budgets and finding ways to welcome new residents and accommodate our older citizens. We must search for means to fill the needs of all in our community, to create a place that works for young and old, long time and new residents, private and public needs.

As we affectionately look back at 2019 and the trends that shaped this year, it’s important to look at the lessons learned and to clearly see our path ahead. We have little means to change our direction, but good reason to steer a solid course.

Happy New Year.

Penobscot Bay Report w/ Ron Huber

Saturdays 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. on WRFR

For people who enjoy, work on and care about Maine’s biggest bay. While relaxing to the natural and human sounds of Penobscot Bay—its waves, winds and wildlife; its foghorns, fishing craft and ferryboats—get your weekly update on the doings of local, state and federal agencies and interest groups grappling with overseeing the bay’s commercial and recreational fishers and hunters, aquaculturists, coastal developer wannabes, and its licensed and unlicensed dischargers. Hear recordings from recent bay-related meetings and public hearings, interviews with retired and working sea captains and readings from 19th century marine scientists exploring and documenting the state of the bay and the Gulf of Maine before the twentieth century’s mechanized fisheries, petrochemicals and other advanced technology changed them forever. And learn how to become a Penobscot Bay Report radio correspondent!



Ron Huber

Around Town is compiled by C.O.H.Gifford, Jr.
An expanded listing is online at wrfr.org
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