



Rockland Buzz

Local Civility and Service

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The Old School
Fellowship Education

Viral Metro Show this week with Nate Davis, next week with Steve Betts



This week Nate Davis filled us in on what our city is doing in the crisis, the Council meetings on Zoom, assistance for those facing homelessness, and other matters. We had many calls, including one with helpful

information from our State Senator David Miramont.

Next week our guest will be reporter Steve Betts from the Courier-Gazette. Steve knows perhaps more than anyone about what has been going on in our community as we prepare for the epidemic to wash over us.

Our thanks to Village Soup for inviting people to join in our Metro conversation. WRFR and VillageSoup have been collaborating to help in this time of need with reliable information and opportunity for civil discourse. As part of that effort, WRFR will be airing a new VillageSoup Hour with recorded interviews and announcements: Mondays and Fridays at 5 pm.

Please do tune in then, and join us next Wednesday from 5 to 6 pm for Steve Betts live on the Rockland Metro show, on 93.3 fm in Rockland, 99.3 fm in Camden, and online at WRFR.org.

And please do call in: 593-0013.

Sylvie Coyaud writes from Milan

Ciao Joe, here we don't dare to hope yet, I think we are more apprehensive and bitter than a week ago. Rules seem to relax, some people plan to go on Easter holidays whatever happens, and the US are doing even worse than we did. Why didn't they learn from our mistakes? Why didn't they listen to Anthony Fauci? He is famous here too, his grandmother was from Naples, for an Italian he is a "compaesano", not quite a kinsman but close. We all know he said victims could be 200 thousands or more, we fear for family and friends in the US and feel helpless. We cannot even do for them the little we are doing for our neighbours.

It was colder in Milan at the end of last week, we didn't chat from our windows. Monday was sunny again, and on Tuesday traffic increased a bit. There are a few more people in the streets even in my village. Outside the supermarket we seem to queue at a shorter distance from each others. After 40 days there is a kind of restlessness, of protest against the restrictions, although everybody wears a face-mask or a scarf up to their nose, and thin white rubber gloves.

At the market, behind the blue and red tape that keeps us four feet away from the stalls, the conversation is about the curve, of course. Is it really starting to flatten? Perhaps it is, but too late for Raffaele Masto, a reporter for Radio Popolare, "my" radio for 43 years, his for more than 20.

We are also worried about what's happening in our country. It reminds us of Lombardy's reluctant and messy response three weeks ago on a much larger scale, and it's heart-breaking. From Lombardy to Sicily we all have relatives and friends in the US, we'd like help. Right now, we can only hope that you aren't defiant like we were six weeks ago, when the motto was "Milano non si ferma", Milan doesn't stop. That you are sharing ventilators, protection kits, money, sound advice, kindness - fast and fairly enough. We learned how to do it the hard way and we were late not only for Raffaele.

Down Main Street with Phil Groce His Art of Art

A dismal freezing February morning on Main Street, and so many stores open during the summer are now closed and vacant—out of business. Estate Jewelry Emporium, however, was open for business, and Jonathan Tardiff, behind the counter, was greeting what few customers had ventured forth. Too early for the art galleries.

"I was raised in Orland, and as a 10-year-old kid I became the junior apprentice of a jeweler down the street, just because I was interested in what he was doing. I guess I had interest in old things--like gold--and how someone made things from it. My parents liked antiques, and much of my family lived in Castine. Visiting them gave a nautical twist to my interests." What is nautical, here?

"Art of the Sea," over in that cabinet--what the whale men wrought during their two years at sea, bringing home scrimshaw art and useful items from the ivory tusks of the whales. Not a particle was wasted by them, and that industry supported people along the eastern seaboard for 100 years. Not that I would want whales harpooned anymore, but that history is right in that display, and it is a big part of our heritage."

One of your sayings here is, "One Piece at a Time." What do you mean by that? "I'm into having things live on, marking history, one item at a time. The old is still living." Gold is old, I remarked. "The older gold is more plumb. All the items made with gold have a mark, like 14K. Old 14K gold can assay 58.5%, but the newer stuff comes in at 52%; and the older wedding bands come in at nearly 60%."

What about the price of gold? "Lately, it's like a rocket. I do NOT reprice the inventory. I hate what I see at the gas stations—they reprice their inventory immediately when the price goes up. That's price gouging." Don't people come in here and try bargaining with you? "I really don't mind. Our prices are 30-50% lower than the large stores." What if the price of gold goes down? "For the 5 years that I have been here, that has not happened."

What is it like to have a store in the middle of town? "I love Rockland, but business is not easy here. Maybe it's easier if you are non-profit, but I am not non-profit, even though my prices are very fair. Everyone complains about the taxes. He hands me a piece of paper from his desk. "That's the tax bill on my house--\$11,000! And that's a split-level cape on ¼ acre.

"You know, I get a lot of business just from the cruise ships that come in here. I would like to see more of them. People have differing viewpoints on that. I wish we could all get along and just discuss it rather than get angry. Life is too short for that. I learned my lesson." He laughed. "All that is moot now, anyway, with the people getting the viruses.

"It pains my heart. Where is compromise anymore? Why all these great divides? Don't we all know that democracy can't survive unless there's free exchange of views and compromise, and we HELP EACH OTHER? Maybe I should blame social media, but I won't, because it's here to stay. We've got to live with it."

Just then, the mailman came in with a couple of letters. Jonathan turned to me. "Listen to this. How many packages from Amazon do you have on your delivery?" About 70 today, the postman replied, but at Christmas, it was, like, 300. "Yeah," replied Jonathan. "My Christmas sales were off 30% this year." You know, said the mailman, people are getting toilet paper, even bottled drinking water, all delivered by us." Jonathan groaned.

"But I have a niche with lots of beauty here," he said. Where does it all come from? Do people come in here and sell you things of value? "Sometimes, but mostly it's from house calls. People want to downsize, or they might be young people who have inherited things; and today's young people don't think so much of old things. Furniture, especially, is taking a beating. It's all Wayfair, or whatever."

Do you offer them a price for the whole lot of what they have? "No, I consider one piece at a time." You must know what you are doing, or you could lose money fast. "It's taken me 20 years, and I can buy and sell gold, repair most anything—at a very reasonable prices even clocks. I deal coins, too. Everything I have here has a history, but I like to say to the customer that the history begins with you, now."

I looked around at his cases, and there were hundreds of items of jewelry, many with precious stones, and nearly always, gold. Then he showed me the Maine tourmaline jewelry he had made. I was impressed. "It's beautiful," he said, "but not so much of it anymore. For every 10 carats of Maine tourmaline there's 1000 karats of Brazilian." I mentioned that he adds to the art renaissance in Rockland as well as the galleries.

Just then, a person tore through the front door to inform us that a pickup side-swiped a parked car out front and sped away without stopping.

Jonathan exhaled, "They have to slow this traffic. What about speed bumps—something to slow it down? It's going to take a runover kid one of these days for them to do something." That idea of making Main Street a walking mall and bypassing the traffic back by the water treatment plant might still be in the mix, I thought. Change, I said out loud.

"No one likes change," he replied, "but change is happening whether we like it or not. Can't you remember, not so long ago, you could walk downtown and buy a hammer at several places. We need changes, but hopefully not ones forced into place, but BY US ALL, talking, compromising, because we love this place."



Confinement Blues

Paul Chartrand writes from Paris

I think that is what I have this week, after 2 1/2 weeks of apartment confinement, looking at a month or more yet to come. I have my hour walk and jog each day within 1km of my apartment, outdoors on some beautiful Spring days, enjoyable even if I cannot access any parks or walks along the river. I see a few other folks on their exercise routes; sometimes we smile and mouth the word "Bonjour", we might even say it out loud. But it is an individual experience, this "shelter in place", "stay at home" or whatever you want to call it. We can not afford to engage any further with folks we pass, we are all suspect, we are all infected to some degree.

I totally support this, as it is one of the only solutions we have; it is simple, and everyone can participate. That is relatively easy to say for a single man with no kids, in a comfortable apartment with a balcony. I worry for the homeless, those in prison, those in unsuitable or overcrowded quarters. How will they do this? Can they do this? We shall see.

I am surprised at how many states and cities in the US avoided taking these drastic measures for so long, including our Gov. Mills. I have a lot of time to pass out blame, that seems to be a side effect of the Confinement Blues! I was happy to see the Rockland City Council and Manager and so many others get on board relatively quickly. Every day without a strong confinement program is a wasted day in a long and difficult battle.

So, keep up the good fight, read a good book, catch up on little neglected projects, watch a little TV, cook some delicious meals, occasionally with a glass of wine or beer, and stay in touch with your loved ones. Don't let the Confinement Blues get YOU down! We have a long way to go.



Riding out the Storm

by Steve Carroll

Both of my boys are all grown up now and live far from home here in Maine. My oldest son lives in Austin Tx. with his wife and my two sweet grand-babies Well not so much babies anymore. Jude is now 10 and Rose (the hellion) now age 6. They opened a Women’s clothing boutique a few years ago and recently opened a second location on the other side of town. Austin has seen substantial growth since they moved there over 10 years ago from Nantucket. There the two young entrepreneurs ran a restaurant until the financial collapse of 2008 forced them to close. So in their short lives (well 45 seems young to me now) they have experienced two financial collapses. Their stores closed, the workers and their family’s all at home “riding out the storm”.

On the West Coast near LA my youngest son and his fiancée are now both out of work and spend their time at home or walking their new dog “Bernie”. They are planning to be married at the end of May , however that may need to be postponed due to the huge outbreak in California. Fortunately he works for Apple (a small fruit company) and was sent home with pay two weeks ago.

The two old folks are still here in Maine holding down the fort. Cabin fever is starting to set in although we are both still healthy, only venturing out

once a week to attend the early morning Seniors Social at Hannafords and Sundays taking “Miss Daisy” for a ride. There are so many stories just like this throughout the country. Young couples just getting a foothold and then to see the carpet pulled out.

I fear for so many small businesses all across the country now closed and waiting to see what the future will bring. This storm will pass, the clouds will clear and the sun will shine again. We have weathered many storms and disasters together and it is so encouraging to hear stories of volunteers who came out and delivered supplies to those unable to get out, or people chipping in to help a single Mom pay her rent. The working class and small business owners are the backbone of this country. They are the heroes we should look up to. The Doctors & nurses, the grocery or convenience store clerks and the men & women who are our front line troops. So stay home if you can and be safe. Work on that honey do list and just think about all those things you've wanted to do but never had time. Go for a walk, clean the garage, read a book. Well this is it ...enjoy the moment.



Grocery Pick-Up and Delivery Services

by The Buzz team

Shopping for groceries has become one of our greater risks, especially for those of us who are especially vulnerable. It is also a great risk to all of us when those who are or may be infected mingle with us in the aisles. With this in mind, our intrepid Steve Carroll did some research and found these options:

Hannaford in Rockland has resumed their “Hannaford To Go” online ordering program. Order online and pay by credit card and they will shop & bag and will call when your order is ready for curbside pickup. Visit the Hannaford website for details.

Shaws in Rockland has a program called “Instacart” offering online ordering with payment by credit card, offering both delivery and curbside pickup. Visit the Shaws website for details.

Good Tern Co-Op is now closed to the public, but is offering a shopping service similar to Hannaford & Shaws. Place your order either online or over the phone (maximum 15 items) pay by credit card and they will shop & bag. Call when you arrive and they will bring your items to your car. Phone 594-8822 or go the Good Tern website. Store hours are now 10-5 Mon-Sat.

South End Grocery can take your grocery, deli or pizza order by phone (596-7321), credit cards or cash accepted. Either pick-up (call when you arrive) or they will deliver. No charge for local delivery. Driver tips are encouraged.

Fresh off the Farm store hours starting at 1-2:30 elderly only in store, 2:30-7 open to general public, 15 people max in store at a time. Beginning at 7:30 AM people can phone in orders (236-3260) or email at fotf87@gmail.com Minimum order \$10. They will deliver 30 mile radius of Rockport, or pick up. Call for more details.

Rockland Food Services offers curbside pick-up. Call 594-5443 to place your order and pay by credit card.

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