



# Rockland Buzz

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## Covid Education

Issue 168, June 12, 2020, Rockland, Maine

*The Old School*  
Fellowship Education

### Metro Show

This week Doug Curtis

Next Week David Gogel



David Gogel  
This week Steve Carroll interviewed investment advisor and board member of RSU13, Doug Curtis. When Doug had to leave for a meeting, Christine Simmonds shared her views on the influence of "Special Education" in our schools. She is a former special education teacher. Those classified as needing special ed are a growing segment of our school population.

Next week David Gogel, Director of Rockland Main Street, will join us for a discussion of the city's plans for a pedestrian Main Street, plans that have their first manifestation on Friday and Saturday, June 19 and 20.

Please join us for that discussion, Wednesday, June 17, from 5 to 6 pm on 93.3 fm in Rockland, 99.3 fm in Camden, and online at WRFR.org. Call in to 593-0013 to join the conversation.

### Oceanside Graduation Live on WRFR

On June 9, at 3 pm, the Oceanside High School class of 2020 formed a motorcade from the High School to the Airport in Owls Head. They proceeded through the gate onto the tarmac and parked their cars in semicircles around a stage that had been set at the edge of the grass. There the graduation ceremony was held. The students and their families, parked in their cars, or standing alongside them, listened to the speeches on their car radios - tuned to 93.3 fm - and honked for applause..

Our little all-volunteer community radio station, WRFR, was proud to broadcast the ceremony live from the tarmac. From our vintage 15 watt Marti remote transmitter on the stage we sent the signal on 162.76 Mhz to our Marti receiver at the WRFR studios on Gay Street in Rockland, and from there broadcast it live to our local world on 93.3 fm.



Ron Tesler



### Matinicus Wannabe with Lock Kiermaier

Wednesdays 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Lock will be playing a eclectic mixture of the music he loves: including rock, country, bluegrass, soul, rhythm & blues, folk, blues and whatever else he's into on any given Wednesday.

Lock on WRFR  
93.3 Rockland  
99.3 Camden

### Down Maine Street with Phil Groce

### From the Window

My wife and I were enjoying a tamarind dish as we were sitting on granite stools at an equally substantive granite table, both quarried at Vinalhaven. It was lunch at the Tugboat eatery. We could observe the goings-on at the nearby ferry terminal and eye the sea gulls diving at whatever they dive at in the harbor. Nearly overhead loomed the prow of the cradled sailing vessel Must Roos.

At the window of the Tugboat eatery, Dan Greene, takes the orders. A Mainer originally from Skowhegan area, Dan found his way to help run and take orders behind that window through a circuitous route. It started after high school, and like many of the young men of the day, he went to Conn. to work for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft. After seven months, he was drafted. That was 1969, at the height of the Viet Nam War. After training in the Army, he was sent to an Army base in the Panama Canal Zone, manning ground surveillance radar.

After his two years of service he returned to Maine and rejoined the Department of Transportation, starting at the bottom, and after over 40 years, retired as a manager. He says he learned his stick-to-it-ness from his father, who had worked in Textile Mills all his life.

After retirement, Dan was doing part-time work. He liked having lunch at the Thai takeout next to the ferry terminal. He got to know the nice lady who owned the place and took the orders at the window and cooked the food. He was attracted to more than the food, and one thing led to another. The rest is history, as they say. Sue Palakawong and Dan are now life-partners and both are running the Thai Tugboat outdoor restaurant and takeout.

The first thing Sue said to me in her heavily accented English was, "I love my food. That's why I'm here. My family loves Chinese noodles." Her family immigrated to Thailand from China, and Sue was the firstborn in the adopted country. She graduated from a Catholic-run boarding high school, then sent to a Catholic college in India to learn secretary skills. The Viet Nam war was booming (literally) with the help of US Air Force bases all over Thailand.

She found work as a secretary on one of the bases. After the war she worked for an export company, was married, but her husband, who worked for Thai Airlines for 30 years, died unexpectedly. In 2000, she decided to come to the U.S., thinking that she could expand upon her cooking skills which she had learned in her family. "All my sauces are from family recipes," she says, beaming.

She landed in Maine, and she says she really does not know why she came to Maine, but she did; and she found work in a restaurant in Portland. In 2005 she and the person who sponsored her green card, opened the Thai Kitchen restaurant in Rockland. Didn't last long. The rent was high, and the winter business insufficient. "We lost our shirt," she says.

They opened the Thai Kitchen restaurant in Camden in 2006. Had success for 4 years, and she then decided to open the present place herself at the entry of the Knight Marine boatyard. She says, "I have to thank Celia Knight for being the best landlord ever. I can cook my food by the sea and give my thanks to the community. The Catholic school I went to was by the sea, and we all swam every day. I have that same feeling, looking out at the water here."

Dan explained to me the genius of the place. "Here, we only pay rent when we are open during the warm weather, not in the winter. We rent a room in Rockland for the summer, but our home is near Sidney where the rest of my family is thereabouts. This is her 10th year here. We have a small menu. It's something we can handle and do well. We experiment some, but mostly we stick with the basics."

I asked Sue what she did during the winter. "I go back to Bangkok for about a month and see the family. But I also get my medical and, especially, all my dental work there. I went to a dentist here once, and I saw him for just a few minutes, and it cost me \$125. Never again. I do craft-work during the winter, and we both deliver trays to patients at Maine General, part-time."

I asked Dan how he looked back on his life. "I have no regrets," he said. "When I was young, and when I started with the DOT, I had issues with them, but I stuck it out. I have a good retirement."

How is Covid affecting them? "Few tourists this year," said Dan, "but our over-all business from locals has increased. Our adjustments have been few. We now take the food out to the people in their vehicles and often to the tables, we wear masks and do a lot of sanitizing inside and out. We now take credit cards. We also have a presence on social media: Facebook, Instagram and a web site thaitugboat.com. We needed more help, and now we have Eddie."

"Don't forget me!" shouted Eddie, from the back. Originally from the Philippines 19 years ago, Eddie Bernal had been laid off from the Samoset Resort kitchen because of Covid.

"We get huge orders from the islanders," said Dan. "They take the hot food with them when they return on the ferry. We're on first-name basis for lots of people around now. And when Sue can take a break, she loves to come out to talk with the customers. Our customers are like family."

Sue nods her head in agreement. "I am thankful to be here, and I am a citizen. I am able to share my food with the people of Rockland. I love my food. I love being here."



COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

I've finally found the right location for the hummingbird feeder. At last, the hummers have arrived and hover and rise at the feeder like tiny Harrier Jump Jets.

I've been tempted to put out the carcass of a roast chicken for the crows. But I don't want to attract seagulls or offend my neighbors. I found the video link to my favorite story about the little Seattle girl's feedings of crows resulting in many covid's gifts she organized by category: <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31604026>

My intent had been to keep my weekly random notes to local topics. But as the late Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neill, once said, "All politics is local." As a white person in Maine, the whitest state in America, I acknowledge my life long responsibility to unpack my backpack of white privilege to speak out. What can white folks do? Do we notice how racism is denied, minimized and justified? Do we speak up when family or friends tell racist jokes in our presence? Do we speak up when racist comments are made on social media platforms? Do we talk to our children about racism? What risks do we take? Do we pull back the curtain on our unconscious racial biases?

Racism was and is a pandemic for 14 generations before COVID-19. Participating in yesterday's protest rally for George Floyd was another reminder of America and Rockland's dark histories of racism. Covid cases and deaths of American people of color far exceed those of white people and police killings of American Black men – twin pandemics - have shined glaring spotlights on our American Apartheid. (The Afrikaans pronunciation of their racist policy is "Apart-Hate.") As I write this, the Sarasota PD was filmed kneeling on a Black man's head and neck. The Maine Office of Attorney General has never found an unjustified police shooting in the 40 years of case reviews.

Our state and city has its own dark history. The powerful white supremacist, anti-Jew and anti-Catholic political force of the Klan flourished in Maine in the 1920's – early 30's, including the Klan-supported election of Maine's anti-Catholic Governor Owen Brewster and later U.S. Senator Brewster. The first Klan rally in America held in broad daylight was in Milo, Maine. In 1924, "half of the city of Rockland was agog with excitement" as "a vast gathering" turned out to "mingle with hooded figures" for a Klan rally with a 50' cross burning on Middle St. (later Talbot Ave.) "while enjoying hotdogs & lemonade." This rally celebrated Klan supported candidates in the cities elections, including Rockland Mayor Carlton F. Snow. A Klan cross was also burned on Mount Battie. The third leader of the Maine Klan owned Gregory's Men's Store in Rockland. Rockland ministers joined the Klan, including the Rev. E.V. Allen, who rose to the rank of "Grand Kaliff." (Sources: Rockland Historical Society) More recently, Maine's former two-term Governor Paul LePage made public remarks, such as telling the Maine NAACP to "kiss his butt" and that people of color were "the enemy of the state." (Spell Check wants to correct LePage to LeRage.)

COVID-fatigue is becoming more and more apparent in Rockland, across the state and the country. People are increasingly foregoing face coverings and social distancing. We may consider ourselves "lucky" that we don't have many cases and feel relief that "only" one person in Knox County has died of covid. That one person also had family and friends who loved and mourn the loss of that man.



No son, the harbor ain't busy - its just tight

Will the tourists come?

by Glen Birbeck

What's the difference between a busy harbor and a "tight" harbor? The old timer remembers a harbor busy with lobster and fishing boats. With small freighters carrying all manner of commerce. This beautiful and picturesque harbor is the heart of Camden. In recent decades, instead of busy, the harbor has been tight with the mega yachts and lesser craft (those costing under \$5 million) of the rich. It's packed, but not with commerce. The well healed visitors ladle plenty of money into the regional economy. The boats might need work. The galleys need provisions. Has this all been upended by the Corona virus?

Will the rich and not so rich be visiting this year? Some will, no doubt. But everyone who depends on this trade is holding their breath, waiting to see. Hotels and motels are still shut. Restaurants are starting to re-open with many restrictions. The folks with mega yachts don't need a hotel, but in years past they dined well and left big tips. The day trippers and weekenders from "away" have been the major source of the annual summer flood of income. Many college students came up to Maine in the summer to work their butts off. They could earn quite a nest egg toward tuition in just three months. Will it be worth their effort this summer?

News suggests the pandemic is growing severe in much of the world. Famine induced by lock-down gives a hobson's choice to people and governments. Die from a virus or from starvation. Here in the better off USA many stumble toward herd immunity the hard way, the ancient and traditional way, by crowding together. Anyone left standing (we fervently hope) is immune. I'll not be entering that lottery. My appointment with the grim reaper is still way off...I hope.



Rotary Time

on WRFR

Tuesdays 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Saturdays 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Hosted by DJ Chuckee!

At The Buzz and WRFR we are all volunteers. We would love to have you join us. To learn more, visit our website at WRFR.org - and call Joe at 596-0731.

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