



Rockland Buzz

Local Matters

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The Old School
Fellowship Education



Valli Geiger

What's Going On?

by Joe Steinberger

Is it about George Floyd or Donald Trump? Or somehow both, as their spirit is aligned in a cosmic struggle between good and evil. Truth, it seems, depends on where you stand on a mono-polar worldview: all complexity reduced to how far left or right it falls on the immutable scale of all things.

But the real world is multi-dimensional. A rational approach to civilization is not found on a line between opposite orthodoxies. Today's political divisions are very much like the religious divisions that caused so much misery in the middle ages. Group think is not effective think, not productive think.

Effective government in the public interest, effective democracy, requires the active participation of all of us. We must each use our independent thought and experience to contribute to the effort. In following one or another orthodoxy, we abdicate our responsibility.

Rational policy in the public interest is found through an organic union of the minds and interests of the public, a thoughtful, respectful collaboration to build win-win solutions.

This is the beauty of democracy. It is a way to control government in the interest of the people as equals.

Democracy, however, has an endemic disease, a disease which is fatal if citizens are not active and fit. The disease is the constant tendency toward increased concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a privileged few.

That, of course, is exactly what is happening today in America.

We, the great majority, cannot pay others to do our "lobbying" for us. And even if we could, what will we tell them to lobby for? Our challenge is to know what policy will be in our interest, the public interest. Once we the people have conferred and agreed on a policy, we can insist on it from our elected representatives. If we are divided and confused, our so-called representatives will just do the bidding of the special interests which fund their campaigns, do their research, write the laws, etc.

We have the ultimate power, but we can do nothing with it unless we understand and agree on a rational policy to serve our interest, the public interest. That is very hard for us to do because the strategy of the power elite is to mislead us, confuse us, and set us against each other. They own the information media that we rely upon, and they use that control to feed us a message that serves their interests.

Understandable. They are not evil, they are just doing what all of us do: protect our interests. The problem is that they are well organized and they have the resources. What we have is the vote, the ultimate power in democracy, but to use that power we must unite.

Our job is not to be angry, but to overcome. We cannot overcome if we are divided. So it is not surprising then that a key part of the message we are fed, by the corporate media on both polarities, is that we must not tolerate the other, that we must despise the leftists, or the rightists, the Republicans or the Democrats, those who love Trump or those who loath him.

We are doing as advised, and in the process we are destroying our chance to save American democracy from the growing power of the special interests.

To get beyond this political division we must realize that what is being presented, and perceived, as an ideological divide is in reality a class divide. There is a vicious circle between growing income inequality and growing special interest power. They feed each other, and are spinning out of control.

The fact that the United States has been doing so poorly in the fight to get the Covid-19 pandemic under control seems to be connected with the gap between rich and poor. The places where the class divide is greatest seem to be the places where the infection rate is highest.

Here in Maine, and in Rockland, we are doing relatively well, both with the Covid crisis, and in general with getting along with each other. Our divisions, political divisions and class divisions, are not beyond healing. Let us try to heal them. America needs our example.

Donald Trump promised he would make America great again. He has not. Neither will Joe Biden. That project is entirely our responsibility. Are we up to the challenge?



A conversation
about local issues
on WRFR,
Wednesdays
from 5 to 6 pm

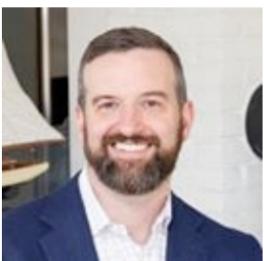
This week, on Wednesday, July 29, on the Metro Show, Joe Steinberger will interview Michael Mullins, Republican candidate to represent Rockland and Owls Head in the Maine House of Representatives. This will be Michael's second visit to the Metro Show. Last months interview can be seen at <http://www.maine coast.tv>

The following Wednesday, August 5th Steve Carroll will interview Valli Geiger, a member of the Rockland City Council who is now running as a Democrat to represent Rockland and Owls Head the Maine House. We will talk about her ideas for State government as well as local government issues, including Rockland's new re-valuation. Valli has joined us several times over the years on WRFR.

In recent weeks we have also interviewed our State Senator, Dave Miramant, a Democrat, and Gordon Page who is running against him this year as a Republican.

We hope in the weeks before the election - and there are still fourteen weeks to go - to have a constructive conversation that includes both candidates for the Maine House, and also one that includes the both candidates for the Maine Senate. Stay tuned to WRFR, 93.3 fm in Rockland, 99.3 fm in Camden, and online at wrrf.org!

Jump on the Metro every Wednesday from 5 to 6 pm, and call 593-0013 to join the conversation.



Michael Mullins

At The Buzz, radio station WRFR, and Maine Coast TV, we are all volunteers. Join us! Call or email Joe Steinberger: steinberger@gwi.net or 596-0731

Herding Sheep

by Steve Carroll

In Ireland I watched in awe as sheep dogs meticulously herded hundreds of sheep from pasture to the safety of their barn. The animals willingly followed their masters without question and seemed to even enjoy the process.

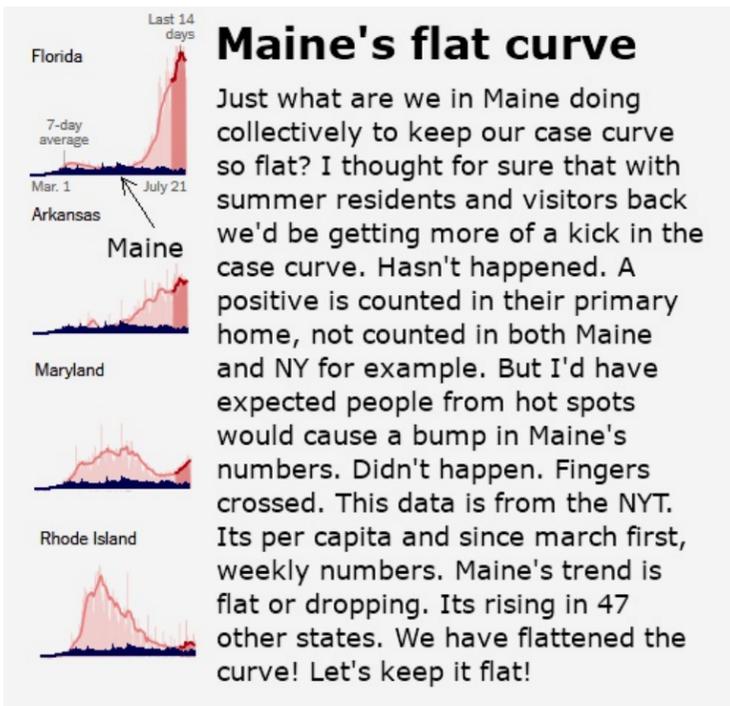
In today's society I see an all too similar process occurring between our leaders and the general population. The people seem to willingly go where they are told. The Democrats & Republicans are basically the same party serving the same corporate masters, even now arguing over the benefits of a new stimulus package. Should we give the peasants more money or just send them back to the mines.

Thirty million people out of work, businesses closing, long lines for food and necessities millions losing their health care, yet our leaders are debating whether more is needed or should we just let them go hungry.

Andrew Yang had a great idea "universal income" - give the people money to spend and they will to pump up the economy and start the engines of growth. It is consumer spending that moves the machine. Our representatives cry, "where will the money come from," yet when it was needed they found a way. An economic collapse at this point would be devastating to our country. We need to keep the engine running by feeding consumer spending.

Our representatives want to create a system of spending from the top down. They feed billions to the banks and corporations hoping that will trickle down, yet it has not. We need to spend from the bottom up. Feed the middle class and they will spend, spend, spend all the way to the top. The middle & lower class will spend all their income on goods and necessities and the corporations will benefit. This is not that difficult to figure out, unless you are only listening to your corporate masters who will ultimately convince you that it's a losing strategy.

At some point, if we are to survive, we must stop being sheep and start questioning the motives of our leaders. This is the time to become tigers and not just so many sheep.



Glen Birbeck

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

The fledgling crows don't seem to need any more coaching by their mother, Broken Wing, to partake eagerly of dry cat food and a stale donut breakfast. A single seagull joined in. I tried chasing it away but it had more patience than I'll ever have.

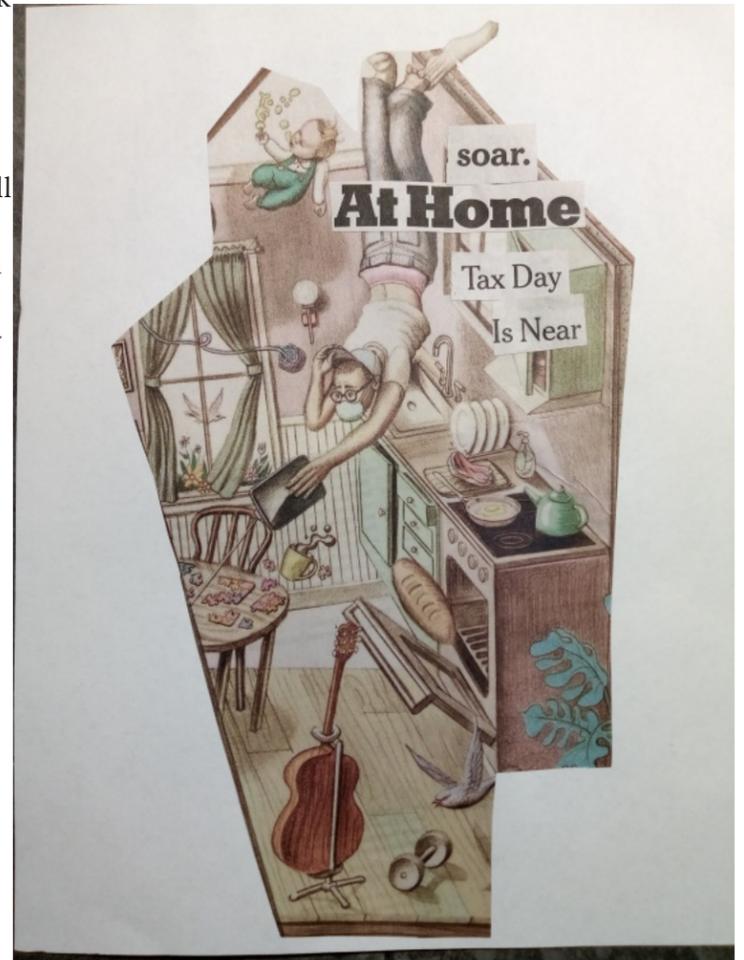
Some years ago I phoned the bird rescue organization, Avian Haven, in Freedom, Maine to see if they rehabbed injured seagulls and they responded, "We don't discriminate." So, I've rescued one injured seagull and one injured crow for Avian Haven volunteers to transport for care. Avian Haven is a wonderful resource.

Yesterday John Lewis, a legend of the Civil Rights Movement and a three decades congressman, died of pancreatic cancer at age 80. He was among civil rights iconic leaders and others protesting, including in 1965 on the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, Alabama, for the right of Black Alabamians to register to vote. Peaceful demonstrations did not protect him and others from police beatings. He had a most passionate and charismatic voice and universal, sound advice for anyone and everyone: "Find something you feel strongly about and stand up, speak up and speak out. Give it your all. Never, ever give up or give in. Do it with faith, hope and much love."

Disturbing news about break-ins at Masonic and Grace Streets homes - among the hardest crimes to solve. As well, victims must feel personally violated. We always lock our car and home doors and windows at night. But about a year ago, one of us forgot and we awoke to find an inner outside door had been ajar all night. I wonder if a Masonic/Grace Streets neighborhood watch, with cell phone cameras/videos at the ready, might help. Just an idea in sympathy with residents.

OK. Now the city has done it up big time with drive-by re-assessments. I and my South End neighbors and friends have been slammed with sky-high home reassessments based on "the fair market values" of other neighborhood homes that have been tear-downs/re-builds/rehabs by out-of-staters with deep pockets. Their bargains are our heartaches. Our home increased in value in one year by 68%! Another home value increased by 91%! Our home has been in my husband's Rockland family since 1944 and my father-in-law fixed it up until he was in his 90's.

City speaks with forked tongue: Councilors say they want both affordable housing and to gouge homeowners with sky rocketing property taxes. Gentrification has been and remains in full operational mode in Rockland. It won't be long before neighborhoods will be unrecognizable. A South End rental sold recently for over half a million. No affordable rents in there. You would think Rockland would cut property owners some slack during the pandemic when the city's economy has been crushed. But the city would say, "So, sell out and get out. We have plenty of flatlanders waiting in the wings with money bags." Meantime, the city uses family homes as its ATM.



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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