



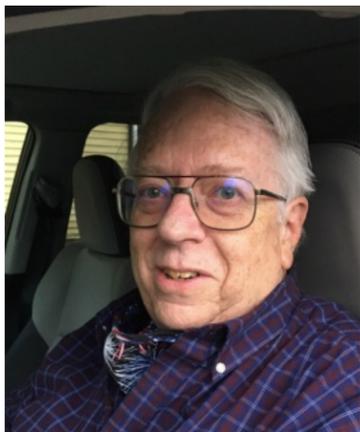
Rockland Buzz

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"The Metro"

Issue 181, September 11, 2020, Rockland, Maine

The Old School
Fellowship Education



Join the Rockland Metro Show on WRFR Wednesday's from 5 to 6 pm. We talk with interesting people from our Rockland metro community, and talk about anything and everything. You can listen at 93.3 fm in Rockland, 99.3 fm in Camden, and worldwide online at wrfr.org. Call in with questions and comments to 593-0013.

Last Wednesday Steve Carroll talked with Brian Harden, former Mayor and City Counselor, Main Street shopkeeper, local historian, and member of the Pen Bay Hospital board. The topic was the nursing home proposed by a private developer for Old County Road in Rockland.

Next Wednesday, September 16, Joe Steinberger will talk with former chair of the Knox County Republicans, Sonja Sleeper. They will try to bridge the partisan divide and reason together.

On Wednesday September 23 Steve Carroll will talk with former Mayor and City Councilor Louise MacClellan-Ruf. Louise is now running again for the Council.

Then on Wednesday, September, Steve Betts from the Courier-Gazette will moderate a "Conversation with the Candidates" with Michael Mullins, republican, and Valli Geiger, Democrat, who are running to represent Rockland and Owls Head in the Maine House of Representatives.

The Metro Show is not only broadcast and streamed on WRFR radio, it is on Maine Coast Television: cable channel 7 and online on Roku and at mainecoast.tv

Down Main Street with Phil Groce

Deep in the Weeds

The building at 500 Main St. in Rockland used to be a church, then for a long time, an antique store. Looking up the wide stone stairway to the entrance, I saw a discrete sign to the right for SCRIMSHAW, and to the left I saw that the Knox County Democrats had moved in with their many signs setting about, one loudly declaring "Renewable Energy." As I climbed the stairs, a familiar smell hit my nostrils. Hey, I thought, the Democrats are really coming out. But following the smell, I entered to the right and soon saw two glassed-in growing rooms fully operational.

Behold, there was a marijuana dispensary with the first room being stocked with CBD products and another separate room containing THC products. Beth White sat behind a counter and stood to greet me. Behind her I could see a monitor screen showing many security views.

Beth grew up in rural Ohio, went to high school there, hated school except for the social aspect—only 27 students in the graduating class. She married thereafter and had 2 children, but later divorced and became a single parent. But all went well, and she eventually married her present husband. In 2002, they took a vacation trip to Rockland and never returned to Ohio. Her husband now works for Dupont in Rockland.

I asked her how she got involved with Scrimshaw, and where did the name come from? "Nick Westervelt owns the place, and he particular likes scrimshaw and whales, and so that's the theme. I just applied for work and gave him my resume." I asked her what he liked about her resume? "It was my law enforcement background. I worked for the sheriff's department in Ohio and also did security for businesses to support the family. I needed to learn a lot of the things I had ignored in high school. I also worked for TSA. Lots to learn. I took courses."

I was impressed by Beth's directness and openness. Right to the point she goes, nothing circular, and kindly, too. I asked her what holds her together. "I try to treat people as I would like to be treated . . . and be honest."

Did you have an interest in marijuana before you started work here? "I smoked some in high school, and I started growing for my own use. It helps with anxiety, and I use a little at night for sleep, but I need to remain straight in my job and with my friends. We all have law enforcement backgrounds. My husband never uses it—doesn't even like it."

Do you participate in the horticulture here? "No, that's a specialty. There are three growers—no one else allowed—and they have to suit up, wear coverings for their shoes. They don't want any contamination, and it's all very organic. Lots of light and electricity used." Must make CMP smile, I said. "Yes," she replied, "lots of overhead, including costly seeds for the particular strains we grow. We also have a farm in Union." It clicked in my brain, remembering biking up a hill in Union and seeing what used to be a rundown barn, now rebuilt securely and lots of electricity coming in—and that familiar smell.

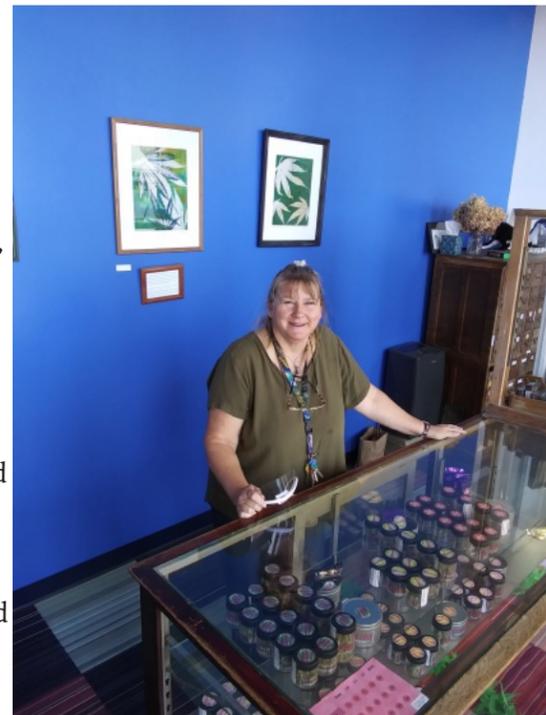
What kind of clients do you have? "If they want to buy in the THC room, they have to have a medical card. Anyone over 21 can buy CBD. We get both young and old, mostly selling THC products. Many people look to us as a medical supplier for their ailments. It's a nice relationship. We have doctors and NP's coming in to learn about the products. We sell seedlings and clones in the spring. Most of our CBD products are from elsewhere, though there's a hemp farm in Union—Victory Botanicals." I guessed that Union is recovering its agricultural background in a new way. Wonder if the agricultural Union Fair is watching?

Retail sales are coming up. What do you see as changes? "We have applied for a retail license, and we also want to continue our medical license. If you have a medical card, you do not have to pay the added Maine tax. So, medical cards will still be in use. We have been having lots of tourists come in here, hearing that we have legalized marijuana in Maine. We have to tell them that medical cards are needed. That will change, hopefully, on October 9, but we'll see. Would be an added tourist draw for Maine." Maybe an added festival after the lobsters?? I laughed at that thought.

Throughout the interview, there was a steady drift of customers coming in, all of whom were tended by Beth. Young and old. Nearly all knew what they wanted and spent little time in the store. I heard one say, "I am a patient of yours." None bought anything in the CBD division. I noted some pretty strong THC products on the shelf: edibles and drinkables—like lemonade.

"Moderation is the word," she said, "though I have to say that there are people coming in who use high doses. Mostly, people need to know that there are two basic strains: Indica and Sativa. Remember Indica—'In the couch'—it can make you sleepy, quell anxiety. Sativa stimulates the brain, can increase anxiety, not a sedative. Then there are hybrids that have both. Ten milligrams is a lot for most people. There can be 100 milligrams in a bottle of lemonade. Edibles can last a long time and with a delayed response depending on what's in the stomach. Clients need to know that. No different than with alcohol, or any medication."

How about with driving? "It can have an effect. In my law enforcement readings, it looks like a test is on the horizon that will aid law enforcement in determining impaired driving. It's needed. Still, there is a lot of good here. I would not be here if there weren't." I could see why Nick hired Beth.



French connection:
Paul Chartrand has sent us this photo from Paris and promises a report next week. See page 2 for another photo.

CAN THE PLAQUE SAVE AMERICA?

by Joe Steinberger

Ch 3.

Our two-party system is not working for us.

The first two parties were the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. Then the Federalist Party collapsed (it opposed the Constitution) and the Democratic-Republicans splintered into Whigs and Democrats. Then

the Whigs crashed and the Republican Party emerged. That was 1854. Ever since, for 166 years, these two parties have constantly controlled Congress and won every Presidential election.

The coalitions of interest that control the two parties have changed. The Republicans began as the northern anti-slavery party and the Democrats defended the interests of the southern slave owners, but the mix keeps shifting. Winning elections, not principle, is the driving force. The two parties now divide all spoils. They squabble over those spoils while they plunder the people.

The reason for democracy is that the public interest is most likely to be served if the public is in charge. But the public's power can be subverted by a minority that is well organized and well funded. This has always been a problem, but organized power now has a greater weapon than ever in the internet and the thought control algorithms they can manipulate from on high.

We Americans put down the Russians for their oligarchy, but we have our own. Can that be denied? Our oligarchs are vampires sucking our blood. Not to say, by the way, that vampires are bad animals. They are just doing their thing.

It's up to us to keep them out of our bedrooms, but how? To have any hope, people must get together, talk to each other, listen to each other, respect each other. Divided we fall.

Our situations are diverse. Our interests are diverse. But there is plenty of win-win territory open to us, territory we can take back from the oligarchy that has taken so much that is rightfully ours. The wonderful thing is that our constitutional heritage makes it ours for the voting.

We must conspire to vote ourselves back into power. We must stop being lazy and timid thinkers, stop joining the chanting mobs, stop censoring each others thoughts with the politico-religious orthodoxies of the moment while the oligarchies of both parties reap our attention and feed on it, selling us pap that bloats our stomachs and numbs our minds while we angrily blame each other.

Our history is not all sweetness and light. Our European ancestors were cruel to the natives, enslaved Africans, and allowed only male property owners to vote. But we began our nation with great principles, and we have made great progress. For two centuries we have been a model to the world with our evolving and enduring democracy, and with our industry. Today we Americans, white and black, male and female, rich and poor, all share equal rights under our Constitution. We are free to participate in our culture, our government and our economy. We are in this together, and we will rise or fall together.

If we pay attention to each other and respect each other we can reclaim our share in the rewards that come from our constitutional and industrial progress. The way forward is not with violence, but with intelligence. I am using my intelligence as best I can, but it will take millions of brains.

Could we join our brains in a bi-partisan citizen's coalition and lead both parties in the public interest? By collaborating, can we the people overcome the power of the oligarchy? It is a daunting project, but here in our little city on the coast of Maine we can make a start at it. We can learn to talk to each other, experiment with ways to work together, and together try to find ways forward.

WEEK TWENTY-SIX

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

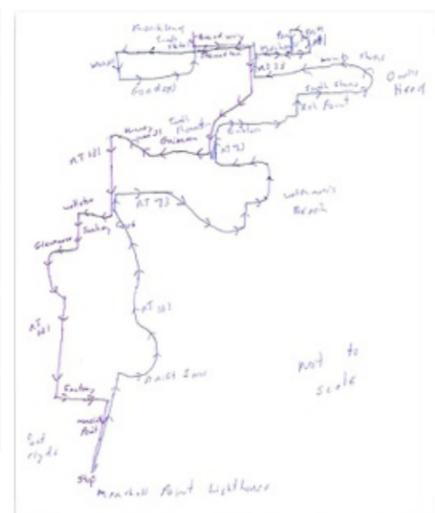
Eagles have been sighted from time-to-time this summer either perched in high branches or soaring over the Head of the Bay. Real live symbols of our democracy come to life. While they split the sky with their flight, our nation is so divided it may not mend again in a long time. This makes me feel sad and helpless.

A Friday afternoon picnic outdoors with extended family feels so close and comforting even with our social distancing. Three brothers compare their corona era beards and stories and photographs are shared. A local guy, following another pickup, hollers at the tourist to "Get the f... out of here and go back to New Jersey!" interrupting our peaceful gathering.

Twenty-six weeks of Covid-Time is so strange, fragmented and unbalanced. One day seems to merge with the next. But I don't mind sheltering-in-place. It feels safe, familiar and dependable. We have some control over our inside time. Venturing out for food and other necessary errands feels unpredictable and risky. I always keep clean masks and disinfectants in the car. Upon return home, I carefully remove the mask by the ear loops, avoiding touching the mask itself, which is disposed of and then careful hand washing. If I use a cloth mask, I wash it thoroughly and hang it outside. (During winter I use the dryer with the mask its only customer.)

There are some people without masks who put the rest of us at risk with their selfishness or denial. Due to a poorly planned wedding, coupled with these attitudes, many new and preventable Maine covid outbreaks, with three deaths, across our state, continue to increase and are highlighted in national media outlets. So embarrassing. Sacrifice for the good of others seems to be an alien concept for some.

After some mixed feelings and discussion, we decided to do absentee mail-in ballots for the November general election. For the first time in our lives we won't be going to the polling place, which will feel strange indeed. The application process for already registered voters through the online State of Maine Absentee Ballot Request Service at the Office of the Secretary of State is so easy. In a matter of a few days, our applications were approved, sent to us via snail mail. We filled out the applications and mailed them to Rockland's city clerk. We were then notified that in early October we'll receive ballots from the Rockland city clerk and all we have to do is vote at home and return our ballots. Everyone is assigned a number that's attached throughout the process. It's a safe and easy way to practice our voting rights during this pandemic and I highly recommend it.



The Rockland Classic

Sunday, September 27th, 2020

starts 9am at South School, 30 Broadway.

Join the second Rockland Classic, a bicycle ride to Marshall Point and back, 50 miles round trip.



At *The Buzz* and WRFR we are all volunteers. Join us!
To learn more, visit our website at WRFR.org

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