



# Rockland Buzz

**People First**

Issue 185, October 9, 2020, Rockland, Maine



**John T. Jenkins**

May 29, 1952- September 30, 2020

John was many things to many people, martial artist, politician, community organizer, teacher, motivational speaker, friend and more.

My husband Robert met John while participating in John's Tai-Chi classes. Over time and many conversations later, a friendship began. We were shocked to hear the news of John's death as were so many others throughout Maine. John had quite a following, he meant a lot to so many people of all ages. A loss of such a remarkable man who had so much more to do. As John would say in his classes "move with the flow as if you were standing waist deep in the ocean and feeling each wave".

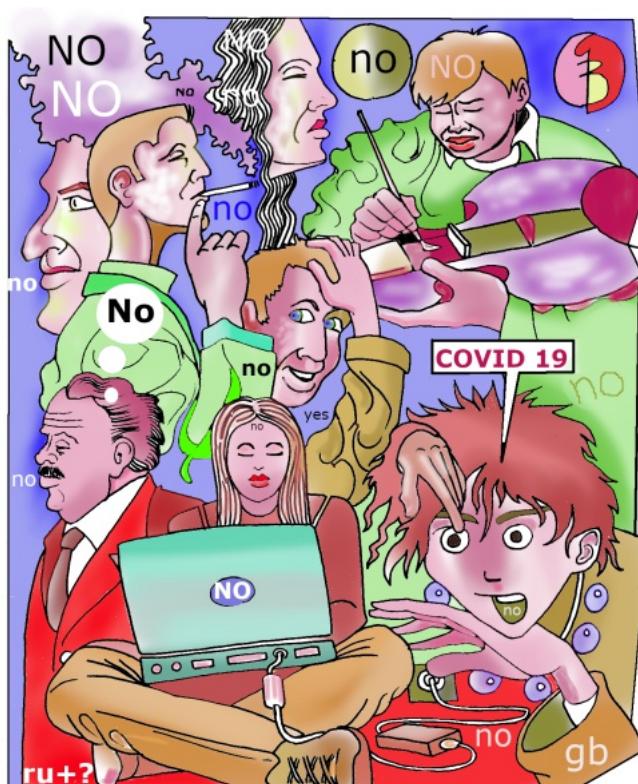
You can view the video tribute of John through Albert + Burpee Funeral site, also his history is on Wikipedia: John Jenkins (American Politician)

A public celebration of his life will be held in the summer of 2021, details to be announced. You can also leave words for John at [www.peptalk.com](http://www.peptalk.com) or at [www.albert-burpee.com/obituaries/john-t-jenkins/](http://www.albert-burpee.com/obituaries/john-t-jenkins/)

- Rita Lichtman



photos by Steve Carroll



by Glen Birbeck

**Down Main Street  
with Phil Groce**

## Not So Simple

I was referred to interview Karen Zola by another writer. When I called Karen, I was struck by her voice: it connoted understanding and acceptance, without any tone of cynicism. I wanted to explore how such a voice came to fruition. She lives just off South Main in a home she has owned for 18 years.

She told me that in high school in Massachusetts she would help when asked, but otherwise, she rarely opened her mouth. Her father owned a small clothing manufacturing company and worked all the time. When she was 13 years old, he bought her a sewing machine. "That unleashed a monster. I put the machine to work and started making my own clothes—mostly to his dismay." Dismay? "Well, they were sort of short for the times. The clothes fit, but I have to say I never quite fit into what was going on around me at school."

"My dad died of pancreatic cancer, still working. I vowed to myself that if I had a family, I would not work away from them, but do something at home. I didn't want to be a 'get to it later' parent, even though I had a lot to thank my parents for."

"After high school I attended art school in Boston for 2 years, then went to France to study art. When I returned, I went to work for my father, as his partner had died of a heart attack, but that was uneasy from the start. I lasted for 2 years before I left and rented a place in Gloucester. I started making men's western shirts, and my boyfriend, later to become my husband, in one of his jobs he tended bar. When he wore the shirts, nearly everyday someone would buy the shirt off his back, and he would come home wearing the other guy's tee shirt. That was \$20 right there. I was working part-time in restaurants, many bakeries. They were good times."

"We took a ride to Maine and decided to stay. My husband, resourceful, started a boat yard, and I started to sew. We had 3 children and eventually moved onto the boatyard to live in a house that I designed. I sewed for whatever people needed, and I cooked for parties, weddings, and as the kids got older, they helped with catering, along with their friends, and even neighbors. People called me just to do dinner at home for them, or special occasions, or even to come in once a week for something different."

"For many reasons, our marriage failed. I found myself raising the kids and supporting myself with what I could do: wedding gowns, shirts, dolls, quilts, knitting, crocheting, whatever someone wanted. I enjoyed any challenge, still do. It didn't help that my brother committed suicide in California. I haven't slept well since. But, still, I have kept busy, like last year, I must have replaced over 70 jacket zippers. Sometimes I do special projects for small manufacturers. I never advertise. It's all word-of-mouth."

"Then Covid came. I mostly stick to home. My kids have their own places, but my youngest daughter helps with groceries. People bring clothing for me to repair. Summer people bring in all their repairs for the year. But things slacked off because of Covid."

"I had the idea to make Covid masks, especially since I have all this cloth for quilts that I may never get to." She was wearing a mask as we were sitting outside of her house for this interview. The outside of the mask is attractive cloth, and inside is a wide cloth pocket. Inside the pocket, the wearer places a coffee filter. I broke out laughing—a coffee filter! "Well, it works," she said. I asked her what she does with the masks.

"I've made nearly two thousand of them. At first, I went through my address book and sent masks away to family and friends, and I also hung little bags of masks on people's doorknobs. I give them to the food pantry and to the school some of my grandchildren attend, and to some businesses in Maine and across the country. I sell some in several stores. There are a lot of people who cannot afford masks, or the coffee filters. That's something I can help with."

"It's all here in my house." She took me on a tour. I saw a carefully ordered kitchen with a six-burner gas stove, long rows of spices on neat shelves, easy access to pots and dishes, and careful food storage. Many windows looked into the back yard giving considerable natural light. "I designed and rebuilt this kitchen to serve my purposes," she said.

Then she showed me her sewing room, with the professional sewing machine, with some disarray from on-going projects, but all the raw materials and tools in order. Thence to a sunlit and windowed porch with a large work table, supplies along a wall, over a hundred spools of thread on little pegs, a daybed, and a large cabinet with neat stacks of colorful cloth squares. "Those are the masks to be," she said. "I redesigned this porch to my needs." Up high along a wall were some of her paintings. "I don't take the time to do much of that anymore." Each told a story.

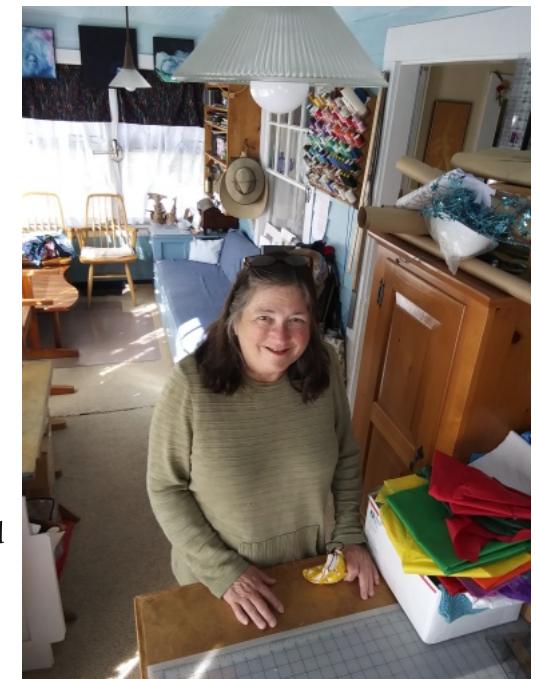
I was impressed by all the people she had been in contact with throughout the town, but rarely leaving home, and servicing their needs, saving them money with repairs, making and giving away masks, raising a family, all done with kindness and focus. "When I hear kids say that they're bored, I say to them that I'll find them things to do. They can do something, and be creative, and feel good about themselves at the same time. I try to make life simple . . . as possible."

I am hoping that Rockland does not become 'Portlandized' by the high taxes and drives people like Karen out of the neighborhood.

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## Remember the Alamo

by Steve Carroll

In 1836 a pivotal event occurred in the Texas revolution. Following a 13 day siege Mexican troops under President Santa Anna reclaimed the Alamo Mission near San Antonio killing a small group of rebels. This small group of Freedom fighters including James Bowie & Davie Crockett fought overwhelming odds from the advancing Mexican army. No reinforcements ever arrived to support these courageous fighters. The Battle of the Alamo will always be remembered as the turning point for Texas independence. As I look upon the circumstances facing our country over the last several months as millions of Americans fight bravely against a viral plague that has overtaken our land and killed thousands of its citizens, I am reminded of the Alamo.

Today many brave Americans are fighting to keep their businesses afloat, to stay in their jobs, to pay their rent or mortgage, and keep food on the table. Many will eventually lose their homes, jobs or business, will find themselves waiting in food lines or even homeless. Yet in Washington our representatives are on break and have failed to create a stimulus package to keep Americans whole.

Like the Alamo in the midst of a raging battle, no reinforcements are coming. Our President just announced he will not negotiate until after the election and the Democrats are also unwilling to lead and come up with a solution. Just yesterday it was announced the airline industry will lay off thousands of employees, all with families and bills to pay. Why are our leaders abandoning our cause? Why are they turning a blind eye to the pain and suffering of their people? Many of our representatives have earned great wealth while in office.

Our congressional leaders have their own health insurance, live in fancy neighborhoods, have everything they want and are in need for nothing. They either do not understand our plight, or even worse, do not care about the situation we are in. If they did, a stimulus package would already be in the works. Wall street is doing well, wealthy Americans seem little effected by the virus, our President was in and out of the Hospital in two days and says he's doing better than ever. The "haves" have everything they want and the "have nots" have nothing.

Our Country is being torn apart by class division, and violence is ravaging our cities. As the battle continues we see more fallen soldiers and still no help in sight. Will this be the turning point for our nation? Bernie Sanders just gave a rally in Michigan for Joe Biden with 15 in attendance compared to a rally he gave in March to over 10,000. What's the difference? - he has nothing to give them.

So if you remember the story of the Alamo, of how many brave fighters gave all they had so others could have a better life, despite no help coming from their government, then you can understand this is your call to action. If we are to overcome this foe we must work together, we alone, to win this battle. Expect nothing from Donald Trump or Joe Biden, or any representative in Washington. They will support their friends and leave us to fight our own battle - and that we must do together. United we stand, or divided we fall.

**CAN THE  
PLAQUE  
SAVE  
AMERICA?**

by Joe Steinberger

**Many countries have done much better than the US in curbing the spread of Covid-19.  
I blame our poor record on three things.**

1. We have a very weak public health system. While we spend far more on "health care" than any other country in the world, almost all of this money goes to private corporations that are motivated mainly by that money. This is true whether they are "for-profit," like the pharmaceutical and insurance corporations, or "non-profit," like most of the hospitals. Providing for public health is one of the core functions of government, and we are failing at it.

2. We are so divided politically, so busy chanting "it's your fault," that we are unable, as a people, to competently reason and work together.

3. We have a large and degenerated underclass. We are pushing so many of our people to the margins; disrespecting and segregating them. Racism is part of this, but the problem runs deeper, affecting both whites and blacks. This injustice is perpetuated today by a "welfare" system that, rather than offering opportunity, creates its own kind of dependence and bondage. We have only to look around our little white city of Rockland to see the result, to see so many children growing up in poverty; struggling, and often failing, to grow into useful and respected citizens. But we don't look around. We just look the other way.

It is not about "socialism" versus "capitalism," or any of the other ideological nonsense of our absurd partisan divide. It is about being competent people, and having competent government. We are not, we have not, and the sickness is spreading.

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## WEEK THIRTY

### COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

Last week was Mother Nature's trick of a thirteenth full moon – one more than usual. I saw a lovely photo of the full moon resting on the torch of The Statue of Liberty. Something I needed to see in these tumultuous times. Nature is going to pull another device from her repertoire on Halloween with a rare Blue Moon.

I can hardly keep up with all the birds swarming our feeder for food. Many are on their migratory routes but many also stay around all winter – just like loyal Maineiacs.

A certain museum owner observed carrying the American flag as our flag dragged along the ground and then they tossed it into the back of their conveyance. As the spouse, daughter and sister of American veterans, I am highly offended. I'm not a rabid patriot but really – what kind of disrespect is this by a citizen?

High-priced homes and vacant lots are selling off quickly in the South End. Out-of-state-covid-refugees are buying up second homes for safe havens in our town. What will they do when the inventory dries up?

Just when I think we've all been up to our necks in weirdness during covid, there's The Week of Weirdness:

The best part of the vice presidential debate was when the fly landed on VP Pence's head, which stayed there almost three minutes. Pence didn't notice but millions did. It was a mesmerizing few minutes in an otherwise meh debate except for the alternative reality force field in which Pence resides and about which he'll reassure us really exist. The only truism of the 2020 debates: Journalists make for useless debate moderators. Then, we now have the White House petri dish covid-super-spreader and the president on a cocktail of who knows how many combo doses of unregulated medications to try to tamp down his covid and who knows how many doses of the psychoactive steroid dexamethasone he's getting and which common side effects are mania, aggression and paranoia. I'm hoping his strange non-stop tweets are the only result. If I thought the first presidential debate was a wild train wreck, I cannot imagine how the second one will unfold. If Biden refuses on the basis of the president's covid, I can imagine the president responding, "What's the problem? You didn't notice I had covid during our first debate." Then, locally, right here in Rockland, two of our police officers were fired because, while on night duty, they were reputedly jacking porcupines and torturing them to death out on the Bog Road, which they posted on Snapchat. What a week and it's not even Thursday.

The other day I was Windexing the sidelights of our front door when I found myself at eye level with a huge orange spider with the glass our only separation by inches. Arrrgh! I've never seen anything like it. Google revealed the spider to be a Cross-orb Weaver that is most active Sept – Oct. Its body was at least one inch with its extended legs about 4". They're not aggressive and non-toxic. (I think the only Maine spider that's toxic is the Brown Recluse.) Cross-orbs build a new web daily.

Its glowing orange coloration and timing must make it a Halloween spider.



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