



Rockland Buzz

Life Goes On

Issue 199, January 15, 2021, Rockland, Maine

MAINE COAST.tv
COMMUNITY TELEVISION
On cable channel 7,
MaineCoast.tv & Roku.

The Old School
Fellowship Education

Solitary or Solidarity?

Fred Bloom

“The issue before us is death.” These are the opening words of a 1991 talk by Chris Hedges, perhaps our greatest living teacher, perhaps a prophet of our time.

He doesn’t mean our personal death, but the greater death of our culture, of our moral sense, and our solidarity as a people. Though we also face the possible literal death of our civilization and indeed our species with the global catastrophe of climate warming, it is the spiritual death of our culture which Hedges sees as the root- and it’s replacement by what he calls, following the philosopher Emile Durkheim, the “anomie” of our lives, the solitary isolation of our separate existences, the reduction of everything to the rational, utilitarian, and material, with nothing left to feed our soul but distraction, spectacle, and entertainment, and nothing to feel but boredom and excitement, envy, and avarice.

“Anomie” is Durkheim’s word for the fatal loss of connection to one another, the loss of our community with one another, our common moral purpose, our ancient values, and our solidarity as a people. We used to sit on the front stoop and gossip with our neighbors. We used to have neighborhood events, ball games, bean suppers. I used to stop at the store on my way home from work on a Friday night, not to buy anything (OK, maybe a six-pack) , but to see who was around, where we were going to get together that night, around whose kitchen table we would laugh and tell stories, in whose garage we were going to drink beer and dance with other people’s wives and have terrible fantasies. Now, everyone is hurrying home to a solitary dinner in front of the evening news, and to a night of entertainment in a darkened room, in front of a big, bright HD screen.

The life that we had was not on a screen. It was not produced for our passive consumption by a news and entertainment industry. It was what he lived for ourselves; it was who and what we were. We were one, as children of God- whatever name we gave that God. Now our God is Moloch. He teaches us to worship money, to imagine that our fulfillment is in consumption- of goods and entertainment, what is produced in His factories and sold to us in His markets, and on His screens. His priests and ministers are those whom we call the elites: our politicians, business moguls, bank and corporate managers, the masters of the financial and corporate machine which controls our government, our lives, and determines our fate.

Hedges says that because we are spiritually bereft, and desperately seeking some sense of connection and meaning, we are prey to fake heroes, who are backed by the people who hold the real power, who don’t want us to see who our real enemies are. We are in a state of silent despair, and we hardly notice it, because we are desperately keeping ourselves distracted from it. Still, our invisible masters are afraid that we might wake up to our real situation. They know that we are vaguely aware of a deep dissatisfaction and sense of injustice. So they want to entice us into blaming some despised group. In a former time, in Germany, it was the Jews. Now it is the liberals, the immigrants, the non-white. In hating them, we can feel glorified and heroic, because we are not them. But, it is a grand deception. They, those with the real power, are revelling in our division from one another. Their biggest fear is that the people will unite against them.

It’s been a grim week in the US. We have experienced, in miniature and amateurish form, the vision of the fascists storming the parliament. The Rough Beast of Yeat’s imagination has arrived in the good-old USA. The priests of Moloch ride triumphantly into the city. Again, in Yeat’s words: Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold. We know that both the Democratic and the Republican Parties are in the hands of the Big Money, with a few individual exceptions. We are in the midst of a great delegitimization- both Parties included. The question is which direction will the people go: will we claim our natural community and solidarity and stand up to the real forces that dominate us, or will we follow some future Rough Beast into death.

footnote 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsfcNKRyZgk>

Down Main Street with Phil Groce From the Soul

Music in the air. Andrea Bocelli. So melodic, and in Italian, but no need to translate. Some customers dance in the aisles, surrounded by the antiques for sale. Bob and Sherry Lary play only CDs of Bocelli music as background in their shop, Antiques Etcetera on Main Street. “It’s amazing,” Bob says, “For instance, people from New York come steaming in here. Then they do a dead stop listening to the music, and you can see their bodies just relax. Happens every time.”

I talked with Bob, as his wife, pleasantly introverted, busily held the place together by doing the office work. Bob credits his wife for their success as a team. “It’s 50-50, always has been, always will be,” he says. “We have an astronomical amount of paperwork, as we have 17 dealers here, each with their own inventory, and we pay them their share. She does it all. I call her the arranger.”

Bob was born in Dover Foxcroft, and he remembers going to a fabulous private school in town funded by a wealthy man, and thence to a high school, also privately funded—both schools now gone. His father was a teacher and athletic director, and his mother worked in a pharmacy. Bob went to college at the Northern Conservatory of Music.

Bob was given a trumpet in the third grade, and from then on, he was a musician, writing his own music, and playing in bands well into adulthood. Sherry sang in a band. It all gradually came to a halt when they had children, three boys. The long nights away playing music interfered too much in parenting. “I don’t regret a minute of it,” he says, “because I love music.”

“Music comes from your heart, from your soul, and you either have it, or you don’t. You know if you have it. But it’s hard to make a living with music, especially having to upgrade the equipment, and the music has changed. Many fewer venues, and melody has gone to a great degree. I treasure the freedom as it was, the spirituality of it all.”

Where did the antiques come in? “My mother was a junker. As a teenager, I bought old broken pump organs—getting many of them for nothing—then fixed them up and sold them on the lawn for good profit. By the time I met Sherry, I was well into buying and selling antiques. After we met, we worked together. Business was very good back in the 70s and 80s. We had to be on the road a lot, and we owned an old 60-passenger school bus that we used for hauling antiques, and all our kids (3 boys) could come along. Better than having babysitters. We learned as we went along, buying what we liked, sometimes crashing and burning.

“In Old Orchard Beach in 1980, we decided to open a group shop.” Group shop? “Just as we have here—multiple dealers all under one roof. It went like gangbusters. We stayed with it there for 4 years and sold out to move to Cornish where we bought an old church in which we developed our business. We raised our kids there until they completed high school. Then we moved to Arizona for a short time, but our kids didn’t like it there. We moved back to open an antique store in Parsonsfield. We were very busy there—like 8 days a week--and it was too much. We sold that at profit, and then moved to Friendship, which is where we have our home now.

“We had a small shop in Friendship (21 Main), but we moved and leased this ideal building in Rockland for 3 years now. The Spear family owns the building, and it was E.L. Spear lumber and hardware before. Everett, himself, built the counter we still use.”

Seems like the antique market has changed a lot since the 70s. “It changed when many of the banks went belly-up, in 2005. That was when we moved to the area, and we were coming from being very busy to a slow crawl in Friendship. But we survived. And it is changing even now. Millennials are finding that all that press-board furniture they bought is falling apart. You see it out on the lawns now. They are realizing that solid wood furniture has great value, and it lasts, and it’s beautiful—cherry, walnut, mahogany. Heavy at times. And I have to move all of it, but it is a matter of leverage and not lifting--sliding.”

What about Covid? “The market is still there. We have a good reputation. This is where many local people buy furniture. We also have many repeat customers. They come in here to find stylish and functional items they love. They know that I will take a loss before I will cheat anyone. When we buy anything, I tell them what it’s worth, and they can come in here and see that we are selling it for what we said. As a customer, if you smile, you are liable to get a better price.”

You are past retirement age. “Well, I love doing what I do. We have built a very good business, and I am going to do it until I can’t do it anymore. It’s a positive experience. I always stay as positive as possible. There’s enough negativity in the world. I love people, and we have met so many great and interesting customers who tend to share with us a love of history. Everything here is history.

“As an antiquarian, my all-time favorite thing to do is to open a door and go down into a cellar, or up in an attic and find all the remnants of history of that house, in the eaves, on old shelves, back in corners. I put it all together in my mind and see the living history. It’s a lot like music. Yeah, between music and the antiques, that’s me.”

Copyright Philip C. Groce 2021 Comments welcomed: buzzingdownmainstreet@gmail.com



by Phyllis Merriam

I'm feeling angry, sad, discouraged and ashamed for our country in this ongoing crisis. The shocking videos in real time Up until the Jan. 6th attempted coup, I was feeling pretty good and optimistic about covid vaccines even with sluggish rollouts. Not now. Knowing that what happens in Washington impacts even our mid-coast, I'm having a hard time wrapping my brain around what happened last Wednesday. Attempted coups are never sudden, unplanned attempts and much evidence was/is there in plain sight. There were many previous, contemporary and public signals that were minimized or ignored. Despite lots of online data about what was coming last Wednesday, the violent and dangerous attempted insurrection was so easily carried out. Many questions remain and many investigations and assessments call for a commission – similar to the 9/11 one – to investigate. Jan. 6th may look benign compared to what insurgents are planning for Jan. 20th. I am afraid for our country.

OBSERVATIONS:

During a rare visit to our Rockland USPS I noticed a no-mask customer getting lengthy help from a postal clerk who wore his mask at half-mast while both men dropped aerosols all over the countertops, which are never disinfected after each customer. USPS has made it clear they neither practice nor enforce CDC covid safety guidelines for themselves or the public. So, if you want to play Covid-Roulette, just visit Rockland's USPS. It's free and open to all comers. I'll use FedEx or UPS.

During visits to PenBay Medical Center my husband and I see unit clerks behind plexi-glass partial barriers but who don't wear masks and no countertops are disinfected between patients, so we're forced to bring our own disinfectant wipes. I find this amazingly neglectful of immune compromised patients during a pandemic.

Saw a house sign with a figure of Trump in a ball and chain and captioned, "Traitor."

The other night I went outside to breathe fresh air and look at the stars before going to bed. The clear sky was bright with constellations – a pleasant ending to the day. Then I heard the loud honking of Canada Geese. I've seen their V's well into early December, but this seems late. Maybe Canada Geese read climate change pretty well.

I saw the first ones about a week ago and now today there were four of them. A couple was strolling by in the evening each wearing sneakers that had miniature but very bright LED flashlights on each sneaker that lit up the sidewalk so the couple could easily see where they were going and not have to carry a flashlight. Genius.



On the left is a photo taken in 2018 of my son Takuma and his new friend Merlin Deon, in Merlin's home in a former silk factory in Lyons, France. On the right is an image from an emailed New Year's greeting from Merlin's family.

Our connection with the Deon family was made possible by SERVAS, an organization whose goal is peace and understanding through travel and hosting. and which now has 15,000 travelers and hosts in 100 countries. To be a traveller an interview is required, and a small membership fee, but hosts do not charge for the visit - it's a cultural exchange - so it is a very inexpensive way to see the world and meet people. Through Servas, Tak and I have friends around the world.

Check it out at servas.org.

Joe Steinberger



ASSIGNMENT: MEMPHIS

the plot that killed the dream

January 18th, 7 p.m. Assignment Memphis

A documentary about the death of Martin Luther King Jr, locally produced by Drew Darling, will air 7 p.m. on Monday, January 18th (MLK day) on WRFR-LP, 93.3 fm Rockland, 99.3 Camden and streaming online at wrfr.org.



Become a WRFR Sponsor

Sponsoring your local all-volunteer radio station is community service, public relations, and advertising - all for just \$360 a year. We will record a 20-second announcement describing your business or organization and letting our listeners know how to find you. Your message will play at least once a day, every day of the year.

To learn more, email Amie Daniels and Ryan McGlashing: sponsorwrfr@gmail.com.

WRFR and The Buzz are supported by these local business sponsors. Please give them your custom!

- American Legion Post 1 • Apache Boat Works • The Apprenticeshop • Astrology with Ananur • Bar Harbour Bank & Trust • Blues Festival • Brio Promotions • Brooks Trap Mill • Bufflehead Sailing Charters • Burpee, Carpenter & Hutchins Funeral Home • Cafe Miranda • Camden Conference • Camden Harbor Cruises • Camden National Bank • Camden Opera House • C'est la Vie Consignment • Chartrand Imports • Courier Publications • Dead River Company • Dowling Walsh Gallery • Eastern Tire • Eric Gabrielsen • First National Bank • Frantz Furniture • The Free Press • Genuine Automotive • Gilman Electrical Company • The Good Tern Co-op & Café • The Grasshopper Shop • Guini Ridge Farm • Hall's Funeral Home • Hoffman's Thomaston • Home Kitchen Cafe • Jensen's Pharmacy • Jess's Market • K & P Speed Shop • Knox Village Soup • Lyman Morse • Maine Street Meats • Maine Coast TV • Maritime Energy • Mountainside Services • Mid-Knight Auto • Monhegan Boat Line • Peaceful Passage • Pen Bay Pilot • Pen Bay Medical Center • Red Bird Acupuncture • Rhumb Line Restaurant • The Ripple Initiative • Rock City Employee Cooperative • Rockland Savings Bank • Sammy's Deluxe • Samoset Resort • Schooner Bay Printing • Side Country Sports • Southend Grocery • State of Maine Cheese • Strand Theatre • Swan Restorations • Suzuki's Sushi Bar • Tea Printers • Toshie Ichiyangi Tesler, CPA • Viking Lumber • Wayfinder School • Willow Bake Shop • The Zack Shack

Get *The Buzz* at these Rockland locations: Good Tern Co-op • Dunkin' Donuts • Jensen's Pharmacy • Rock City Cafe • Southend Grocery
The Buzz is composed and printed by the Fellows of The Old School at the WRFR studios, 20 Gay Street, Rockland. Email: wrfr93.3@gmail.com