

Rockland Buzz

Local Love

Issue 202, February 5, 2021, Rockland, Maine

On cable channel 7, MaineCoast.tv & Roku.

The Old School

Fellowship Education

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WRFR is a 100 watt FM radio station. We broadcast from our studios in a former garage at 20 Gay Street in Rockland, studios we share with MCTV, Rockland's public access television station.

All of us at WRFR, at MCTV, and at The Buzz are volunteers. We take care of our own administration, and we give each other space to do our own thing. Join us! Do your thing, and make a creative contrtibution to your Rockland metropolitan community.

To learn more, call Joe Steinberger at 596-0731. Or visit our website at wrfr.org.





by Glen Birbeck



Scallops, Peppers & Onions 1/28/2021

Down Maine Street With Phil Groce **Giving Back**

I generally interview the first person who speaks to me when I enter a business. Elissa Bower first spoke to me in the Good Tern Co-op, and she was standing by the sandwich counter. I thought she made the sandwiches, but come to find out, her hangout is the small office seen behind. She was so forthright, I felt welcomed.

Elissa has been with the Good Tern Co-operative (Coop) on Main Street for over 4 years working through different jobs, starting at cashier, and where she is now the manager of the grocery, meat, and cheese departments. She's also in charge of education programs and outreach for the Co-op. How did she develop her forthrightness?

"I was born in Camden and went through school there. My parents own the schooner, Heron, in Rockport.

They make their living by chartering in the Caribbean during the winter and up here during the summer. I was home-schooled, along with my younger sister on the boat down south, and I had the chance to be at close quarters with people from all over the world. Seeing and living the wild life, facing heavy weather and the ocean, I think I learned common sense then. Don't stand around and think about it. Just do something. You have to make quick decision on a schooner."

Why not stay with that? "Actually, I hated going back and forth, leaving my friends back home. I did spend, maybe a total of a year and half actually at Camden High school, but I graduated a year early, and then I was on my own." What then?

"I, and a partner, lived on a small farm, and we learned about natural food, gardening in general. What really interested me was permaculture." Permaculture? "Making systems sustainable, like building soil, and in a larger context, biodynamic, which has a spiritual component. You call it stewardship. We have to be the stewards of the earth. Actually, I started learning that lesson when I was on the boat. It helped me through some hard times." In what way?

"As a teenager, there was so much going on, crazy times, often over-whelming. But just being able to see that on the earth it's all fine. The world is NOT terrible. Watching something grow—seeds growing to fruition—is very cool, finding myself, centering, being able to see a bigger picture. That's what attracted me to the Co-op. I was 18." You skipped some years here. "No, I'm only 23, but I don't mention that to anyone. Without thinking, people naturally discredit you in the very beginning if they think you're young. Lots of millennials feel that . . . prejudice." So, you're a manager now?

"Yes, and I have spent time serving as interim general manager when the manager left. Luckily, the Co-op was able to hire new general managers after about five months. As the manager of grocery, meat, and cheese, I deal with over 50 local farmers and producers--all on the small side. We also get food from United Natural Foods, Inc. So, we have big and small deliveries coming in, like maybe \$60 worth of eggs, and also pallets of large deliveries.

"I love dealing with all the producers personally, and seeing their work-sites. I feel as if I am giving back to the people of Maine for all their hard work in producing healthy beautiful food. It can be expensive. You have to pick and choose. I have been able to learn about cheeses—it's so beautiful and sensual, and the hard work and dedication to produce something like that, bread, too. I'm in awe of what they do."

Is Maine doing well in local food production? "I feel that the millennial generation--those in their 20's and 30's—are directing lots of their energy back to the earth and the local and organic movement, like back in the 70's and 80's when all the hippies came to Maine with their communes. My parents came to Maine then. Only today, this is more integral. Small farms are popping up. New greenhouses are extending the growing season, producing local greens and root vegetables all-yearround. I see innovative farmers growing hemp, rice, heritage grains, turmeric, ginger, saffron, and more. Maine IS leading the way, giving back, helping the climate." What of the co-op business

"It's a fantastic model, and it has to be governed by an involved board of directors, with financing coming from over 1500 members (at the Good Tern) who each pay \$180 in equity to become member-owners. Most Co-ops re-distribute profit as dividends to their member-owners at the end of the year. Members-owners have a say in the organization, and they are eligible to vote on or run for the board. All co-ops are held to a set of values: self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity."

What is your dream? "In the interim general management position, I came into close contact with Columinate, an organization that offered consulting to the Co-op concerning its business model and operations. There was a very young woman in that organization, Brittany, from whom I learned. She was so brilliant and knowledgeable, started at the bottom, and now she teaches others. She's my model.

"At some time, I am going to get a degree in cooperative systems. I think adding employee ownership to the co-operative model is the way of the future. But employee-owners have to be dedicated. There can't be much turn-over, and they have to be accountable. The staff has to remember that this is a business, and they are all in it together as owners.

"My dream is to learn how to build dreams in others, help people start co-ops in different forms as needed. It's a fantastically flexible model, and it has a magnificent future."

I can see now, some young person in the future saying, "Yes, it was Elissa who really inspired me to do this. I wanted to be like her. Thank you, Elissa."

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Going...Gone. Rockland 2/4/2021



"This is after a snow storm on our walk up Suffolk Street. The painting is a memory of my late husband Frank and our dog Jolie." Annie Pavalkis

WRFR Local Love Special on Valentines Day, Sunday Feb. 12

2-3 p.m. **Keith Alley** - love songs and stories

- 3-4 Camden Shakespear Festival love scenes
 - 4-5 Chuck Kruger and friends love songs
 - 5-6 **Downeast Singers** virtual chorus
 - 6-8 Everyman Repertory Theater play

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WEEK FORTY-SEVEN

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

Aha! Saw the night pedestrian again sporting his safety headgear with the flashing red light. He walks really fast. If you get a chance to see him, you'll be charmed.

I received my first Pfizer vaccine in Belfast during a very organized Maine Health Care clinic. First was a security screening, by four friendly but don't-mess-with-us guys, similar to ones at airports (what's an airport?), e.g. photo ID, metal detector, then on to many other levels of screening and info. gathering. And finally the shot that I didn't even feel, then the 15-minute wait for adverse reactions and lastly the date of the second Pfizer vaccine. The whole process went smoothly and quickly. I felt so lucky and profusely thanked every staff I encountered. I wanted to vogue dance my way out to the parking lot. Vaccine rollouts have been sluggish, at best. And getting an actual appointment can be like negotiating a maze. I feel privileged and guilty, while many, many, many more people need to have my luck.

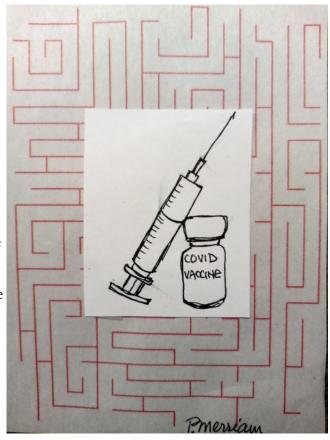
Light snow gives our town the appearance of a holiday card. Climate change has altered "real winters" my husband knew growing up when he and his gang of brothers and friends built huge snow caves and aimed their Flexible Fliers from Lawrence Street down to the harbor and walked across the harbor to Owls Head.

Who knew Rockland can use public money to upgrade private properties. A PenBay Pilot article, with photos, documented Rockland Public Works employees grinding away with our town's heavy equipment to provide free labor, using taxpayers' money, to give Safe Harbor Marinas and Stuart Smith, a Camden multimillionaire, a clear view of the harbor. So, when either private entity erects a structure, they will have a ready-made water view. Council applauds this surprise move as granting us peasants a water view. Maybe ten months of sheltering-in-place has lowered my IQ.

Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. Meanwhile, Rockland's Public Works Department continues their longtime neglect of Lindsey Brook's collapsing, supporting walls, resulting in flooding of neighboring properties.

Went to retrieve our mail when I heard what sounded like a woodpecker hammering at the Big Maple. Turned out it was a woman knocking at my neighbor's looking for "the massage business." I re-directed her to the nearby location. LOL! Some years ago, a different woman pounded on our front door demanding to be let in to the massage parlor. She wouldn't believe she was in the wrong place. The massage business needs to have better signage to preserve our neighborhood cred. Snow and sleet reconfigure Rockland's landscape and structures. Buildings and tree trunks look like Mother Nature did a right-handed power winder and slammed snow against them. Splat. I'm procrastinating confronting deep, heavy

drifts with my shovels and snow scoop – feeble tools compared to snow blowers. Punxsutawney Phil predicts six more weeks of winter. More groundhog days to manage.



Opinion by Steve Carroll

Most national polls are showing the overwhelming majority of Americans - 70 to 80% - approve of things like stimulus checks, national health care, and a national minimum wage. Yet our elected representatives seem to put the most wanted items at the bottom of their "to do" list. Our new President in his first week of office has signed into law a flurry of executive orders including canceling the XL pipeline, killing thousands of good-paying jobs for many Americans in the western states, as well as hurting restaurants, bars, and hotels that benefit from these workers. This one action has also caused a 25 cent a gallon increase in fuel pricing.

Illegal immigrants took precedence over average citizens as a freeze on deportations occurred on the President's first day, canceling the deportation of thousands of convicted criminals. His order has since been overturned by a federal court. He has also halted construction of our border wall and re-joined the Paris climate accord (another job killing plan). Even though millions of U.S. Citizens are out of work or had hours reduced due to the pandemic, monetary support from our government is nothing more than a promise.

While senators and congressman spend hours attempting to impeach a President no longer in office, millions of Americans go hungry and suffer from loss of health care. It just seems as though the health & well-being of our citizens is overlooked by our elected representatives.

This week a group of 10 senators, including our own Susan Collins, met with President Biden to offer a stimulus plan that proposes lower individual payments and NO State & local funding. The question is: who are these people working for? Billions in foreign aid and military spending are approved by a majority in no time, and nobody questions where the money is coming from. When the talks turn to actual items that benefit average Americans, representatives cry "who will pay for it?" Our former President based his proposals on "America first," protecting American jobs and enforcing immigration. This President and his policies are putting "America Last."

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