



A new tool/toy has arrived and I am checking it out.
Glen Birbeck

Confinement cuteness in Paris

At least semi-confined, with a 6 pm curfew and everything closed except stores, for over 4 mos. Bears have most of the fun! Afternoon dance lessons on the terrace outside (closed) Musée d'Orsay are pretty good fun for humans.

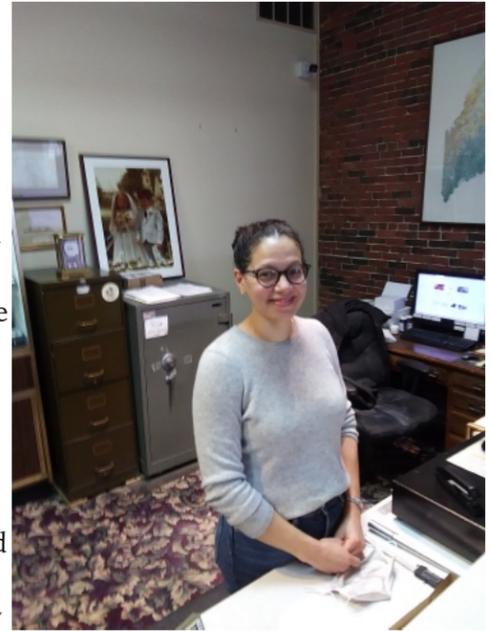
Paul Chartrand



Down Maine Street with Phil Groce

Using the Tools

Customers, only occasionally now, come into By George Fine Jewelry on Maine Street and discover that George Holmes, the original owner, died three years ago—tragically of liver cancer. He was well loved for his friendly antics, his shiny Harley, and his honesty. When you walk in now, you meet the very competent—and equally honest--Sage Chandler, the general manager, who is now alone running the store. Ownership is in the hands of George's daughter, currently living out of state and busy with a growing family of her own.



Sage originally comes from a small town in New Hampshire. She attended a boarding high school in Mass. and loved it and then went on to Dartmouth College and graduated in the humanities and art. She says she did not find 'her people' at Dartmouth and felt disconnected. Teaching was in the back of her mind. After graduation, she went to California to see what the world looked like out there.

"I stayed in Mountain View and San Francisco some, lived in Berkeley and Arcata, got a job in a music store and a nursing home. I came back after a year and eventually met the man whom I married. We dated for 6 months, and I moved to Rockland to be with him in 2001. I started thinking about teaching again as I was then working as a preschool classroom assistant. I went to the community college to study early childhood education. After that I taught at Rockland Head Start.

"I started having babies--three over 6 years--and I stayed home. I slipped into drinking when the kids were all school-aged. Only in hindsight do I now see that what little drinking I had done in the past was abnormal and unhealthy, when before, I thought it all perfectly normal. With the kids in school, I had increasing feelings of isolation, and at the same time, my husband was affected by his own set of problems. We lost the marriage, and I eventually ended up in the hospital and was referred to a rehabilitation program—thank God! What a wonderful program and fine people. Before, I didn't even have the tools to talk about this problem. It's common, especially when women feel isolated, and it comes on hard and fast in women—like you would never expect it, especially in the retired.

"They call it 'misuse disorder' now. But to conquer it, you need a support structure. I have my fiancé, and we're on the same page about this; and I have the support of the people in the program. I've also had a year of therapy. Plus, my father and mother moved out here to Rockland to retire, as they wanted to be closer to the water, and they loved Rockland from trips out here before. We all live together right now."

With courage, it sounds as if you have become a student of this disorder. "Compared to others, I still see myself as a beginner. Looking back when I was young, somewhere in the back of my mind, I felt that I had a problem with addiction. There can be a genetic link in this disorder and with addictive feelings and behaviors. Regardless, it ends up in your lap—my lap—to make the decisions to change. Time to stop treading water and start swimming. Life is NOT easy. Nor is learning about yourself."

How did you get involved with By George? "I've been here nearly 3 years, and George had been diagnosed with cancer, and I was looking for a job. I had no customer-service experience, but to be honest, it is a lot like dealing with kids—no offense meant—but you merely need to be kind, patient, and honest. I don't work on a commission; so, I don't have to push. I'm a life-long learner, and I do have a background in art, which means I have 'the eye' in design. I am not one to covet, and it does not bother me to be surrounded by these beautiful things. When I first started, I had to learn fast. That learning continues, but now I have the competence to do what I do, and the confidence to say when I don't know something. As a tool, The Golden Rule works just fine.

"We now have the only fine jewelry store in Rockland, and we do the usual things: engagement and wedding rings, fine jewelry gifts. Lots of repeat customers. People miss George as he could do everything in the business, but we no longer buy silver or gold, and we have a jeweler who does the repairs, but not on location; and we no longer do appraisals. One thing I have learned: jewelry has monetary value only if there are people willing to buy it. Very little resale market in the area. With all that in mind, people can frequently have unrealistic expectations of what something is worth. We all can do that. I have learned to be diplomatic. With the pandemic, we are open Tuesday to Saturday.

"I was always shy, and this job has brought me out, along with what I have learned in recovery. I have met so many people that I feel I have become part of the community. I feel as if I am making a contribution. My fiancé and I are looking for a house in Rockland."

I observed that Rockland is making some rapid changes. "We like the diversity in Rockland. It has so much to offer. I guess many people are having the same feelings, because houses go on the market and within days, they are gone—mostly to out-of-staters who have cash, I hear. That may be the Covid effect. It makes me feel that gentrification will change Rockland from its beloved working-class roots. I hear about a big marina moving in. Good for some, not good for others. I guess that's always the case. But who wants a place that where you work can't be where you live?"

Time to Lower the Pay of Senators and Representatives

Judy Pasqualge, 6 March 2021

After the Senate vote on the \$15 minimum wage amendment, in which eight Democratic senators voted against, and thus prevented, a raise, I have a proposal that could gain the support of many republicans, democrats and independents: lower Congressional pay.

Right now, they make a minimum of \$174,000 per year (Senate majority/minority leaders and president pro tempore make \$194,400; and the House speaker \$223,500).

Let's be generous and set pay at \$10 per hour, a rate some senators think would be adequate (not the current \$7.25).

That comes to about \$20,000 per year in pretax pay.

Let's go further: they are free to take additional part-time jobs, also at \$10, as long as this does not interfere in the work of their primary job (but NOT running in primaries).

They would put all their assets into some kind of escrow account for the duration of their time in Congress.

And, let's be really generous, and allow them access to a buffer for emergencies, say, about \$30,000. This, with their pay, comes to \$50,000 - an amount some of them suggested should be the cut-off point for receiving the new COVID-19 stimulus checks.

We'll also keep their access to the Affordable Care Act health insurance program, for them and their families. After all, while many of them find it perfectly acceptable that 20 to 30 to 40 million citizens lack health insurance, we don't.

Since they are dedicated to public service, while they are in office, they should have access to their houses in their home states, and some set allowance for returning to their states to see voters and mailing information to them, but these should not be extravagant, and must be enforced/accounted for with receipts.

But as for some of the perks that go with the job, there can be no longer be: \$25/month luxury gym access, free parking in illegal zones and at airports, monetary help with workplace disputes, only partial disclosure of stock trades, and free overseas trips (for member and staffers).

All this is contingent on a requirement that assets and liabilities, and thus net worth, are publicly reported every year.

It's here that things get interesting (net worth in \$; most from [opensecrets.org/Center for Responsive Politics](https://www.opensecrets.org/Center-for-Responsive-Politics), and for 2018): keeping in mind the eight thrifty DP/I senators: Coons (DE); King (ME); Manchin (WV); Carper (DE); Shaheen (NH); Tester (MT); Hassan (NH); and Sinema (AZ); and with no mention of the worth of any family members:

President Biden is worth from 2 to 9 million.

Sen. Coons: 10.13 million (did he actually cast his fellow Delawarean Biden's vote?) • Sen. King: 9.49 m • Sen. Manchin: 7.62 m • Sen. Carper: 5.73 m • Sen. Shaheen: 3.82 m • Sen. Tester: 3.67 m • Sen. Hassan: 3.47 m • Sen. Sinema: 32,500

By way of comparison, let's add the following:

VP Kamala Harris: 3.5 m • Sen. Susan Collins (ME): 4.12 m • Sen. Mitt Romney (UT): 250 m

And, to see how several former presidents are doing:

Bill Clinton: peak 75 m (wikipedia); Hillary Clinton: 45 m (2016, Forbes)

George W Bush: 9.49 m (2008); 39.5 (current, USA Today)

Barack Obama: 3.62 m (2014); now 40 (wikipedia), maybe even 70

A final requirement to be in Congress is to stop talking about values when actions defy them whether the values concern your country, state, religion, etc.

This is for your own protection, and to increase your chances of being reelected; this will also serve to illustrate your 'heart' and 'empathy' that is, real compassion for all the voters who have had listened to it.

I can't believe I've been keeping Random Notes now for one year. It is now the one-year anniversary since America and Maine reacted to the historical, worldwide Covid-19 pandemic and my husband and I started our Covid sheltering-in-place. I wasn't at all sure how long sheltering would last or how to find meaning in these endless Covid-Days. Sometimes the time has felt foreshortened. Other times it seems endless. Time can be lighter than air or seem heavier than iron.

Looking in the mirror to stare at myself to see if I've changed in a year should not be mistaken for some latent wisdom. Maybe it's some sort of psychological reassurance that I'm still here, intact. Probably its just vanity. I seem to have a permanent crease between my eyes that I'll always attribute to this time in history: 2020 -2021-2022.

Some things are just ordinary daily household tasks. Others are quite new and unusual. Wearing masks seemed so radical at first. But I quickly adapted and got quite used to them and would feel very vulnerable without one and now two masks.

The varieties of masks I see are quite broad and some don't meet CDC standards. The strangest masks are small square see-thru plastic coverings, with all-around gaps, that seem to be advertising, "This is what I'm wearing. What are you going to do about it?" I've seen photos of local kids' coaches wearing them.

Masks have evolved into personal & others' protection vs. indifference for others' safety. Covid deniers don't seem to understand the virus and its mutations are invisible and will outsmart us every time when we ignore precautions. Texas and Mississippi governors have lifted all mask recommendations. I just cannot accept the irrational excuses people employ to not use a simple mask. Selfishness prevails.

Grocery shopping has been and remains my major foray outside. Keeping six feet distancing between me and other human beings is not as easy as one would think. Many are considerate. Some seem to take the position, "I'm here. Get out of my way." After so many months, six-foot floor markers and arrows are wearing down. Maybe they're a metaphor for we humans wearing down from a year of altered daily life.

We Americans understandably like to take national pride in our accomplishments. Our latest achievement is the highest numbers of Covid deaths in the world. It didn't have to be this way. Friday night's PBS News Hour always ends with In Memoriam to five Covid victims. Judy Woodruff always narrates victims' biographies. She was so moved she could barely close out the program. I found myself weeping.

I find comfort in the companionship of my husband, relatives at a distance and five close friends who, no matter what dire news occurs, find ourselves laughing across telephone distancing.

There does seem to be light at the end of the long, long tunnel and it's not a locomotive. Congress has finally passed another Covid-relief package despite every GOP senator's opposition. More and more vaccines are becoming available, the number of Americans hesitant to get vaccines drops almost in proportion to the enthusiasts getting shots. We continue to have anti-Vaxxers who may impact herd immunity. When the CDC says we all can, at some point in the future, give up our masks, will I be able to give up mine. I've become so fixated on wearing one that it has become some sort of a relic for this historical time, a token, and an artifact. I do know that when the time comes, I will put them in a box with my other keepsakes.



the babypaw press

Mondays 9-10 pm & Fridays 7-8 am
on WRFR

Tune in early or late with the babypaw press, broadcasting movement-centric tracks so that although physically distant, we all may dance together.



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 • Bay Chamber Concerts & Music School • 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 • 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 Ichiyanagi Tesler, CPA • Viking Lumber • Wayfinder School • Willow Bake Shop • The Zack Shack

Get The Buzz at these Rockand 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