



The Buzz

Rockland's Downtown Magazine

Issue 215, May 7, 2021, Rockland, Maine

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The Old School
Fellowship Education



HALFWAY HOME

The viral pandemic that has ravaged our health, our communities, and our souls for the past year is now showing signs of subsiding. This highly infectious disease has taken its toll being passed from person to person throughout the world. No one is safe from its deadly grip. Early on pharmaceutical companies rushed into production a life-saving vaccine that will over time save millions of lives, yet many in this country have chosen not to protect themselves and others by being vaccinated. The latest CDC figures show 61% of Knox County residents have had at least one vaccination (village soup 5/5/21) so a little less than half remain susceptible and could potentially pass on the deadly virus to a family member or stranger. This negligence on the part of many citizens could potentially prolong infections indefinitely. Like polio in the early 50's not until the entire population had been inoculated were we all safe from this killer. Supplies of the COVID-19 vaccine are now widely available to all who wish regardless of age. Now the task begins to convince those unwilling to participate in the importance of saving our society from more months of isolation, masks, and social distancing.

On Wednesday, May 19th please join us on the Rockland Metro show for a public discussion on ending this virus for good. If you wish to participate, have questions, or wish to comment please send your request to mainecoasttv.com. Our show will be broadcast over WRFR Radio and Maine Coast TV local channel 7 on Wednesday, May 19 from 5 to 6 pm.

Your host, Steve Carroll

WRFR is low-power community radio in Rockland.

We have been broadcasting 24/7 since 2002.

At WRFR we are all volunteers - now more than 60 strong. We play the music and host the talk shows - and we play what we like and say what we like, subject only to the fcc rules against profanity and our own principle that we must treat all members of our community with respect. We serve also as our own administrators and our own technicians.

It is not easy, and we would very much like to have your help! We are open to everyone and eager to welcome you into the fold.

Our local business sponsors, over 80 strong, support us because they appreciate the interest local media and local business share in maintaining our independence and viability in an increasingly centralized culture and economy. We also receive much-appreciated support from individual donors.

The Buzz which you hold in your hand, or see on your screen, is a weekly publication of WRFR. The Buzz editors, writers and artists are also all volunteers, and we are eager for you to join us.

The umbrella organization for WRFR, The Buzz, and other activities is the Old School, a non-profit - 501 (c) (3) - educational organization, also all volunteers.

To lean more, to become a sponsor or a donor, or to join us as a volunteer, go to wrfr.org, email wrfr93.3@gmail.com, or call Joe at 596-0731.

Down Main Street with Phil Groce

Accepting Granite

Over the years, if you are going north on Main Street and look to the left, you undoubtedly have noticed the Old Granite Inn, a bed and breakfast. Ed Hantz, the owner along with his wife, Joan, is not enthused with the word 'Old,' because, as Ed told me, "The interior is not old-looking, and it is not Victorian. In 1840, it was a house. We call our decor modern cottage style—simple elegance."

Ed grew up in Fayetteville, Arkansas, where his father was a professor of philosophy, and his mother a reference librarian at the University of Arkansas. I asked him what it was like having a philosophy professor as a father. Ed grinned, "I never won an argument. In that respect, it's even worse than having a father in the psychology department."

"But with the University there, it was more racially accepting than the rest of Arkansas. They still remembered the violence in Little Rock." How about in high school, were you a rebel? "No, I was a nerd. I played the piano and the viola in the youth orchestra, and after graduation, I went straight into college, because, as you know, the Viet Nam War was on. At that time, the draft wasn't taking kids in college."

What college? "Reed College in Oregon, and my parents were happy that I graduated in math. Then I sort of rebelled and went into music and got a graduate degree in music and organ performance. That was where I met my wife. She was working on becoming a composer, and her instrument was violin. I went on to get a masters' and PhD in music theory." Did you use that?

"I taught music theory at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester for 15 years. We already had a son, born in 1973, and in 1992 we decided to adopt a Brazilian girl. We went down there, and it was the most anxiety-ridden 65 days of my life." What was the problem? "So many people lied to us; the judicial system was a mess, we could not find anyone to trust, and we didn't understand the language or the culture. But we were in love with Giuliana, our new daughter. It was wonderful to have a baby in the house again."

"I retired from college teaching, as I ran up against the publish or perish wall. I went to work for my wife, who ran a graphic design company in Rochester. Business began to fall off, as Xerox was collapsing, and the entire area was on the skids. It's notable that we had bought a house in a suburb and there was a covenant on the property from 1927 that said it could not be sold to anyone of color. I had lived in racism in Arkansas, but we were surprised to see that in Rochester. We were later to encounter racism in Maine in the local school system. But we made progress there, as it was not so burdened with heavy cultural opposition."

"We decided to live in Maine, as Joan's father, Chip Harkness--a retired architect--lived on Vinalhaven. We bought the Inn, fixed it up to Joan's keen vision, and we are quite happy, schmoozing with the guests, and we can even play music at the school in Rockport. Chip died in 2016, one day short of his 100th birthday."

Who does what here? "I do the cooking and gardening, and Joan does the infrastructure; but it's 50/50, and we interchange roles. Lots to do in an old house, and to make everything ready for the guests. It's our 15th year here." What about Covid?

"Revenues dropped 70% from 2019 to 2020. We have some regulars, but people were staying home, though we have island-people stay here for the ferry the next day after doing business on the mainland. Things are beginning to pick up now. We are optimistic, because we have done well in the past, and I think people are ready for travel after Covid."

What's it like to own a B&B in Rockland? "Surprisingly, the B&B's stick together as Historic Inns of Rockland. We, and the Berry Manor, and the LimeRock Inn do publicity together and refer guests to each other. We're also part of the Inns Along the Coast. The thing is, we are all integrated into the important activities in Rockland, like the Seafood Festival, the Boat Show, the Blues Festival, and especially Pies on Parade." Pies on Parade?

"It annually raises about \$30,000 for the Food Bank. That's in January when there is not much else going on. You can buy a ticket and visit 20 venues around Rockland serving pies. You can see people walking around town with a fork in their hands and a smile on their faces. We have about 400 people wander through the inn. It costs us to make 30 pies, but it's worth it. In fact, we are known for our food here. It's like a family reunion during the Blues Festival. The same people have been coming here, some of them for 20 years. Looks like the Blues Festival is still on. Not the Lobster Festival." I was hoping the lobsters would change their mind.

"We take pride in our personal attention to our guests. They need to know what's going on, and we serve as concierge. The rooms are unique and certainly not like the cookie-cutter rooms of, say, a chain inn. And red or blue, people stay here from Maine and from all over the country. They find congenial conversation, barring politics, and find acceptance."

"If you want privacy, we have separate tables, but people enjoy eating with the other guests at the big table the most. Joan and I are so tired of divisions. We hope the Inn provides a venue for all people to gather and discover common ground. We want to enable people to relate. When you get to 76 years old, acceptance and relationships are a big deal."





Peter D. returns with Rawkus Radio!

Peter D. is back with a new show on Wednesdays from 10-11pm! During Rawkus Radio Peter plays new and old independent hip hop.

Please think for yourself, we need your advice.

a Buzz editorial

Freedom of thought is declining. We have become divided into competing political orthodoxies fighting to win the battle for power. In this battle, freedom of thought must defer to the group effort to defeat the enemy. But when we abandon truth in favor of orthodoxy we all lose. We are social creatures. Our genius is our ability to think, to communicate, and to collaborate.

Freedom of thought is the foundation of democracy, and has been our path beyond slavery and serfdom. If we cannot think for ourselves, if we cannot share our thoughts, and our power, we are doomed to return to serfdom. Our growing inequality, under both of our competing parties, is the direction in which our truth suppressing group-think is taking us.

To turn things around, to make our democracy work for the common good, we must have the courage to think for ourselves, to communicate honestly with each other, and to share our power out of respect for our equal worth as human beings.

The way in which we can effectively share our power is simple: one-person, one-vote. But how to vote? We live in a country of 330 million people spread out over 3.8 million square miles. Some of us are poor, some rich, some live in cities, some in the countryside, some of us are female, some are male, some of us are of European origin, some Asian or African, some of our ancestors were slaves and some were slave owners.

As we are different from each other, we are easily led to fight against each other, but it is unwise for us to do so. We are no longer competing tribes in a vast wilderness. We must share a world of limited space and resources. Unless we believe in genocide for the advancement of our tribe, we are all better off if we get along and work together.

Getting along and working together, however, does not mean that we do not compete with each other. Fair and respectful competition is our best means of collaborating with each other. It is through the competition of ideas that the truth is found. It is through the competition of the marketplace that our material progress is developed.

We must stop being spectators in a national media competition for our attention, attention which they get by stoking our animosity and dividing us into chanting crowds. We must stop buying the Coke, and talk to each other. It's fun, if you are open-minded and not too egotistical. And if you are closed-minded and egotistical, as we all are to some degree, you can have fun too. Just relax, take a deep breath, and let go.

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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

WEEK SIXTY

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

It's hard to believe I've been writing Random Notes now for sixty weeks as my husband and I have been sheltering from the virus and now its mutations. Harder to believe is actually living the sixty weeks during a pandemic. Where has the time gone? How much more time do we need to keep wearing masks even though we were both vaccinated last February? When six months is up, will there be booster shots available? I always keep us supplied with disposable masks. We also have 21 two-ply cloth masks! My favorite two-ply has the words, "Catch Fish Not Corona." It seems appropriate for a mid-coast Maine mask. This week I feel fixated on the virus and vulnerable, which isn't a healthy approach and not my usual outlook. However, I have to admit to a low-grade feeling of worry - like a low-grade fever - as a background to my life during these surreal times.

Yesterday, the Maine CDC Director, Dr. Nirav Shah, reported two Mainers in their twenties, with no underlying health conditions, have died of Covid-19. And the Lewiston/Auburn area is on fire with one of the highest cases per capita in the country. Young people in Maine are not getting vaccines at anticipated rates, leaving stockpiles of unused vaccines. Meanwhile, there are outbreaks again in Maine nursing homes because many staff refuse vaccines. This means residents are again denied visits with their relatives. This seems thoughtless, selfish and cruel. There is no federal law requiring long-term care staff to get vaccinated in order to protect residents. Then there are the anti-Vaxxers. Then there is India.

A huge solitary crow came for breakfast today. Maybe it's a raven? I can't tell the difference - except ravens are larger than crows and I couldn't get a clear view of its beak. Ravens have distinguishing beaks. Since it was alone, I'll go with raven.

Much needed rain today, which will ease dislodging the remaining dandelions. I know dandelions are an important source of food for pollinators, especially honeybees. But there is a large crop of dandelions for them in our backyard and all over the South End, so I justify digging up the few in our front yard.

Went to the Cornell Ornithology Lab website again to try to determine the two-note songbird with which I've been duetting and just got more confused. Maybe it's a black-capped chickadee? Maybe a tufted titmouse? Maybe neither? Who cares? It's mysterious and interesting to do a call-and-response with an unseen and unknown bird species. The odd things I enjoy during a pandemic...

Yesterday's sunset turned gulls' white breasts a lovely rose color as they flew eastward. Our neighbor's Italian greyhound loves to sit in the sun cuddled on top of its huge tawny housemate of no particular breeding except monumental patience.

Main Street Market smoothies take the edge off a long road trip to my husband's doctor. Whatever happened to those two guys who made creative smoothies one summer by the Trade Winds? So many businesses on Main Street have come and gone never to return. Other stalwart businesses have thrived despite everything the world has become over these many months of uncertainty.

I decided not to read an article about the US goal of reaching herd immunity by fall is dimming, as vaccine doubters emerge as entrenched. This is depressing and I try to avoid anticipatory anxiety.

Huge building construction at the maritime museum is mostly very high roofing, reminds me of the old adage about certain Texans, "Big hat - no cattle."

Got a closer look at the big bird at breakfast. It's a large crow, perhaps a male and definitely not a raven. I haven't seen Broken Wing for some days now. Maybe she's incubating her eggs and the large crow is her mate? Incubation is about 19 days and I won't see any of her offspring until they're almost fully grown.

