



The Buzz

Rockland Metro Magazine

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The Old School Fellowship Education

Rebuttal to Steve Carroll re Firefly Field

Hi Steve,

I just read your editorial on Firefly Field. If you've been reading all the letters that Jonathan Frost (my husband, whom you can credit with the beautiful painting on the "Save Firefly Field; Protect Our Wetlands" signs), and I and others have been writing to the Free Press since March, and if you've listened to our statements to the City Council and Planning Board, you wouldn't be able to dismiss this complex issue as a simplistic "Save the Fireflies" or NIMBY-ism. Jonathan and I live a mile from the field, but we have walked by it and closely observed it daily for ten years. You can't accuse us of NIMBY-ism. And why shouldn't people care about what happens in their neighborhoods? Think globally, act locally.

You're wrong that I would say nothing if an array of solar panels were proposed for the field. I would oppose ANY development on Firefly Field. It is a wetland so it is the wrong place to build ANYTHING, and people over the past 250 years realized this, that's why it has NEVER been built on. It is already providing us with invaluable ecosystem services that are necessary for human life, such as absorbing and sequestering carbon (wetlands are the VERY best habitat for doing this, better than trees) and it absorbs and filters rainwater for two watersheds, Lindsey Brook, and Weskeag Marsh without any need for human engineering.

As for fireflies, we had named the field that after watching fireflies dance there on several summer nights years ago. This year they have been especially beautiful, and yes, fireflies are declining worldwide. Habitat loss, light pollution at night, and pesticide use are the culprits.. But fireflies are just the tip of the iceberg: we are in the middle of an insect apocalypse, and though we humans are loathe to admit it, our lives depend on healthy insect populations. As acclaimed scientist EO Wilson states, "if insects were to disappear, the environment would collapse into chaos."

Firefly Field is also habitat for rich populations of native plants, birds, and mammals -- as shown by tracks in the winter, it is a wildlife corridor.

There are many empty buildings that could be rehabilitated in Rockland for low income and moderate income housing, some even owned by the city. Why not renovate buildings that were built to last and have lasted 100 years or more, than build cheap, chintzy houses that will last 40 years at most?

I would be happy to discuss and debate these issues with you on your radio program.

Sincerely, Susan Beebe

(Reader comments and other contributions are always welcome at the Buzz: email steinberger@gwi.net)



Clyde "Sonny" Sewall, Rockland icon, 1936 - 2021

Most of Sonny's friends are dead now. He used to come over to Gay Street Place and park in the driveway where once was his home. The house had been falling down and he sold it and moved into the Rankin Center, into the very room where his older sister had died just months before. The house was torn down, but the new owners, who live around the corner, did not mind that Sonny would park in his old driveway, and that I would see him out my window and come out and pull up a chair and we would talk.

No more of that, but I have my memories. I learned about his military service during the Korean War, in New Jersey; about the surgery to remove a birthmark below his left eye that left him more seriously disfigured, about his battle with alcoholism that had him with the DT's climbing out the window at Togus.

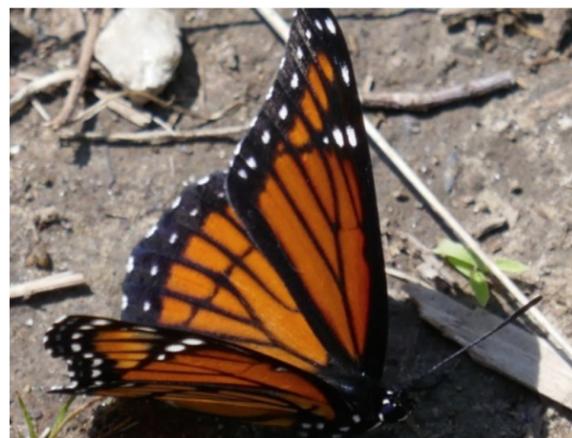
When I met Sonny in 1982, when I bought the land across the street, he was extremely kind and helpful. He let me run an extension cord over the street from his furniture shop while I built my house, and he and his upstairs neighbor Butch helped me build it.

Lately Sonny had been having chest pains just from the exertion of walking from his apartment to his car. We discussed the possibility that he might consult his doctor at Togus about it, but he worried that he would end up in a hospital bed on oxygen, like his friend Kikey, and he preferred to live while he could, and take his chances. I respect him for that, and for his courage to be himself.

- Joe Steinberger



Day at the Beech
photos Ron Tesler



Local Talk Radio (and TV)

With Hosts Joe Steinberger and Steve Carroll
Wednesdays, 5-6 pm on WRFR 93.3 and MCTV Ch. 7

UNHEALTHY OBSESSIONS

Opinion by Steve Carroll

Recently several stories on Village Soup have captured my attention. Just earlier this week traffic on Main Street (Route One) was halted so a film crew could stage a new Buick TV commercial. Our neighboring towns of Camden & Rockport are struggling to find ways to accommodate this machine that has caused quite a stir since its inception early in the 19th century. Numerous towns have requirements on the number of parking spaces a business is required to provide. A lawsuit has been filed by a group of Rockport residents to stop the construction of a new hotel because "not enough parking has been provided," Camden as well has been in discussions on how best to solve their own downtown parking problems. Unfortunately, this remarkable means of transportation needs a place to be stored while not in use and it seems we move mountains just to accommodate them. We spend millions on pathways, parking and fuel just to satisfy their needs. I have heard it said: "if aliens are studying our planet, they must believe its inhabitants are the shiny, metallic objects and all the little ants are their caretakers". How did we get along for centuries before this "automobile" was invented? It seems this "unhealthy obsession" of ours has caused more problems than it has solved. Instead of focusing on creating more parking perhaps we should instead gaze on ways to provide better means to move the "pedestrians" and to create a healthy environment for the caretakers. Public transportation would go along way to eliminate the need for parking in our congested downtown areas. Find alternate routes for heavy trucks and motorists. Make our downtown and shopping districts a pleasant oasis to stroll, dine or just sit and enjoy. Perhaps create more bicycle paths. Many major European cities have found ways to diminish or eliminate all Auto traffic and instead provide access for bicycles & pedestrians only, thereby minimizing pollution & congestion in town. As we move forward into a new century it is imperative our society finds a pathway to transport us in a cleaner, less congestive and more environmentally friendly manner. Progress is being made to improve electric cars and bicycles and even electric scooters, more parks and pedestrian friendly shopping and market districts. These automobiles are shiny and fun but they are not good for your health & well being. Think about taking a walk, you're not getting any younger.



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WEEK SEVENTY-ONE

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

Camden's select board is moving to secure more public access to its waterfronts.

Meanwhile, Rockland's mayor and city council seem to offer the approach of the double-faced Greek god Janus of the past and the future. On the one hand, they say they want to preserve and expand public access to our city's waterfront. On the other hand the mayor and council are happy that Schooner Wharf, Steel Pro and the North End Shipyard have bundled their 9 acres and 2,100 feet of prime waterfront properties for sale to developers, which will bring in new revenue to Rockland. A Falmouth realtor says, "Nothing like this exists on the coast of Maine." Media reports, "No sale price is publicly disclosed." (It's got to be in the multi-millions.)

City councilors have disclosed they'd like a pay increase from \$800 to \$4,000 per year. This doesn't seem like a popular proposition, if social media comments have any weight. If the proposal goes on this November's ballot the people will speak. Council posits the stipend increase will attract more people to run for office because they'll have babysitting monies. Unless council changes its start time to later than five p.m., few working residents will be able to participate. Current council members are either not employed, retired or have the flexible hours of self-employment. Babysitting costs would eat up a big chunk of any stipend.

Wednesday's chilly fog is so thick it's obliterating the view to Owls Head. The damp weather doesn't seem to impede tourists whose long lines and heavy traffic seem to bode well for Rockland's businesses this summer. Can they do Covid-Catch-up?

As a fully vaccinated diner, I've eaten in two restaurants without having to wear a mask. It was a rather strange experience and prices were higher for less food. One restaurant had a posted sign asking for patrons' patience with staffing shortages. Operating a restaurant is never an easy path to success especially during Covid.

New building construction in the South End is either going full bore or slower than molasses in January. Some construction seems to have been held up by either the exorbitant costs of materials or materials in such high demand that supplies are running low or are on long back orders. Also, there may be a shortage of skilled construction crews. In any case, some properties seem unlikely to be habitable before cold weather closes in.

The two Rockland PD officers, who beat eleven porcupines to death with their batons, while on night duty, have pled guilty to animal cruelty and will do short jail sentences, community service, \$1,000 fines, probation and not be allowed to work again in law enforcement; a sad saga for vulnerable wildlife and sadder still for Rockland PD's cred. Both former officers are appealing their firings from the force.

More needed rain is here while several Western states are on fire and parts of Europe are inundated with severe rains with heavy flooding and many deaths.

I cannot feel safe with the Delta variant lurking everywhere. Fully vaccinated people are thought by the CDC to be vulnerable to less severe Covid infections from Delta. Several members of congress and unnamed White House staff have gotten Covid despite vaccinations. I'm not taking any chances and have returned to wearing masks in indoor venues.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Resumption of sit-down meals

Come join us!

We're waiting for you



St Peter's Episcopal Church

11 White Street (on church) next to the Rockland Public Library

STARTING: Saturday, September 11, 2021

Proof of vaccination required

Take-out meals available

Every Saturday: serving at 12:30pm doors open at noon
Every Sunday: serving at 1pm doors open at 12:30pm