



# The Buzz

Rockland Metro Magazine

Issue 228, August 6, 2021, Rockland, Maine

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*The Old School*  
Fellowship Education

## MAYBERRY LOST

by Steve Carroll

Many of the older folks fondly remember Sheriff Andy Griffith, Deputy Barney Fife and the fabled Carolina town of Mayberry RFD. The story of a small town sheriff working to make the lives of his friends, neighbors and all those living in or just passing thru Mayberry a little bit better. Our small coastal fishing village was not so much different back in the 50's & 60's. Teenagers "bombed the Rotary" every Friday and Saturday night. Fisherman home for just a few days before their next trip out would stir up a little mischief at one of the local watering holes and life went on under the watchful eye of our local patrolmen. These men like Chief Bert Snow, officers Louie Metcalf, Paul Benjamin and many others would stand ready to break up fights at the "Big O" the "log Cabin" or the "dory lounge," to help in case of an accident, to rescue a stranded motorist or just keep the peace. For many years you would see these men as they strolled up & down Main Street making sure everything was in order. In all the time I was growing up in this ruff and tumble village I can never remember a time when any officer acted "out of line" or brought a bad name to the department. Through good times and bad these noble sentries were always there 24/7 to keep watch over us.

Today it seems times are so much different. No longer do officers patrol Main Street. They'll do a "drive by" in their SUV inspecting the scene. Gone are the Rowdy fisherman and the dive bars that lined Main Street. Gone are the teens that bombed the Rotary, now they race up & down our city streets in their giant pickup trucks equipped with an exhaust so loud it would even put a Harley to shame. Police knowing the perpetrators choose not to stop them and allow their lawless nature to continue. It is this attitude to condone the lawlessness that bothers me most of all. "Spare the Rod and spoil the Child" an expression my father would use and its meaning is never so relevant as it is today. Parents allowing their children to "do as they wish" has resulted in a society of lawlessness and we have hand-cuffed the police not to interfere.

Recently the City council has proposed an oversight committee to make recommendations on how the police department should be run. They have even purchased body cameras for every officer to wear so we can keep a watchful eye on them. In my opinion, this is just wrong. Let the police do what they do best keep the peace. All are graduates of the State Police academy and many have years of experience dealing many kinds of domestic situations. I don't think they need to be told what to do. Let's take the cuffs off, tell them what our expectations are and leave them to do what they do best, "Keep the Peace".

This is my opinion and your rebuttals are always welcome - Steve Carroll

## For Community Control of the Police

A Rebuttal by Joe Steinberger

Freedom and democracy depend on our ability to make laws that are fair and useful, and on our ability to maintain a government that effectively and justly enforces these laws. Here in Rockland we have a system of laws that are for the most part made by the Maine State Legislature, but much of the task of enforcing these laws depends on our Rockland Police Department, a body of police officers who work for us and are paid by Rockland taxpayers. We decide how many people to employ as police, who we wish to employ, what training to give them or require of them, and what specific tasks to charge them with.

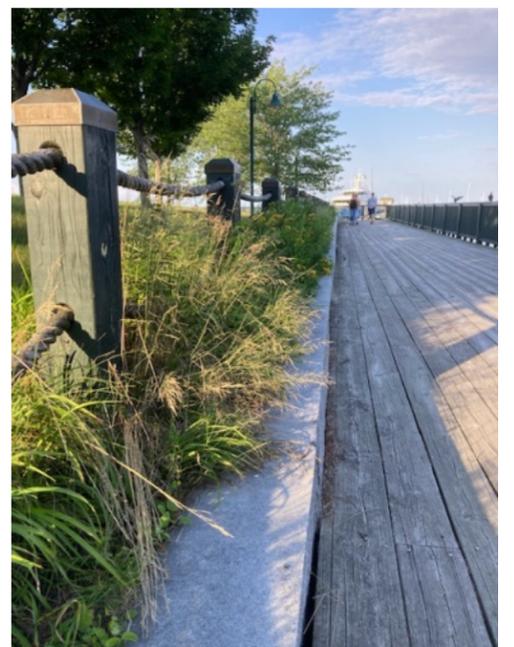
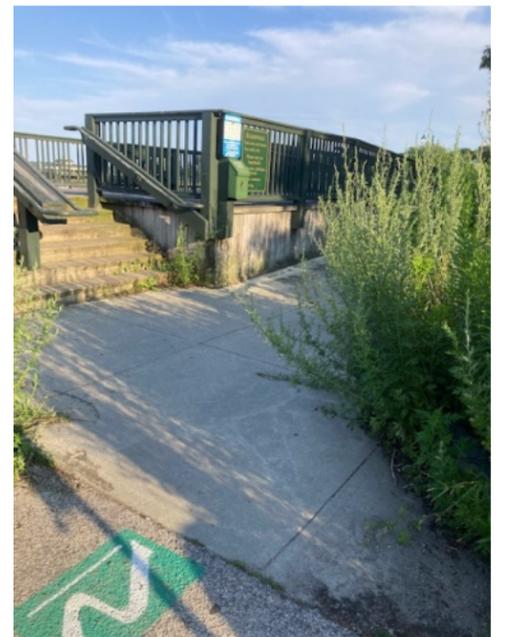
The task of overseeing the police department falls to the City Manager who is employed by our elected City Council. The City Manager hires a Police Chief who in turn hires the police officers and directs their work. The size and structure of the Police Department is decided by the Council through the annual budget process, but the mechanism for democratic community control of the priorities and practices of the police is not so clear. The authority is in the Council. If this were not the case, if the Council did not "tell them what to do," but allowed the police to do as they choose, we would no longer have a democracy, but a police state. In fact we have a democratic system. The Council/Manager/Chief hierarchy is a line of authority which puts citizens at the top, but the Council - five citizens who are paid essentially nothing and meet two or three times a month - have a lot on their plate and as a practical matter have little effective means to oversee the work of the Manager, Chief and officers who they employ. As someone who has served on the Council, and who has been through the budget process, I can attest that the process is quite ineffective.

Recently we had a scandal in our police department. Two officers were spending their time while on duty (and being paid by taxpayers) out on the Bog Road hunting porcupines with lights, and killing them with batons. They have now been convicted of animal cruelty, but their crime was even more serious: dereliction of duty. They were caught only because another officer, an honest one, got wind of it and reported it. They were not caught by the administrators who are responsible for overseeing them.

Perhaps if these derelict officers had been wearing body cameras the porcupines would have had a better chance. Perhaps citizens would too, especially those citizens at the bottom of the heap, citizens whose political clout is not much above the porcupines. With all the focus on "Black Lives Matter" it is easy to forget that injustice and police cruelty is not just about race and racism, but about class and social status. It is a problem not just in Detroit and Minneapolis, but right here in Rockland.

I have a perspective on this from forty years as a lawyer, often defending lower-class citizens in criminal cases. I also have my own personal experiences. The police can be competent and friendly, like the fine Rockport cop who gave me a speeding ticket a couple years ago; or hostile and intimidating like the Rockland cop who stopped me for a light out. They can be useless, as they were to my wife when one of her employees went missing; or extremely helpful, as a number of officers have been to me and the children in my neighborhood when there have been incidents of fighting and vandalism.

The police are an essential element of our community, and can be of great value to us. We must take seriously our obligation as citizens of a democratic nation to direct and oversee our police in the interests of the commonweal. For Rockland, the establishment of a citizens review committee to meet with the police administration is an excellent step toward better policing, and toward a better relationship between our police and our community.



Boardwalk photos by Steve Carroll



**Local Talk Radio (and TV)**

With Hosts Joe Steinberger and Steve Carrroll

Wednesdays, 5-6 pm on WRFR 93.3 and MCTV Ch. 7

Reader comments and other contributions are always welcome at the Buzz: email [steinberger@gwi.net](mailto:steinberger@gwi.net) - or on the Metro Show: call 593-0013



## Cabin Fever Dream-ing with Sara Trunzo

The SoundCheck series of live performances at the Camden Opera House, 29 Elm St., presents Sara Trunzo 7:30 p.m. Friday night, Aug. 13. The singer-songwriter and food system organizer's one-set concert is sponsored by First National Bank.

Sara Trunzo's no-frills, no-nonsense lyrics cut to the bone of the struggles of rural people in the Northeast. An alt-country/Americana artist from Unity, and co-founder of Veggies For All and Waldo County Bounty, Trunzo spent time pre-pandemic in Nashville. Her debut EP, 2017's "Thanks Birdie," was followed by the LP "Dirigo Attitude," which reached No. 22 on the Folk Alliance International chart in 2019. Its lead single, "Food and Medicine" reached No. 3 and won first prize at 2018 Maine Songwriters Association contest. Trunzo's third record, "Cabin Fever Dream," is set to be released next month.

Tickets are \$10, and advance purchase is encouraged via [camdenoperahouse.com](http://camdenoperahouse.com) and 236-3154. The opera house currently uses a choose-your-own ticketing software that creates every-other-row distancing, as well as inserting a couple of seats either side of each party's reservation, for comfortable spacing. Wearing a mask in the building is requested.

Doors will open at 7 p.m. SoundCheck also is livestreamed on the Camden Opera House Facebook page.

Miss Stefanie returns to the Camden Public Library for three Saturdays in August to host outdoor story times in the Children's Garden at 10:00 am. The theme for the August 14 program is "Beach Fun;" August 21 is "Pirates;" and August 28 is "Back to School Backpacks." Programs are free, and all ages are welcome.



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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](mailto:wrfr93.3@gmail.com)

## WEEK SEVENTY-THREE

### COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

A friend described the virus and its variants like living in a science fiction story.

Maybe it's as if Persephone, the mythical Greek goddess of death, roams the earth.

The invisible virus and its mutants may be our lives, as we know them, from now on. How many more mutants will emerge? Will the virus deniers ever come to their senses, or will clinging to their hard-core myths mean any return to a post-Covid world is out of reach? I've noticed there is little to no mention in the media now of the more than 600,000 Americans who have died of Covid. Speculation exists about the likely undercounts of the worldwide deaths. Too many so-called third world countries don't have anywhere near the vaccinations needed. Mobs of deniers in several countries have taken to the streets to protest mask wearing. Then there are the deniers who prefer to misuse Patrick Henry's famous quote, "Give me liberty or give me death!" Maybe enough humans will take Viktor Frankl's thought to heart, "For the world is in a bad state, but everything will become still worse unless each of us does his best."

In the meantime, the new CDC guidelines seem confusing to people. (Or they say it's confusing when what they really mean is they don't want to wear masks again.) Mask wearing is now recommended indoors in hot spots like Waldo County where Delta is rampant. There are some scientists of the opinion the highly transmissible Delta variant can even spread outdoors, which used to be judged safe from contagion. It may not be rampant yet here in Knox County. But I'm not waiting til we're a hot spot, too, to wear my masks indoors. Delta doesn't stop at county (or country) borders.

I noticed yesterday that there were more mask-wearers in Hannaford, even though we're still a minority. Americans came together to make all manner of huge personal sacrifices during WWII. More Americans have died of Covid-19 than perished in WWII. Why has a small piece of protective face gear become such a political bugaboo? Although he's late to the game, even Mitch McConnell is pitching mask wearing in Kentucky TV commercials. Meanwhile, one hundred million Americans, who are eligible for vaccines, remain unvaccinated. I have no sympathy - only increasing anger toward Americans who refuse to act in the public good for their fellow citizens. I have to admit that I'm trying to tamp down my feelings of hostility toward those who pride themselves in being unvaccinated. I may become too full of ire to fit through a door.

Broken Wing and her cohort of six crows loved their breakfast of leftover spaghetti and some meat sauce. They slurped up the pasta as adroitly as any Italian diner. They also skillfully grabbed cherries, flew with them to tree branches where they held them in their claws and daintily dined, piece by piece.

As I drive up Main Street for errands, I see that businesses must be doing well. Tourists are swarming our city. Care needs to be taken while driving to avoid people popping out in-between cars, crossing in the middle of the street and bending their heads in obeisance over their cell phones oblivious to traffic. The usual suspects bear license plates from other New England states, New York, Pennsylvania and D.C.

Other plates I saw were: New Jersey, Wisconsin, Texas, Alabama, Tennessee, the Carolinas, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, Florida, Michigan, Alaska and California. People want to hit the road, to find something, anything to distract from the virus and its variants.

## ArtBeat returns August 6th at 3 p.m.

WRFR's First Friday radio show is back. Hosted by Fritz Buehler, ArtBeat is a one-hour show with live commentary and recorded interviews and conversations with art makers and supporters in Maine and beyond. The unedited recordings take place in the studios and exhibition spaces where work is being produced and shown. Like a cop on her beat, ArtBeat strives to be on the ground close to the action and to set a tone of candid, in-the-moment connectedness. ArtBeat is sponsored by Dowling Walsh Gallery.

