



The Buzz

Rockland Metro Magazine

Issue 230, August 20, 2021, Rockland, Maine



The Old School Fellowship Education

Afghanistan Etc.

by Joe Steinberger

I came of age during the Vietnam War. It lasted 19 years and ended in failure. Millions of people died.

Meanwhile we have invaded Central American countries many times, creating corrupt authoritarian governments, a declining quality of life for the majority, and massive migration to our borders. Recently we have seen further chaos and tragedy in Haiti, the country we have occupied more than any other.

And now we have now seen undeniable proof that our 20 year occupation of Afghanistan has resulted in zero gain, and huge loss.

We might also remember the 1953 military coup we staged in Iran that ousted a democratically elected government and replaced it with an monarch, a move that has earned the deep and lasting enmity of the Iranian people, lead to the current theocracy, and to disaster for our Middle Eastern relations.

Then there is the invasion of Iraq, the destabilization of Syria and Libya, and the murder of Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein after they had given up their nuclear ambitions. Can we wonder why North Korea's Kim Jong-un does not give up his?

The results of our multiple endless wars have been overwhelmingly bad, and they have cost us dearly.

President Eisenhower warned in 1961, in his farewell speech, that a alliance of the military and industry was taking control of US foreign policy, to the detriment of our security and wellbeing. A warlike foreign policy makes a few rich, but is not in the public interest.

Sixty years later this truth is clear. We don't doubt it, but we ignore it because we don't want to confront the forces that drive it. What would happen to any Representative or Senator who is not hungry for military spending in her district? No wonder there are none.

Meanwhile we go on rattling sabres against Russia and China. The Cold War continues, with proxy wars brewing and killing in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, in Central and South America. The threat of a nuclear end to civilization is even greater today than in Eisenhower's time. but after sixty years we have grown inured to it.

It is possible to be an American patriot, to be glad to live here and not in China or Russia, or Iran, or Iraq, or Haiti, or Afghanistan, and at the same time respect their right to their sovereignty, and to their own future. We can respect their contributions to the culture of the world we share, and respect their people as our equals. Not only is this possible, it is the only sane and constructive attitude to bring to the table. And to the table we must go, to sit together and discuss the many ways in which we can all gain by fighting less and cooperating more.

The condo collapse in Florida is a reminder that we are not without corruption and incompetence in the U.S. The stupendous murder rates in our inner cities, largely driven by the tragic legacy of slavery and segregation, the increasing numbers of homeless on our cities, our growing economic divide, the degradation of our political dialog in this era of partisan blame-based rhetoric... we have our own problems. We have the good and the bad in our own history, and we are contending with this still.

Let he who has not sinned cast the first stone.

It would be great if other countries could be less authoritarian and more democratic, and if their people could be more free. It is right for us to try to find an effective way to contribute to that future. The question is how. Are wars and occupations, threats and sanctions, coups and assassinations an effective way to achieve that goal? History says no. Such tactics may provide opportunities for money making, and for political chest thumping, but they are counter productive because they feed into chest thumping by the leaders of our "enemies," and make freedom and democracy even more difficult for their people to attain.

Those of us who worry about climate change and other global environmental and political threats must be clear that the only way to solve these challenges is to move beyond war, to respect each other and work together to find win-win solutions.



Kabul 2021

Saigon 1975

Glen Birbeck

A "Health Pass" for the US ?

from Paul Chartrand in Paris

France is now experimenting with a new requirement for anyone to enter most public spaces. It is called the "Passe Sanitaire" or Health Pass. For most folks it is carried and transmitted to others using a mobile App. One can also use a paper version.

Proof of full vaccination with the last of two doses at least 7 days before the date of first use of the pass, or at least 28 days prior for a single dose vaccine.

Proof of a negative Covid test within the last 72hrs.

Proof of recovery from a positive Covid case at least 12 days ago and within the last 6 mos.

A paper vaccine card as used in the US is also considered valid; mine has never been questioned. Without such proof one cannot enter any restaurant, bar, cinema, museum, concert, nightclub or large commercial shopping center. Even outdoor dining areas require the pass. Major intercity transit buses, trains and airplanes also require the pass, but city public transit systems do not.

This began in late July and early August depending on the venue, and is now required for anyone over 17yrs old. It will also cover 12-17yrs olds as of Sept 30. The entire program will extend through Nov 15 with a possibility of renewal. There is also the possibility of extending the pass requirement to the few remaining excluded operations, which include small stores.

Enforcement of the pass is done by employees of each venue, who cannot ask for proof of identity. Theoretically one could show a card or app belonging to someone else. Business owners questioned how they would learn and enforce all the new rules, and how much resistance they would encounter. There have been very few problems with asking for or using the pass in places I have entered. It seems to have become another requirement, like masks, that is accepted and criticized, complained about but not actively resisted where required.

Many wondered how the French would accept such restrictions to their beloved daily café visits, cinemas and restaurant meals. So far, resistance has not shown itself at the points of service. No large groups have forcefully entered a café or bar, and no such businesses have actively refused to enforce the rules. There may be some "easygoing" lack of enforcement by some operators who risk legal sanctions. I have been asked to show my pass almost anywhere I have gone. A few forgetful employees have missed me, but most are doing their job.

Large public protests began and have continued since this late July announcement, with over 200,000 protestors nationwide every Saturday. Last weekend the number dipped slightly, but this is August in France, when everyone goes on vacation. So the numbers are quite impressive for summer demonstrations. There has been little violence, certainly much less than during the 2019 Yellow Vest movement. Protestors come from all ages and both Right and Left political persuasions. President Macron is in the middle and represents neither side with his "Republic on the March" party. His re-election in May 2022 is threatened by the mistakes and disturbances to daily life throughout the last two years, but there are no really strong opposition candidates in sight.

With almost 70% of French citizens now vaccinated at least once and over 50% fully vaccinated, there are less and less people excluded from their normal activities, which may reduce protest groups in the future. France was behind the

(continued on page 2)



Local Talk Radio (and TV)

With Hosts Joe Steinberger and Steve Carroll

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 - or on the Metro Show: call 593-0013

("Health Pass" continued from page 1)

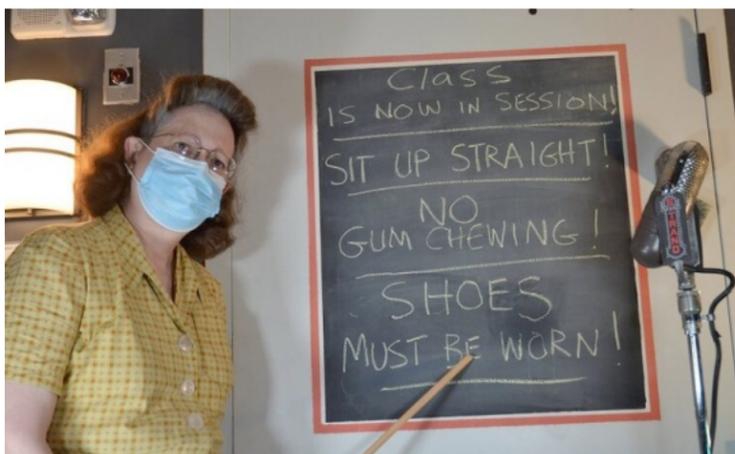
US in vaccinations until recently; now first time shots here have surged since the restrictions, which was the desired response.

Prior to Covid, France led the world in resistance to vaccines in general with the US not far behind. Many folks I know waited and some are still not vaccinated, but resistance is wearing down as world vaccine experience continues, especially under the new pass restrictions.

The relatively smooth transition surprised many here but France had already accepted a lot of Covid restrictions. There is always a lot of criticism and yelling, but the average citizen accepts some responsibility without anger and the Covid response has never been politicized or identified with any one group or "side" in national politics. Masks continue to be required in public indoor spaces and transit vehicles, including most places entered with a health pass; dining & drinking establishments are more easygoing. Masks are still seen outdoors on many persons and are required in some cities with higher case loads.

Many schools, institutions and businesses in the US are beginning or considering requiring vaccinated customers and participants. Would a government mandate make that decision easier here, or more difficult? Would a requirement take the burden off private entities to help keep customer relations more pleasant? Could the "Health Pass" happen here? Would it help to lighten up that map of deep red zones of rising cases?

The Strand on the Air "Back To Cool Edition!" Sunday, August 29, 5 to 6 pm on WRFR



Fall's coming, the kids are headed back to school, and there's plenty of fun ahead as THE STRAND ON THE AIR presents its all-new "Back To Cool Edition!" Join Liz McLeod and the Strand Family Players, Brittany Parker, and Dan Bookham as we say goodbye to summer with an hour of music and laughs. "All Things Rescinded" will take a look at the challenges kids face as they zoom out of Zoom and back to the classroom, and you'll meet the most fanatical fan of Fall that ever sipped a pumpkin-spice latte. Down in Abysmal Point, we pick up the story as Mrs. Grunden struggles with her sudden and unexpected success in the field of clam-flavored snack treats. And you won't want to miss our musical guests, indie roots rockers Bishop Reilly! The Strand on the Air - Maine's own radio variety show - is produced and presented by the Strand Theatre in Downtown Rockland!

WRFR is 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 think, 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.

We would very much like to have your help! We are open to everyone.

To learn more, go to wrfr.org, or tune in!

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: 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 • Home Kitchen Cafe • Jensen's Pharmacy • Jess's Market • K & P Speed Shop • Knox Village Soup • 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 Family Dentistry • 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 • Well and Good Natural Medicine • Willow Bake Shop • The Zack Shack

Get *The Buzz* at these Rockland 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

WEEK SEVENTY-FIVE

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

As the week draws to a close, Maine meteorologists predict temps into the '90's with suffocating humidity. Then toward the weekend's finale, cooling temps will arrive. Maine Public Radio features news about the availability of "cooling stations" in the Bangor and Portland areas. So far, closing windows and opening them during the evenings, keeps our home cool. If that defense doesn't work, we have a rolling A/C dehumidifier unit. On top of the pandemic, our western states' citizens are suffering horrendous heat and fires of historic proportions. We have been very lucky up here in Maine. Little wonder, then, those hordes of Covid refugees have been seeking refuge here.

Yesterday demonstrated to me that at least one faithful crow, Broken Wing, trusts me. When I brought out breakfast, three sea gulls on our neighbor's barn roof were poised to swoop down to feast. It hasn't taken much for the gulls to know I bring daily breakfast about the same time. I sat very still on one of the patio chairs and waited them out. Very soon Broken Wing arrived and dined just 6 feet from me. After awhile, the gulls finally gave up and flew away.

The 2021 Maine Boats, Homes and Harbor show displaced Thursday's farmer's market from the public landing to Harbor Park. Buyers swarmed the market. The white vendors' tents looked like a gathering of nomads taking some time out.

The 2020 Census shows Rockland's population has declined by 361 down to 6,936. The peak population in 1950 was 9,284 and has declined ever since. Can Rockland still qualify as a "city" with such a small population, even though it's the county seat?

The US Census shows a less white more diverse and more multi-cultural America.

The housing crisis for Rockland's service sector workers, working families, et al, remains unresolved and unaddressed by city council, some of whom engage in handwringing, others in lip service while no viable solutions are forthcoming. They still haven't figured out that their ordinances allowing so-called "tiny houses" are generally unaffordable because they cost more per square foot than traditional houses and land in town is sky high. Water/sewer connections are not free. Septic systems and wells on more rural parts of Rockland cost even more. Additionally, can the human brain withstand 25 years or more confined to living in 400 sq. ft.? Tiny houses are a new fad for singletons or young couples. Unless they're stacked like cordwood, they're too small for families. How long will the enthusiasms last - longer than chia pets? February cabin fever relievers are not hermit-like square feet. Tiny houses seem like a boon to short-term rental landlords. Meanwhile, the 1% can't build big enough, service sector workers cannot afford Rockland's rents and Section 8 applicants wait three years for scarce low-income housing.

America's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan is hard to watch. Desperate Afghanis cling to US Air Force transport planes wheels and fuselages. Our administrations never really understood the tribal factions, culture and mountainous terrain. I think the last time we successfully engaged in guerilla warfare tactics was The Revolutionary War. Afghanistan has long been known as "the graveyard of empires" for all the nations that attempted to occupy over the centuries. It looks like America is abandoning many Afghan translators and other Afghan support personnel. The VA is sending out emails and announcements regarding available supports for our veterans and their families. Thousands of Americans survive with catastrophic injuries. Countless Afghanis died or suffered injuries. Some vets are asking what it was all for; the warrior officer class is mostly defending America's longest war. What will historians write about America's twenty-year involvement of five presidential administrations: Reagan, Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden?

Alarming rates of Covid-19/Delta hospitalizations are being reported by Maine hospitals. Some health care providers and their supporters, including some from out-of-state, staged a protest in Augusta in reaction to the governor's vaccine mandate for all categories of health care providers. Some threaten to quit. Sounds good to me. I don't want unvaccinated providers anywhere near me or anyone else.

July 2021 was the world's hottest on record. Earthquakes in Haiti have claimed many lives and property just as a tropical storm moves in.

