

Santa comes to Vinalhaven

by Phil Crossman

In 1952 Santa came to Vinalhaven, to the church, as he did every year, to separate the worthy from the unworthy. We all foundered in those tricky waters where worthy and unworthy were not so distinct. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." -Romans 14:10 simply was not as scary as actually sitting in the judgment seat, in the lap no less, of one who knew for sure, not only when we were sleeping and when we were awake, but whether we'd been bad or good or worse, for goodness sake. This was, after all, the eighth annual church visitation from Santa in my own young life, and that was eight more times than I had even seen Christ, let alone sat in his lap.

Supper that night was, for me, like the last meal of a condemned man. My two younger brothers were nervous but excited, unaware, at this early stage, of their own sinful condition. I, on the other hand, was apprehensive and anxious. The church was only a few hundred yards away and I could see, as soon as we left the house, that a big crowd had already gathered.

We found a place on the aisle next to Billy Soderburg and his mother. Like a few others of my contemporaries, Billy had no apparent father and when quizzed about this he said he was the product of an immaculate conception. On those occasions when he said that the rest of us nodded knowingly because we didn't know what he was talking about and didn't know what else to do but didn't want to appear uninformed.

Across the aisle Albert Nelson caught my eye and flashed from his jacket pocket, as he'd been doing for several weeks, a little glass ball in which reposed a female figure whose skirt, when the globe was inverted and snow flakes descended, blew up a little like Marilyn Monroe's in *The Seven Year Itch*. Albert employed an evil snicker each time he exposed his little figurine in a manner not unlike that which characterized Billy's attitude when he explained his parentage and so most of the rest of us, just as mystified about the appeal of billowing skirts as we were by the concept of conception, nodded, as before, in compromising acquiescence.

At 5:30, we were stilled by the distant sound of approaching sleigh bells. In a moment a rich baritone chortling "Ho, ho, ho & Merry Christmas" ascended the steps and all eyes were toward the back of the church

In a shiny red suit with white fur collar, big red cheeks, black boots, and huge mittens, he was enormous, pretty much what we'd expect from someone who knew everything about everything we did and everything about everything we thought about doing and from whom we could keep nothing. He strode down the aisle turning right and left to tousle a youngster's hair and to chuckle ho, ho, ho and when he got to Albert and patted him on the head I was afraid, much more afraid than was Albert that he would stop and say "Young master Nelson, have you been good this year? Do you not have a little female figure in your pocket whose skirt is billowing about provocatively?" But he didn't and when his attention returned to my side of the aisle he didn't say anything to Billy either, about his being immaculately conceived.

When he reached the front of the church the minister rose from his front row chair, and stood next to Santa, who'd turned to face us with his hands on his hips. He asked Santa silly questions then told him that all the names of all the kids had been put in a hat and, as their names were called, they could all be expected to trot down front, climb up in his lap and tell him what they'd like to have for Christmas. 'Treetop' Roberts was the first name called and she kind of set the tone for the evening. Santa asked, "Lillian, have you been good this year?" and she answered, "Depends on who you ask." When Albert was asked the same question I was very badly tempted to say 'Look in his pocket' but resisted easily when I considered the consequences.

I was called about halfway through the evening and headed warily down the aisle. Santa reached down and scooped me up and settled me on his lap.

"So, Phil, have you been a good little boy this year?"

"I guess so."

"What about telling the truth. Have you told the truth this year?"

"I guess so."

"Are you sure?"

"I guess so."

"Are you really sure? Is there anything you'd like to tell Santa?"

"You smell just like my Grandpa."



Six Questions with DJ Scott Sell

by Ron Staschak

One of the many benefits of interviewing WRFR deejays is discovering the vast knowledge that they possess. I admire Scott for his devotion to music and his love of history. As Bob Dylan writes, "my you stay forever young."

I wish everyone a joyous holiday season. Remember the days are getting longer!

1) What do you do at the radio station?

I host a show called *Random Rules* (Mondays at 6pm) which operates as one big mixtape. For the first few years of the show, I would stand in front of my music collection, close my eyes, and run my finger along the spines of my records and CDs, and whatever my finger landed on is what I'd bring in for the show, no editing of the selection. And I'd do this as a way to refamiliarize myself with what was living in my collection, finding some old favorites in the process and sharing what that music meant to me at certain points in my life. The show has morphed a bit recently and I'll be starting 2022 with some restructuring, with a focus on themes, guests, and literary nights. Stay tuned for more!

2) How long have you been volunteering?

I've been volunteering since 2013. I hosted a different show when I started at WRFR called *City Limits*, in which I focused on a different city for each show and the music coming out of that particular place over the course of the last 100 years. Essentially a two-hour primer on the music coming out of different cities for each show. It was a lot of work and research, which is why I only did it once a month, but it was hugely satisfying and I discovered the most incredible music in the process. I took a break from WRFR for a few years as things got busy, but started *Random Rules* in early 2019 because I was feeling like I had so much music I wanted to share!

3) Why did you decide to volunteer/why did you want to have a show?

I had a radio show in college that I loved doing and for many years afterwards I wasn't living in a place where the opportunity to host a show was available. But it continued to be something I wanted to do and when we moved to Rockland 10 years ago and I started listening to WRFR and heard how much fun people were having with their shows, I knew I wanted to be a part of it.

4) Other than the show you host, what is your favorite show?

Jo Silver and Todd Week's show "*Kalimotxo*" is just the best. Music I've often never heard before and I always love. They have the slot right before mine and I'll usually listen to it as I'm wrapping up my Monday workday and then driving over to the station and it always puts me in the best mood.

5) Who are your favorite musicians?!

Even though I have plenty of other favorites, I will always and forever be a Bob Dylan devotee. I haven't gone more than a week without listening to him since I was in 8th grade. Stylistically, there's just so much there, from period to period. And, of course, so much material. I mean, the guy did completely change popular music.

6) What was the most interesting city you discussed on *City Limits*? Why?

One of the best parts about *City Limits* was having friends who lived in the city I was featuring introduce the music. In the case of Missoula, Montana, I knew nothing of the music coming out of there, except that it's where our musician friend Fletcher lived. He pointed us in the direction of contemporary bands he loved as well as an archival project someone was working on that cataloged all of the garage bands, and their recordings, in Missoula during the 60s and 70s! It was a total goldmine and ended up being my favorite show.



photos by Kirk Gentelen



photo by Ron Tesler

First Snow

by Kirk Gentelen. December 19, 2021

I think I am at my happiest when walking through the first snow of the season.

The first 'real' snow I should say
You know, the one that captures the footprints,
the trails, the clues, & the lessons from the night before.
And so it's down to the marsh I go
Time to check for otter sign
That's what got me up hours before sunrise
Anticipation and excitement too thick to sleep through
Rise sun rise!
A belly slide at a latrine
A trail through the slush at the water's surface
And fresh tracks at a spot or two.
Man, I at my happiest walking through the first snow of the season.
And I'll be at my happiest again walking in the second snow....
And then the 3rd.....and then the 4th.....

FIRST SNOWSTORM

Snow is gently falling
not much wind
a lullaby for those
who have had their shots
and can relax before the woodstove
or fireplace
voices in the elbow of winter

Kendall Merriam, 12-18-2021



Your thoughts and art are always welcome at the Buzz

Email Joe: steinberger@gwi.net, or call me: 596-0731

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WEEK NINETY-THREE

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

By Phyllis Merriam

I noticed one of our city councilors, with another councilor's support, is pushing ordinances to allow minimum twenty square foot dwellings in every Rockland neighborhood. That's the size of a Hobbit House, a garage, a shack, a hut, an outbuilding, a pigeonhole, a garden shed, a potting shed. Many people cannot afford the going rates of Rockland apartments, so how would they afford land, building materials, hooking up water/sewers, utilities, maintenance and high property taxes for what counselors call "affordable housing"? (February's cabin fever would be a free add-on.) Families couldn't live in these mini structures unless they were stacked like cordwood. Counselors' plan is for Rockland to "catch up" with Portland and the rest of urban America. Why is it that when people from away come to Rockland and Maine they want to change everything local into what they left behind? Maybe these two counselors who live in full-size houses should try living in a twenty-foot square one until the city council decides on their vote.

Our new cat, Mango, discovered his favorite toy. I accidentally dropped a milk carton cap and Mango went full on manic. He chases it all around the house, picking it up in his mouth to move it from room to room to play floor hockey until he tires and drops for a nap. When we went to Pope Memorial Humane Society to choose a cat, we had an older feline in mind. But they all seemed to need pills three times a day. My husband has to take pills four times a day. I thought there could be the chance of mixing them up and my husband would be looking for the litter box and meowing for dinner while the cat would be typing away on a laptop and reciting poetry. So, when this young orange cat kept closely following me around the shelter, we knew he wanted to be adopted. Now he closely follows me all around house. His forever home now. Mango has brought great joy to our Covid-sheltered lives.

As Americans, we seem to be low on supplies of compassion toward our fellow citizens. A relative noticed every customer leaving Hannaford's was loaded down with toilet paper purchases. There were three rolls left on the shelves. Looks like we're having a second wave of toilet paper famine. And cat owners are scoffing up all the good tinned feline food. Are they the same people hoarding toilet paper?

A friend with a barn discovered it still has a one-holer with one roll of toilet paper from who knows how many decades ago. He thinks he'll be prepared when the toilet paper famine arrives.

Moon, Meteors and More Sun:

The last full moon of 2021, called the Cold Moon by the Mohawk People, is Dec. 18.

The annual ursids meteor showers can be seen from Dec. 17 - 25 and peak on Christmas night.

The winter solstice gives us the shortest day of the year December 21st. Thereafter, we can expect more gradual daylight - much needed in this Viral Age of Anxiety.



Local Talk Radio (and TV)

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

On the Metro show we consider all matters of importance to our community, we think for ourselves, we say what we think, we listen to each other, we reconsider, and we have fun doing it! You are invited to join in as a guest in the studio or on the phone. Just stop by the WRFR studio at 20 Gay Street at 5 pm on a Wednesday, or call in to 593-0013. For more info, call Joe at 596-0731.

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 are open to all and would very much like to have your help! To learn more, go to wrfr.org, or tune in to 93.3 fm!

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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