



The Buzz

Rockland Metro Magazine

Issue 255, February 11, 2022, Rockland, Maine



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The Old School
Fellowship Education



Try to look away!

by Glen Birbeck

I am not myself immune to the urge to jump off the merry go round, the 24/7 news cycle. To turn away from that megaphone's constant blast of war and rumor of war and plague and political drama. I also avoid the celeb gossip which flows from our media in quantities which would stupefy, were that audience prone to stupefaction. But, honestly, what's the difference between reports of Putin making sexist remarks about the Ukrainian leader and the celeb news? Breathless headlines saying celebrity A reportedly flirted with celeb B as celeb C watched. One difference is that Putin could launch thousands of warheads in my general direction. Celebrities launch news releases to keep their brand in the public eye, obnoxious but short of deadly. Then there's another trope of the "news", the plea to be forgiven. This past week saw a couple of requests for forgiveness. Each is interesting and unique. Whoopi Goldberg, the comedian and actress, got a slap on the wrist from her employer. She was required to sit out two weeks of "The View". I imagine it was with pay. Being well paid and NOT having to gab to earn it doesn't sound that bad. Still, I couldn't do it, I have size 17 feet. If a dainty shoe like Goldie's could set off a "woke" land mine I wouldn't last two steps. She didn't know, as she does now, that reality morphs with the passage of time. Yes she grew up in a Jewish home. Yes she grew up in Oklahoma, site of a pogrom aimed at colored people. Add to this she is intelligent and what we used to call "progressive" BUT, the "Woke" police bagged her for suggesting Jews were not a racial group. Maybe she thought they were an ethnic group. I did. We stand corrected. The other notable person asking forgiveness had been in the business of forgiveness himself. Central to Catholicism is confession and forgiveness. Benedict XVI said his handling of the clerical sex abuse cases when he headed the Munich archdiocese was with "grievous fault". He stopped short of admitting responsibility. I'm guessing his offering is less than that needed for official forgiveness. I forgive him. When and if I meet god over a beer I'll ask for the back story. I'll also ask him/her if Jews are an ethnic or racial group. He might reply, after a few beers, "you are all a bunch of mongrel heathens" No, he won't say that. More likely he will nod off and start snoring. A few beers on a warm afternoon, reclined on soft fluffy clouds, the creator could be forgiven for getting drowsy. After all, he is very very old. And so am I. I'm seventy six....I think. The arithmetic gets arthritic, bones creak, hair greys, attention wanders. I keep a "factoid" because I like its perspective. It says that a human being is designed for a life of about 35 years. It's over designed in the way engineers will over design an appliance. make it tough enough to last twenty years and it might last ten. The environment provided humans by nature 50,000 years ago was tough. Thirty five years is enough to sire and bear children, feed and educate them (don't eat this plant!) and send them out into the world. Nature gets no benefit from someone who just hangs around an extra 50 years, eating from the larder without contributing much. Grandpa might go on the hunt for mastodons but only as bait. Nature doesn't benefit from geriatrics playing nine holes of golf a couple of times a week. Neither do I.

Editor's response:

Glen, you have just proved that old people are very useful. Even in primitive times old people were important. Hunting mastadons with spears and arrows is not just about speed and strength, but about knowledge of techniques that work. There is a lot more to success in life than just "don't eat that."

Stephen Carroll

by Ron Staschak

It is great to talk with. a founder of WRFR. Like everything in life, there are many emotions. Starting something is always scary, challenging, and rewarding. I assume that Stephen looks back with pride on his achievements. I am so glad that he and Joe Steinberger (who I need to interview) had the courage and foresight to start an local radio station. Thank you Stephen!

Tell us about your interest in radio.

During my sophomore year at Rockland High I was invited to participate on a radio program at our local station WRKD. Located in the center of Main Street (now the home of "In Good Company") RKD along with the local Courier Gazette comprised the heartbeat of the city. This early involvement sparked an interest in radio which has lasted my whole life. I spent the next 25 years working in the business as well as some commercial and production work in TV. In the late 80's I volunteered doing local TV production for the City Government channel. It was here that I met Joe Steinberger and talk began of starting a local low power radio station. Joe applied for a new license just issued by the FCC and a group of us built a studio out of Joe's two car garage. This all began in 2001 and Rockland's new station WRFR went on the air Valentine's Day in 2002. For at least a year, perhaps more, Joe & I did an early news and talk show called "Morning Train." Now the two of us have joined again to present a weekly show Wednesday's at 5 called "the Rockland Metro." We invite local guests to talk about issues of interest to area residents. The station has grown and flourished over the last nearly 20 years due to our many volunteers comprising the life blood of this tiny yet vital Radio Station. In just a week WRFR will celebrate their 20 year anniversary. Please join us, it may change your life.

Has WRFR met you dreams and goals? Would you make any changes to WRFR? How can WRFR grow?

Ron, I can't say as I dream about WRFR and as far as changes I believe the station will evolve and grow naturally with the natural flow of volunteers coming & going.



Built for Comfort - Sunday



It's going to be huge – That's the word on the street when it comes to this Sunday's (2/13) 'Built For Comfort' (BFC) program (3-5pm). This particular show started out as a traditional 'Valentine's Day Show' but was then deemed 'too pretty' for BFC standards. What about the listeners who dislike Cupid, or those fortunate enough to have partners who share in their 'despise-al' of the Hallmark holiday? So we added break-up songs and it magically became our 'Valentine's/Anti-Valentines' show. Then covid hit the family, we had a quarantine Christmas and Festivus made sense like never before. So we added songs about disease, and quarantining, and some that just felt like blowing off steam. And with that, our show is what it has become - a meandering, groovy, pain free collage featuring Sonny and Cher, The Cure, Alanis Morissette, Kenny Rogers and Amy Winehouse, that picks up steam with Nirvana, Oysterhead, and Motley Crue, building up to the epic 20 minute jam that is 'What I Say' by Miles Davis. It's going to be huge.

It's hard to believe I've been writing rambling random notes about living through an historic pandemic for 100 weeks now. It is now the beginning of a third year of an amorphous enemy that is invisible, quick and lithe, has no smell, cannot be heard, tasted or touched. It's like some spooky ghost that haunts our lives. But I don't believe in ghosts or angels. I believe in peer-reviewed science, compassion and responsibility toward my fellow humans and common sense.

Over 900,000 Americans have now died from Covid-19 - the highest death rates of any country. Even as hospitalizations from the omicron variant are declining, the unvaccinated and our elderly citizens have by and large been and continue to be the victims. Half of the deaths have occurred after vaccines became available.

I'm so used to wearing a mask that if I even walk in our yard without a mask, I feel as though I'm violating some norm. I always keep fresh masks in my car and it's easy for me to keep social distancing. If others, in a grocery store, are too close, everyone moves back when I politely ask them to do so, even as some have snarky responses. I am constantly amazed at how many people are maskless in the few food stores I enter and the post office. It's not that I've become some sort of covid protocol police. It's that I'm still on alert mode to try and stay safe. Even after break through omicron infections despite our three jabs, my husband and I know antibodies are short-lived added protections.

A friend in Atlanta has had her fourth Moderna jab due to the CDC, which is headquartered in Atlanta, pressuring pharmacies to provide the fourth vaccine. I've not seen or heard any news up here in Maine about a fourth vaccine being available to us Maineiacs, who qualify as immunocompromised.

So much has happened since covid and its variants arrived in 2020: The one-term president lost re-election and continues to spread The Big Lie that he won; his GOP cult of personality is morphing into plans for his re-run as a wannabe dictator; the new president took office in the midst of a pandemic for which many are blaming him; scientists are being taunted and their lives threatened; hospital staff are being harassed by unvaccinated patients and their relatives; teachers are quitting jobs that have become overwhelming; our government was close to a coup last January 6th; Republicans are gas lighting us about Jan. 6th; more and more Black Americans citizens are being killed by police; anti-Vaxxers thrive on social media; airline staff are increasingly under threat by out-of-control passengers; poorly paid service industry employees are quitting en mass; the One-Per-Centers are thriving; homeless populations are increasing along with mass evictions; health care providers and first responders are heroes; people are tired of covid and taking more risks; mask mandates/no mask mandates; racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are on the rise; periodic hoarding of essentials; climate change involving floods, fires and devastation; devastating opioids addictions and deaths; Russian oligarchs storing their stolen \$ in London banks as approved by British parliamentarians; Putin's troops massing on Ukraine's borders; dysfunctional Congress; Maine children killed by abuse and neglect.

Among all the bad news, are small things that bring joy: renewed closeness among the sheltering-in-place; neighbors and friends helping each other; trust in the future by having babies; taking the risk to find jobs that bring some pride; more home cooking; communing with nature in all possible ways; finding creative ways for self-expression.



Call for Tiny Art: Youth & Adults

Rockland Public Library invites local community members to share their artistic talents! The Library is seeking submissions for its first Tiny Art Show. Artists ages 12 years and older can pick up a tiny art kit starting Wednesday, February 9 through Thursday, February 24 (or while supplies last). Participants can choose a painting kit that includes a 3"x3" canvas and easel, acrylic paints, and brushes or sculpture kit with air-dry clay, brushes, and acrylic paints. Adding to the provided supplies is encouraged as long as everything fits on the tiny canvas and the sculpture doesn't get too big. Finished pieces must be returned to the library by Friday, February 25, to be part of the exhibit. The show will run through the month of March in the display cases at the library. If requested, after the show art pieces will be returned to artists.



photo by Phil McStowe

Your thoughts and art are always welcome at the Buzz

Email Joe: steinberger@gwi.net, or call me: 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!

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.



Check out the Rockland Metro Show on Wednesdays from 5 to 6 PM for a conversation with local doers and thinkers. Also on mainecoast.tv Call in with questions and comments: 593-0013

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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