



Interview with Jo Lindsay

by Ron Staschak

I am always amazed at the wonderful people associated with WRFR. Jo Lindsay is a treasure. When I started at WRFR, Jo was the station manager and she did everything. I am so glad that she is restarting her show, AFTER WORDS- Thursday 8-9am. What a great show! Please listen to it live or on the podcast.

I host a show called After Words. It is an obituary reflection show. I read the local obituaries, and play music based on what I can come away with from the obituary information. Sometimes it is sad, but mostly (I hope) it is just a nice time to recognize the community members we have lost. The songs can sometimes be humorous, but it is always my intention to respect and celebrate the life that was once an active part in our collective lives.

I have been volunteering for about 15 years. I started when Joe Steinberger asked for help paying a few bills and going through mail etc. He said "20 minutes a week!" Ha! The 20 minutes quickly turned into many hours. I started basically running the station and handling the volunteers, the website, bills, and broadcasting. It snuck up on me, but I loved it. I am a terrible delegator, and finally, after 15 years, left the operations work to a fresh, and energized team of volunteers. They have done an amazing job of taking over through the last 2 years of Covid, and all the complications that came with that.

During the early days, I was interested in having a music show. Joe S. Was really trying to keep the programmers focused on the idea of community, so I had a local music show called "In Town Tunes". Surprisingly, at the time, it was hard to get people to send music. (It was before music platforms like Spotify). I felt restricted by what was available, and decided to add another show that was community focused, and began After Words.

There have been so many shows over the years, but I always seem to gravitate to shows with music and a real honest feel. Not trying to be "big". I was listening to Christine Murphy while she was doing a very early show back in 2005 or so. She was announcing the "Thanksgiving Turkey trot followed by free donuts"... well, she got to laughing, and couldn't stop. I just love moments like that. So, I love her show, Dublin to Dingle and also others like Built for Comfort, Happy Hour...I really enjoy tuning in and just seeing what I get. We have had young students with shows that were just fabulous. I encourage any young person to come to the station and try it out!! It is a great experience.

Why is this station important?

WRFR is an under-appreciated gem in this community. The potential for the station is always there to build more community by connecting more people to each other and their surroundings. WRFR is important for everyone's voice to be heard. Sometimes it is very hard to maintain balance, but that is the nature of us. The station is constantly evolving and that can only be good for all.

If you were stranded on an island, what three books and four albums would you want to have?

I have spent a stupid amount of time worrying about which albums and books I would choose!!! Ha! I am only choosing one of each... Bob Dylan's Nashville Skyline and Jane Eyre.



Our friend Glen Birbeck, who drew these two cartoons, came up with the idea of the "Monroeski Doctrine." The Monroe Doctrine, 1823, was a U.S. policy of opposing European interference in the Western Hemisphere. I think the analogy is apt, and worthy of reflection.

Our current dialogue, internal, external, is increasingly polarized. The chant, on all sides, is "It's their fault!" With the Russian invasion of Україна that's a natural for us Americans. Putin's Hitleresque behavior is hard to defend. But it behooves us, if we want to make progress toward a more peaceful world for our children, to reflect on our own faults as well, and to try to do better in future.

The United States has been invading countries all over the world. Just in my lifetime, we have invaded North Korea, Vietnam, numerous Central American countries, Afghanistan and Iraq. Then there is the coup by which we overthrew the Democratic government in Iran, our intervention in Syria, and much more. We have not set a good example.

Or rather I should say that though over the years we have set many good examples, yet we have also set many bad ones.

Can we not take this frightening moment to consider whether we might find room for a better East West relationship, one which could respect both and respect the interests of both, and which by wise evolution could be a win for both?

The history of Україна is complex, and very tied to Russia since long before the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. Check it out. A five minute read in Wikipedia is more useful than hours of watching hyped-up corporate media news.

Let me offer a patriotic suggestion. We Americans are in a better position than the Russian people to lead us all on a better way forward. We have freedom, they do not. We can honestly and openly research and discuss the facts, and put our heads together without interference from government authority. The Russians are handicapped by thought controls.

So let us do our duty as citizens of this great democratic nation and lead the world, not by arms, but by brains.

-- Joe Steinberger

Україна and the Monroeski Doctrine



Bullies with Nukes by Glen Birbeck

What's worse than being beaten senseless by a big bully? Watching the beating, weapon in hand but doing nothing to stop it. Well, nearly nothing. Nothing useful. Nothing that will save the victim. It's like being "pistol whipped". Come to the victim's aid and you'll be shot dead. Today's bully needs to have nuclear weapons and use murder/suicide as a threat. I have no choice but to watch you injure and kill, maim and impoverish innocents. Any move to stop you would bring much more death. The inexorable logic of our nuclear MADness leads to this helplessness. Unless we find a way. There is only so much dumb luck available and we've used a lot getting 77 years into the nuclear age unscathed. In my old age I sometimes wonder if living is just running out the clock. Letting the arrow of time fly. Counting ticks toward the game's end. It would be ironic (everything is anymore) if another clock was moving toward our collective end. Is my clock a minute slow? Is my clock giving me a false idea that its not so late after all? The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has a clock. A famous clock with hands frozen at 100 seconds before midnight. That metaphoric midnight would be the end of the day for our civilization. I'd like to be guilty of touting gloom and doom without cause. I'm not. The man who controls the majority of the world's nuclear warheads has twice in the last few days threatened to use them. If you've read this far, imagine in your head, the credits rolling and Dame Vera Lynn singing "We'll meet again". This was the ending of the 1964 Kubrick film, "Doctor Strangelove". The meeting she alluded to was to be in the afterlife. Good luck.

French Presidential Politics 2022, Ch. 1.

by Paul Chartrand in Paris

Friday, March 4 is an important day for French presidential campaigns, which take place every five years. Today is the day that the public knows exactly who the candidates will be they go to the polls Sunday, April 10 for the first of two votes. A second and final runoff vote occurs two weeks later. It is an extremely short campaign season compared to the U.S. The campaign will be a strange one due to continued pandemic effects and the explosive new war in Ukraine dominating everyday news.

Most potential candidates did not declare themselves or show interest until summer or fall of 2021. Incumbent President Macron has not even yet declared that he is running. French Presidents often postpone this commitment until less than 2 mos. before an election. They are too busy leading the country to focus on a campaign. But everyone knows who is running, by the speeches and visits offered since last fall. Yet there is no political media advertising, lawn signs or posters. Beginning next week, designated areas in every community will allow one poster from each officially authorized candidate.

Over the last six months there have been over 20 contenders from all ends and the middle of the political spectrum. If we take the undeclared Pres. Macron for the middle, centrist competitors to either side are Republican Valérie Pécresse to the right and Socialist Annie Hidalgo to the left. But neither would consider themselves close to Macron in politics. Mme. Pécresse is President of the Ile de France region, which includes Paris, and Mme. Hidalgo is Mayor of Paris. Macron also governs France from the Elysée Palace in Paris, so there is a very Paris focused group in the center of this election. Socialists and Republicans, somewhat equivalent to U.S. Democrats and Republicans, dominated French politics for decades until Macron's new *Republique en Marche* party took over in 2017.

There have always been too many candidates and parties, which is why collecting sponsorships and a runoff election are needed to finalize French votes. Small minority parties often succeed in getting a few members into Parliament when those elections take place in June, so it is not completely futile to run so many presidential candidates.

March 4 is the day when 500 sponsorship signatures must be registered with the Constitutional Council in order to be on the April 10 ballot. This unique system will reduce the field significantly. These are not registered voter signatures; all 500 must be elected officials at the mayoral level or above, each of whom may only support one presidential candidate. With over 35,000 "communes" or communities with mayors in France, and thousands of other elected parliamentary and European deputies, there is no shortage of potential supporters. But it is no small task for a lesser known party or candidate to get 500 supporters in the short 40 days allowed. A candidate's signatures must come from at least 30 different departments or regions amongst France's 101, with no more than 10% from any one department. This limits "hometown" support getting someone on the ballot and spreads out a region's signatures among different candidates.

As of March 3, only eleven declared candidates had the required sponsorships, including several from extreme right and left parties. Many candidates complained about the difficulty of the process this year. It has been in place since 2001. A centrist party without a presidential candidate this year even offered to "give" up to 80 "reserved" sponsors to any candidate in need if they are close to 500 and have 10% in recent voter surveys. This unusual offer is being made to further diversity and democracy, since the "neutral" sponsors will not likely support the same candidates in the election. But no candidate beyond the eleven already registered has over 10% in polls, or enough sponsorship to benefit from 80 more.



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WEEK ONE HUNDRED-THREE

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

Now the world has two global crises: The pandemic and a land war against Ukraine. Thursday, Feb. 24, Vlad-the-Paranoid, with his dead soul, sent his Russian troops on a "special military operation" into Ukraine after amassing hundreds of thousands of them along Ukraine's borders since last spring. Putin's unprovoked invasion is meant to recreate the collapsed Soviet Union by any means and to intimidate NATO countries and the USA. Once KGB, always KGB. One of the many poignant videos coming from Ukraine is of a woman sweeping up broken glass in her war-damaged apartment while tearfully singing the Ukrainian national anthem.

Worldwide rallies in support of Ukraine are heartening as countries come together to get supplies to Ukraine. The London Eye, the Eiffel Tower and the Empire State Building have all been lit up in blue and yellow.

Russia has already occupied Ukraine's Donbas region for eight years. Western Europe is compromised by its dependence upon Russia's gas, trade and sheltering oligarchs' stolen money, especially in London banks. The US continues to buy Russian oil even as our government sanctions Russia's economy and new oligarchs. Doing business with dictators, especially the short guys with shoe lifts, face-lifts and weak egos, always has consequences. Putin also has one droopy eyelid. Is that nerve damage from all his cosmetic surgery? Or he cannot see his future as a world pariah?

What will Vlad do next? Multiple cyber attacks? Kill more civilians? Kill President Zelenskyy or send him to a modern day Russian gulag? Install a puppet government in Kyiv? Threaten Europe with Chernobyl's radiation or with Russian nuclear weapons? Move troops into Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Moldova, Poland? Directly threaten Sweden and Finland if they join NATO? My parents had Estonian friends when I lived in Germany as a child. My husband and I had a wonderful Latvian neighbor. I had a Lithuanian roommate who became my Maid of Honor and a Polish-American Rockland friend was our translator when we travelled to Poland. We also have Ukrainian and Russian friends. There are no national borders, passports or checkpoints in friendships.

Zelenskyy has rebuffed the USA's offer to evacuate him from Kyiv saying, he doesn't need a ride, he needs more help to defend his country. A million Ukrainians have fled to safety. Many more are standing their ground against this humanitarian crisis. Zelenskyy, a former favorite comedian and entertainer, is now his country's and the world's hero.

The two Vlads, Volodymyr Zelenskyy – the Ukrainian equivalent of Vladimir – and Vladimir Putin are locked in combat; one a patriot to save his country and the other a paranoiac out to destroy it and threaten Western Europe and the US. A forty-mile convoy of Russian weaponry is rolling toward Kyiv after destroying much of the center of Kharkiv. The destruction of cities and towns in Ukraine looks like pictures from WWII. Ukrainians who remain – mostly women and children - are sheltering underground. The Russians have killed many children. Putin will not back down. He once dangled his own daughter over a balcony when she was a child. That act, alone, should tell the world it was no surprise what he did to the Chechens, Aleppo and now Ukraine.

