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"The Buzz"

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The Old School
Fellowship Education

No Mow May

by Susan Beebe



Not mowing lawns in May allows many more flowers to bloom in the lawn, and these flowers are crucial forage for spring-emerging bees. Started in England by a group called Plantlife, it's promoted here by BeeCityUSA.

Did you know that Queen bumblebees are the only individuals of their small colony to survive the winter? Right now, the last week of April, these queens are emerging from hibernation. (1) I've seen them bumbling along, searching for and feeding on small flowers in longish grass. (2) Each queen must find enough nectar and pollen to provision her nest in (perhaps) an empty mouse burrow. She shapes a ball of pollen called "beebread," and lays her first eggs on it. She incubates them like a bird does. She forms a wax pot and stores nectar for a rainy day when she can't forage. (3) In three weeks, her adult (but small) daughter bumblebees emerge and take over provisioning the colony, (4), which can grow to a couple hundred individuals by summer's end. In the fall, the colony produces new queens and males (drones) who leave to find mates. (5) The fertilized queens hibernate in small dry cavities, perhaps in stone walls. (6) All the other workers, drones and the old queens die with the first frosts. Each queen has one chance to start a new colony when she emerges in the spring. If she dies, or if she can't find enough pollen and nectar, her line dies out.

Maine has seventeen species of bumblebees, and several of these species are declining. Native bumblebees are better at pollinating blueberries than European honeybees because only they are capable of "buzz pollination," shaking pollen grains loose with their wing muscles, which results in fatter, juicier berries.

In Gilbert and Adams Central Park, which I've tended as a volunteer for twelve years, I've planted native strawberries and violets under some of the bushes and they are spreading into the lawn. Violets are the sole host plant for the beautiful orange and silver-spangled fritillary butterfly. The female butterfly lays eggs on the violet leaves in late summer; these hatch and overwinter as caterpillars. No Mow May would allow them to complete their life cycle and become butterflies.

I've also seen, in this small urban park, leaf cutter bees, which carry pollen under their abdomens, metallic green sweat bees, European honeybees from managed hives, flower flies, black swallowtail butterflies, red admirals, monarchs, tiger swallowtails, and American lady butterflies, praying mantises, and two species of giant silkworm moths, Polyphemus and Cecropia.

In Appleton, Wisconsin in 2020, more than 400 households participated in No Mow May. Researchers from Lawrence University compared numbers of bee species and sheer abundance of bees in unmowed lawns and nearby mowed parks. They found three times more bee species and five times more bee abundance in the unmowed lawns.



Judiciously mowing wide paths or simply leaving part of your lawn for the bees, until the dandelions go to seed, should keep ticks at bay.

This resolution is a very positive step Rocklanders can take to help pollinators and biodiversity; it complements the ordinance passed two years ago to phase out lawn pesticides. I urge you to take part in No Mow May!



Julie Daigle Occasionally on Tuesdays, 8-9 pm & Thursdays 7-8 am on WRFR

by Ron Staschak

I want to welcome Julie Daigle to the WRFR team. It is great that we have another voice and a new format. I love the idea of listening to French music and maybe an Acadian history lesson. Listen to Cheech's Radio Hour (Tuesday 8-9pm) Do well!

What do you do at the radio station?

I'm starting a French music show as "Bonne Juju." Rachel Albury has kindly given me a spot on her show Cheech's

Radio Hour for the first couple of weeks. I was hesitant about at first; I like to volunteer and I work multiple jobs so my schedule is packed pretty solidly. And as of last fall, I've been living on a sailboat, so my housing and transportation to and from the boat for work is taking a lot of time and energy in a way it wasn't before- I wasn't sure it was smart to take on another commitment. But I'm loving the whole process of planning a show; Im really looking forward to airing my first one. And being able to pre-record the show is going to be helpful, I think.

How long have you been volunteering?

You're catching me on my first week here. :) I haven't even aired my first show yet.

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

Kyle Swan had talked to me about it years ago- probably close to three years ago, I think? I was interested, and initially thought about doing something with swing or big band music, but it wasn't until I'd had conversations with Cheech and her family about my Acadian French heritage and my love of French music and French bands that the shape of a possible radio show really started to take shape in my head. Their encouragement played a big part in this for me. But also, listening to music is my happy place- one of my favorite things to do is to get friends together and just share songs from YouTube or our personal music collections in a kind of round robin style. I can do it for hours - lol. The radio show just seems like a natural evolution of that.

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

The only two I've heard so far are Rachel's and Kyle's. I was impressed with the range of shows WRFR has though and Im looking forward to listening to others.

Is there a question should have asked you?

No, but I wanted to share that at least two of your WRFR DJs are creative, passionate and persuasive folks! Thanks to both of them, to the whole WRFR team, and to the great community volunteers in all areas who make Rockland and Maine's midcoast such an interesting and vibrant place to live.

Sailing: Im a beginner sailor, so I don't have any interesting sailing stories yet, unless it's the story of how I got interested in sailing?

have a follow up question

Are you a sailor? If yes, tell me an interesting sailing story.

Almost 30 years ago, my Mainer self was living in North Carolina when I met another North Carolinian who, it turns out, had gone to Orono and had worked for a summer on the Victory Chimes. He inspired me to try to get a job on a schooner, so, one May in the mid 90s, after returning from a solo backpacking trip in Europe, I started canvassing the windjammers on the coast for a job as a deckhand. Everybody was booked- it was long past the time when the captains and owners were putting their crews together- but one captain/owner had just lost his chef and was interested in the years of experience I had under my belt cooking in restaurants. I signed up. The captain was Neal Parker and the boat was the Wendameen, a 90-foot 1912 John Alden wooden schooner that he had singlehandedly restored from her near-death in a boatyard somewhere in New York, I think. I returned the following summer as a deckhand.

I fell in love with sailing because of that boat. She's docked these days in Portland harbor and is maintained as a charter boat/windjammer. I go visit her occasionally, when I have the chance. The year after I worked on the Wendameen, I completed a RYA basic navigation class with the intent to get my sailing license and pursue that dream, but as it turns out, life had other plans. I ended up in an area in Maine with very, very few sailors (it was a motor-boating culture in that area), with little access to whatever good sailing locations there were, and with other priorities and responsibilities competing for my time and attention. Little did I know in 1996 when I completed that RYA course and started looking for practical hours that I would actually set foot on very few sailboats until 2019 put me back in Rockland for the first time in nearly 30 years. My interest in that dream from long ago reignited, I bought Merideth, and I am now slowly figuring things out again!

spots we thought were secluded

by Phil Crossman on Vinalhaven

When I was a kid my friends and I went to great lengths to pick a secluded spot, or spots we thought were secluded, to smoke, drink or otherwise misbehave but the parents in this little island town of 1200 were an alert and conspiratorial bunch and we often found our clandestine activities woefully transparent.

One day in 1958 we picked up a pack of Camels from the Cascade Lanes and headed down the little six-foot-wide alley between L. R. Smith and Helen Wadworth’s Restaurant to enjoy a smoke and to share a little bottle of vanilla extract we’d pocketed at E. G. Carver’s and a much larger bottle of Haffenreffer malt liquor we’d persuaded our customary adult resource to get for us at Tibb’s Store. The resource ordinarily charged us a nickel per bottle but on this day, sensing our eagerness, soaked us for a dime.

The Cascade Lanes – where we got the smokes - was O. V. Drew’s very busy bowling and pool emporium. League bowling took place every night and the town was divided into imaginatively named teams of men and of women involving nearly all the town’s adults. Similarly cyclical pool and billiard tournaments meant the place was jumping nearly every day and certainly every evening. I was one of about a dozen adolescent pin setters who risked life and limb, certainly fingers, to return ten candlepins to their respective standing positions after each three-ball frame was bowled. For ten cents a string, my fellow pin setters and I huddled on a little ledge above the lanes as deadwood flew in all directions. Three strings would give us the 27 cents we’d need for a pack of Camels and a few pennies to spare. Proprietor Drew, a clinically calculating retailer, kept an open pack behind the counter and would make single cigarettes available for 2 cents apiece thus realizing a 33% profit beyond the profit he made from selling a pack for 27 cents.

The east side of the alley was the west wall of Helen Wadworth’s restaurant. Helen was famous for her Codfish cakes, wonderful mouthwatering creations served three at a time with a little pile of homemade sausage patties and home fries that started out in the oven before being transferred to a huge stove top sauté pan to be finished off with peppers and onions.

The west wall of the alley was L. R. Smith, a busy and bustling clothing store that sold oilskins and other foul weather clothing to lobstermen but also all sorts of children’s outfits and infant needs, men’s and women’s clothing, casual along with fine formal wear. .

Upstairs over the clothing store was the telephone exchange. A team of local ladies, all mothers, all members of the operator’s guild and all among the most well-informed of the aforementioned conspiratorial parents, handled and now and then monitored every phone call made by anyone to anyone without exception. The operators, there were four of them, manned the switchboard, one at a time, 24 hours a day and, except during the colder months, with the window open.

As we headed down the alley toward mischief we’d have heard, had we paused long enough to listen, first the sound of ringing then my Patricia Crossman’s, my Mom’s, voice,

“Hello”

“Pat, this is Mabel down to the switchboard. Phillip & Jo Jo just headed down to the carriage house and Phillip was smoking and carrying a bottle.”

“Land sakes, Mabel, will it ever end? Thanks for calling. I’ll send his Dad right down.”



Join the Rockland Metro Show
Wednesdays from 5 to 6 pm
Simulcast on WRFR and MaineCoast.tv

On the Metro Show we try to have the **conversation America needs today**, Co-hosted by Steve Carroll and Joe Steinberger, the show features lively, friendly and constructive conversations between people from different backgrounds and political perspectives. This Wednesday we will be talking about the return of the Maine Lobster Festival with Celia Knight and perhaps others. Topics will include the history and evolution of the festival, political issues around the festival, and plans for this summer. Listen or watch, and call **593-0013** with your questions and comments.

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WEEK ONE HUNDRED-ELEVEN

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

The devastation in Mariupol looks like photos of Europe in WWII. The few civilian escapees descending from rescue buses have eyes that have seen the unspeakable.

Putin instructs his Army to, “Block it so a fly can’t pass.” This is the same dictator, Tsar-Wannabe, who dangled one of his daughters over a balcony, who has his critics poisoned, shot, defenestrated, imprisoned and any Russian citizen who says Russia has waged “war on Ukraine” faces a 15 year prison sentence. I don’t believe this despot will negotiate a peace settlement with Ukraine.

More and more mass graves of Ukrainian civilians are being located by satellite. Forensic experts are finding signs of torture. Other bodies of executed civilians are being found in homes, on roadsides, in yards, gardens and fields. Rape has been Putin’s weapon of war.

The most holy of days in Eastern Europe is Orthodox Easter. Ukrainians are celebrating the occasion at home and abroad where 5.2 million Ukrainians have fled the war.

President Zelensky: Orthodox Easter “gives us great hope and unwavering faith that light will overcome darkness, good will overcome evil, life will overcome death, and therefore Ukraine will surely win.”

Putin spent Orthodox Easter hammering artillery at the Donbas and rubbing shoulders with the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Putin’s Obedient Servant.

When we lived in Richmond, Maine, we were invited to attend the Russian Orthodox Easter services that began at midnight and required a good deal of standing for hours and going outside to walk around the church three times to symbolize Christ’s three days in the tomb. While I practice no religion, I was moved by their a cappella choir and the incense drifting over the congregants during the complex rituals. Worshipers bring baskets of eggs, Kulich, an Easter cake and Pashka, a rich cheese-based dessert, to be blessed by the priest and eaten after the service ends the fasting of meat, eggs and dairy products. (Strict Orthodox believers do not eat these foods year round on Wednesdays and Fridays.) I successfully made Pashka once. But I found the lengthy process involving cheesecloth very tedious since I had no faith to support my labor. Russian neighbors taught me to say the traditional Russian Orthodox Easter greeting, “Kristos voskres, voistinu voskres!” Christ is risen, indeed he is risen.

Broken Wing is still the first crow to arrive for breakfast. I usually give them peanuts and dry cat food and spread it out so competition with a gull or two is limited. A sentry crow alerts the rest and they start gathering when they see me leave the feeding ground. Mango loves to watch them from his windowsill perch as he twitches his tail and makes chattering sounds.

Dr. Fauci says America is no longer in a pandemic. Covid is at a low level that may or may not stay low. Virologists are thinking that future vaccinations, at some yet unknown future frequency, are likely. Covid has not departed. 60% of American adults and 75% of American children have gotten covid. The numbers could be much higher because there is no centralized reporting method for positive home antigen tests. Then there are numbers of people walking around asymptomatic and unwittingly infecting others. The new anti-viral pills, paxlovid by Pfizer and Merk’s molnupiravir, can be highly effective in preventing hospitalizations. But there is a brief window of opportunity requiring getting tested, obtaining a physician’s prescription, finding a pharmacy that has supplies and taking the pills. This all sounds too fraught with complications and delays. Maybe the state and feds should just mail pill kits to households like the antigen test kits.

I keep trying to fend off alternating feelings of anxiety and frustration with covid and all it brings, and has brought, these two and a half years of fully sheltering and half-sheltering. I still wear masks in any public setting, which has saved me buying lipstick.

I just realized that at age one year and six months, Mango is a covid cat. Of course, he’s completely oblivious about sheltering from a virus. He just knows he has a safe, warm home with food aplenty, a clean litter box, many places to select for napping and sleeping and humans who play with him and let him watch YouTube videos. He loves back scratches, muzzle rubs and head strokes with my big, soft paintbrushes.

What’s to worry in Mango’s covid-free world?