

A Letter From Rome

(I wrote recently to our correspondent in Rome. Sergio Iavarrone: The situation in Ukraine is so sad. I hope there can be some resolution short of nuclear war, and that we will live to see each other again. Here is his response. JS.)

Hi Joe,

Don't be so pessimistic, I am sure that we will see each other again, though the situation is undoubtedly heavy. Putin has no justification about the invasion of Ukraine, I've never liked him, since the beginning in 2000 when he became president of Russia. Putin's attitude is not a present discovery. Let's have a look at the past: Chechnya war(1999-2009), Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008), not mentioning the intervention in Syria at the side of the dictator Assad. Again annexation of Crimea in 2014 and starting of war in Donbass the same year. In this region between 2014 and 2022, before the present war, there have been at least 14,000 dead, some other sources say 22,000.

> What I don't like in this situation is the hypocrisy of the so-called Western democracies. They have just ignored the war in Donbass for 8 years, and have never tried to help for a resolution of the conflict. Although Zelenskyy is the leader of a country attacked by Russia, I like him less and less. He bestowed the highest honor, Hero of Ukraine, on Denys Prokopenko, the commander of the infamous neo-nazi Azov Battalion, responsible of the mass killing and torture of prisoners according Amnesty International. In 2016 they killed and burnt alive civilians who took refuge at the House of Trade Unions in Odessa.

> The paradox is that Zelenskyy is Jewish as his super rich supporter Igor Kolomoyskiy, business man with triple Ukrainian, Cypriot and Israeli passport. The "democratic" Zelenskyy has suspended the activity of 11 moderate opposition parties, while the activity of the Communist party had already been suspended since 2015, by the previous government. In the election of 2012 the Communist party took 13%. Zelenskyy has declared martial law and for this reason men between 16 and 60 cannot leave Ukraine. What I want to say is that the facts are more complex than what the Western propaganda says. Of course the propaganda is also used by Russia, but in this case it's less effective. Sometimes is difficult to distinguish a fake news or a partial lie, from the truth, but we have to try to do our best.

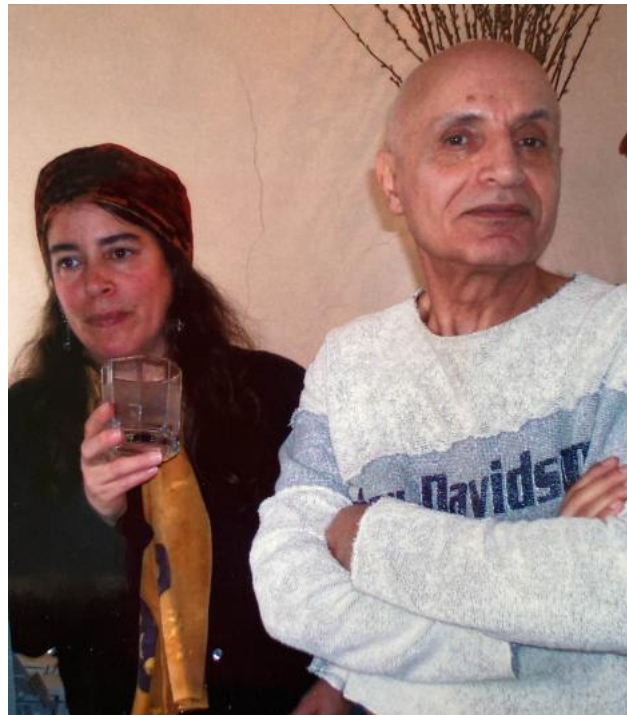
In 1989 Michail Gorbachev and George H. W. Bush reached a gentlemen agreement and in exchange for a united Germany, Soviet Union was assured that the Warsaw pact countries and the former Soviet republics would never enter NATO, an agreement never written officially, but did not last long, given that most of those countries are now part of the Atlantic Alliance: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania, Czech Republic, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Slovenia (these four belonged to the former Yugoslavia), Romania, Slovakia and of course the previous East Germany now integrated in West Germany. It means that Nato missiles are closer and closer to Russia, practically at the border. This is the reason why Russia feels itself surrounded now. Russia is almost alone now with the exception of Bielorrussia. The Warsaw Pact doesn't exist any longer since 1991.

In 1962 we were very close to a nuclear conflict because Russians wanted to deploy nuclear missiles in Cuba and the reaction of the United States was very strong. There was an agreement (not made public) at the last moment: Russians withdrew their missiles from Cuba in exchange the US withdrew their missiles from Turkey (a country member of NATO).

Another couple of paradoxes: Zelenskyy shouts out loudly that Western European countries should stop importing gas and oil from Russia, in practice a strict embargo, forgetting that countries like Germany and Italy depend very much on these Russian energy sources, between 35-45%. While Ukraine at the same time continues to get rich royalties from Russia because the Russian pipeline passes through its own territory. The second paradox is that Zelenskyy wants to take Putin to the International Criminal Court, to have another Nuremberg trials, he pretends not to know that the US, Russia, China, and ... Ukraine don't recognize the above Court. The US and Russia don't recognize it for obvious reasons: they would be the first to be judged for what they have done in Afghanistan (both), Syria, Iraq etc. etc.

By the way, the very democratic US want the extradition of Julian Assange (Head of WikiLeaks) from Great Britain, and we

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Uncle Paul's Closet

Mondays, 3-5 pm
on WRFR

by Ron Staschak

I am so impressed when someone is passionate about something. After listening to the show, I can understand why Cynthia is so passionate. Uncle Paul's Closet is amazing! Not only is the music great, the stories associated with Paul Motian are riveting. Listen in: Mondays 3-5pm.

What do you do at the radio station?

I have a show called Uncle Paul's Jazz Closet.

How long have you been volunteering?

Since 2014, 8 years

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

My Uncle, jazz drummer Paul Motian, left me his archive of papers and music when he passed away in 2011. As I was organizing the archive and coming across funny, enlightening and jazz historical items I kept thinking, "That would be a great thing to share." Before the archive, I already had a great collection of jazz because he was always sending me CDs. I had thought I should have a radio show then but never followed through. The premise of my show is to do readings from the archive and play the related music. I knew Jo Lindsay and asked her about it. She said, "Sure." After sitting in with her for 1 show, she said "OK, you're on." But I made her sit in with me a bit as I was a true neophyte with the audio technicalities. If I can do it, anyone can. I encourage others to have a show.

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

Cheech's Radio Hour, Bonnie Farmer Show, Professor Bop, The Vinyl Hour

Is there a question I should have asked you?

How did I come up with the title of my show?

Uncle Paul was always cleaning out his closets and sending me the contents. Knick knacks, CDs, cashmere sweaters, I never know what I would get. My partner and I used to joke that we should open a 2nd hand store and call it Uncle Paul's Closet.

I have a blog/web page www.jazzcloset.blogspot.com where you can access my shows as podcasts and also download PDFs of some papers from the Paul Motian Archive.

My show is currently on repeat as I still have some post concussion issues related to fainting because of a tick bite. I look forward to getting back into the studio. During COVID, I made shows at home and uploaded them but being live in the studio is much more enjoyable.

What is the most memorable thing that you received from your Uncle Paul's closet, and what is the strangest item you have received from your Uncle Paul?

Memorable-The sweater really stands out.

Everything he had was high quality but the Italian, cashmere sweater was very luxurious.

Strangest- Even though he was known for his sunglass collection, I have a pair of steampunk looking aviator sunglasses that are a bit strange. The glass is surrounded by leather that fits flush with a leather strap around your head. I did come across a photo of him wearing them and I think he may have gotten them because he was in search of glasses that wouldn't fog up when he was jogging in cold weather. Pic attached.



Rockland Bicycle Club

The Rockland Bicycle Club will begin its riding season this week. All rides will start and end at Harbor Park. Helmets are required for all rides. All riding levels are invited. No rider will ride alone.

The Rockland Shuffle- 5:30 pm every Friday- short loops around downtown

Recreational Ride- 9am Sunday Riders will divide into groups: slow - 5 miles/10mph, medium - 15 miles/14mph, fast - 50 miles/20mph

Please join us. Find us at FaceBook- Rockland Bicycle Club. Or call 691-7578

Sonja Sleeper will welcome Ed Thelander, US congressional candidate, on **Meat & Potatoes**, live this Saturday May 7, 2022, 8 to 9 am on **WRFR**. Ed Thelander is seeking to replace Chellie Pingree as our representative for District 1. A retired Navy SEAL, and currently a volunteer Firefighter and Reserve Deputy Sheriff, he will be on the show for the full hour and ready to answer any questions you may have. Call in to 593-0013.

are very close to this achievement. He is risking to be sentenced up to 175 years. Did he kill somebody? Did he spread fake news? No, he informed the entire world of true facts occurred for example at the Abu Ghraib prison in Irak: tortures and flagrant violation of human rights perpetrated by American soldiers and intelligence agents. Without WikiLeaks we would never know these facts. The democratic world should thank Assange for his bravery.

As regards attacks to democracy I suggest to some "Western democrats" to take always in mind a couple of biblical sentences: "Whoever is free of sin, cast the first stone" or if you prefer "We see the mote in our brother's eye, but we don't see the beam in our own eye".

We have to stop this war at any cost, because the entire world is in such a danger as almost never before in the past. This continuous escalation could lead only to the end of this planet. I don't have too much confidence in Putin, but I unfortunately have to admit that at the moment I don't have too much confidence in Biden as well. He should stop using a cowboy language, aggressive speeches can only make Putin nastier. Biden is the President of a great nation, the United States of America, and as such he should behave. Diplomacy and still diplomacy instead of sending endlessly new weapons. Sit around a table and start talks, negotiations. This is the only means that can lead to an agreement, a compromise, the only way to defuse the bomb (atomic) that is in our hands, ready to deflagrate.

Ciao, Sergio

A letter from Maria Devery

Interesting about no mow may - on my property, lawn clippings are bagged and used to mulch my gardens to improve soil health. For bees I have 2 perennial flower beds with bee and butterfly specific varieties. I also have not removed any additional trees, bushes from my wooded land. This is to provide food for small animals and birds. My strategies must be working because we have lots of bees, butterflies, birds, and wildlife. So my grass will be mowed because I need the clippings.



Tang Ping is the Chinese name for a social movement. In English it somewhat translates to "Lying Flat". It's a reaction to the pressure of working life in China and other Asian countries. A work force asked to work nine to nine six days a week is fraying around the edges. They call it "996" and increasingly reject it. Rather than chase the dream of career, family, car, house and status, many would rather relax, lay back, lay flat. They work enough to share a dry place to sleep. Just enough casual labor to earn a minimum to eat. The movement isn't part of the government's plan for moving the country forward. But from the individual's point of view, seventy-

two hour work weeks are not sufficiently rewarded. Those hoping a college degree would ensure a career and prosperous life are also often disappointed. Lying Flat is a drag on the "New Era" declared by the Chinese government. Doing nothing and lying flat is counter revolutionary, radical. The movement began with a single social media post entitled, "Lying flat is justice". The workers dropping out of the system have a name for themselves, the "Leek People". Leeks are harvested with a knife, those standing up are harvested, those that lay down avoid the knife. - Glen Birbeck



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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. Listen or watch, and call 593-0013 with your questions and comments.

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WEEK ONE HUNDRED-TWELVE

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

Captain Sharp's embedded, land locked schooner, "GEM", is undergoing seasonal scraping of her hull above the water line by staff doing laborious, tedious work by hand. This has to be done yearly on its Ferro cement hull, a ship building process developed in France and the Netherlands in the 1840's. Gem looks rather scabrous with all her paint scrapings. Boat ownership involves so much annual maintenance. I'm glad we only had a double poly-hulled rowboat, "EOS" (The Goddess of the Dawn), that only required seasonal garden hosing's. We picked the name mostly for its three letters, as they were easier for me to paint on her stern.

Our cold mid-coast April has favored the forsythia to last much longer and tulips are thriving in the chill, lighting up dull, overcast days. Not growing my own bulbs, I go to Swell Farm on Rockland's Old County Road, which has the most wonderful tulips (I think they may be parrot tulips with their feathery edges) and Icelandic poppies. The young couple entrepreneurs offer all kinds of seasonal flowers from their greenhouses and fields. It's a lovely bit of country in our small coastal city.

Driving up Route 17, I listened to public radio's story about "hygge", the Danish word for coziness and contentment, and how happy Danes are. Then I saw a couple of children holding a sign, "Honk if you're happy!" How did they know about hygge? A while ago, the Rockland Public Library had a program introducing mid-coasters to the charms of hygge, which can lift our spirits during a Maine winter. With never-ending covid, we could all use some year round hygge (pronounced hewgah).

The news from Ukraine is so depressing - especially such loss of life among civilians. While Putin's Army is experiencing its own colossal body counts, they are still pounding Mariupol into oblivion where 100,000 Ukrainians are unable to flee for safety. Five Russian oligarchs, their wives and children have been found dead. Russia says "murder/suicides." This is doubtful given the short time frames of these multiple deaths and Putin's penchant for murdering dissidents and competitors.

Sergei Lavrov, Putin's Foreign Minister: "Hitler had Jewish blood" and "The most rabid anti-Semites tend to be Jews." All in justification for comparing Ukraine's Jewish President Zelenskyy to Hitler and Putin's "denazification of Ukraine", which is Putin's racist code for the mass murder of Ukrainians. An aide to Zelenskyy says this is "further evidence that Russia is the legal successor to Nazi ideology."

Russia has a long history of anti-Semitism. They're not alone. Anti-Semitism has been rising to alarming levels in the US.

SCOTUS's Alito's first draft memo overturning Roe v. Wade was leaked to the public.

Chief Justice Roberts is demanding an investigation. Americans' opinions of SCOTUS had reached an all time low even before this unprecedented leak. Meanwhile, about 16 "red states" are enacting legislative strictures or outright bans on abortions. The politicization of women's bodies and privacy are underway, led by Republicans who want to own women's wombs. How about a countrywide ban on vasectomies?

Senator Collins voted to confirm Kavanaugh and Gorsuch to SCOTUS and now is naively saying they said Roe v. Wade was "settled law" during their confirmation hearings. Settled law is settled, until it isn't. Any US senator should know that.

I got up early this morning to enjoy my mugs of coffee - a mix of whole ground roasted beans from Rock City Coffee ("Jet") and Camden's Coffee on the Porch ("Amen Again" and "Key West Cuban"). Then I saw two bright stars close to each other at the brightening horizon. Google told me they were an annual conjunction of Venus and Jupiter. They looked like many carat diamonds hovering over Vinalhaven.

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