



Rockland Metro Magazine

"The Buzz"

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The Old School
Fellowship Education

Land of the Crats and Cans

by Joe Steinberger

While cruising in my sailboat last summer I was swept off course by a powerful thunderstorm in the center of which the updraft was so strong that it lifted me, my dog, and our boat into the sky, and then dropped us into a fine harbor in a country which is unknown to civilization, but which was eerily similar to our own.

As soon we debarked we were accosted by members of a tribe who began shouting at us that we should put on our masks. The dog did not understand, but I did - they spoke English quite well, with an educated accent. Luckily, I had a crumpled mask in my pocket from Covid days and I put it on. That calmed them down. They didn't seem to notice that the dog did not have a mask.

They asked us if we had seen any Cans. This was the name for their enemy tribe. The Cans, they warned us, were full of dark money and corruption, evil in every way, agents of the devil.

We assumed from their hostility that the Crats were at war with the Cans and killing each other, but in fact they were inhabiting the same territory (although there were some areas with more Crats than Cans, and visa-versa) and were at least in occasional contact with each other.

The Crats were what we call "white-collar" and what Marx called "bourgeois." They did not work with their hands, but were clerks of various sorts, both for their government and for private enterprises, which they had divided into "for-profits" and "non-profits," though it was difficult for us to understand the difference. The Crats were proud of their college degrees and their status as "educated." They wore masks, we learned, especially when they were likely to come into contact with Cans. They despised the Cans as ignorant and misinformed, and considered them dirty.

The Cans were mostly what we call "blue collar," or what Marx called "proletarian." Often they worked for the Crats. At work they wore masks if their Crat bosses required them to, which was most of the time, and kept their mouths shut. But when they were at home, or in their neighborhood (if it was mostly Cans) they did not wear masks and had quite a bit to say.

We spent some time in the small city on the harbor shore while we waited for another storm to carry us home, and we learned that their differences were not just about mask wearing, but about political beliefs, which they adhered to dogmatically, Crats against Cans, much like the conflicting religious orthodoxies of the middle ages in Europe.

The Cans, for example, felt threatened by what they saw as the tyrannical tendencies of the Crats and were highly defensive of the right to carry guns which their constitution had granted them. The Crats for their part feared the Can's guns and wanted the constitution to be reinterpreted in a way that would allow them to take the Cans' guns away.

The Crats, on the other hand, believed that the most fundamental of human rights was the right of a woman to abort a pregnancy without government restriction. The Cans opposed this, denied that it was a constitutional right, and considered it evil.

There were many more issues, and much animosity, but we managed to make friends with both Crats and Cans and found them both to be mostly decent people, worthy of respect, and quite pleasant to hang out with as long as we did not disagree with their orthodoxies.

Perhaps some day I will write more about our experiences among the Crats and Cans (I did take notes) but for now suffice to say that a storm did finally come and take us home, though it is sometimes hard for us to remember whether we are here or there.



Built for Comfort

by Ron Staschak

If ever there was an appropriate name, it is Built for Comfort (BFC). This show is built for comfort. BFC is a wonderful mix of music and talk. You can tell the chemistry is working. BFC is the most enjoyable two hours you will spend. Listen in every Sunday at 3 pm.

What do you do at the radio station

We provide two hours of pain-free, toe jamming, head tappin' groovy tunes every Sunday from 3-5 pm under the show name - 'Built For Comfort'. We get Frank Zappa on the airwaves. It is our pleasure to serve the community in this way.

How long have you been volunteering?

Since early 2018. So using the metric system around like 15 years?

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

We get to make a mixed tape every week and then share it. Plus we have our famous Frank Zappa guarantee with every show. We love music, and are always looking for the next groove. And it's fun to share.

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

We are not big fans of this question. All the shows are great, how about we pick all the shows that haven't been mentioned as favorites so far in these interviews? And a big hello to Kyle Swan. We miss Grampy Keith!

Is there a question I should have asked you?

Maybe 'what is the coolest connection you (me) have made through the show?'. Or something better.

So 'Built for Comfort' (BFC) is part of the exclusive news group at WRFR. We specialize in 'odd' and 'animal' news as well as recently broken world records (hey, these stories must be told!). While researching odd news in March we came across a (not so odd) story about a program that a 5th grade class in Indiana had set up called 'When Life Gives You Lemons, Call a 5th grader'. Basically you call a number (574-832-4965) and get to hear recorded messages - jokes, inspirational quotes, fun facts, and other positive sayings - told by 5th graders. We called the hotline during the show and it was so sweet that it became an 'all eyes that could hear were full of tears' situation in the studio. We liked it so much that we reached out to the teacher to tell her that we liked it so much. That has set off a continuing, wonderful exchange with Cheryl (teacher) and the class that is so wonderful that the class recorded special messages for our show, including the entire class chanting 'BFC! BFC! BFC!' which has become the official intro, outro and 'whatever you call the stuff in the middle' to the show! We have made fun of Indiana in the past on the show - their state drink is water after all - but the lesson for us, which is a lesson we've been taught a gagillion times, is that there are cool, good people everywhere. Even Indiana.

What is the Frank Zappa guarantee?

Our Frank Zappa guarantee is that we will play at least one - sometimes more - Zappa tune somewhere during each show. Its been 4 years plus now and this guarantee has not been a problem to keep since Frank produced such an incredible body of work in way too short a life. Granted, a lot of the songs aren't 'fit' for radio, but between his humorous, serious, and wonderfully composed instrumental pieces we seem to get by!

In your opinion, can humor save the world?

Can humor alone save the world? That would be a firm 'no' from the BFC home office. But along with love, understanding, empathy and caring, humor is a tool (a mind-frame!) to be used for the positive and should/could/is a big part of saving the world. Or at least making things better. Humans are magically one of the most interesting and most boring species on the planet at the same time, there is so much to laugh about ourselves and others that a good chuckle can go a long way. Plus it doesn't hurt! Unless you get slapped after making a not all that funny comment, but that is the magic of radio - no slapping!

My Time Capsule - by Glen Birbeck



My time capsule of tid-bits for the future to ponder is nearly full. Just room enough for a couple more headlines. Lets see, "Government votes funds to increase supply of baby formula". No, not the procedure for making babies. The formula for feeding them in ways nature didn't intend. The government has had to step in. At the risk of revealing my naivety, how did human babies survive before? Ooops, I see a trip-wire and mine field around this question, better step back. With that the capsule is nearly full. When opened a thousand years hence people will marvel at our moment in history. I hope there's room for this week's UFO news. Or more accurately, the latest in non-news. The news is that we still don't know what those things are. Washington, our seat of government, where baby formula and flying saucers meet, had another UFO hearing. Its been fifty years since the last one. Let me go out on a limb and predict. In another 50 years, another congress will hold another hearing to expose the truth about UFO's. Drum roll please....and they'll announce "we don't know what they are". Lest the people opening the capsule in 3022 BCE think it's boring here in 2022 we've informed them of the Australian beetles who are attracted to beer bottles. Sexually attracted. The beetle is the "Jewel" beetle. The object of the Jewel beetle's lust is an empty bottle of "Emu Export". Seems the bottle's color and dimpled glass get this little guy excited. The outback's road sides are strewn with discarded bottles. The bottles are often covered with frustrated beetles. The bottler, in a rare gesture to conservation, has altered the bottles. The change worked and the female beetles are happy, I guess. Not the first time a male has left his mate for the bottle. I'm not going to put anything in the capsule about the war in Ukraine. If it goes, you know, "unthinkable" the future will not need to learn that from us. They'll still be cleaning up. Our time capsule is full so screw on the cap and put it in the hole. I'm tempted to climb in after it.

CMCA Announces Open Call for 2023 Biennial

The Center for Maine Contemporary Art (CMCA) in Rockland is announcing an open call for submissions to its 2023 Biennial exhibition. Submissions will be accepted from June 1 to August 15, 2022. The CMCA Biennial is the longest running statewide juried exhibition in Maine, dating back to 1978. For more information contact Rachel Romanski: 207.701.5005 or rromanski@cmcanow.org

Alex Cuba, 2022 Latin Pop Album Grammy winner at the Strand, Saturday, May 28

Alex Cuba is a singer-songwriter with vast musical vision. His melodies, pop-soul hooks, and powerful guitar riffs relinquish a conventional stereotype that exemplifies much of the Latin music landscape.

Strand Theatre | (207) 594-0070 | info@rocklandstrand.com | www.RocklandStrand.com
345 Main St., PO Box 433, Rockland, ME 04841

Join the Rockland Metro Show on Wednesday, May 25

when our guests will be former Rockland economic development director Rodney Lynch and local artist and environmentalist Susan Beebe. We will be speaking with our guests about alternative means to improve the city's housing stock by renovating existing buildings to add additional units. Join us for a lively conversation on WRFR radio 93.3 fm and streaming on wrfr.org, and over Maine Coast tv local channel 7 and at MaineCoast.tv.



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

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WEEK ONE HUNDRED-FOURTEEN

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

Driving to Brunswick for an appointment, the landscapes glowed with chartreuse forsythia. I love our Maine spring and how nature is so tender and lovely.

May's "Flower Moon" will rise Sunday night into Monday. Maine's Abenaki people call this moon the "field maker moon", meaning planting time. The moon will turn red during the total lunar eclipse Sunday night. With the heavy coastal fog and rain, I could not see this astrological event.

My hostas are coming up with their spikey shoots that look like The Grinch's fingers. The interrupted and cinnamon fern fronds are rising, planted decades ago by my father-in-law from ferns he dug up in the woods and which never need anything more than water during the hottest days. Yesterday it was 84 in our mid-coast.

America is experiencing critical shortages of baby formula that seem to have no timely resolution. What are mothers who haven't breast-fed or cannot produce enough breast milk going to do? It's dangerous to water down formula or feed cow's milk, soy, goat, oat or almond milk to babies less than one year old. They lack sufficient vitamins, iron and essential fatty acids for nutrition and child development. Parents must be on the verge of panic. And don't other countries buy American-made baby formulas? Some European countries make formula.

Despite our spring season and all its glory, the world seems like its turned upside down. Ukrainians continue to suffer unspeakable atrocities under Putin's War; America has more mass shootings; SCOTUS seems poised to turn "The Handmaid's Tale" into reality; North Korea is experiencing covid outbreaks and rejecting vaccine help; The Philippines have elected the Marcos' son as president; the world's wealthiest man is planning to turn Twitter into a chaotic platform for anyone wishing to post venom and lies.

Meanwhile, Sweden and Finland have applied for NATO membership. And Ukraine?

On a trip to Augusta, I had to slow way down to let a pair of Canada Geese with their five long-necked goslings cross the road, just like Robert McCloskey's children's story, "Make Way for Ducklings." On the return home, the quick flash of a weasel crossing the road startled me.

Governor Mills ordered flags at half-mast to honor the million Americans who have died of covid. In actuality, more Americans have died of covid than have been recorded: Those who never made it to a hospital and died at home or those whose deaths were not counted as covid-related.

As a country, we seem unable to grasp the magnitude of America's covid deaths – more than any other country. We memorialize all other national deaths but are unable to come to grips with the pandemic's human toll. Meanwhile, many more million are suffering grief and loss that is beyond understanding unless one has lost a family member, spouse, partner, friend, and colleague. Most people are foregoing masks and think covid is gone, is a hoax, or they're done with it. Local school boards are being pressured by staff and a few parents loudly voicing misinformation to lift masks. And the boards are caving. Maine cases are the highest since February. Most hospitalizations, ventilator use, critical care, and deaths are among our elderly. Now I've finally understood why many Americans dismiss or deny covid. They dismiss our elderly.

The Forsythia has now morphed into their green. Lilacs are beginning to show their purple and white. We'll see if lilacs reach their traditional peak on Memorial Day.

Walt Whitman used lilacs to memorialize Abraham Lincoln.

I've noticed that many solo Harbor Trail Walkers are on their devices, while couples are hand-in-hand, talking and looking at each other. Maybe devices are relationship substitutes, or companions against loneliness? I feel very lucky to have the same close friendships of many years and decades. We all plan to maintain and treasure these relationships into our old age.

Rockland's South End continues to be the realtors', sellers, and buyers' marketplace. The generation before me would be astounded at the changes and the huge amounts of money changing hands. It's such a contrast with little affordable housing in town.

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