



Rockland Metro Magazine

"The Buzz"

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The Old School
Fellowship Education

Barnaby Druthers Mystery Hour created for WRFR by J. Timothy Quirk

interview by Ron Staschak

I say all the time, that I am amazed at the talent of the WRFR volunteers. Nowhere is this more apparent than listening to the Barnaby Druthers Mystery Hour. The imagination of Mr Quirk has created an wonderful radio show. This interview column has introduced me to the diversity of the WRFR community and everyday I am more and more proud to be associated with it.

What do you do at the radio station?

I create a program called Barnaby Druthers Mystery Hour which airs on Sunday mornings. Barnaby Druthers Mystery Hour is an audio theater program.

How long have you been volunteering?

I've been creating audio theater programs since 2018 and Barnaby Druthers since 2019. Barnaby Druthers found a home on WRFR in January 2021

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

I love telling stories and sharing them with a listening audience. Barnaby Druthers is a wonderful character who believes he is more intelligent than his actions suggest, who relies on reputation and his intellectual partner, Harper Thorne, as the way through to the conclusion of a mystery. He is flawed and not always successful, but his heart is in the right place and I enjoy writing those stories. I enjoy hearing the words spring to life thanks to the wonderful voice actors who take the scripts to the next level. Special kudos to Humphry Rolleston as Barnaby, Devon Richtmeyer as Harper Thorne, AJ Lin who directs the show and Kurt Boucher who is a talented actor and producer and to the entire team of actors who work on the show.

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

The best part of community radio is the diversity of programming that is not found on commercial radio. If you want Reggae there's Two Hours of Reggae Power, if you want Blues, there's Blues Highway, Hip Hop, you have Hip Hop with Blue Heff, and an eclectic mix of rock, electronic, jazz and a plethora of other genres. Coming from Irish descent, I have a fondness for Dublin to Dingle.

But every program plays a unique role in what makes WRFR special. With community radio, the listener is given the opportunity of discovery. We receive the unique experience of discovering a song a performer or even, perhaps, a genre of audio entertainment we've never had exposure to before. There is very little "discovery" on commercial radio.

Is there a question should have asked you?

Will you write a Barnaby Druthers story taking place in Maine this year?

Answer: Yes...stay tuned!

How do you create the names of characters (especially Barnaby Druthers)?

Humphry Rolleston and Devon Richtmeyer were new actors to my anthology show called Nutmeg Junction and I wanted to create a skit for them. Barnaby was created as a one-off comedic skit where he bumbled into meeting Moriarity and by accident would give the villain the entire plot that was behind Moriarity's plans in Doyle's short story, "The Final Problem". So, the name came from thinking that the word "Druthers" was a wonderfully silly word and Barnaby seemed to fit nicely with it. After the first skit, I wrote a second right away, with Druthers meeting Jack the Ripper (and getting it wrong again). From there, we were off to the races, and I realized there were more stories to share and the program has evolved since then. Some last names come from street names that inspire me when I'm writing a story. There are recurring characters like Viscountess who is simply known by her title. Smythe sounds like someone who is a member of an upper crust club. As Devon's character is a woman of mystery, I offered Devon some suggestions on what her character's name should be and she chose Harper Thorne.

Are your screenplays the product of imagination or based on real facts?

All stories stem from the imagination but sometimes there are elements that support some verisimilitude. For instance, there was an actor named William Terriss who was murdered in London as I describe in a story, and the idea of the Ghost of William Terriss is something that has been discussed. I read newspaper articles to get facts on the case, but the Barnaby story is pure invention. Additionally, there is a story with Harriet Beecher Stowe, who did travel to London and did have a contentious issue relative to copyright protection. And at the end of her life she did start rewriting her most famous novel. She would not have traveled to London at the age she was in the timeframe I wrote the story, but there were enough elements there so that the story was not implausible. I do research to the best of my ability especially on locations and timeframes. In my most recent Druthers short story (approx. 1600 words), I created the idea of Sir Bedivere's Gift. Part of it is steeped in the actual mythology of Sir Bedivere so the idea is plausible, though pure invention. I'll add a copy of the short story here. In summation, I do research to make the stories the best they can possibly be, like learning how the game of cricket is played before writing "The Summer Game" or finding out where many doctors resided and held their practice in London in the 1890s so that it could be where the Doctor Hyluss adventure could take place.

Who do you consider the greatest contemporary playwrights? Why are they great?

I am sure there are others who could answer this question much better than I can. I don't have a chance to see plays most of the time. And it is unclear who would be considered "contemporary". Obviously, Arthur Miller is a great playwright, does he count as contemporary? For living playwrights, I like Mamet and Sorkin but this is mainly



based on movies and programs written by these writers who also write plays and sometimes those plays become movies. I like their work immensely and none of their work would be inadvertently reflected in my writing at all, which is how I like it. I like reading PG Wodehouse who is not a playwright. I read Poe, Dickens and Doyle but I think mainly about the language they use, not plot, with the exception of doing an adaptation of Poe's "The Sphinx" at the request of a listener. As I write stories, I am attempting to make the current piece better than previous ones, and I write stories I would listen to if I wasn't the one writing it.



**Memorial Day is coming
Three-day weekends give me a thrill
And the neighborhood kids love the fireworks
When I light the barbecue grill.**

- Chris Wolf

Memorial Day

(originally known as Decoration Day) is a federal holiday in the United States for mourning the U.S. military personnel who have died while serving in the armed forces. It is observed on the last Monday of May. It was observed on May 30 from 1868 to 1970.



ETHNIC RINSING

by Phil Crossman

One day several summers ago I noticed a box approaching, diagonally, from across the street. It was tall and slim, the kind of box a water heater might have come in but smaller. I eyed it suspiciously. Wavering not so much in its mission as in its course, it came nonetheless, unmistakably, at me. This was no ordinary box and as it got closer, I could see it had tiny legs and feet, fashionably attired in understated black pumps. Thin white arms hung from corresponding holes in the sides of the box. Female, I concluded. A couple of little holes at eye level allowed her to maneuver. While I didn't know who was inside, the color of the weaponry, one dangling from each hand, didn't escape me. My own squirt gun was in my truck, too far away to reach in time to defend me and the two motel guests with whom I was chatting. One would have thought that by now I'd have learned to keep it with me at all times.

The box was halfway across the street and traffic had stopped in each direction as it might for a meandering duck or a turtle. Island drivers, familiar by now with Vinalhaven's Main Street water wars, laughed and hooted encouragement to the box. Big compared to its occupant, its bottom had been cut out entirely so nothing impeded her legs from moving and the holes for her arms were fairly large so there was no friction there either. The thing hung from her shoulders and swayed back and forth as she advanced like a corrugated prom dress gone berserk.

"Brace yourselves," I advised my companions.

"Who, what--," began one of them as the box, standing now right in my doorway, raised both squirt guns and let us have it. I went out to face my adversary and closed the door behind me, my guest's fears dampened. The box kept shooting and, turning as I strode by, it following me to my truck. She aimed both guns at my back and the ice-cold water sent that 'short of breath' shock through me with each hit. By the time I'd reached the van, though, she was nearly out of ammo. I reached under the seat and pulled out my big pump 'two hands required' squirt gun and a roll of duct tape. She stood there with both empty guns hanging down by her side and began to laugh nervously. That this hapless and unsuspecting passerby had been enticed to play the role of combatant was contemptuous, a new low in the escalating Main Street water wars. I didn't relish the prospect of dealing with this innocent harshly, but I had to send a message across the street. The box began to quiver as her laughter subsided. I moved around, corralling her until she was backed up against the hood and then, wrapping one end of the roll around a side mirror, I duct taped her to the van. I savored my moment for a moment, then discharged the gun's one gallon reservoir selectively, into each armpit while holding the little emerging arm horizontally, then into a quarter sized naturally occurring manufacturer's hole just at tummy level, finally up into the box from underneath. My water wasn't as cold as hers had been, but it was cold enough. Her shrieks and bawls filled Main Street. I let her go and she ran, back across the street to those who'd foolishly put her up to it.

Free Joinery Workshop at Erickson Fields

Maine Coast Heritage Trust, a statewide land conservation organization, will host a free timber frame joinery workshop from 9am to noon on Saturday, June 18th at Erikson Fields Preserve, 164 West St, Rockport. Ryan Twisla, a local timber framer and sustainable builder, will demonstrate cutting joinery, discuss tools for the job, and invite attendees to try their hand at it. Twisla will explain the function of different types of joints and timbers in the frame of the barn to be built at Erikson Fields.

Pre-registration is required and is available online at aldermere.org/joinery and by phone, 236-2739. Registration is free; donations are appreciated. For more information about the barn being built at Erickson Fields, visit mcht.org/moo.



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-FIFTEEN

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

Every morning this week there is such a thick fog I cannot see across the Head of the Bay. It's like a weighted pale curtain. One August, during my husband's Rockland childhood, every day was chilly and dripping with moisture from the heavy fog.

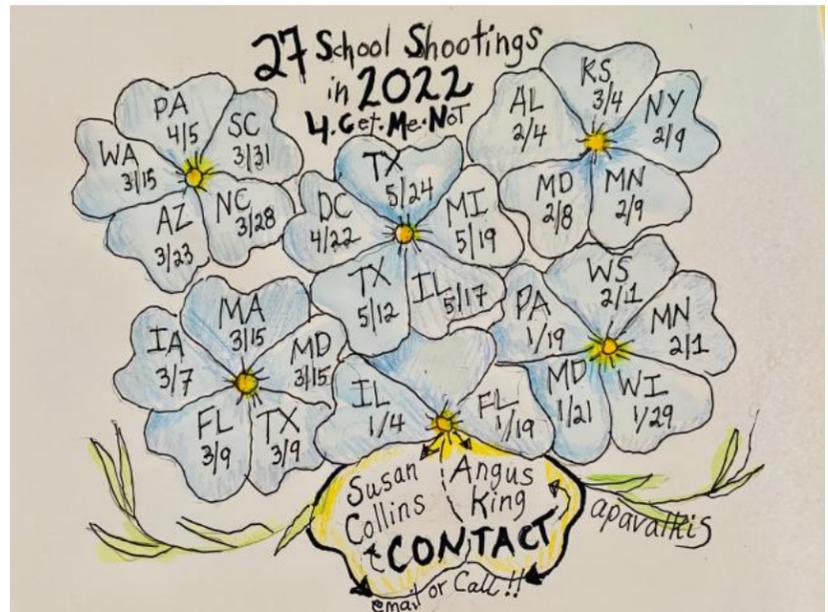
Today three adult ospreys circled and circled our yard, whistling their calls as a trio. They nest at The Head of the Bay and return year after year producing offspring.

The other night Mango became very antsy at the sound of loud explosions booming outside nearby. I went out to explore and discovered the reverberations were from fantastic fireworks near the Samoset: For newlyweds, for a senior prom?

America is experiencing another mass shooting in just two weeks: The Buffalo supermarket shooting of American Blacks and another Texas elementary school mass shooting. Both shooters were 18 year-old males with easy access to AR-15 weapons. Congress will once again wring its hands and then do nothing to protect their fellow Americans – especially children. A 25 year-old Buxton, Maine man is standing trial for allegedly threatening to kill Jews with his AR-15. America has more guns than people. People in elected office have failed and continue to fail America's children, their parents and racist shooters. I don't recognize my own country anymore.

A two year-old girl in Maine was killed by gunfire while her three male relatives fought over a T-shirt. Now 30 Maine children have been killed by recent incidences of violence. Maine DHHS has no plan to protect our most vulnerable children. I don't recognize my own state anymore.

A local Republican candidate has put a screed on social media excoriating teachers as responsible for the Texas massacre. Gun ownership trumps child safety in the Republican election playbooks.



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