

Abort the Supreme Court?

by Joe Steinberger

In front of Rockland's Courthouse last week a group of demonstrators were holding up signs, one of which particularly caught my attention: "Abort the Supreme Court." I walked over and talked with the demonstrators - a civil conversation. My philosophy is that government should not interfere in such private matters as abortion, so we agreed on that, but as someone trained in the law, and as someone who highly values the rule of law, I found it disturbing that abortion rights advocates would go so far as to advocate the abolition of the Supreme Court.

From our conversation it became clear that they had not thought this through, but I remain concerned that our extreme political polarization is encouraging thoughtless extremism, and growing disfunction in our democracy.

The decision of the Supreme Court overturning the 50 year precedent of Roe v. Wade was not a decision that abortion is wrong and should be punished, it was a decision that abortion is not a right protected by the Constitution. This decision reflected a more conservative approach to Constitutional interpretation than was the approach of the majority which decided Roe v Wade in 1973.

Where the balance should be between strict and liberal construction of the Constitution is an important question, but what must decide this is not popular opinion, but the opinion of the majority of the Supreme Court,. It is also important to understand that the overturning of a 50 year precedent is not in itself a necessarily bad thing. We might remind ourselves of the 1954 decision in Brown v Board of Education which overturned the 1896 holding of Plessy v. Ferguson allowing "separate but equal" education of whites and blacks.

Also important to understand is that the decision overturning Roe is not requiring legislatures to ban abortion, it is simply allowing them to make such laws concerning abortion as they deem appropriate. Here in Maine it is unlikely that our legislature is going to ban abortion - that would be very unpopular with their electorate.

In those states where there is popular support for banning abortions, they are likely to find that such bans will be of somewhat limited effect because states cannot criminalize conduct in another state. People will travel to another state to get an abortion - an significant inconvenience for sure, but hardly existential.

What is existential is the degree of hysteria and partisan hatred to which our polarization has led us. Perhaps on this path we will truly abort the Supreme Court, and our Constitution, and enter on the path to the sort of authoritarianism which overtook failed democracies in Europe in the nineteen twenties and thirties..

Meanwhile, not to be too fatalistic, or too serious, there is a great irony afoot. The overturning of Roe has given a huge political boost to the Democrats, the party that advocates abortion rights. The Democrats' formerly bleak prospects for November have suddenly been greatly improved. Indeed Donald Trump, our idiot savant scheister-in-chief, a former Democrat who once supported abortion rights, has, according to the New York Times, privately told friends and advisers that the ruling will be "bad for Republicans."

I suspect he is right. Courier-Gazette reporter Steve Betts recently wrote an article in which he asked local legislative candidates for their reaction to the overturning of Roe. All the Democrats responded enthusiastically condemning it. Two of the six Republican candidates gave ambiguous responses, the other four Republicans declined to respond.

And this brings up another point. In a sense the Supreme Court has just aborted itself. It has concluded that the question of whether abortion should be allowed, and under what circumstances, is for the legislative branch to decide, which is to say it is a question for the people, not the courts. It is now up to all of us to contribute thoughtfully and constructively to that decision.



interview with Chuck Gifford

by Ron Staschak

I had the honor of interviewing one of the foundations of WRFR. Not only does Chuck have two great and very different shows (Rotary Hour- Tuesday 3-4pm and Happy Hour - Tuesday 4-6pm), he also organizes all the on air programming. WRFR and the Rockland community are fortunate to have Chuck.

What do you do at the radio station?

I host two shows: Rotary Time, 3-4 Tuesdays, followed immediately by Happy Hour 4-6. I also upload remotely created shows. Sometimes something at the Station needs resetting, and it might fall to me to do so.

How long have you been volunteering?

Since May 2012.

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

My friend and bandmate Claymore Wales, aka Kel Chapman, had a long-running show called Kaleidoscope on Tuesday afternoons. He invited me in for a Special Edition to celebrate my wife's birthday. I enjoyed selecting music & puzzling together a playlist. Thus was I hooked.

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

As many of your respondents have observed, that's a tough question, say I enjoy the shows that the DJs have put their time and intent and passion into. There are many such and are easily discerned upon hearing them.

Is there a question I should have asked you?

"Is there always time to do it over?"

Answer this question.

The question is a koan, any answer might be correct.

NOTE : A kōan () is a story, dialogue, question, or statement which is used in Zen practice to provoke the "great doubt" and to practice or test a student's progress in Zen

Describe each show: Rotary Time and Happy Hour.

Rotary Time is a music show with a hebdomadal theme. Happy Hour is a show based on Melody & Poetry. Every week we present From Where I Stood: The Millay Moment®

honoring Rockland's Own Edna St Vincent Millay.

In that segment we feature poetry.

What instrument(s) do you play?

I play most stringed instruments and keyboards.



Drop by the Rockland Public Library to visit with the great people from Herring Gut Learning Center and meet some sea creatures. Herring Gut will be bringing their touch tank to the library for families to meet lobsters, crabs, hermit crabs, urchins, sea stars, anemones, and more.

After visiting the sea creatures, join Miss Katie in the Children's Room for an ocean craft. This program is free and for all ages.

To learn more about Herring Gut Learning Center: <https://herringgutlearningcenter.org/>

Signs of Kindness



July 5-July 12- Sign Making at the Library

People of all ages are invited to participate in "Signs of Kindness." On Wednesday, June 13 at 9:00 AM, we'll hold up positive and affirmative (non-political or religious, please) signs on the Union St. lawn to share joy with those driving and walking by. Signs can be made at home, or between July 5-12, during the Library's regular open hours, participants can come in and create one. Supplies (poster board and markers) are provided.

Let's spread some kindness! Part of the Kindness Counts Initiative at the Library.

Camden Shakespeare Festival presents a groovy AS YOU LIKE IT

Camden Shakespeare Festival gives Shakespeare's beloved comedy AS YOU LIKE IT a "Summer of Love" makeover. It's the 1960s, where anything goes, and the plucky Rosalind tries to win the man of her dreams in the most outlandish way possible. Groovy songs are performed live in this crowd-pleasing favorite!

Lovers and fools run afoul of the evil Duke Fredrick and they all retreat to the forest. Love requited, love unrequited and gender confusion all get sorted out as the lovers succumb to the charms of the natural world. This is the play which contains the famous speech "All the world's a stage..." And indeed, all the world IS a stage as the trees and foliage of the Camden Amphitheatre are transformed into the magical Forest of Arden.

AS YOU LIKE IT will be presented outdoors in the Camden Library



Amphitheater on these dates: July 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29 and August 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. All performances begin at 6pm. The production is suitable for children. In the event of rain, the show will play indoors at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church.

Tickets are available at OnTheStage.com, by calling 207-464-0008, or at the theatre and Camden Library one hour prior to each performance.



The Rockland Metro Show Wednesdays from 5 to 6 pm 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.

Become a WRFR Sponsor

Sponsoring your local all-volunteer radio station is community service, public relations, and advertising - all for just \$360 a year. We will record a 20-second announcement describing your business or organization and letting our listeners know how to find you. Your message will play at least once a day, every day of the year. To learn more, email David Dyer: sponsorwrfr@gmail.com.

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Get *The Buzz* at these Rockland locations: Good Tern Co-op • Dunkin' Donuts • Jensen's Pharmacy • Rock City Cafe • Southend Grocery

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WEEK ONE HUNDRED-TWENTY

COVID-19 RANDOM NOTES WHILE SHELTERING IN PLACE

by Phyllis Merriam

This morning's mid-coast fog brought the scent of the nearby ocean. There isn't a perfumer in the world that can match it. I cannot even describe the aroma, except the feelings evoked of spending time oceanside over the decades: Salty, sweaty skin after sunbathing; sandy feet with the grit between my toes; the beach chair that sinks into the sand; molding sand castles that wash away with the tide; plastic buckets and shovels of childhood; eating lunch time sandwiches under an umbrella;

Beach sand in my bathing suit and bed sheets; body surfing; beachcombing for anything interesting; avoiding jellyfish; the red sun going down and time to leave.

After 50 years, the ultra conservative SCOTUS majority killed American women's legal, constitutional right to choose an abortion. Conservative states promptly enacted their "trigger laws" and other legislation to limit or outright ban abortions. If Clarence Thomas has his way, SCOTUS will go after abortion pills, contraception, gay rights and who knows what other Americans' rights established by stare decisis, i.e. legal precedence. Sen. Susan Collins is now whining that Kavanaugh and Gorsuch promised her they wouldn't overturn any legal precedents. Collins is too naïve to serve the people of Maine, especially Maine women.

Whether it is domestic violence perpetrators, or legislators, or a former president, or SCOTUS, conservative men in power want to control women and their bodies.

So far as I could tell, our local press did not cover the lone, courageous woman demonstrating with her sign, "Regulate the Penis." Many cars honked their support.

The January 6th Committee produced a surprise in-person witness, Cassidy Hutchinson, Mark Meadows Special Assistant in the West Wing. What a brave and articulate 26 year-old woman. Despite having a phalanx of photographers in her face, Cassidy kept her composure and related some astonishing information about the MAGA Man as former president. When he was confronted with roadblocks to his goals, Trump would rage and throw ketchup-filled dishes at dining room walls or pull tablecloths from dining tables, dumping the contents. (These are behaviors seen in domestic violence perpetrators.) Here we have a president who didn't hesitate to despoil The People's House and treat the White House staff as his personal cleanup crew.

Cassidy had much more to say about MAGA Man's knowledge of his January 6th weaponized supporters and how he planned to join them at the Capitol where he put his own vice-president and congress in mortal danger. This person should never again hold any public office or get within a thousand miles of the nuclear codes.

I just received the Southern Poverty Law Center's (SPLC) summer report. There are 733 hate groups and anti-government extremist groups around the USA, including several in our own state of Maine. The armed storming of the U.S. Capitol revealed extremist groups that can mobilize large groups of Americans bent on using force and violence to reshape our democracy into an autocracy - or worse. The most recent product of their efforts and the well-funded GOP efforts are historic voter repression laws, especially in our southern states. The Exposing Extremism in Elections Report can be read at: splcactionfund.org/eeie

The news is so depressing. I look out at the ocean on this beautiful summer day and wonder with anxiety what will become of my country.

Join the WRFR/Buzz team

Radio station WRFR and our magazine, the Buzz, are all-volunteer efforts. We are open to everyone, and we need your help.

WRFR is now 20 years old, and many of us who started this local community radio station are getting old too! We need young blood. (Old blood is welcome too.)

We need people to do radio shows, to help with our administration, to provide technical support, to write, to edit, to print - to do your thing. Do you have skills that could help our Rockland community have a voice? Then join us.

Give me a shout: 596-0731, or steinberger@gwi.net.

- Joe