

December Freezes the Wells Point

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December was cold! We survived it with our regular twice-daily walks around Providence, and then we headed to Portugal for a brief but relaxing holiday. The month ended with us in India, enjoying some warm weather. Images from the month are interspersed throughout the newsletter. In December, I was editing two films for upcoming public presentations. During the past year, I had been editing a friend's film titled [Triple Decker: A New England Love Story](#), in time for a preview screening at the Providence Public Library at 2 pm on Valentine's Day (Saturday, February 14th). There will be a Q&A with the filmmaker after the screening. The tickets are free, and [registration is not required](#), but signing up helps us plan for the event!



The New England Triple-Decker house's history is a microcosm of the American urban experience, where a simple architectural form became a powerful symbol of immigration and community, fostering a sense of pride and shared identity. The building emerged from a specific set of circumstances, industrialization, immigration, and transit, as a brilliant and democratic solution to a housing crisis. There are essential echoes for today's housing crisis.



In other big news, a film I have been working on for almost 10 years, titled [Unbowed](#), will air on Rhode Island PBS in January. Log line for the film: Omar Bah was a young journalist, and because of his reporting, he had to flee The Gambia under threat of death from the regime's President. He is eventually resettled as a refugee in Rhode Island. When the same President is deposed years later, Omar is finally able to end his exile and claim much longed-for closure to this traumatic part of his life. As he prepares for his first return journey to The Gambia since exiled over a decade ago, the film reveals the remarkable person Omar has become in America.



In other “film” news, in December, I was thrilled to get notices saying, “Congratulations!” Venice Lagoon Wave Film Festival has accepted [Surfacing](#) for inclusion in the festival. Congratulations! [Shucking Tradition](#) has been selected for the 2026 SPE Media Festival in Atlanta. Congratulations! Shucking Tradition has been chosen for the La Femme Independent Film Festival London 2026. (These last two are the twelfth and thirteenth film festival wins for the Shucking Tradition film.)



POINTS OF PRIDE:

I have written before, with great pride, about the project [Portraits in Faith](#), created by my former student, Daniel K. Epstein. Daniel shared his work and journey in developing [Portraits in Faith](#) during a joint press conference at the Vatican as part of the "Open Doors" cultural program for the Jubilee 2025 in Rome, which featured art for social change. Religious figures there spoke beautifully about "the humanity expressed in each of Daniel's portraits."

NEWS YOU CAN USE:



While a podcast titled "[Master Class in Photo Book Publishing, with Mary Virginia Swanson & Rick Smolan](#)" is certainly interesting, I wonder why it is audio-only? They describe it, explaining that "Every photographer dreams of publishing a book of their photographs. But what exactly does that entail? In today's show, we're going to peek behind the scenes of this complex and daunting process in a chat with two complementary figures who've spent their respective careers helping to redefine what a photo book can be." To be blunt, they certainly know what they are doing, and there are some important lessons there, but they also live and work in a higher realm than most photographers.



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