

# The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

raindrops keep fallin'

August 17, 2021





### Beware tricky scams

By John Powers

We are seeing an abundance of scams, some of which are very clever.

The less clever ones are the hackers who get inside someone's address book and send out emails appearing to originate from that person. Most of these are pretty simple-minded containing only a link and inviting you to click on it. These links can have consequences from introducing a nasty virus to taking over your computer as in a ransomware attack. The quickest response is to reply to the sender asking, "Is this from you, Alex?" Most of the time it is not.

I assume by now that everyone here has an external hard drive on which all your files are backed up weekly and then disconnected.

The more clever ones are like the recent Shirley T. email asking for a favor. "Hi. How are you doing? Can I ask you for a quick favor?"

Since I was not clicking on anything, I responded, "sure" as her husband was a dear friend. At the point of asking me to send gift cards, I asked her to call me, but she said her phone was out. At this point, it was pretty clear that this was a scam but to confirm, I asked her to send me her unit number and the name of her husband (any number of questions could work here). I did not hear back. 📧



### ABBA's Frida shines in Super Trouper

By Chester Taylor

While "Dancing Queen" was the most popular song that ABBA produced, "Super Trouper" is another crowd favorite. In this song, Anni-Frid Lyngstad (Frida) sings in the lead and Agnetha Fältskog joins. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BshxCIjNEjY> Their voices harmonize so well, they often sound like a single voice. Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus wrote the lyrics together and performed the backup. Benny played the keyboard and Björn played the guitar.

The song has a distinctly march beat. There are three themes that resonate with the audience. First, the demanding commitment required by the artists. Despite Frida saying "All I do is eat and sleep and sing," there are the twenty thousand fans who expect a good show, and she must continue with professionalism. Then there is the solitude of the artist who is away from home. Frida sings, "How can anyone be so lonely, part of a success that never ends." Finally, there is hope, something that makes it worthwhile "cause somewhere in the crowd there's you."

So, like Frida, we march in our lives as super troupers and, hopefully, will be "shining like the sun, smiling, having fun, feeling like a number one." 📧

### Zoom music

By Richard Titus

In the August *Times of Montebello*, the Activities Committee announced a new club, the Google Music Club. We gather, select from the infinite variety of music available on Google, listen to it, and then discuss it.

Good idea, *bad* timing! Covid-19 returned in force and the world, Montebello included, is shutting down again.

But but but, could it maybe transfer to Zoom? Through online dialogue we agree on the music. On our own, we listen on Google and then we "meet" on Zoom to discuss it. Not ideal, but these days, what is? And it just might turn out to be really nice.

If interested, contact me at [meagain37@cox.net](mailto:meagain37@cox.net) or 571-217-6095. 📧

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Cover photo by Azita Mashayekhi

## Masks up for health safety around our homes!

By Jim Bechtel

Dear Montebello Board of Directors and Management:

Please reinstate mandatory masks in elevators, lobbies, hallways, and other indoor spaces. Our residents deserve to feel and be safe from Covid-19 infection. Without masks, we have no idea who is safe, or who is a reckless (or naive) fool endangering our health and lives.

### Get masks up around our homes!

The Delta variant of the Covid-19 virus breakthrough weak or waning vaccine defenses and devastates the unvaccinated. While a vaccine is better than none, we are all becoming vulnerable again to sickness, hospitalization, and death.

CDC says the Delta variant now causes 83.2% of new Covid-19 cases in the U.S. (up from near zero only three months ago) and 69.4% of infections in the mid-Atlantic.

Delta is in Fairfax County, where Covid-19 infections are highest since May 9, and testing positivity rate jumped to 2.4% from 0.8% in just three weeks, despite having 57.7% of county residents fully vaccinated. (*Tysons Reporter* 7/26/21)

A CDC presentation leaked July 30 insists: "Acknowledge the war has changed...Universal masking is essential to reduce transmission of the Delta variant...Reconsider other community mitigation strategies."

Delta is different from previous strains: it is highly contagious, likely more severe, and breakthrough infections (among the vaccinated) may be as transmissible as unvaccinated cases. The Delta variant generates a "~10-fold increase in viral load" in breakthrough (vaccinated) cases versus earlier virus.

The Delta variant is more

transmissible than MERS & SARS, Ebola, common cold, seasonal flu, 1918 Spanish flu, smallpox, and as transmissible as chicken pox.

Published evidence shows: Delta infections associated with higher viral load and duration of shedding.

◆ Delta variant vaccine breakthrough cases may be as transmissible as unvaccinated cases.

◆ Delta variant may cause more severe disease than Alpha or ancestral strains.

◆ Vaccines may be less effective at preventing infection or transmission of Delta.

◆ Therefore, expect more breakthrough and more community spread despite vaccination.



CDC data show increasing percentage of vaccinated persons among those hospitalized. In May alone, vaccinated hospitalization rates doubled to 9% of cases, and vaccinated death rates soared by 5 times, to 15.1% from 3.1% in April. (Note: Since May, outcomes likely got worse, as Delta multiplies)

Latest real-world health ministry data show Pfizer two-dose vaccine effectiveness proved only 39% protective against Delta variant virus for confirmed and symptomatic disease in Israel, despite ~60% herd immunity. Most new cases there are vaccine breakthrough infections. (CNBC 7/23/21) Therefore, Israel has already started giving third Pfizer booster shots. (Note: vaccine effectiveness against

Delta virus may be similar for Moderna mRNA vaccine, but worse for those who got J&J.)

Case study: 73% of new infections were vaccinated breakthroughs in a recent community cluster (882 infections now from zero on July 4 in Provincetown, MA). (*Patch.com* 7/30/21) Don't let that happen here!

Crucial developments compel immediate action:

1. CDC now recommends masks indoors for both fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people. Act!
2. Federal agencies, White House, Congress, and DC now require masks indoors on everyone, regardless of vaccine status. Do the same!
3. Mask mandates remain in healthcare, air travel, public transportation, federal venues, major employers, and multitudes of other places with enlightened leadership. Follow their example!
4. Health experts again recommend (K)N-95 or double masks, as it becomes obvious that we're all more vulnerable, whether vaccinated or not. Tell everyone!
5. Seniors and immunocompromised persons are especially vulnerable. Protect them!
6. Children are not yet eligible to receive vaccines. Protect them!
7. Covid-19 infections are rising again, here and around USA. We need masks on everyone!
8. Malicious variants, especially Delta, now threaten all sectors of our population. New harmful variants are emerging. Act fast!
9. Vaccine breakthrough infections are becoming far more widespread. Yet they have been vastly under-reported because CDC only counted hospitalizations or deaths, but did not collect (or hid) test data about vaccinated Covid diagnoses (ignoring that Covid-19 can still



## surviving the pandemic

cause long-term systemic damage or develop into a more serious case, apparently the recent trend).

10. Studies show that antibodies to fight disease have peaked or begun declining in some infected or vaccinated earliest (notably elderly, immunocompromised, and nursing home residents). So they are not as capable to resist the virus.
11. Pfizer's study of 44,000 people showed two-dose effectiveness decreased an average of 6% every two months. However, its CEO said, "The good news is that we are very, very confident that a third dose, a boost, will bring the immune response to levels that will be sufficient to protect against the Delta variant." (*Digismak.com* 7/31/21)
12. Science shows booster shots are needed, but are far away from approval or availability in USA. (Some physicians are already giving third boosters "off label" as FDA fails to respond.)
13. Some public health experts have said recently that actual Covid cases today are likely much higher, and spread wider, than reported data (up to 5-10 times more?), because (a) testing is not as robust or pervasive as it used to be, (b) tests may be done at home and unreported, and (c) both younger and vaccinated people at early stages of infection are initially less symptomatic than previously, so they don't get tested. Thus, the sick spread disease without detection or contact tracing. Even if they don't become severely ill (as too many later do), others they expose to the virus can become seriously sick, hospitalized, or dead. Don't let our neighbors be victims!
14. If we continue to ignore prudent measures to contain and combat Covid-19, scientists warn that the virus will breed more virulent new variants able to circumvent

the human immune system, with or without vaccines. Is the Delta variant an ugly omen of horrors ahead?

Last year, I praised management leadership and gave thanks for cooperation of people in our community to keep masks on, respect social distancing, care for others, and support those in need. But please, let's not lose progress, and undo all the valiant efforts and formerly wise policies that led Montebello through the first year nightmare of the pandemic!

Lately we are seeing an alarming emergence of disrespectful selfish mavericks who don't give a f--- about others.

I am dismayed by the number of people lately who try to barge into

elevators without masks. When we refuse, some whine they have a right to ride. A few are belligerent. Others with no face coverings protest "but I have a mask" (somewhere unseen) when we ask them not to enter an elevator. Too many rush into lobbies, or gather in groups around elevators, with no protection – and don't stay away a safe distance.

So, we're in a sad time of menacing disrespect, careless disregard of others' welfare, and hostile defiance, which endangers everyone, especially the most vulnerable. Stop these trends now, before it's too late! Frankly, we need leaders at Montebello who will demand, like Maryland Governor Larry Hogan's successful ad: "Just wear the damn mask!" 🙏



*Photo by Dian McDonald*

# At the movies with Ruth

By Marsha Weiner

Each of us has had our personal reactions to the 18-month Covid-19 lockdown. For our fellow Montebellonian, Ruth Hieneman, summer, ripe with possibilities for safe outdoor activities, spawned the idea to launch The Irreverent Film Series.

The first two films of the series have fulfilled the promise of the festival's theme:

## irreverent

*/ə'rev(ə)rənt/ adjective*

1. showing a lack of respect for people or things that are generally taken seriously

Opening with *Blazing Saddles* was inspired, and an unintentional homage to a master of irreverent satire, Mel Brooks, who turned 95 just one month prior to the screening. The film, starring Gene Wilder and Cleavon Little along with Brooks' cabal that includes Dom DeLuise, Madeline Kahn, Harvey Korman, along with Count Basie and Slim Pickens; Richard Pryor shares a writing credit, rips into themes of racial bigotry and greed... and more bigotry and more greed.

I remember seeing the film when it was released in 1974 and frankly, didn't care for it too much. All I remembered was the campfire scene from which the movie gets its name. But seeing it now was hilarious and sadly, timely, justifying its inclusion in the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress in 2006.

Ruth followed that hit with Monty Python's *The Life of Brian*. In short: the film, starring Python's Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam,

Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin (directed by Jones) tells the story of Brian Cohen (played by Chapman), a young Jewish-Roman man who is born on the same day as – and next door to Jesus, and is subsequently mistaken for the Messiah.

*Life of Brian* achieved the highest level of irreverence – “drawing accusations of blasphemy.”



Production was rescued by former Beatle George Harrison after EMI withdrew funding. Though banned in Ireland and Norway – not to miss an opportunity to show their satiric irreverent talents, promotional posters began to include “So funny it was banned in Norway!”

Regardless of all protests, it was the fourth-highest-grossing film in the United Kingdom in 1979, and the highest grossing of any British film in the United States that year.

So, what's with Ruth? Thought I'd stop by have a chat with the woman

behind this display of unabashed and hilarious irreverence.

Once the lockdown was lifted, she “needed a break from Zoom Bingo” and decided to mine her collection of films. Her late husband Brian was a true videophile, and the collection he bequeathed her includes documentaries, NASA documentaries, television series, lots of horror, film noir, comedy, disaster and classics (including the original *Twilight Zone* series!) Over the years they had laser discs, videos, and VHS recorders to capture video directly off the television. The collection includes over 3,000 DVDs.

Shoving her personal preferences aside (she has a particular fondness for monster classics like the original Japanese *Godzilla*, big bug movies such as *Tarantula* and disaster movies such as *Twister*), she gave herself the challenge to select films that were humorous, not so readily viewed on cable stations like AMC and TMC and were, indeed, irreverent.

So far, she's succeeded!

The outdoor set up on Picnic Hill works. People spread out their snacks and beverages on the picnic tables, some bring their own lawn chairs; the canopy of

the trees gives good cover and inflatable 12'x10' screen is easy viewing.

So if you are in the mood, or if you feel your mood needs to be shaken up a bit, there are four more movies slated for The Irreverent Film Series, Friday evenings, 7:30 at Picnic Hill

August 27: Monty Python and the Holy Grail

September 3: Best in Show

See you at the movies. 🍿



# cinophile



*Photos by Paul Foldes and Dian McDonald*



## Me and Sam McGee

By Bob Shea

John B. Heath, my 9th-grade English teacher, tasked our class to compare and discuss two poets, one from 18th-century Europe and one from 20th-century North America. He selected Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) and Robert W. Service (1871-1958). Most recognize the former as the famed author of “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and “Kubla Khan,” part of the English Romantic Movement, but who had ever heard of the other guy?

We debated style, meter, and how the story was told. Additionally, we had to memorize the first 12 lines of a poem by each. Coleridge’s classic works tell of the ancient mariner and the albatross with “water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink,” and his strange vision/dream “In Xanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure dome decree.”

Robert W. Service, on the other hand, transplanted from England to British Columbia, wrote hard-scramble poems about bohemian Paris, World War I, and the Yukon Territories and the men who dug in the dirt during the Klondike Gold Rush. The class consensus was that Service was more fun to read, to understand, and was a better poet, but teenage boys are usually not the best judges of classic poetry.

My very favorite was Service’s “The Cremation of Sam McGee” penned in 1901. I suddenly had a favorite poet. The story teller is a gold miner who befriends Sam McGee as they both trek the wilds and the bitter cold of a Yukon winter in search of precious metal. Sam is from Tennessee and claims he has not once been warm since he left that state. When Sam becomes deathly ill, he makes his partner promise to cre-

mate him with the line “Yet ‘taint being dead – it’s the dread of the icy grave that pains.”

Fast forward, Sam does die, and his body is strapped to a dog sled as his partner agonizes on how to carry out Sam’s last wish for he knows “Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code.” Finally he finds a derelict small steamer on a large lake, collects coal and wood, fires up the boiler, stuffs Sam in, and leaves “for I didn’t want to hear him sizzle



so.” Later, he returns to “take a peep inside.” He finds Sam sitting and grinning in the boiler and asking him to please close that door, saying “It’s fine in here, but I greatly fear you’ll let in the cold and storm, since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee, it’s the first time I have been warm.”

Robert W. Service captured me. I later learned that in some circles he is called the Bard of The Yukon. He also wrote “The Shooting of Dan McGrew,” which includes the mysterious character “the lady that’s known as Lou,” another classic of the time. I memorized about 20 lines of Sam’s

story to meet Mr. Heath’s requirement, and those lines remained in my memory over the years like an old pop song that keeps rattling around in your head. I was always ready to recite Robert Service to tell at least part of Sam’s story, assuming anyone would listen.

On a trip to Alaska in 1991, I was delighted when our coach driver, Steve, began reciting Sam’s story over the bus PA system during part of the drive from Anchorage to Fairbanks. He kept both hands on the wheel, no cheat sheet, for he had memorized all 60 lines of the poem. What a guy! I was thrilled, for I had re-connected with Sam McGee.

In Fairbanks, across the street from our hotel, was a bookstore, where while browsing, I found a book titled *The Best Of Robert Service*. Needless to say, I bought it. Now I had not only Sam McGee’s story but about 80 other poems by the Bard of the Yukon, a valued addition to my library.

Again, fast forward to 2014, I was a dinner guest at the Captain’s Table on the river cruise ship, the M/S Bizet, on the Seine River. Most guests were respectfully asking the captain about his duties and river navigating, but a fellow tourist, from North Carolina whom I had

never met, about my age, and I were exchanging other non-river small talk when he not only mentioned Sam McGee, but also recited the first few opening lines: “The Northern lights have seen queer sights, but the queerest they ever did see, was the night on the marge of Lake Lebarge, I cremated Sam McGee,” and I picked up the next 2 or 3 lines. Instant bonding! What a guy! Who would have thought? By the way, Webster tells us that the word “marge” is an old English contraction of “margin or shoreline.”

He then added that he had a book at home that I might like, *The Best of*

## poetic license

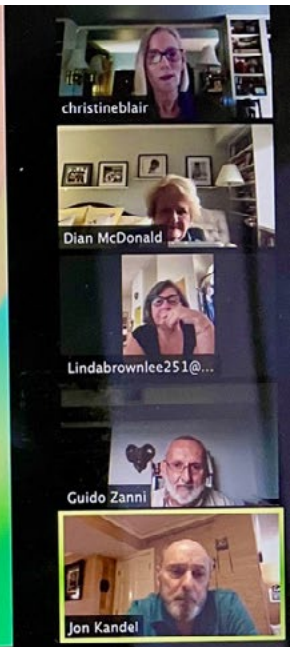
*Robert Service.* I told him that I had the same book, purchased at a bookstore in Fairbanks. He asked if was it across the street from the Fairbanks Westmark Inn where many tour groups stayed? Yup, same book, same book store! Small world! Talk about male bonding! We have been friends with him and his

wife ever since, visiting their home in New Bern, and taking two other small ship cruises with them. We now have a really dumb cocktail lounge routine where we alternate lines about Sam McGee. It does not take much to humor two old guys, but I am sure that


there are much worse bad habits for senior citizens.

So, from 9th grade English to Steve's coach recitation to the Captain's Table on the M/S Bizet, Sam McGee and his cremation have been a thread through much of my life – yes, Me and Sam McGee. Sorry Janis, Kris, and Bobby. 🙏

## Art in Montebello unveils another group show



**Harriet Duval, Chair, AiM**



Harriet Duval has served first as Co-Chair and then as Chair since the inception of AiM in 20014. Under her leadership, AiM has expanded its outreach with greater recognition for digital art and photography, three-dimensional art, lectures, workshops, and classic films. She also “negotiated” a greater presence of resident art in the newly renovated Community Center to include display cases for three-dimensional art and wall space beyond the boundaries of the café to showcase resident art.

AiM’s membership has significantly increased with Harriet at the helm as she is always on the lookout for new members and talent. Membership is open to all residents and is not restricted to artists. If you are interested in joining AiM, please contact Harriet at [haziduval@gmail.com](mailto:haziduval@gmail.com).



[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1u2-HFeBY\\_jPLaTitpJ8tmGPJzCH3rZSa/edit#slide=id.p1](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1u2-HFeBY_jPLaTitpJ8tmGPJzCH3rZSa/edit#slide=id.p1)



## Why I attend the Tech Club meetings

By Christine Winter

Last week someone asked me, “Should I attend the Tech Club meetings?” I hardly knew how to answer. I had written a little piece in *The Times of Montebello* about Tech Club, and suggested that people who attended would “catch on.” But I don’t think that’s really true, as there seems to be an infinity to know, and it is hard to narrow your focus to those aspects that would best serve you in your current needs, and well nigh impossible to be sure what your future needs will be. Nevertheless, if we do not challenge ourselves to learn technology, we remain separated from some efficiencies and some joys that technology devices make possible.

Decades ago, my mother tried to convince me in weekly phone calls that I should get a microwave oven. My husband and I were barely scraping by, and I saw no purpose in such a device, since I was able to cook by frying, boiling, and baking, thank you. At a holiday visit, I witnessed its convenience in heating/reheating foods, and a year later she sent the money for us to buy one. Since that time, I have never expanded its options of heating/reheating, but am convinced it is a necessity.

Not many years later in New York, I attended a dinner with an academic colleague whose wife worked at IBM. I asked her whether they planned to buy a personal computer and she replied, with a bit of disdain, that she had no problem keeping their records in file folders and saw no reason to buy one. I figured she was the expert!

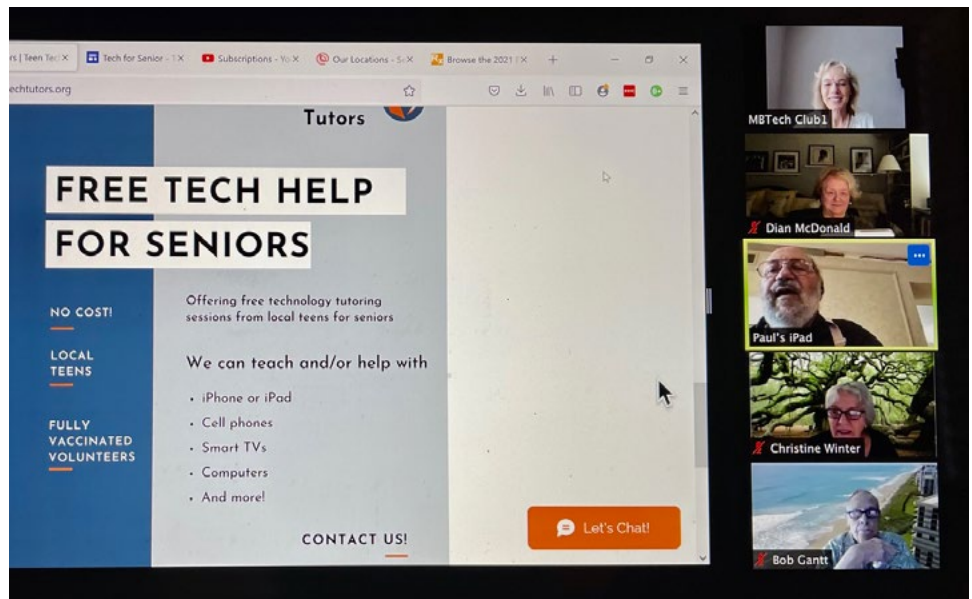
Nevertheless, I would come to have my life changed by a computer. In 1985, we had left our professional careers behind, striking out for a new state and new (as yet unknown) careers. I enrolled in a bonus-for-fun degree program at the University of North Carolina (I already had a doctorate

in psychology) and was directed to the computer center to learn to use one. The teaching assistant said I should “play with the mouse,” and pointed out an empty carrel with a boxy computer and an object beside it attached by a wire to the back. I learned this object was the “mouse.” I picked up the mouse, turning it over and around in my hand, trying to figure out how the heck you should play with it and feeling ridiculous as I did so.

As you know, Apple prided itself on its user-friendly capabilities, but I was a dumb cluck and could not intuit it! I was embarrassed to roll my chair over

and then the super sleek large-monitor iMacs in 2011 and 2018, the last one costing me \$1,250! I used the graphics programs on the Macintoshes early on: MacDraw, MacPaint, and such. What a joy for creating curricula, while my lagging-behind friends were still using text-heavy PCs. Nevertheless, I would never call myself an early adopter; in fact, more like a late adopter.

After Y2K, it seems that technology started to speed up. Having returned to academia, now in another new state, my department head insisted that all of us must carry our pagers when we left campus. I had barely learned what



to another student, where moving the mouse around on the flat desk surface was demonstrated. Even after seeing that, I had trouble because I kept running the cursor off the page, or losing vision of the cursor, and picking up the mouse to try to reposition it. I’m assuming many of you may have had a similar naive experience.

As that student 35 years ago, I was able to purchase my first computer in 1986 at a discount, a 512K Apple Macintosh, for \$1,335, plus the cost of a printer and cable. I upgraded to a Classic in 1990, the “blueberry” iMac G3 in ’99, the “half-basketball” G4 in ’04,

a PDA or a Blackberry was. I did not need to be “paged” about any aspect of my job, when I knew how to conduct myself, direct my focus and my time, without her input. I kept it in my desk drawer where the battery ran down. Nor was there any need for phone contact with my husband when it was obvious that both of us were either at home or doing our jobs; and I had total trust that my child’s needs were being met in his school settings.

Life changed when my husband was diagnosed with cancer and began treatment, as we then recognized the need for more immediate communi-



## technical support



cations, as family members needed to be brought up to speed; appointments made and changed; transportation planned for; and access to emergency services needed to be at hand. Hence, our first cell phone, a.k.a. mobile phone, a Nokia flip phone.

As years passed, my original 2003 Nokia flip phone has been replaced with various versions of iPhones, with the wondrous photo capabilities that made my digital camera a thing of the past, as well as with an infinity of built-in or purchasable apps. I was gifted early with a Kindle for reading books. I certainly use the Kindle, but now, if I want, I could easily read books on my phone.

I could never hope to keep up with all the new technologies introduced every year for maximizing my use of the telephone, but also my television, the kitchen, the washer/dryer, HVAC system, automobile, community libraries, music options, health records, banking, financial records, art creating and appreciation, movies, museum touring, professional and personal group meetings, travel, virtual and real, family communications by voice, video, text, animations. Is there anything that has not been touched by technology? Yes, I know, we still had to purchase and store toilet paper in 2020. Ha! I just showed this essay to Cheryl Jobe and she reminded me there is technology for the

toilet that dispenses with toilet paper.

The Montebello Technology Club meets monthly, first Thursdays at 4 p.m., and I assist co-leaders Cheryl Jobe and Paul Foldes, not because I know technology. My assistance is being the sample audience, the average person who wants to drive that car to get to a destination, but doesn't understand anything under the hood. Various club members share their experience or their solutions to problems, introduce new sites to visit. Knowing now that my mother was right about the microwave, I do not want to avoid any opportunity to learn something new, especially something that is so totally ubiquitous as the technologies of communication and knowledge.

At our recent meeting, attended by 16 people, we discussed using a new group meeting platform instead of Zoom, called Ring Central. Its advantage is that we will not be limited to a 40-minute session. Cheryl reminded us to be sure to back up our computers/data using iDrive or iCloud. And that we needed to use 2-factor authentication for all of our sensitive sites, such as banking or other financial dealings. The main topic was On-Line Resources for Seniors, and Paul identified a site for evaluating Medicare drug prices in preparation for the Open Season of October 17-December 5. This site pro-

vides a newsletter: [Q1Medicare.com](http://Q1Medicare.com). He reminded us that every year there may be changes to your medications, or to the tier to which certain prescriptions you are getting are assigned. He added that anyone can make an appointment with Medicare, if needed, for the same discussion.

Paul also introduced us to [seniorplanet.org](http://seniorplanet.org), which began about 15 years ago as a non-profit, but is now supported by AARP. Senior Planet was initially providing in-person classes, but has now moved to virtual meetings, due to Covid. They offer tutorials, classes, for example, "Digital Essentials for Caregivers." These are free sites.

Cheryl suggested that anyone can search [meet-up.com](http://meet-up.com) to look up any interest, such as local groups for technology. She also found a YouTube channel called Tech for Seniors, which has live shows every Monday, but keeps the recordings of all prior ones, and has a searchable index. That site is [techforsenior.com](http://techforsenior.com).

And, lastly, Paul identified a local group called Teen Tech Tutors who provide consultation by computer, phone, and even make house calls! You can check out their site at [teentech-tutors.org](http://teentech-tutors.org). Or, you can write to [teentechtutors4seniors@gmail.com](mailto:teentechtutors4seniors@gmail.com). But since these teens have busy lives, you may not get an immediate reply. Much more was discussed about Kindle Fire Tablets, electric cars and Montebello's plans to install charging stations. Currently, one of our members with a Tesla drives to National Harbor to get the car charged.

Should you attend a Tech Club meeting? Maybe. For more information, contact Cheryl Jobe at [mbtechclub1@gmail.com](mailto:mbtechclub1@gmail.com). 📧



## la vie en lilac

# New book celebrates Mackinac Island's fragrant jewels

By Sue Allen

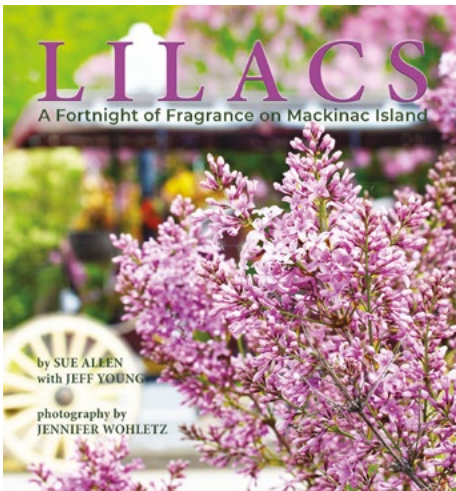
They say plant a lilac and you'll plant a memory. I've had the extreme good fortune of having decades of memories of these iconic blossoms and their unforgettable scent by summering on Mackinac Island, Michigan, where lilacs grow into 18-foot trees, and can be found all over the island. Although not native to the U.S. – lilacs originally came from Eastern Europe and Asia – lilacs have adapted remarkably well to Mackinac Island, thanks

to the moist cool weather, lake breezes, long winters and limestone soil. As a result, there is nowhere else on the planet where you can find lilacs with such impressive architecture. Some of the lilacs are more than 200 years old, and Mackinac is home to thousands of lilac plants representing more than 300 kinds. In the large public park in downtown Mackinac, 75 kinds of lilacs grow in 13 beds.

In 2019 I was asked to help write a book about Mackinac's wonderful lilacs. I jumped at the chance. Working with a lilac expert, Jeff Young, and photographer and book designer Jennifer

Wohletz, we had a book ready for print by spring of 2020. Then came Covid, so we put off printing until May 2021. We wanted it to coincide with the annual Lilac Festival, which was cancelled in 2020. The book, *Lilacs – A Fortnight of Fragrance on Mackinac Island*, is now available. With more than 300 photographs, the 152-page, hard-cover coffee table book is sponsored by the Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau, and proceeds go to the Lilac Preservation Fund.

Books are sold at the Island Bookstore for \$30 [islandbookstore.com](http://islandbookstore.com). (They are not available on Amazon). 📖



*Sue Allen, clad in a vintage '50s dress of lilac blooms, with co-author and lilac expert Jeff Young in front of a poster of the cover of their book. The photo taken on June 6 in Marquette Park, Mackinac Island, where 75 varieties of lilacs bloom.*



## Highlights: “Fun with a Purpose”

By Raymond Houck

Admit it. We have all sat at the doctor’s or dentist’s office and casually paged through *Highlights* magazine sitting among the other periodicals on the waiting room table. It is a pop culture phenomenon at this point how universal *Highlights* is in medical offices, but without the medical community, there would not be a *Highlights* today. The publishers rolled out a program to put *Highlights* into doctors’ and dentists’ offices, which is what made the publication take off so it could successfully grow and continue. The magazine accepted no advertising and shunned single-issue sales and can still be found today in most doctors’ and dentists’ offices in the United States.

*Highlights for Children*, often referred to simply as *Highlights*, is an American children’s magazine. It began publication in June 1946, started by Garry Cleveland Myers and his wife Caroline Clark Myers in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. They both worked for another children’s magazine, *Children’s Activities*, for 12 years before leaving to start *Highlights*. Since its inception, *Highlights* has carried the slogan “Fun with a Purpose.” *Highlights* has surpassed one billion copies in print, and along with its sister publications *High Five* and *Hello* magazines, does not accept any third-party advertising or commercial messages.

The Highlights Foundation is a public, not-for-profit organization supported by individuals, several publishing companies, and writers’ organizations committed to improving the quality of children’s literature by helping authors and illustrators hone their craft. The Foundation is located in Pennsylvania at the former home of the founders of *Highlights for Children*.

Garry Myers earned a Ph.D. in psychology from Columbia University be-

fore World War I, providing a basis for the teaching he would do the rest of his life. He and Caroline Myers worked for the United States Army teaching illiterate soldiers, with Caroline becoming the first female teacher employed by the Army. This experience led to their pioneering of elementary education. For a time, they taught educators and parents at Case Western Reserve



University in Cleveland, Ohio, during which Garry Myers wrote a nationally syndicated column, *Parent Problems*, and the couple also co-authored numerous books.

Having become nationally well-known in education and wanting to share their knowledge, they began to work for *Children’s Activities*. Lecturing across the nation, they informed, discovered, and refined what they knew. After finishing with *Children’s Activities*, instead of retiring, they decided to start their own magazine. Their experience, knowledge, and uncompromising methods led to success for *Highlights*. Later, they would buy *Children’s Activities* and incorporate it into *Highlights*.

*Highlights* is geared to elementary school students, containing stories and puzzles for children ages six to 12. The magazine aims to encourage kids to read and has something for preschoolers in every issue. *Highlights’* illustrations feature people of all colors, and its stories also cover diverse communities.

In June 1946, the first issue of *Highlights* sold fewer than 20,000 copies. Forty years later, *Highlights* was the most popular children’s magazine in the United States, having close to two million subscribers, with 95 percent of copies mailed to homes.

By 1995, *Highlights’* circulation had grown to 2.8 million, with most subscribers still being families. In 2006, the United States Postal Service delivered the one-billionth copy of *Highlights* magazine to a young subscriber in Dallas, Texas.

*Highlights’* circulation numbers increased again when the magazine announced that it would move some content onto tablets and mobile devices with the help of San Francisco startup Fingerprint Digital. The magazine launched a new mobile app, *Highlights Every Day*, in April 2017.

Every month boys and girls look forward to enjoying regular features in each issue:

◆ *Ask Arizona* – Appearing in the magazine since 2005, “Ask Arizona” is a story series featuring a girl named Arizona who writes an advice column for other children, like Dear Abby or Ask Ann Landers. The article depicts real-life experiences and appears in every issue.

◆ *Hidden Pictures* – Published in every issue of *Highlights* since the magazine’s inception, children find the smaller hidden pictures within the larger image.

◆ *The Timbertoes* – The feature created for a 1932 book of the same name by writers Edna M. Aldredge and Jessie F. McKee, along with illustrator John Gee, *The Timbertoes* has appeared in the magazine for more than 50 years.

◆ *Goofus and Gallant* – First appearing in *Highlights* in 1948, *Goofus and Gallant* is a cartoon strip that features two contrasting boys, Goofus and Gallant.



## good read

The cartoon illustrates how each boy would respond to the same situation. Goofus chooses an irresponsible and immature path, while Gallant chooses a responsible, mature, and kind path.

Each month there is more, including

an advice column, jokes, riddles, crafts, contests, short stories, and poems.

The world was a different place in 1946 when *Highlights* magazine was first published. As times changed, so did kids, and so did the magazine. Don't worry, though – it is still the same

trusted children's magazine in all the most important ways. The experts at *Highlights* still know how to keep kids motivated with fun while learning and practicing the essential skills they will need in school. 📖

## Recommendations for engrossing historical biographies

By Chester Taylor

Allow me to I recommend three historical biographies written by Shelley Emling that I thoroughly enjoyed. Shelley studied journalism at the University of Texas. She is the editor of "The Girlfriend," a weekly newsletter from AARP magazine, was previously a senior editor at The Huffington Post, and a foreign correspondent for the Cox



Newspaper chain in Europe and Latin America.

In the first book, *A Forgotten Hero*, Shelley chronicles the life of Swedish nobleman and diplomat Folke Bernadotte. During World War II, Bernadotte negotiated with Heinrich Himmler, head of the German Gestapo and Hitler's right-hand man, the release of about 31,000 prisoners from German concentration camps, including 450 Danish Jews from the Theresienstadt camp. After the war, Bernadotte was unanimously elected UN Security Council member in the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1947-1948. He was assassinated in Jerusalem in 1948 by the paramilitary Zionist group Lehi while complet-

ing his official duties. It is hard to imagine the risks that Bernadotte, who had a privileged life, took to help others.

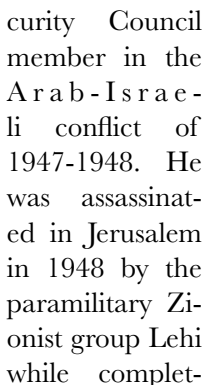
In the second book, *The Fossil Hunter*, my favorite, Shelley writes about the life of Mary Anning who at 12 years old in 1811 discovered the first dinosaur skeleton – of an ichthyosaur – while fossil hunting on the cliffs of Lyme Regis, England. Until Mary's incredible discovery, it was widely believed that animals did not become extinct. Mary became a world-renowned paleontologist and her peculiar finds helped lay the groundwork for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution laid out in his *On the Origin of Species*. Darwin drew on Mary's fossilized creatures as irrefutable evidence that life in the past was nothing like life in the present. I like how Shelley highlights how a self-educated young woman with little money who was denied opportunities because of her gender and social status, prevailed.

Probably, Shelley's best book is *Marie Curie and Her Daughters: The Private Lives of Science's First Family*. This is not the story just about Marie Curie who was denied admission to studying science at Kraków University because of sexism in academia, developed the portable



X-ray machine, or winning the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. It is about Marie as a person and as a mother of two daughters, Irène and Ève. Marie stressed education and both her daughters went to the best schools in France. After attending school, the daughters took different paths. Irène graduated with a baccalaureate degree in science from the Sorbonne, worked as a nurse assistant with her mother when WWI broke out, and then eventually worked as her mother's assistant, teaching radiology at the Radium Institute that had been built by her parents. Irène, with her brother-in-law Frédéric Joliot-Curie, won a Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1935 for their discovery of new radioactive isotopes. Ève

earned a bachelor's degrees in science and philosophy from the Collège Sévigné in 1925. With her mother's encouragement, Ève became a concert pianist performing across France and Belgium and writing musical reviews for various publications. 📖





## Spanish Club visits Mexican Cultural Institute

By Christine Winter

The Spanish Club was lucky to have a few weeks of in-person meetings this summer during the time the party rooms were open, and before we reverted to Zoom. Like other clubs, we had adapted to Zoom sessions, which allowed us to benefit from many opportunities presented by our leader, Lorena Aceff Coorsh. Using the screen-sharing function, we watched movies and shorts in Spanish; we had presentations by Mexican scholars or diplomats; and we enjoyed a virtual tour of the Dali museum in Figueres, Spain. On a weekly basis we share our favorite Hispanic musical groups, voice and instrumental, or discuss good Spanish-language movies on Netflix. We talk about Hispanic food and our favorite restaurants. And all this while speaking a second (and for some members a third or fourth) language. To give a fair report, I must tell that we also have not-so-popular sessions focusing on grammar!

So it was a special pleasure when we decided it was safe enough to go out on a field trip to the Mexican Cultural Institute in D.C. in late July. And good thing we did, as our excursion window has closed again, especially for those of us with grandchildren too young to be vaccinated. Our visit was inspired by a current art exhibit called *Catarsis* (*Catharsis*) which displayed recent and also older works representing the restrictions and changes the virus forced on our lives under Covid.

The Institute, providing exhibitions and educational outreach since 1990, is housed in a grand Beaux Arts building at 2829 16th St., NW. Built in 1910-1911, the mansion was purchased in 1921 by the Mexican government to be the Embassy and the Ambassador's residence. (The Embassy was moved to



Pennsylvania Ave. in 1989.) The magnificent murals on its grand walls and up the several staircases were painted by Roberto Cueva del Rio from 1933 to 1941. They depict the history of Mexico and parts of its countryside. They were restored in 2018 by art conservationists and students. The enormous rooms of this four-story building are beautifully designed. The delightful sun room was remodeled by Cueva del Rio using bright blue and yellow Puebla Talavera tiles.

Following this visit, we tried out a Mexican restaurant in Arlington. The Spanish Club meets every Thursday from 11 a.m. to noon, now by Zoom. For additional information, please contact Lorena at [spanishclubmonte@gmail.com](mailto:spanishclubmonte@gmail.com). 📧



*Photos by Lorena Coorsh and Christine Winter*



## final glance



*After seeing this butterfly, granddaughter Nyla, 9, said, “It is sad they can’t see how beautiful their wings are.”*

*Photo by Linda Brownlee*