

The

MONTEBELLO

Voice

an independent gazette

Слава Україні!

March 5, 2022



A Putin fantasy

A few US billionaires get together. Anonymously, and painlessly, they establish a Fund of \$100 million. The Fund announces that it would be extremely grateful to whomever could make the Putin problem go away. Anonymous procedures of verification and payment are set forth in detail.

Given that Putin's first thought will be to stage his own death and collect the bounty, procedures are described to rule that out as a possibility. Putin – knowing that no one will examine this new opportunity more carefully than those closest to him – will most probably initiate a Stalinesque slaughter of them, which perhaps will crash his apparatus and his control. If not, no problem; the bounty on him can be raised steadily until some assassin, from somewhere in the world, is able to collect. All the KGB training in Putin's past will not be enough.

A fantasy, nothing more. Possibly, however, with a greater chance of succeeding than what we will actually wind up doing. – *Richard Titus* 📧

What about Ukraine?

Start with approaches to the ransomware problem. (Hang in there and hopefully it will make sense to you). With no official government involvement, past and potential victims of ransomware could establish a fund worth billions. On the next ransomware incident, the fund would simply announce that it would be grateful, to the extent of \$___ million, to whomever would make it go away, and, indicating anonymous procedures for verification and obtaining payment.

Since Russia is a major source of ransomware, a price would also be put on Putin's head. Putin would know that some of the people looking with great interest at this new opportunity are people whom he sees every day! He would also know that such a "bounty" approach could easily migrate to the Ukraine problem.

Not so long ago, there was another type of ransom: the seizure of merchant ships off the coast of East Africa. It quickly became fashionable, but in a vigorous and prompt response, ships were armed. Would-be pirates could see on Google guys like them being blown out of the water. We don't hear much anymore about this problem!

Personally, I view Putin's response to NATO expansion as predictable and perhaps justifiable. Historically, it's about two fading superpowers acting as though they still matter. Look in your house. Nothing made in Russia, almost nothing made in America. Tragically, Ukrainians will die while this game is being played out. – *Richard Titus* 📧

Please keep political comments civil

I would ask the readers of the *Voice* to consider their comments associated with the upcoming Board of Directors election to ensure those comments remain civil. Please remember that volunteers are essential to keeping Montebello a wonderful place to live. Let's do things that encourage people to volunteer their time, not discourage it.

I would encourage avoiding the harsh rhetoric used in an article in the February 18 *Voice*. That article first maligned a sitting member of the Board, then misquoted the position of the Treasurer, and later was dismissive of the value of several of the people who were volunteering to serve on the Board.

Perhaps the national political rhetoric has conditioned some of us to believe that this is the way things should be done. I believe at Montebello we can do better. – *Rolf Dietrich* 📧

*The Montebello
Voice
uncut, uncensored,
unofficial*

Candidates night on YouTube

Sometimes all you have to do is ask. In the last edition of the *Voice*, I asked Election Committee to please record Meet the Candidates night for later viewing pleasure. Originally, the event was supposed to last from 7 to 9 p.m., but because we have nine qualified candidates, it went into overtime by another hour and a half. Kudos to anyone with the stamina and the attention span who stuck to the end. The rest of us can leisurely watch it on Montebello's private YouTube channel (who knew?) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jq4DfIJZuk4>. Maybe in the future we can also record board meetings and other community events. – *MK* 📧

Cover photo of traditional Ukrainian embroidery

The **MONTEBELLO** Voice

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Alexandria, Virginia

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Editor & Designer
Mikhailina Karina

Contributors
Rolf Dietrich, Dian McDonald, Leslie Rodriguez, Hugh Schwartz, Bruce Shaw, Bob Shea, Edibaldo Silva, Chester Taylor, Richard Titus

Montebello sales trends

By *Leslie Rodriguez*

Assessments

As new assessments come out, here is my ballpark take on recent market changes. This is just based on sales posted in the MLS, not all sales, and I did remove the highest and the lowest in each category. And as you may know, the assessment does not always follow the MLS sales. My own assessment was lower than this, for 2021, but it was higher for 2020. I lumped similar sizes together, but of course, it does vary by tier. You will see that the larger ones went down, but remember that this is all dependent on what was on the market, in terms of condition/level/view. I am sure the H/J owners remember the 25% year.

Montebello is still very much a bargain compared to our competitors in Old Town, and our values have continued to increase. In a nutshell:

A-C units

2019-20	+6%
2020-21	+6%

D-EE units

2019-20	+13%
2020-21	+6.4%

H-J units

2019-20	+9%
2020-21	-5%

The H/J is a surprise to me. It will be interesting to see how this pans out with the assessments. Fairfax County averaged 3.9% up for condos, but of course, that means nothing. By the way, I used the median, and took out the high and the low for each group.

Richmond Highway effect

I am sure that some people see where we are on a map and immediately rule us out! But on the other hand, most of our buyers are more local and appreciate the location being so central. Even

locals will point out how we are such an oasis surrounded by highways.

What buyers want

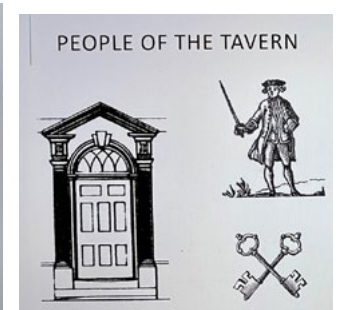
In general, they are looking for exactly what we have! (There was a survey done of area Realtors a few years ago, with a long list.) Other than our location, many are looking for walkability to shops and restaurants. They will just have to wind up paying a premium for Old Town. To maximize their appeal, the usual updates are needed, so no surprises there. Basically, everything that buyers see all the time on HGTV: flooring (in all rooms, preferably no carpeting in the bedrooms); updated and opened-up kitchen; and renovated bathrooms (with a shower in one, preferably the primary unless it's

the only tub). Some things that are specific to Montebello: removal of popcorn ceiling (preferably with recessed lights); replacement of balcony sliders and possibly removing the inside sliders, if that is done; and replacement of the interior doors with six-panel doors and level handles.

Down-sizers?

Probably going by the numbers, it is fair to say that the buyers are primarily downsizers, as is typical of all high-rise communities, but there are more younger families as well. They like the convenience, the amenities, and for many, the proximity to the Metro. 🏠

Leslie Rodriguez is a Weichert Realtor

Zoom presentation about Gadsby's Tavern

Photos by Dian McDonald

The new Russian submarines

Swift, silent, and deadly

By Chester Taylor

While the Russian can put only a couple dozen submarines out to sea, roughly half as many as the United States, its newest submarines are impressive. Three that have the world intelligence community abuzz (upphetsad) these days are the Varshavyanka-class stealth attack submarines; the fourth-generation Borei-class ballistic nuclear missile capable submarine; and the *Moscow*, a special missions submarine.

The state-of-the-art attack submarines in the Varshavyanka class are diesel-electric. They have advanced stealth technology with very low noise emission and visibility that make them virtually undetectable when submerged. Currently, Russia has six of these submarines: *Veliky Novgorod*, *Kolpino*, *Rostov-on-Don*, *Stary Oskol* and the *Krasnodar*. All are deployed with the Russian Black Sea Fleet. These submarines each have a crew of 52, a top underwater speed of 20 knots and a cruising range of 400 miles (electric propulsion), with the ability to patrol for 45 days. They are armed with 18 torpedoes and eight surface-to-air missiles. While they are capable of hitting land targets, these submarines are primarily designed for anti-ship and anti-submarine missions in relatively shallow waters. The Russian Defense Ministry and the Admiralty Shipyards signed a contract this fall for the construction of six additional Varshavyanka-class submarines by 2021.

The new Borei-class submarines are replacing the Cold War Vintage Typhoon class submarines. Each Borei-class submarine is capable of firing between 12 to 16 Bulava (RSM-56) ballistic missiles with 6-10 warheads per missile – each warhead yielding 100-150 kilotons – for a total of 72

to 160 warheads per submarine. The Borei-class is 170 meters long, has a hull diameter of 13 meters, and a crew of 107, including 55 officers. It can dive to a maximum depth of about 450 meters and yields a submerged speed of roughly 30 knots. The sub has a compact, hydro-dynamically efficient hull for reduced broadband noise and



uses pump-jet propulsion. Pump-jet propulsion reduces noise and provides the submarine with a higher tactical ‘silent speed’ and increased maneuverability. This makes the submarine more difficult to detect. The boat’s antisubmarine warfare capabilities are also impressive. Each boat has six torpedo tubes for launching six RPK-2 Viyuga (SS-N-15) missiles. Each SS-N-15 is capable of carrying a payload of a Type 40 torpedo or 90R nuclear depth charge. The missile can strike enemy submarines within a range of 45 km, while travelling at a subsonic speed of Mach 0.9.

The Russians have three Borei-class submarines in operation. The first, *Yuriy Dolgorukiy*, serves in Russia’s Northern Fleet. The second, *Vladimir Monomakh*, is expected to enter the service of the Pacific Fleet this year. The third, *Alexander Nevsky*, conducted a successful launch of the Bulava inter-continental ballistic missile on the Kamchatka Peninsula. All in all, the Russian Navy plans to build eight submarines of this class, with an option to construct two more, by 2020.

To complete the modernization of their submarine fleet, Russia has produced the *Moscow*, a special missions submarine. It is 175 meters long and has two nuclear reactors for its power. It has several missions: to be part science vessel, testing new technology; to be a spy ship, gathering intelligence – and preventing the enemy’s submarines from collecting intelligence of their own; to be a commando transport, quietly transporting naval commandos on deadly secret missions; and to be a “mothership” supporting deep-diving mini-submarines and free-swimming underwater robots.

The innovation and advanced technology Russia has demonstrated in building these three new classes of submarines show that they are determined to rebuild its dilapidated navy despite a period of a declining economy. They are producing their new submarines at a cost of less than half of what it takes to produce a U.S. submarine. The *Moscow* cost around \$7 million to renovate from one of its former ballistic missile capable submarines. The total cost of the first Borei-class SSBN was \$713 million, including the \$280 million research and development effort. In comparison, the cost of a U.S. *Ohio*-class SSBN was around \$2 billion per vessel.

Now, a quarter-century after the Cold War ended, once again Russia is challenging the United States and other nations on and beneath the world’s oceans. Russian Prime Minister Putin and the Russian people want to restore Russia to its former glory. Like the recent deployment of Iskander missiles to Kaliningrad and two missile ships to the Baltic, Putin is placing these new submarines like chess pieces at strategic points of the map to further his plan of Russian dominance of Europe and the rest of the world. 🇷🇺

Kyiv, my home

By *Mikhailina Karina*

The process of writing – conceptualizing ideas, organizing information, choosing the best words – is how I make sense of the world. But lately, all these lofty techniques fail me as I attempt to wrap my mind around what’s happening in Ukraine. Every 30 minutes I check the news for updates, dreading and hoping at the same time; at night, when the sun is over Ukraine, I wake up to make sure Kyiv is still free. Instead of writing an essay with an introduction, a middle, and a conclusion, this narrative is a jumble of emotions and shards of memories.



I was born in Kyiv (known as Kiev during the Soviet time) on the last day of 1967 and lived there until March 5, 1979, when my family immigrated to the United States. To be precise, we were not immigrants, but stateless political refugees stripped of Soviet citizenship. Like millions of Jewish families before and since, we left the Soviet Union because of its endemic anti-Semitism that prevailed in every aspect of life. For the past year, I’ve been immersed in serious genealogical research about my family in Ukraine. Being able to read Russian, I’ve combed through thousands of digitized pages of birth, marriage, death, and divorce registries starting in the mid-1860s. Dozens of old Yiddish names from Starokonstantinov, Brusilov, Vasilkov, and Kiev (Russian spelling was used during the Russian Empire) held clues about social status, professions, education, and fate. Needing to put these people in the historical context to better understand their lives, I began reading about Jewish life in Kyiv and in small towns. One of the most remarkable finds were digitized *All Kiev* city directories dating back to late 19th century, which are Yellow Pages, White Pages, and almanac in one tome. I fell

in love with the pre-1917 (Bolshevik Revolution) Kyiv I never knew existed – thriving commerce; numerous schools for boys, girls, men, and women; philanthropic organizations and hospitals to serve the needy; dozens of newspapers and magazines; performing arts venues with diagrams of seats; public transportation and train schedules; and even information about crops and religious holidays. In addition, the books had geographical information about other countries and scientific articles on latest agricultural advancements in the United States. Suddenly, my memories of Kyiv were no longer limited to the 1970s Brezhnev era, but stretched back to the time when my great-grandparents and their families lived in this world-class metropolis.



“We are finally here!” I exclaim to my husband as we walk down a street that should look familiar. “It’s not a dream like those other times.” Navigating with a map, we come to the circular park with a statue to a war hero. Keeping to the right, I see the old faded yellow police building and immediately round the corner past the trade school. I’m home. And then I wake up. Still waiting to return.



The terrifying wail of air raid sirens, tanks rolling over cobblestones, fiery explosions, crowded bomb shelters, destroyed buildings, viral and bacterial diseases, and long lines of desperate people escaping to safety are some of the images embedded into the DNA of every Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Moldovan – the list goes on – who experienced World War II. This DNA, or collective subconscious, is passed down to future generations who grew up surrounded by monuments to war heroes, museums honoring those who fought, and films about partisans. Growing up in Kyiv, the Great Patriotic War (as the

Soviets call World War II) was never far from our minds and 20 million people who perished became a sacred number. Every May 9, war veterans put on their gleaming medals and received flowers from polite schoolchildren. Parents and grandparents told stories about their wartime experiences and made us witnesses to what had happened. What could never be allowed to happen again. The psychological and spiritual trauma of World War II was mercilessly triggered on February 24, 2022.



In June 1941, my grandfather, Mikhail Karin, once again joined the Red Army. Knowing the seriousness of the situation, he packed up his wife and young children, including my mother, Kira, and his wife’s mother and sister, Elja, and her daughter, Raya, and accompanied them to Saratov, a Russian city 770 miles away in a convoy of five uncovered trucks. (Elja’s husband and his mother had refused to leave Kyiv and actually welcomed the Nazis as liberators from the detested Soviets who had nationalized the family’s pre-revolutionary factory. When I asked Raya, who was a 20-year-old medical student at the time, what had happened to her father and grandmother, she snapped, “What happened to them? Babi Yar happened!”) Outside Kyiv, one of the trucks was attacked by the German planes and those passengers were distributed among the four truck beds filled with women and children sitting along wooden benches. People’s luggage was piled in the middle. After four days of traveling day and night, they arrived in Saratov, where they lived for five months before boarding another train to Kattakurgan, Uzbekistan, where hundreds of thousands of other refugees were escaping. It took a month to reach their destination due to frequent aerial bombings. My great-grandmother, Gudlya Boyarskaya, died shortly after. In January 1942,

Passover 2022

the family moved to Tashkent and lived there until returning to Kyiv in the spring 1944 to a devastated city.



Over the past week, people have been emailing and texting me warm words of support and asking whether I still have any family or friends in Ukraine. “About 44 million people and a few ghosts,” I reply. Scrolling through my Facebook feed I see a mosaic of blue and yellow images on people’s profile photos – Ukrainian flag, sunflowers, and other symbols of support. I feel special that my homeland is getting so much social media support and they have an unexpected, telegenic and courageous president who rallied the world behind his people. But what can we do from the safety of our homes to help people on the other side of the world? Temporary Ukrainian flag frames will expire in 30 days, but how much longer are the slaughter and destruction going to continue?



Long lines of desperate refugees barely escaping from a calamity is as old as the story of Exodus. Packing up a few belongings and not having time to let bread rise is retold each year at Passover, the holiday of displaced persons who may never see their homes again. Passover is my favorite Jewish holiday because (God’s miracles notwithstanding) it’s a universal observance of an oppressed people being forced out of their homes by a stronger aggressor. Since the Old Testament Exodus, there have been countless exoduses all over the world, and it’s likely more exoduses will happen in the future. Heart-wrenching images of women and children saying good-bye to their sons, husbands, brothers, and fathers – not knowing whether it’s their final good-bye – show how little the world has changed since the time of Moses. With another Passover coming in a few weeks, we have another chance to retell the story in real time.

The Montebello Voice



It appears that not all refugees are created equal. While the Western news media has been diligently covering the Ukrainian tragedy with a million displaced persons streaming into Europe’s welcoming arms, there is another equally tragic story of refugees from Africa and the Middle East crossing treacherous waters in inflatable boats with hopes of bringing their impoverished families from war-torn nations to safety in Europe. The images of the dead toddler washed up on the beach or a baby being passed through razor wire are forever seared in our hearts. But was there a similar outrage from the international community and countries welcoming these terrified, exhausted people? Closer to home, we have refugees gathering on America’s southern border hoping to escape violence and poverty in Central America. Like the Ukrainian families, they have also walked for many miles in search of a safe home in a strange land.



In addition to the hell in Ukraine, here is a list of other countries experiencing violence at this moment: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Mexico, Somalia, South Sudan, and Libya. Throw in a couple of interstate conflicts (India-Pakistan) with a dash of political instability (Lebanon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar) and a sprinkling of territorial disputes (Kurdish-Turkish and Israeli-Palestinian) with a hint of transnational terrorism and sectarian violence.



“When the war started, we were living on the outskirts of Kyiv near the military munitions factory. The first bombs fell near our home in the middle of the night. In addition to the deafening explosions, I remember the loud barking of the dogs. In the morning, we learned it was an aerial bombardment by the Germans. All men older than 18

were required to come to the military recruitment office within 24 hours. My father was sent to the front in Western Ukraine. At 10 years old, I was left with my mother, grandmother, and younger brother. Civilians were ordered to evacuate to Central Asia and Far East, but there wasn’t enough transportation. My father sent us letters from the front insisting we stay in Kyiv. When we finally arrived in Kattakurgan, Uzbekistan, my mother contracted typhoid fever, [a highly infectious bacterial disease common in unhygienic, crowded conditions]. Instead of sending her to the hospital, where she likely would have died, I took care of her at home. She lost a lot of weight and the only thing we had to eat were carrots, beets, and turnips, which were cheap at the market. I built a small outdoor stove from two stones and cooked large cast iron vats of gruel, which I gave her six to eight times a day. After two weeks she recovered. In the winter, my father joined us after suffering a concussion. My grandmother Basia died from typhoid fever and was buried along with 20 other people. We returned to Kyiv in January 1944. The center was destroyed, streets were empty, our home was occupied by strangers.” As told by my father, Ilya Shrifteilik. I’m glad he didn’t live to see this war. In the final years of his life he frequently talked about his war experiences. I had the good fortune to find his family’s yellowing evacuation papers on the Yad Vashem site.



What do you pack into a single suitcase when you have to face several days of walking on frigid earth? What if you have elderly relatives, young children, and pets? Where do you get provisions for the road? How do you maintain your resolve to make it to safety and not fall apart? How do you get over this trauma?



Our sons are 19 and 21. When they were younger and acting (age-appropriately) dumb, I used to tell them, “When my grandfather was 15, he lied about his age, picked up a rifle and joined the revolution.” If we were in Ukraine now, they really would have to pick up a weapon and join the defense. That’s what hundreds of thousands of other college students have to do – kiss their mothers good-bye, not knowing whether it’s the last one.



Kyiv is one of 13 Soviet cities awarded the Hero City status after World War II for the enormous sacrifice incurred during the city’s defense and occupation. When the Germans started their offensive on July 7, Soviet forces concentrated in the Kyiv area were ordered to stand fast. Thousands of civilians volunteered to defend the city. Eventually Kyiv was taken on September

19. The Red Army suffered 700,544 casualties; five Soviet field armies (43 divisions) virtually ceased to exist. The prolonged resistance disrupted the German plans of *blitzkrieg*. In military terms, the battle was a great victory for the German Army and a disaster for the Soviets. During the German occupation of Kyiv, hundreds of thousands of residents were executed or sent to die in slave labor camps. Most of Kyiv’s Jewish population was slaughtered in the Babi Yar killing field. The city again became a battlefield when advancing Soviet forces pushed the Germans back West, liberating the city on November 6, 1943. Other Hero Cities are Leningrad (Saint Petersburg), Odessa, Sevastopol, Brest Fortress, Moscow, Kerch, Novorossiysk, Minsk, Tula, Murmansk, and Smolensk.



Last Sunday, my husband and I joined hundreds of Ukrainians at a demonstration in front of the White House (photos below). Most people were wrapped in Ukrainian flags and wore shirts embroidered with traditional patterns. I swathed myself in a fringed black shawl with bright flowers. Although I only understand, but don’t speak Ukrainian, I initially felt like a tourist and was afraid I’d offend people by speaking Russian. But soon, my discomfort melted away as I started to recognize familiar faces and sounds from my childhood and I let them awaken my long-dormant heritage. Eventually, I became overwhelmed by the crowd and needed to decompress by walking around the George Washington University campus. I popped into a ladies’ room, where I encountered four women from the demonstration. “Слава Україні! (Glory to Ukraine),” one of them told me. “Слава Україні!” I responded.

I pray for this nightmare to end. I want Russian soldiers to realize they are not fighting a war against an enemy, but are following whimsical orders from a deranged wannabe czar. I pray everyone can lay down their arms and go home. 🙏



My father and Norman Lear – in retrospect

By Bob Shea

From 1971 to 1976, Norman Lear's *All In The Family* was No. 1 in the Neilson ratings, meaning it was the most watched show on television for over five years. It was billed as a comedy, but it was much more than funny. It was controversial.

It was a cutting-edge program that shocked its viewers by exploring a myriad of topics that had never been aired on prime-time television. Among other topics, episodes focused on racism, anti-Semitism, women's rights, impotence, and homosexuality. It was not *Ozzie and Harriet* or *Father Knows Best*. It made us laugh, but it also made many uncomfortable and squeamish.

Archie Bunker, the family patriarch, was outspoken, narrow-minded, and prejudiced against everyone who was not like him. He was unvarnished and reacted to the world as he saw it. It was a clash between his Greatest Generation and the Baby Boomers represented by his daughter, her husband, and almost everyone in his Queens neighborhood.

He was also a frightened man who was terrified of the constantly changing world around him. He was not evil by definition, just an old white man who was terrified as he tried to cope with what he saw as each day's newest blemish on his perfectly ordered world. In a word, Archie was anything but politically correct. He told it as he saw it and did not apologize.

Even the show's theme song "Those Were The Days" was an ode to the more simple days of Archie's life when everyone knew their place in society's fabric, and no one rocked the boat. Life was consistent. Archie was much more comfortable seeing life in the rear view mirror than confronting what was hap-

pening around him.

Norman Lear was a genius who made some of the viewing public see themselves and others as they really were.

I grew up in a home with a father who could have been a model for Archie Bunker's character, albeit with a carpenter's tool belt.

My father, like Archie, was honest and

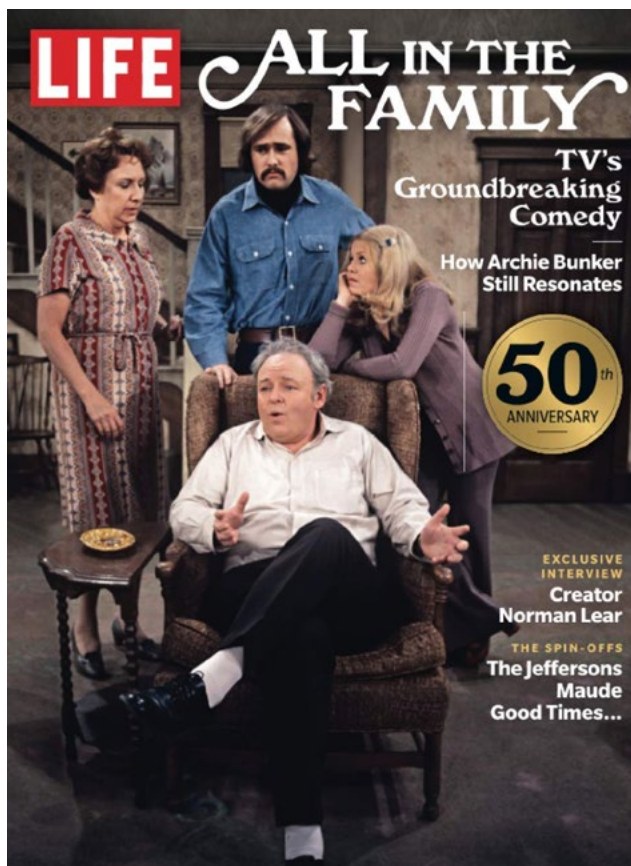
in New Hampshire, if it was printed in the *Union-Leader*, it had to be factual. William Loeb molded public opinion. He poured gasoline on the fire of fear and unease and fanned the flames. If Loeb liked you, you were golden, but if he painted you as "un-American" or not to his liking for whatever reason, you were in trouble with the Granite State's Archie Bunkers. And there were a lot of them. They knew a threat when they read about it.

As an aside, the fired White House Chief of Staff was a former governor of New Hampshire, Sherman Adams. It was alleged at the time that William Loeb, who disapproved of both Adams and President Dwight Eisenhower (he called him Dopey Dwight), tipped off Jack Anderson, the investigative and muck-raking columnist, of the gift accepted by Adams. Loeb played hard ball and had influence among true believers even outside of New Hampshire. Sherman Adams was just one of his victims.

It is uncomfortable to most of us as adults to admit that we are not the success that we had hoped to be. When that realization happens, one has two choices: (1) Admit we did not live up to our maybe rose-colored vision of our

future selves and move on, or (2) Find someone to blame. Those assigned blame include everyone who does not look like us, who speaks with an accent, who has an ethnic-sounding name, who has a different lifestyle, or who for whatever reason is more successful than we are – maybe by just working harder or being better educated. They are all around us and are so damn scary. They were the identified threat. They created victims. They frightened Archie as well as my father, bless him.

They were caught in society's whirlpool spinning helplessly away from all that was familiar and comfortable.



hard working, and, as I figured out later, he was terrified of the world changing around him. The 1950s was a relatively simple time with the biggest public scandal being the White House Chief of Staff being fired after accepting an expensive vicuna coat from someone being investigated by the Feds.

It was also the era when there was one state-wide newspaper in New Hampshire, the *Manchester Union-Leader*. My father read the *Union-Leader* from front to back. Its publisher was William Loeb whose forte was fiery racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic personally signed front-page editorials. To many

They knew that it was not their fault, for they were victims of forces over which they had no control. Given the choice of “fight or flight,” they fought, defending their narrow definition of how life should be against all they did not know or like. It was not a time to be polite or tactful. It was a time to fight. What had happened to the good old days?

When my brother and I graduated from college and entered the Army via ROTC, and my sister married a career Army non-commissioned officer, we escaped from the Bunker Bubble. We traveled and were exposed to new

ideas and people. If we disagreed with the ideas at home, we were not called “meatheads” as Archie called his son-in-law, we were identified as part of the “complaisant generation.” In my father’s mind, we were far too willing to accept change, entertain others’ viewpoints, think for ourselves, and not accept Willam Loeb as the gold standard of the truth, to whom an open mind was suspect. We were certainly not true believers, even though all three of us were in uniform and served in Vietnam.

We learned that many topics were off-limits when we were visiting my par-

ents. Does that sound a bit like the rampant tribalism of today when families dance around selected topics to keep peace in the family?

I have often said that Norman Lear was a real genius, for he created a fictional Archie Bunker based on a BBC program called *Until Death Do Us Part*. Unfortunately, I missed an opportunity to create that sitcom based on my real life, having lived *All In the Family* as I grew up. I did not know that I was in the midst of a television plot as a boy. Well done, Norman! 🍷

Running low on Vitamin D?

By Chester Taylor

It’s that time of year when most of us are running low on vitamin D. We have had a cold winter, starting our third year of the pandemic, and we have aged. I was shocked when my doctor in a routine physical told me I needed to take vitamin D supplements. I walk and play golf all the time, I eat cheese and drink milk. What the hell? Then my doctor gave me the facts of life – not those facts of life. As you age, your skin doesn’t absorb vitamin D like it used to. Most of us wear sun protection hats and clothing, plus use sunscreen, to avoid skin cancer. Our diets don’t provide enough vitamin D either. Now, I get a blood test each year for vitamin D and take supplements as directed by doctor.

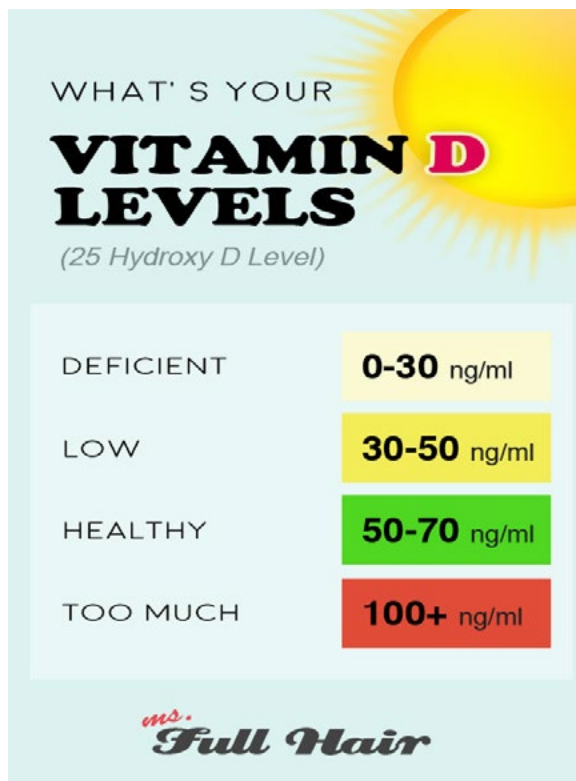
Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin produced by our body when our skin is exposed to ultraviolet rays from sunlight. Since vitamin D improves calcium absorption and regulates calcium and phosphate concentrations in our body, it is vital for our bones’ normal growth and health.

Importantly, vitamin D lowers the risk of developing osteoporosis, charac-

terized by fragile bones prone to fractures. Several studies have investigated the benefits of vitamin D in preventing some severe medical conditions, including hypertension and glucose intolerance.

Important now in this pandemic, a deficiency of vitamin D puts you at more risk of dying from COVID-19. A study just completed this February 2022 by researchers from the Azrieli Faculty of Medicine of Bar-Ilan University concluded that those with vitamin D deficiency were 14 times more likely to have severe or critical cases of the COVID-19 than those with normal levels. The deficient vitamin D group had a mortality of 25.6% while the mortality rate of those with sufficient levels was 2.3%.

Very few foods in nature contain vitamin D. Foods that are high in vitamin D include fish like salmon and tuna, mushrooms exposed to sunlight, fortified milk, fortified milk substitutes, fortified tofu, fortified yogurt, fortified breakfast cereals, fortified orange juice, pork chops, and eggs. 🍷



Common breast cancer myths and fact-based responses

By Edibaldo Silva, MD, PhD

Myth	Fact	A Good Response Would Be...
If you are diagnosed with breast cancer, you will probably die from it. ¹	Most women with breast cancer do not die of breast cancer.	70 to 80% of women survive a diagnosis of breast cancer, with 90% of women with early stage breast cancer surviving.
Having a double mastectomy is the best way to avoid having breast cancer in the future. ²	Less than 3% of women with one breast cancer will develop a second breast cancer in the opposite breast.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The occurrence of a cancer in the opposite breast is 0.3% per year, and this is reduced to less than half (0.15%) by chemo and estrogen blocking oral drugs. 2. Death due to breast cancer is not reduced by removing your normal breast, but is reduced by treating the cancer on the affected breast only.
Having cancer in one breast makes it more likely that you will get it in the second breast. ³	Only women with bad genes (5 out of 100 women with breast cancer) have an increased risk (40%) of getting cancer in the other breast.	A simple blood test can identify with 95% accuracy, those women who have bad genes. Only 5 out of 100 breast cancer patients have bad genes. The other 95 women just had bad luck and have only a 3% chance of developing cancer in their other breast. ⁸
If other members of your family have breast cancer, you will probably get it too. Better to have a double mastectomy. ⁴	Breast cancer is a disease of women as they age and bad luck (not bad family genes) accounts for 95 out of 100 cases.	Only 15% of women with breast cancer have a family history of breast cancer and only 5% are found to have bad genes. Even in families with bad genes, only one of two children will inherit the bad gene.
Mastectomy is better than having a lumpectomy, which usually requires radiation. ⁵	Women undergoing mastectomy have the same mortality as women undergoing a lumpectomy with radiation.	Having a lumpectomy with radiation is called breast conservation. The local recurrence for some breast cancers may be actually lower with breast conservation than for mastectomy.
Women who have a mastectomy, do not need to have radiation therapy. ⁶	Radiation is still required for many women who have a mastectomy.	Having a mastectomy may not avoid the need for radiation. Even without radiation, mastectomy is more disfiguring than a lumpectomy.
Breast cancer requires immediate surgery as it can spread. ⁷	On average, a palpable breast cancer has been in place for 1 to 2 years.	There is no urgency to get surgery, as many questions must be answered first. Chemo can markedly shrink some tumors before surgery.

In the USA, one of every eight women may develop breast cancer in their lifetime. Despite the public's misinformation, it remains primarily a disease of older women. The odds of a woman developing breast cancer by age 30 is 1 in 232, which increases to 1 in 69 by age 40 and 1 in 29 by age 70. Of the 268,000 women diagnosed with breast cancer every year more than two-thirds have early stage breast cancer with no spread to the lymph glands, one-third have involved lymph glands and only 5-6% have stage IV (distant spread) at the time of diagnosis. There are more than 4 million breast cancer survivors alive and well today in the USA. In 2019, fewer than 42,000 women died of breast cancer. By comparison, 61,360 women died of lung cancer in the same period.

Currently, and for many years, there have been no indications or medical benefit from a double mastectomy except in women who are BRCA gene carriers or who have a previous history of radiation therapy to the chest for Hodgkins Lymphoma at a young age. It stands to reason that if any women with breast cancer in one breast benefitted from a double mastectomy, there would be NO women with breast cancer with any breasts, which is a grossly incorrect statement. Furthermore, currently, a double mastectomy with reconstruction carries a 27% risk of surgical complications.

Breast cancer is uniformly a one-sided disease and rarely affects both breasts. In the absence of a genetic mutation, the incidence of a second breast cancer in the opposite breast is 0.15% per year after treatment for the affected breast using best practice patterns. Women with a BRCA mutation have a 40% risk of developing a cancer of the opposite breast in their lifetime.

Despite the exaggerated risk which patients and poorly informed physicians ascribe to a family history of breast cancer, only 15% of all women

with breast cancer have a first- or second-degree relative with breast cancer. The majority of women with breast cancer have bad luck, NOT bad genes.

Large studies of breast cancer worldwide reported as early as 1991 and increasingly more in the past decade have shown that mastectomy is NOT superior to a lumpectomy or removal of the small cancer with a rim of normal tissue around it. Since 1991 the NIH/NCI recommendations stated that breast conserving surgery (lumpectomy with radiation) is the preferred treatment for most women with breast cancer. This is more salient today when mammography detects a majority of breast cancer BEFORE they are palpable. The surgical complication risk of breast conserving lumpectomy (which is an outpatient procedure) is negligible when done by experienced cancer surgeons.

Mature evidence has proven that even after a mastectomy women may have to undergo radiation therapy. Radiation therapy further increases the risk of surgical complications following a double mastectomy with reconstruction. Complications from radiation after lumpectomy are very rare. Cosmetic outcomes after lumpectomy when done by trained cancer surgeons using new oncologic techniques remain excellent.

The most common reason for women undergoing breast cancer surgery without adequate counseling and education is fear. This fear is compounded by doctors who encourage the patient to have surgery "as soon as possible or the cancer will spread." This is WRONG. On average, when a patient feels a malignant breast lump, it has likely been present in the breast for 1-3 years! Therefore, there is no need to hurry up and have surgery without meeting with a medical oncologist first, since at least 25% of all women with breast cancer need to undergo systemic chemotherapy BEFORE they undergo any surgery. Fewer than one-third women at possi-

ble risk for carrying a BRCA mutation ever undergo genetic counseling before an untimely operation. Genetic counseling done after surgery may reveal they are not gene carriers, did not benefit from a double mastectomy, or underwent a lumpectomy only to learn after the fact that they were BRCA gene carriers and needed a double mastectomy. Also many of these women may require a course of chemotherapy before surgery to improve their long term survival. Lastly, the mortality of BRCA gene carriers is primarily due to their increased risk of advanced stage ovarian cancer which is often ignored in the rush to a breast operation. BRCA gene carriers have a 20-40% odds of developing advanced incurable ovarian cancer which is unaffected by a double mastectomy.

Among African American women, even in the absence of any family history, the risk of carrying a BRCA mutation can be as high as 15-20% , much higher than Caucasian women. Notably, some Hispanic women at risk for hereditary breast cancer carry BRCA mutations frequently seen in Ashkenazy Jewish women who have an inherent increase of breast cancer. Contemporary studies suggest that these Hispanic women inherited these Ashkenazy Jewish mutations from long-lost ancestors who came to the New World during the Spanish Inquisition.

*Edibaldo Silva, MD, PhD, FACS, FSSO
Professor Emeritus
Department of Surgery
Section of Surgical Oncology
The Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center
Nebraska Medicine in Omaha*

The actual behavior of triumphant economic entities be damned!

By *Hugh Schwartz*

This is a tale of the evolution of triumphant behavior in economic entities since the days of Adam Smith. It is a tale of an amazing lack of progress, amazing in that is difficult to fathom.

With the exception of his years in the British Customs House, Adam Smith never much came into contact with entrepreneurs, no less with those who triumphed. His focus was basically that of the armchair observer and his observations were, by and large, pretty sound for the average producer and particularly, the average of those who were successful. So it was, too, for Ricardo, a heralded broker and the second name most mentioned among the early economists, as for the other early contributors to our field. They noted variations, including a tendency to integrate not-entirely-economic considerations into decision-making, but built an idealized theory of economic behavior, that behavior which came out best. Jevons and the Austrians drew upon this, as did Alfred Marshall.

Not long after, there was a major depression and economics shifted gears and became primarily concerned with the effects on the overall behavior of the economy. Macroeconomics (the name given to the field that dealt with the overall behavior of the economy) was indeed tied to the behavior of individuals and individual producers, including behavior that involved the integration of not-entirely-economic factors that had consequences for the economy as a whole; but the behavior of individuals and producers that was taken into account was the average behavior of individuals and producers on the economy as a whole. The validity of the assumed behavior has always been the key concern. Later a few (behavioral economists) showed that individuals often behaved in a manner that was not

optimal, of considerable importance for microeconomics (the name given to the field that deals with the role of individual actors). This was shown, not so much in individuals confronted with the non-optimizing but tempting bowls of salted cashews (the example given by a leading behavioral economist) as in the behavior of those in financial markets – where advantage frequently was taken of the non-optimizing behavior of many individuals.

Individual economic behavior varies. For most individuals it varies quite a bit from the average. That difference sometimes leads to winning behavior (even if it often leads to dramatically losing behavior). Sometimes, though, it leads to the behavior that microeconomic theory predicted (refined with help from mathematicians) as the economy pulled out of its recessionary lapse, a behavior based on doing the best that's possible. The behavior behind behavioral economics was explained by those with their heart in understanding the individual (the cognitive psychologists) as well as by those focused on the overall picture (the macroeconomists). Yet, in economics, even in so-called behavioral economics, it is the later behavior, that of those who conform to statistical regularities, which is given all the attention, while those who would proclaim that only a few individuals and companies perform otherwise (taking not-entirely-economic factors into consideration in decision-making and always, in given period, in a maximizing calculus),

are simply ignored.

Yet, as we look around us, that is not what happened. Consider the way that Steve Jobs went about his decision-making, the way in which Elon Musk once did, and the way in which Jeff Bezos did with his principal companies when he ruled the roost; did any of them (and other winners) behave in ways that the studies of so-called behavioral economics proclaims with its emphasis on average behavior? Is it any wonder that the public no longer pays much attention to what the economic experts say? Perhaps it is time to consider the way in which winners, often outliers initially (and, as such, not even taken into account) go about making their decisions – and why most of the winners eventually shifted from the approach that enabled them to first sit on top (in only a few cases, with adverse consequences). 📌



Photo by Dian McDonald

Musings on Ukraine

As of 2/28/2022

By Bruce R. Shaw

Putin's invaded Ukraine.
Seems he wants to expand his domain,
 And without provocation
 Add to his nation.
But to most that seems quite insane.

His head's still in the U.S.S.R.
Wants to recreate it by far.
 It takes lots of guts
 And seems like he's nuts
The whole thing is quite bizarre.

Putin wants to regain each lost state,
But they had improved their own fate
 By getting free
 Of Russia with glee.
Free from Soviets, they did celebrate.

Crimea was Putin's first move.
Kinda got him into the groove.
 It put him in place
 With jumping off space
For further invasions to prove.

Then Putin issued an order
To place Russian troops at the border
 Of country Ukraine,
 The very domain
Where he'd surely create much disorder.

But Ukrainians rose to the task.
To the fight no one had to ask.
 All took up arms
 And rose to alarms
To fight against odds that were vast.

They're fighting for their homeland,
And certainly are quite out-manned.
 But they fight with vigor
 And get results bigger
And stronger than Putin had planned.

So now we all have to wait.
Can Ukraine ensure its own fate?
 They're surely outnumbered,
 Somewhat encumbered,
And Putin wants to so dominate.

What could be possible next?
The Baltics and others annexed?
 If Putin wins
 With no end to his sins
The free world would be totally vexed.

So let's do all that we can
To stop this misguided man.
 His effort must end
 To let Europe mend
And be back on a positive plan.

