

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent community gazette

best friends

September 16, 2023





Guin Jones (right) passes the leadership of Montebello's Women's Club to Monica Sangbong

Photo by Dian McDonald

The Montebello Voice wants to hear from you: musings, travels, announcements, photos, book reviews, commentary, memoirs, essays, analysis, poems, suggestions, club news, recipes, and free ads
A publication for the residents, by the residents

Cover photos by Dian McDonald



Board member Rob Maruca hosted an open forum for the residents

Photo by Dian McDonald



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an independent gazette
Alexandria, Virginia

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God's children

By Chester Taylor

Before and during WWII, the German Nazis killed 1.5 million Jewish children. Only a small number were saved in children's homes. One was a 10-year-old girl, who in 1938 was sent by her parents from Germany to a residential school in Switzerland for safety. Her name was Karola Ruth Westheimer. She was Jewish. She would never see her parents again, who were sent to concentration camps and subsequently killed by the Gestapo. Ruth, in talking about growing up in the school, said that they were treated well and provided the basics, but added there weren't a lot of hugs. Ruth is better known as Dr. Ruth, and she has lived an extraordinary life.

Today, in Ukraine, nearly 4.8 million or nearly 2/3 of all Ukrainian children, have fled their homes since Russia's invasion. About half of them are living in residential institutions in Poland. Many others are waiting for international adoption by families who can provide them with love and care. Russia has abducted over 121,000 Ukrainian children, a war crime. Only a few have been returned.

In the United States, there are over 340,000 children in foster care. Foster care is when a child is placed into a children's home or private home of a state-certified caregiver (foster parent). Also, they can be placed with a family member approved by the state. In most cases, children are only meant to live in care as a temporary measure,

although for some staying in care is the best option. Almost 10 percent of children in foster care are there for five or more years. State social services manage some of the children's homes, but most are managed by faith-based organizations.

War has been one of the major reasons children are in foster care, but many go because of problems in the family unit. Poor life choices by the parents, poverty, abuse, or illness are high on the list. Children often have a hard time understanding why they are in foster care. Didn't their parents love them? Doesn't anyone love them? 🙏

The Tears of Heaven

Each night the children would cry,
One by one.

First little Sarah, she was six.
Then James, he was eight.
Curtis next, he was twelve,
And finally, Susie, she had just turned thirteen.

With little hands they would pull their quilts
Over their heads, hoping the rest wouldn't hear,
But they all heard.

When the tears dried on their cheeks,
They laid on their backs.
Staring at the black void
Wondering why they were there.
Didn't anyone care?

They had said their prayers,
Didn't God listen?
Weren't they worthy?
They had but one small wish,
Just a hug, that's all.
Then more tears would flow again.

Just one of many in a children's home,
They went to school and church.
They were thankful they had food and care,
But their hearts wanted what was not there,
Someone to love them.

And each night the children cry,
One by one.

The lonely old man

By **Rebecca Long Hayden**
Montebello Writers Group (MWG)

What's his name? I've met him once or twice at Cuppa Joe, and I see him taking a walk most days about this time. He's trying to stay active, but he shuffles, and he labors on the hills. His broad shoulders hunch inward now.

He lives alone, I'm sure. His clothes are not shabby, but not new or stylish. When he's in jeans, the cuffs are worn. When he wears shorts, the butt sags. No one helps him sort out his wardrobe.

He passes two women of a certain age, but he doesn't see them. They look at him, but he keeps his eyes on the ground. They don't exchange greetings.

The women move on, chatting and laughing. Judging by their pretty blous-

es, they may be going to dinner at the Grille, maybe meeting up with their "friends group," as it's called now. Used to be their *gang*, or their *clique*. It's where women go for companionship, solace, sharing, a respite from the loneliness that overtakes us as we age. Married, single, it doesn't matter. It's the human condition to be lonely, but women carve out a circle of human contact, this group of friends.

The man enters the building across the way, and I wonder what he will do tonight. He may cook himself a meal, something easy, or maybe he's one of the men I see at Balducci's on Monday morning, ordering prepared food for the week – four entrees, four sides.

I imagine he had one or two close friends, but likely his social life was nurtured by his wife, who's gone now, and his good friends are gone, too. He

wants to make friends, but he's forgotten how, if he ever knew.

Maybe he has siblings, nieces and nephews, but they don't live close by, and the nieces and nephews barely know him. *They have their own lives.* I've heard that expression many times.

He goes to the pool sometimes, and looks at the young life guards, and a few young mothers who bring their kids to swim. He wishes he could tell them about his life, his accomplishments, but they have no interest in him. He's seen how their eyes glaze over when he tries. They think he's boring, or worse.

The two women he passed on his walk often come to the pool when he's there, but he doesn't see them.

I still don't remember his name. 📷



The IGNIS Woodwind Quintet – Nathaniel Wolff, Lisa Choi, Molly Flanagan, Christian Whitacre, and Kyle Glasgow – performed music by Lalo Schifrin, Fazil Say, Gyorgi Ligeti, Samuel Barber, and Valerie Coleman

Photo by Dian McDonald

Reflections on evolving health care, chapter 2

By Bob Shea

Last month I shared my thoughts on health care through the eyes of a patient seeing a doctor in his/her office or having a prescribed test in a lab or an imaging facility. Retail medicine?

At 3:30 a.m. on August 1, I experienced another side of health care when I had to dial 911 for assistance for my wife.

Thus, I was able to experience a whole new version of health care, starting when seven firefighters/paramedics from the Fairfax Fire and Rescue entered our unit with a gurney piled high with various bags of emergency gear and all kinds of questions. Now I have a new perspective on another aspect of healthcare.

My thoughts:

The seven responding firefighters/paramedics looked like the offense line of an NFL team as they came down the corridor to our unit. Are there any small guys or gals in the department?

The emergency room is a study in structured chaos as the medical personnel deal with heart attacks and coughs, trauma injury and children's sore throats. Every patient is an emergency but levels of emergency differ significantly. The staff quietly approach their tasks with a business-like calm manner.

Hospital wards are the ultimate in "silo responsibilities" with duties, responsibilities, and patient support defined by strict rules on who can do what to whom and when.

It helps to quickly learn the roles of medical personnel based on the color of their scrubs, from dark blue for RNs to white coats for doctors. They all stay within the guard rails of their assigned color-coded scrubs or coats. A good system (probably based on legal issues) but frustrating when a question needs to be asked.

Housekeeping folks are some of the

cheeriest and most pleasant folks on the ward.

Hospital rooms are small and the beds are large especially when a patient and their bed must be moved to a lab for testing. The ancillary medical equipment and guest chairs in each room makes moving a version of medical musical chairs for transport personnel.

I wish I had a nickel for every pair



of latex gloves that I saw used and discarded in the course of patient care. Necessary but costly.

Hospital wards are staffed with a variety of people from the ultimate caring professionals who go "above and beyond" to those who are just on shift and doing their job.

A hospital ward is a cacophony of sounds from various alarms from patient requests for assistance to PA announcements to actual life-threatening alerts for patients in distress.

Sundays are the quietest days on a hospital ward. Hospital food is actually pretty good with a 4-page menu system that allows each patient to order his/her next meal, which is precisely what the patient wanted. There are many options, and the food is well-prepared.

All-day visiting hours are a benefit by allowing almost unlimited access to a patient's friends or relatives within the two-person rule. However, it encour-

ages day-long bedside vigils that may not be in the patient's best interests, and which are certainly not in the best interests of a well-intentioned family member who may feel an obligation to "be there."

Hospital doctors, making their rounds, vary in personality from caring professionals who take their time with each patient to door knobs in white coats and stethoscopes.

With every ward person carrying an iPad or rolling a computer on a stand, wealths of data and information is collected and stored. However, data collected is not necessarily data shared between multiple systems, meaning person A may not know what person B knows. Solvable? Maybe not.

Ward nurses, the tip of the medical pyramid in the absence of someone with an MD after their name, are overworked and under-appreciated.

The Case Manager System designed to treat the patient holistically, especially when discharge decisions must be made, is broken. Factors such as what is the appropriate next level of care, patient independence, home environment, and family wishes are allegedly considered and decisions recommended by a skilled Case Manager Team. Wrong!

It is strange when a patient with a test scheduled at the hospital before admission is denied that test because they are now a patient *in that same hospital*. Out-patient versus in-patient status precludes required pre-scheduled tests even though the patient can be wheeled in his/her bed all over the hospital for other tests that are scheduled based on their in-patient status. Does that make sense? No way!

Being a care-giver is exhausting.

Unfortunately I did not expect to have the insight to write this Chapter 2 of reflections of health care, but now I do. 🙏



Activities Committee received nearly 3,000 books from the residents for the annual book swap. Approximately a third found new homes at Montebello and the rest were taken to the Sherwood Hall Library.

Photos by Dian McDonald



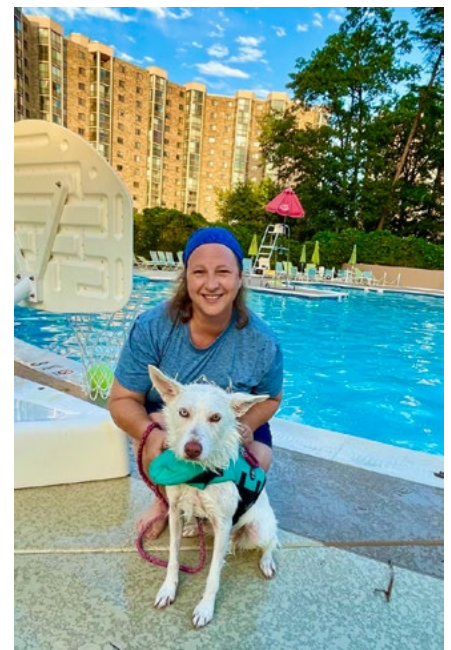
Neighbors enjoy the monthly Cup of Joe and the Memorial Day picnic

Photos by Dian McDonald

doggie swim



Photos by Dian McDonald



final glance



Photo by Rachael Bright