

## The Story of the Two Rocking Chairs

Richard Servatius from the prison came down and told me that he and an offender had made two rocking chairs. They wanted to donate them to Matthew House for us to sell so we could help raise money for the kid's playground we are trying to build. Richard suggested we try to sell them at the fair, but we did not have a booth to do that at. I told him if they did not sell here at Matthew House I would put them on Craig's list and see if someone would buy them. Twice I tried to put them on Craig's list but every time I pushed the enter button it came back saying an error had occurred and it did not go through.

Kelsey T. our Matthew House bookkeeper came in and said she would like to contribute to the playground fund. I showed her the rocking chairs donated by an inmate. They were hand made, solid oak, and skillfully hand painted. They were absolutely beautiful... Kelsey said, "For some reason, I am really drawn to this one with the boat on it." She asked me who had made them. I told her I did not know the offenders' names but I would ask next time Richard came in and let her know. She then proceeded to tell me that her and her ex-husband's best friend had a brother who was incarcerated here in Monroe. They both had been in Viet Nam and then when they got out they went to college in Bellingham. Kelsey said, "When he came back he had PTS but had never gone in for treatment." He then committed a crime that sent him to prison. She said, "I wonder if it is Tom Montague who made these." She then turned to me and said, "Linda, I really am suppose to have this rocker. I will give you \$300 for it." She gave me a check and I had to leave for a meeting. When I came out of the meeting there was a call from Kelsey asking me to call her as soon as I was available. I immediately called her and she said, "You're not going to believe this! When I turned the rocker over to put it in the trunk of my car the name was burned on the bottom of the rocker with 2 scripture verses John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. The name burned on the bottom was Tom Montague. What are the chances of that ever happening?" She said, "I was so excited it brought me to tears. When I got home my ex-husband Rick was there and when I showed him the chair and told him that Tom had made them, he started bawling." Kelsey said, "I read him the scriptures over and over, and even got to pray with him, which is something that rarely happens. I then called Tim, who is Tom's brother and told him the story of the rocking chair and he was filled with emotion. He was at the hospital with his wife and family anxiously awaiting the birth of their youngest daughter's child. Kelsey goes on to say, "He shared the story with his family, and they were so excited that I had ended up with the chair. How wonderful is that? I don't think it was just luck that kept that rocking chair from making Craig's list. It really was a 'God thing!'" She then said, "Linda hang on to the other chair as I am coming in Saturday with another check for \$300. I am going to give the chair to Mary my dearest friend who has known the family for over 20 years. Kelsey said, "God Bless, Tom and the guys for creating loving gifts in support of the children's playground." We found out later that the CAC Program had made the seat covers and back covering, and one of the chairs was painted by an offender named Broeske.

Kelsey said, "it leaves me in awe how the whole thing happened.



**It really was amazing!**