

Board plans to authorize upgrade to fiber optic network

By Mikhailina Karina

Within the year, the Board of Directors plans to complete the installation of a new fiber optic backbone to replace the current “failing, outmoded” digital data network, said director Greg Bender at the Feb. 23 work session.

Members of the Ad Hoc Reserve Project Review Committee “strongly and unanimously” recommended letting Honeywell Building Solutions to connect all buildings, offices, and employees digitally, as well as incorporate the management of access control and building systems.

According to the report of the Reserve Project Review Committee, the



The first pieces of new teak furniture have arrived at the indoor pool

current system has “obsolete (and nearly unsupportable) fire alarm and warning systems.”

The upgrade to the fiber optic digital communications network, the report states, “is key to increasing systems reliability, multiplying employee efficiency, and enhancing Resident safety.” Bender pointed out that FIOS would not be an available option for residents at this time.

In the report, which is available on the Montebello website under Board Agendas and Materials, Board Treasurer Joe Riccobono recommended allotting \$860,000 for this project.

Board President Doug Kennett said one of the most important security features of this upgrade would be fobs instead of front door keys. “This would improve our safety and quality of life,” he said.

Because this study has been going on for the past four years, with Honeywell presenting its recommendations, the Board will give the project its authorization at the March meeting.

Another potential project worthy of immediate priority this year is “implementing long-term fixes for Montebello’s water runoff and erosion issues,” states the report. Particularly important is replacing trees to avoid erosion on the slope next to the new Fitness Center.

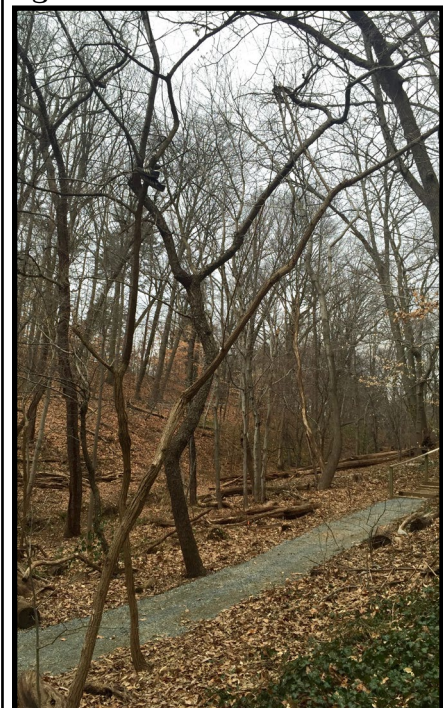
Next year, the committee recommends hiring an outside interior design firm to refurbish the four party rooms on a budget of \$10,000.

Overall, more than 110 line items for the next three years have been prioritized in order of importance and feasibility. For a complete list, refer to the aforementioned document on the Montebello website.

In his report on the Quality Improvement Committee, Board member Guido Zanni said he would share a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation on his findings on the “low participation in terms of people volunteering on committees or being chairs or co-chairs” at the March meeting.

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High kicks on the trail





Montebello Quarterly Safety Report: thumping sounds from an adjacent unit

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Blank space

No decision on possible use for the locker rooms antechamber

By Mikhailina Karina

Since the completion of the new Fitness Center, many residents have been wondering about the space leading to the locker rooms.

For a while, an idea floated around that it would become the new game room for the ping pong and billiards tables while the former game room would be converted into Association offices.

A Feb. 19 email notification from the Association office stated, “The equipment in the temporary fitness center is scheduled for removal (weather per-

mitting) the first week of March. Maintenance will set up billiards and ping pong tables. Repairs and maintenance to return the room to the former condition are scheduled for completion on or about Monday, March 14th.”

With the former game room returning to its original state, the question remains about the possible uses for the locker rooms’ antechamber, which is an imperfect rectangle 15 feet across and approximately 36 feet long and includes a large supporting column.

In a written response on Feb. 22, the Association told *The Montebello Voice*, “No decisions have been made on the use of space in the main Community Center. Over the course of 2016, the Board will address many of these issues, which will be discussed at open Board meetings and/or town meetings, which will be reported in the *Times of Montebello*.”



Antechamber use ideas

- Art gallery
- Weekend flea/craft market
- Resident business center with computers and color printer
- Pin Ball machine
- Just Dance and other Wii games
- Pop-up boutique

What do you suggest? Send your ideas to *The Montebello Voice* and they will be published in the next issue.

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Behavioral economics deals with the way humans actually make decisions. That differs from the traditional approach of economics, which is oriented towards optimality and assumes that we do what is (mathematically) best – or that those who are the most successful do so in any event. What is best may vary according to what we deem the risk involved, and that risk is likely to vary from individual to individual. It may not always be possible to es-

Understanding behavioral economics

By Hugh Schwartz

Psychological influences almost always are a consideration, and, so, too, may sociological, cultural and political factors.

Even where everything is a matter of supply and demand, note that different individuals may perceive elements of supply and demand differently, and note, too, that non-economic factors often intervene in judgments.

Behavioral economics has its doubters. Some feel that the approach may fail to provide guidelines that are as useful as the simple assumption that people try to maximize and come close to it – which, indeed, sometimes is true.

Behavioral Economics for Skeptics, a short book, is aimed at them, at those who dismiss the narrow cost/benefit approach of economics generally, and, particularly at the broad audience of the curious. It helps explain why people spend a lot more for a cup of coffee at Starbucks than the cost of preparing one at home, why it's so hard to select the best cereal at the supermarket, why people leave tips at restaurants unlikely to be visited again, and why they gamble in lotteries and yet take out insurance.

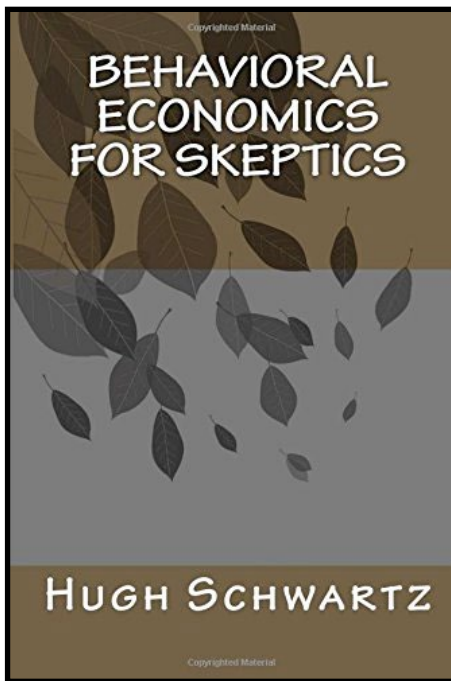
It explains why people may borrow money at high rates of interest when they have access to funds at lower rates, and why they may sell winning stocks too soon and hold on to losers even contrary to rational thinking. Behavioral economics helps in explaining how people make decisions when

the choices include something they are not familiar with, it reveals that even those who are risk averse often view choice to be less risky if the returns are high enough, that we often choose something unlikely when it's put in particular lights, and quite a bit more. Behavioral economics is not just descriptive, however, it helps explain how companies – and countries – might get people to do what is more in their own interest. Unfortunately, to date, it hasn't helped much in dealing with the broader economic picture, what is referred to as macroeconomics, though that may change as more people work on that problem.

Some of the perhaps seemingly strange conclusions of behavioral economics were long suspected by economists and others, but recently they have been substantiated in the laboratory and field experiments. Also by in-depth questioning of decision makers.

Preferences are influenced by the way in which they are described, by the goods and services we possess, and sometimes, incredibly, by irrelevant matters. They can shift in different contexts and over time, and they may first have to be constructed when the choice includes something with which we are not familiar.

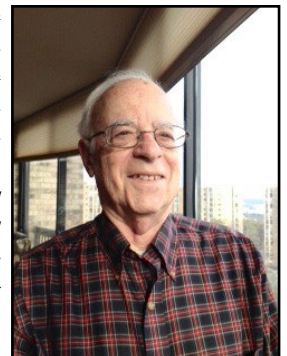
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The book is self-published and is for sale at Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and Reiters-Books.com for \$9.95.

timate what is best, however. Everyone may not perceive the information equally well. There may be too many factors for humans to take into account, and too much uncertainty. Even when it is possible to estimate what is best, we may take more than our own or our group's objectives into account – and those objectives may not be solely economic.

Building 2 resident Hugh Schwartz has taught economics at several universities in the United States and Latin America, as well as consulted at three international organizations. He has been publishing about behavioral economics since 1987.



The more complex the decision, the less of the critical information we possess, and the shorter the time period to resolve our choice, the more we are likely to replace careful reasoning with rules of thumb (or heuristics).

There are general and specific rules of thumb and they all have biases – in the sense that they deviate from some definition of optimality. The leading rules of thumb, or heuristics are representativeness, availability, and anchoring and adjustment. The bias of loss aversion – that we tend to value a given dollar of losses more than the same value of gains, was first suggested by Adam Smith centuries ago, but has now reemerged as important. Unfor-

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tunately, however, the rules of thumb are not entirely consistent, and the use of one may lead to choices that differ from the choice of another. Moreover, as non-economists have been prone to emphasize, emotions (and even visceral inclinations) are factors in our decision making, and we have to take them into account.

There are theories of human behavior that underlie the field, the most important of which is called Prospect Theory. These theories attempt to explain human deviations from

any standard of efficiency, but there are limitations to these theories and exceptions to be noted. Another disturbing consideration is how we deal with decisions over time. As a general rule we discount future costs and benefits, but there is more than one way of doing so,

and there are exceptions to both, revealing that in some cases we may even accept negative rates of return. That's what takes place when teachers choose pay over twelve months for work done in nine.

The manner in which decisions are made when several persons or entities are involved is complex and must involve learning but we tend to oversimplify the way in which this is true. This frequently takes the form of game theory, now increasingly, behavioral game theory.

Some of the findings of behavioral economics have long held sway in marketing and among trial lawyers but the field is only beginning to influence the theory of how to proceed in many others. It has influenced a number of areas of decision making, perhaps most notably, finance, with a growing minority of practitioners now taking account of the findings of behavioral finance, both to advise clients and to cash in. 📖

**The Montebello
Voice wants to hear
from you**

This bootlegger novel is an okay read

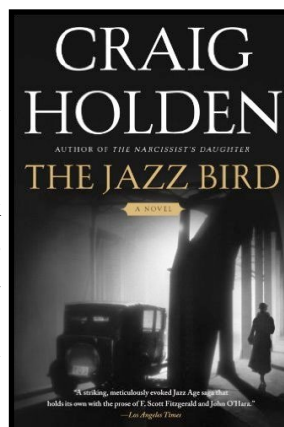
By Anne Corridan

On Thursday, February 18th the Montebello Evening Book Club had a lively discussion of *The Jazz Bird* by Craig Holden. Based on the true story of George Remus, a lawyer, who becomes the country's biggest bootlegger, this novel which takes place in 1927 Cincinnati, is a love story, a crime novel, and the tale of a courtroom battle between two powerful men whose respective futures hang in the balance.

The consensus:



The March meeting of the Montebello Evening Book Club has been changed to Monday, March 14th so not to conflict with the St. Patrick's Day festivities at Montebello. We will be discussing Jill Ker Conway's book *The Road from Coorain*. Please note that the we will be meeting at the home of Ellen Orlando, Bldg. 1, Apt. 606 since Party Room 1 is not available. 📖



Board, Continued from page 1

In the coming weeks, Zanni plans to meet with all the committee chairs (except the Covenants Committee, which is Board-appointed), to “study root causes and plan corrective actions” to increase participation. He hopes to make recommendations in the next four or five months. All meetings will be open to the public and posted on calendars.

And finally, the Board has “reconstituted” the Ad Hoc Equipment Committee to study “a stack of suggestions from unit owners” on improving the Fitness Center. Headed by John Powers, residents Kim De Marco, Diane Fitzgerald, and Zanni will “actively solicit and consider resident input” during a series of open meetings. 📖

Let them eat dirt

By Sue Allen

I don't know about your adult children, but mine have become five-star germophobes. And they're cultivating a second generation of germophobes – my grandkids – undoing the ancient colony of “good guy” microbes, and possibly making everyone sicker.

My daughter approaches the local grocery like a soldier storming a den of scum. After the automatic door opens she rushes to the hand sanitizer, wipes down every touchable inch of the grocery cart, scowling especially hard at the handle.

Both she and my son are terrorized by sponges. Though neither have been attacked by one, they (without asking my permission) toss any sponge in my house in the microwave the minute they enter the kitchen. My daughter won't allow them in her house, though she has no qualms on letting her kids watch Sponge Bob.

She is appalled that I don't own any sanitary wipes – not one!

So you'd assume my grandchildren would rarely suffer illness. Not so. They seem to harbor a cough, sneeze, fever,



ear infection or respiratory ailment year-round.

My daughter – who played with worms a lot, was known to lick rocks and never touched antibacterial soap 'til she hit her 30s – sailed through childhood with little illness. Part of me thinks some good must have come from all that exposure to germs, microbes and soil.

Digging around on the Internet, there's plenty of information about a drug called “triclosan” the active agent in about 75 percent of antibacterial soaps and hand sanitizer products. While it's pretty damn good at killing bacteria, it may be too good. The *Smithsonian Magazine* reports that “antibacterial soaps have the potential to create antibiotic-resistant bacteria. If this happens on a broad enough scale, it can essentially render that chemical (triclosoan) useless against the strain of bacteria.” (www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/five-reasons-why-you-should-proba-

bly-stop-using-antibacterial-soap-).

Uh-oh. We're making superbugs. It may not only be just as effective to wash with plain old soap and water than all the alcohol-heavy “antibacterial” potions out there – it may be better.

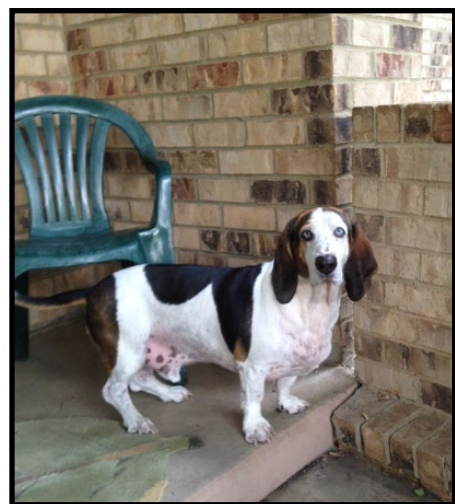
And face it, doesn't threatening a bad-words kids with “I'm going to wash out your mouth with a bar of soap” carry a wee more punch than, “I'm going to clean up that mouth with antibacterial sanitizer”?

Perhaps we should start up dirt re-education camps for all these germophobes. They could start slowly with mud facials, then work themselves up to mud wrestling and pushing around unwiped grocery carts. They could even violate the three-second rule and toss toast on the floor, count to six before picking it up and eating it.

Now don't get me wrong: I'm all for washing hands and keeping a place clean, but let's not go overboard.

So I say to my grandkids, “Eat a little dirt. It's good for you.”

Visit grandmasueez.com to read more articles like this. Grandma Sue lives in Building 4. She has five grandchildren. To contact her, email grandmasueez@gmail.com. 📧



Linda and her Shadow

Shadow is a blue-eyed 9-year-old Bassett Hound who lives with Linda Pyne in Building 2. “Bassett Hounds always have brown eyes,” Linda explains. “I call him Angel Eyes. He was a rescue, but I think he rescued me.”

“They are funny, funny dogs. They lay in very strange positions, like contortionists. They are a very smart breed and great hunting dogs with very keen senses. They don't miss much and know anything that moves.” Such as squirrels – Shadow has caught two. Or occasional “gifts” of birds from Linda's open first-floor balcony. In spite of Shadow's 70-pound heft and sweetheart disposition, if he gets a whiff of something, he becomes very powerful and fast.

He also speaks. “Are you hungry?” Linda asks Shadow. “Yes,” he clearly replies. “He knows I can't see [Linda is legally blind] and never steps in front of me in the condo because he knows I'll trip,” Linda says. When they walk at night, she tells Shadow, “Take me home,” and he delivers her to the B-3 entrance. – MK 📧

Do's and don'ts of Italian cooking

Growing up in Genoa, Anoushka, Montebello's self-proclaimed "Italian foodie," learned to shop according to seasons with daily trips to the market. Decades later, she still goes to the grocery store nearly each day to buy the freshest ingredients.

After years of living all over Italy and delving deep into the country's diverse cuisine, as well as spending a good amount of time in restaurant kitchens, Anoushka has come up with a list of common faux pas and misconceptions about Italian food.

"One day I heard an ad on the radio for Red Lobster," she says, "and it said 'Parmesan on top.' No good Italian puts cheese on seafood." So that's lesson number one: don't coat your shrimp scampi with a layer of Parmigiano-Reggiano.

"Italians don't use a fork and a spoon to eat pasta," Anoushka contin-

ues. Any long noodles are twirled on the plate with a fork. Using the spoon is a French-invented "aberration." *Mon Dieu*, those French!

To cook pasta, you need a lot of water and a generous pinch of salt. "The further south, the more *al dente*," Anoushka says. However, the best pasta and coffee are in Naples because of their "fabulous water."

Then comes the science of pairing the right pasta shape with the right sauce. Since the Italians have invented nearly 350 different shapes, the pairing of the noodle with the sauce (and we're not even getting into vegetables) has been a cause for many food fights in Italian kitchens. Seriously, fracas have erupted over penne rigate with grooves versus smooth tubes as a base for chunky meat dishes.

Linguini and spaghetti are best for *vongole* (Venetian clam pasta), but dare not use fettuccini in this dish. Angel hair

is really for *capellini en brodo* dishes that involve a broth. Get the idea?

However, Anoushka's biggest pet peeve is the Americans' bastardization of *spaghetti alla carbonara*, which ends up with improvisations such as mushrooms and peas while omitting bacon. "It's eggs, bacon, onion, cheese, and black pepper," Anoushka dictates. *Basta!*

After a mouth-watering discussion, Anoushka shares the simplest, fool-proof recipe – with eyeballed measurements – for an authentic taste of Italy:

- spaghetti
- olive oil
- fresh garlic
- Parmesan
- chili flakes

Buon appetito! – MK 🍴



What is your madeleine?

"No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shudder ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me.... And suddenly the memory revealed itself.... The sight of the little madeleine had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it. And all from my cup of tea."

– Marcel Proust

À la recherche du temps perdu (In Search of Lost Time)



Proust's famous description of a childhood memory of eating a buttery pastry set off an avalanche of novels. The madeleine has become a symbol of letting a

childhood incident trigger involuntary memories of people, places, and events.

Living in the Soviet Ukraine in the 1970s, we didn't have a wide variety of dishes that didn't include potatoes, cabbage, beets, mushrooms, basic garden vegetables, meat, and lots of canned foods. One of my favorite childhood dishes was canned sprats in tomato

sauce, which I can now buy at World Market and enjoy with mashed potatoes. It tastes like home – albeit with a bitter aftertaste of socialism – and often sets off an avalanche of memories.

Send *The Montebello Voice* your own madeleine story and read about your neighbors' sentimental favorite food memories in the next issue. – MK 🍴