

## The 2016 Presidential non-election

# A case against Hillary

By Richard Titus, Ph.D.

The two-party system for 2016 will offer voters a classic version of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. The Clintons have always been closet Republicans and today are worth over \$200 million. Hillary Clinton is owned by Wall Street and the military contractors. Opinion polls indicate that her trustworthiness and competence are seen to be suspect. So far, then, she is just like whomever the Republicans will nominate.

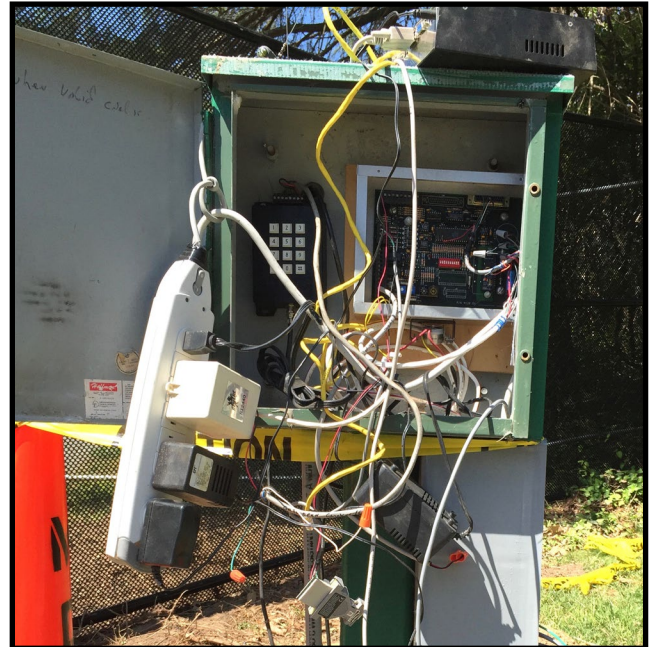
The last of these characteristics – Ms. Clinton’s competence – is insufficiently discussed. *The New York Times* has called Hillary Rodham Clinton: “...one of the most broadly and deeply qualified Presidential candidates in modern history.” Really??? Let’s have a look at the record.

Ms. Clinton’s earliest political appearance was as a Goldwater Girl in support of the 1964 Presidential candidacy of Republican Senator Barry Goldwater. A retired Air Force general and a far-right Cold Warrior, Goldwater made no secret of who he was. Ms. Clinton had to have known what kind of man she was supporting; clearly, Barry Goldwater appealed to conservative and militaristic elements in her, elements that are still evident today.

Ms. Clinton next appears as the wife of Bill Clinton, Governor of Arkansas. Governor Clinton’s Arkansas was a favorite of corporate polluters and right-to-work advocates. Ms. Clinton spent this period doing legal work for those who could afford it.

We next see Ms. Clinton as the wife of President Bill Clinton. During the 1992 Presidential election campaign much was made of the potential of Ms. Clinton as a “co-President,” as one half of “Billary.” However, early in Bill Clinton’s first term she proved to be a liability, not an asset;

*Continued on page 3*



*The innards of the back gate control panel*

## Fitness Center is not accessible for some residents

By Sue Priestland

The new Fitness Center has provided handicapped workout machines and, of course, the pool but has not made it possible for some of us to get in the doors. If I wanted to go into the gym, there are four doors to pass through and I, in my wheelchair, am not able to do this. Even if I were to use a walker, the doors are too heavy for me and others with whom I have spoken.

According to reports, the doors were made to have secure seals to keep the area warm and the humidity at the right level. All of this is meaningless to those of us who cannot use the facility but still have to pay for it every month through our condo fee.

Several questions arise:

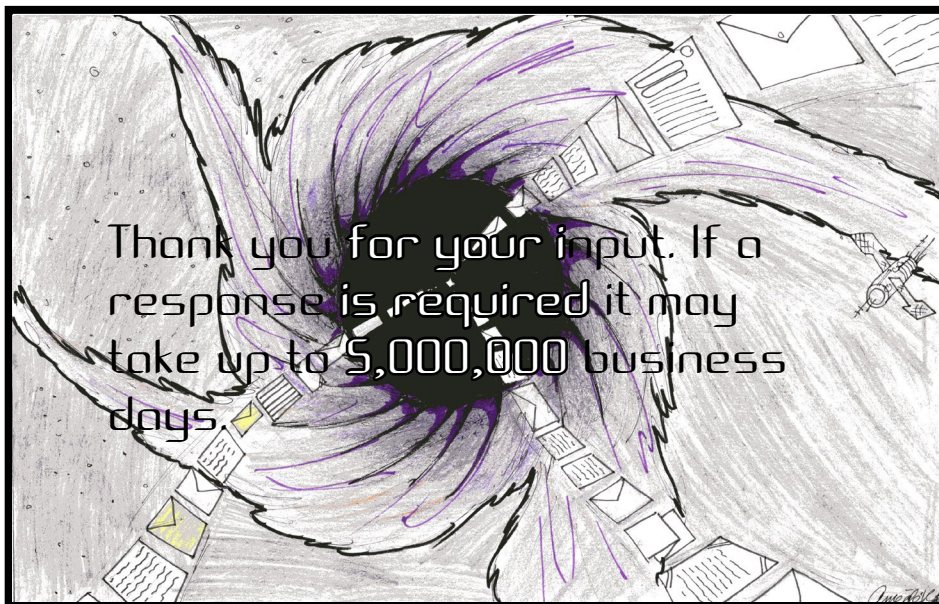
With all the money that was spent on this project, why were automated doors not included?

What is the cost of doing this now?  
What are the current plans of the Board and Management to fix this problem?

What is the timing for making access available to all of Montebello?

Asking for assistance from the front desk is no solution because they cannot go into the gym and wait for us during our workout or swim or shower. We would also need a person of the same gender to let us back out, and that would depend on who was also in the gym or pool.

This project, aimed at enhancing the value of our condo community, is not attractive to all who may consider this a good place to live. Along with many others, I am looking for a solution to the accessibility problem. The argument that the solution is too expensive is not acceptable. ■



Auto-reply from mcuoa@vacoxmail.com

## Animal Magnetism

### Time for a quick “PAWS!”

By Holden Coy

Have you met us, your new neighbors, Abigail and Walden, as we walk around Montebello? We are a mixed Chihuahua-Mini Poodle (“chi-poo”) brother and sister who live in Building 1. We are still kind of getting to know the neighborhood. You may come across us when we are in the elevator, or out and about taking a walk on this beautiful property, or when we’re heading off in the car to an adventure in a nearby park!

We are 4-year-old siblings: Abby is the larger at 18 pounds and Walden is 12 pounds of boundless energy. We were rescued by volunteers from HART – the Homeless Animal Rescue Team (www.hart90.org). They are our heroes since we were living in rural Southern Maryland with a strange hoarder lady who had 18 dogs and a litter of four puppies (including us!) – all locked up



in a barn next to a pond. Since she was unable to care for us, HART came to the rescue and found forever homes for all of us.

Our dads (Holden Coy and Raymond Houck) adopted us when we were two of the little, squirmy, rambunctious puppies. HART had named Walden after “Walden Pond” since

there was a pond next to the barn, and Abby’s name was Blossom, but our dads thought Abigail (after Abigail Adams) was more fitting for a Washington, D.C. lady.

We have all been a happy and loving family ever since our rescue. At first, we settled into our new home in the Sleepy Hollow/Lake Barcroft section of Falls Church, Va. Our home was big with almost an acre of fenced-in yard that we could run around in, tussle and play.

But the dads decided to move to Montebello in 2015. They were concerned we would miss the old house and not like high-rise living. **Boy, were they ever wrong!** We love looking out the windows from way up high, riding the elevators, walking around the 35 acres of beautiful grounds – and we have discovered so many great parks nearby!

Every day here at Montebello is an adventure! New sights, new smells, new people – and new fun!

We both love snacks, walks in the park by the Potomac, our toys, and spaghetti! When you walk behind Building 1, look up and see our happy little faces looking down at *you*, and you may even hear us send a friendly “woof” your way – it’s just us saying “Hello down there!” 🐾

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Alexandria, Virginia

**an independent publication**

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Editor & Designer .....Mikhailina Karina  
 Contributing Writers..... Donald and Karen Barnes, Holden Coy, Denise Cumbee, Raymond Houck, Carla Jones-Batka, Thomas Lasch, Sue Priestland, Richard Titus

she was quietly shelved for the remainder of her husband's Presidency.

Ms. Clinton next appears as a U.S. Senator for New York State. Her term as Senator was characterized by support for military actions abroad and was not distinguished by any notable accomplishment or leadership in other areas. Even as freshman, some Senators – one thinks of Al Franken – have been much more influential.

In 2008 Ms. Clinton was a Democratic candidate for President. She was considered by all to be the pre-emptive front-runner but instead lost in the primaries to dark-horse candidate Barack Obama. As to why she lost, some observers credit the brilliance of the Obama effort; an equal number however cite the ineptitude and disorganization of the Clinton team under Ms. Clinton's leadership.

Ms. Clinton next appears as Secretary of State to President Barack Obama. During her tenure she passively oversaw a continuation of the Bush-Cheney policies; she thus shares responsibility for the heavy price we today are paying for those policies.

In 2016 Ms. Clinton is once again a candidate for President. With success in the more conservative states, and with the party apparatchiks ("superdelegates") in her pocket, she is likely to be the Democratic nominee. But if so, the general election will pose significant hurdles for her. Opinion polls continue to show Ms. Clinton rating low on likeability and trustworthiness among Americans in general; she also polls poorly among women and the young. Another significant problem for Ms. Clinton is that while a Clinton candidacy can be expected to strongly energize Republicans, it will in all likelihood have quite the opposite effect on many Democrats and Independents. These less conservative voters may not give time or money to her during the cam-

paigned and, as voters, may perhaps not see any meaningful difference between her and the Republican alternative.

But all of this is conjecture. Let us simply stipulate a Clinton victory in 2016 and then ask what the effect would be of a Hillary Clinton Presidency on some major issues confronting America and the world.

1. What about Bill? No one would call the 1992-2000 Clinton Presidency

*There is nothing in Ms. Clinton's record to indicate that she would provide strong and effective leadership on such issues as civil liberties, voting rights, climate change, race relations, more progressive fiscal policies, and labor-management equity.*

"progressive," and in the last 16 years since he has expressed many opinions and beliefs that are incongruent with what Ms. Clinton is saying today. How much of this would become relevant in a Hillary Clinton Presidency?

2. Ms. Clinton would almost certainly have to deal with a Republican, or a divided, Congress. There is no evidence from her past performance to suggest that Ms. Clinton would be up to the task. She appears to have limited executive skills and to be more a divider than a unifier.

3. In recent decades America has moved steadily to the right and Republicans will certainly continue to push in that direction. Democrats have over the years been unable to counter this push; they have in effect been enablers, owing to their lack of commitment to more progressive policies. Disregarding her current electioneering, there is nothing in Ms. Clinton's record to indicate that she would represent a change in this pattern, that she would provide strong and effective leadership on such issues as civil liberties, voting rights, climate change, race relations, more progressive fiscal policies, and labor-management equity.

4. Income inequality in today's America is at historic levels. The Clin-

tons themselves are worth over \$200 million and have become members of the plutocracy. (They have been reluctant to discuss where all this money came from, and, what they did to get it). While Ms. Clinton likes to echo some of Bernie Sanders' more progressive ideas in her speeches, this almost certainly is not where her heart lies.

5. America's continuing military involvement around the globe has almost invariably worsened the situations it was claiming to address, while at the same time, absorbing most of discretionary Federal spending. In addition to her ties to Wall Street Ms. Clinton has been the beneficiary of support from military contractors. Based on her record

Ms. Clinton can be expected to favor military approaches and the permanent war economy, yielding the same dismal outcomes as heretofore.

In summary: aspirants to the highest office in the land should be able to offer a record of demonstrable effectiveness and accomplishment, along with clear past indications of who they are and what they stand for. In 2008 Democrats took a chance on Barack Obama, a man with almost no relevant track record; the Obama Presidency gave us what amounted to eight more years of Bush-Cheney. With Ms. Clinton, what track record there is does not suggest the competence being asserted by the *New York Times*, or, a commitment to the more progressive ideas she is now proclaiming. If one looks at her record, rather than listening to her words, how much does it matter whether the next President is Ms. Clinton or some Republican? ■

*The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination.*

*– Albert Einstein*



*A seriously funny man*

**Breakfast  
with  
Ellis  
Weiner**

*By Mikhailina Karina*

**W**hat is humor and what makes people laugh? One answer is “I know it when I see it.” Humor can be dark, dry, corny, slapstick, sophomoric, self-deprecating, and at least a dozen other categories. But in the end, as Donald O’Connor famously sang and danced in *Singin’ in the Rain*, *Make ‘em laugh*. That’s the job of writers at sketch comedy and late-night talk shows, films, sitcoms, books, and magazines. Humor is a serious business and a huge industry.

Earlier this month, Los Angeles-based humorist Ellis Weiner was visiting his sister, Marsha Weiner, who lives in Building 1. Generously, Marsha offered to set up an interview with Ellis to talk about his work and anything else that popped up.

Ellis could easily pass for a tenured English professor who speaks in complete paragraphs with a measured rhythm. Once in a while, his light blue eyes twinkle as he slips in a zinger. Over coffee and a platter of Sugar Shack donuts (they are worth the schlep and the calories), we had a serious conversation about how Ellis first discovered humor writing, his early influences, American comedy culture, and his latest project for the Los Angeles Review of Books.

Over the course of nearly an hour and a half, I learned that humor writ-

ing is intelligent, vibrant, descriptive writing with an element of surprise – it requires, among other things, a deep understanding of human nature (identifying with an oppressed minority is a bonus), sharp eyes and ears for observation, voracious reading habits, and a superb facility with language.

According to the Los Angeles Review of Books website, Ellis, a former editor of *The National Lampoon* and a columnist for *Spy*, has written humor

*I got my sense of humor from my father and the nerve to use it from my mother.*

pieces for many publications, including *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Air & Space*, and *Modern Humorist*. He is the author of *Yiddish with Dick and Jane* (with his wife, Barbara Davilman), *The Joy of Worry* (illustrated by Roz Chast), *The Northern Exposure Cookbook*, and is the co-author (with Sydney Biddle Barrows) of *Mayflower Manners*. Some of his recent books include *How to Profit from the Coming Rapture* and *Atlas Slugged AGAIN*. He blogs at [www.ellisweiner.com](http://www.ellisweiner.com).

**Why we need humor**

A lot of philosophers and psychologists have tried to come up with descriptions of humor, Ellis says. According to Octavio Paz [Nobel laureate Mexican

essayist and poet], humor is “the sudden perception and unity of opposites.” In other words, Ellis explains, humor makes logical something that isn’t by taking a situation that seems illogical to a logical conclusion.

While a writer at *The National Lampoon*, Ellis specialized in parodies. “I always thought of it as a kind of literary criticism,” he says. “And I noticed, not

*Humor is an intellectual super power.*

to my surprise, the best and the funniest stuff I wrote was inspired by stuff that I really hated.” Or simply wanted to mock for the sheer joy of poking fun at some of society’s esteemed institutions or beliefs.

“I love absurdity. I approve of it,” he says. “So I don’t make fun of that. I use it to make fun of everything else.”

“They say life is a comedy to those who think and a tragedy to those who feel. We need humor to metabolize not only the absurdities in our lives, but sometimes the tragedies, the unfairnesses, and the outrages,” Ellis explains.

**Early influences**

“My parents are funny. I got my sense of humor from my father and the nerve to use it from my mother,” Ellis says. He was raised on a steady television diet of Mike Nichols and Elaine May, Bob Newhart, the Smothers brothers, and Danny Kaye.

Growing up in Baltimore in the early 1960s, Ellis recalls a seminal moment when he was 12 and discovered *MAD Magazine*. “I didn’t know you were allowed to do this!” The magazine’s irreverent humor “suited my satire, my brain, my personality.”

In eighth grade, the history teacher assigned students to create a magazine. Naturally, Weiner and a friend created a humor magazine, which they thought was a hoot. “I got to imitate Robert Benchley and James Thurber,” he says. But it was 1963 and the teacher gave them a C, saying no one would be interested in reading it. Nine years later

*The National Lampoon* hit the newsstands.

In high school, Ellis and his best friend wrote radio sketches that were broadcast over the school's PA system. While a student at the University of Pennsylvania, he wrote music reviews and served as editor-in-chief of *34<sup>th</sup> Street* magazine, where he occasionally penned humorous magazine pieces.

He earned what he calls "a bullshit major because I had to have a major" in psychology and literature and then took off for New York, where he worked at the legendary Strand Bookstore and played drums in a band that was a cross between Crosby, Stills and Nash and The Loving Spoonful.

### On becoming a humor writer

While playing the drums in dinner theater productions for *Oklahoma* and *Sweet Charity*, Ellis passed his free daytime hours by writing "pseudo-Freudian analyses of musicals," which cast members found delightful. He had just read Richard Brautigan's novel *The Abortion* and decided to write a parody version. Ellis put the manuscript in a yellow envelope and handed it to the receptionist/submissions editor at *The National Lampoon* office in Manhattan. He'd heard of this magazine, but had never actually read it. "I didn't have a master plan," he says, "but one thing led to another" and he became one of magazine's staff writers in 1976.

### LOL

What makes Ellis laugh? "It's the combination of language and truth," Ellis explains. One of the funniest, most perfect lines in literature that never ceases to crack him up is from *Lucky Jim*, a Kingsley Amis novel, in which a character is rooting around an attic and finds an old archery target. "Who knew what flaring imbecilities must it have witnessed?" And Ellis laughs at the line he must have uttered hundreds of time.

In addition, he cites P.G. Wodehouse, the earlier books of Martin Amis (Sir Kingsley's son), and online venues, such as Alicublog, "the comments are great," he says, and Bad Lip Reading on YouTube.

Over the years, some of Ellis' favorite movies include *Soapdish* with Sally Field, *Dr. Strangelove*, and *Some Like It Hot*. While he is a fan of Monty Python, his wife is not.

"I get the biggest laughs from reading, not movies," he says. "It's the ultimate deadpan presentation that appeal to logic and the exaggeration of language." Whereas movies and television are more behavior-based

comedy with just a smattering of language.

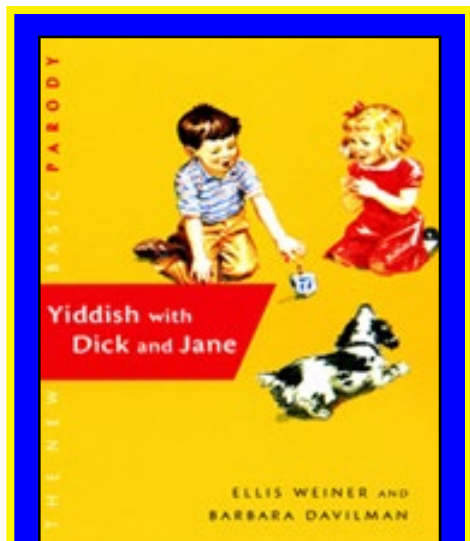
He barely watches television, and when he does, it's dramas such as *Breaking Bad*, *Better Call Saul*, or just about every episode of *Law and Order*. "I don't want to laugh at night. Don't want to get all jazzed up when I have to go to sleep," he says. "But if someone posts a clip the next day, I'll happily watch it."

### The Sherman Oaks Review of Books

In addition to writing clever parody books with his wife, teaching, blogging, and posting *Shouts and Murmurs* on *The New Yorker* magazine website, earlier this week, Ellis launched *The Sherman Oaks Review of Books* channel on the *Los Angeles Review of Books* website at [shermanoaksreview.com](http://shermanoaksreview.com). The site follows in the tradition of the sadly defunct (long story, read Ellis' essay) *Rancho Cucamonga Review of Books*.

"It will be to literary review what *The Onion* is to newspapers," he explains the site's mission to post articles such as Ayn Rand's cookbook, rating a superhero rescuer on Yelp, and auto-corrected best-known excerpts from Shakespeare.

The site is both funny and free. 📖



*Guess what? Dick and Jane are all grown up. They're married now and they have children of their own. Father, alas, is no longer with us, but Mother is alive and kicking – and having a stroke, too, which occasions the return of sister Sally from San Francisco, where she teaches transgressive feminist ceramics.*

*Oh, and one more thing: Dick, Jane, Mother, Sally, the narrator – everyone speaks Yiddish! Can you imagine?*

*Maybe you can't, but thank God you don't have to. We can, and did. And, nu, what else? We made it into a book already, a parody of the Dick and Jane primers, complete with charming watercolor illustrations, scenes of homosexual kissing and marijuana use, and a helpful, still-fairly-topical glossary in the back, explaining the meaning of such words as schmooze, putz, ibbledick and nu.*

*This was the book that landed us on the L.A. Times Best Seller List. This was the book that got us (and Little, Brown) sued by Pearson UK. This was the book that inspired the Vidlit ([www.vidlit.com](http://www.vidlit.com)) that went around the world and triggered literally a million hits.*

*Be the first person on your block to be the last person you know to finally get a copy.*

(Text and image shamelessly lifted from [ellisweiner.com](http://ellisweiner.com) for crass commercial promotion of this literary classic)

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# Concerned residents disagree with Board's decision not to require DNA tests of two suspected pit bulls

By Denise Cumbee

**W**e are disappointed and frustrated by the recent Board decision [April 12 Montebello Pet Policy Update MML] to take no action to remove the two dogs on the property that we believe are pit bulls. The association attorney, Robert J. Segan of Segan, Mason and Mason, P.C., stated that the bylaws prevent any further action to determine the breed of the dogs.

An attorney in our group, and the additional people who initiated this process to try to get these dangerous animals off the Montebello property, disagree with the attorney's interpretation of the bylaw. The bylaw does not state that the sole documentation to determine breed is the certificate of vaccination and identification of breed in the form approved by the Board of Directors, and does not prevent the association from asking for further documentation.

We assert that the certificate of vaccination is not a certification of breed by a veterinarian. We contacted a local veterinarian and simply asked if the certificate of vaccination is considered confirmation of breed. The local veterinarian stated that the breed noted on the forms utilized to register a dog in the county and on the vaccination forms is the breed the owner claims the dog is – and the veterinarian merely restates that information on the vaccination form.

We also asked this veterinarian what type of steps need to be taken to confirm breed. This veterinarian clearly stated that the only way to confirm breed is a DNA test or paperwork from a reputable breeder if the dog was purchased from a breeder.

The dog owner in Building 2 told me that he adopted the dog from a shelter in Miami. The dog owner in building 2 has been announcing to everyone that he can now keep his pit bull.

This is the same person who submitted fraudulent paperwork on more than one occasion stating that the dog is an American Bulldog both to the county and to Montebello. Now that he has designated the dog as a service dog – he is openly admitting that the dog is a pit bull.

Fairfax County has a very broad definition of a service dog and it is very simple to have any dog identified as a service dog with no special training and no testing to determine if the dog has the appropriate temperament to be utilized as a service dog.

*We do not believe that the bylaws need to be changed to allow DNA testing on dogs suspected to be the one breed banned at Montebello. The current bylaw allows for additional documentation and the attorney and Board are choosing to ignore that possibility and instead trying to hide behind an interpretation of the law that others do not agree is accurate.*

Under the Fairfax County rules, a simple statement from your physician indicating that you have some sort of a disabling condition (examples include but are not limited to hypertension, anxiety, depression, impulse control disorder) and that having the dog assists with control of the symptoms is sufficient to designate the dog as a service dog. I believe that most dogs on Montebello property could be easily and legally registered as support dogs. Fairfax County recognizes support dogs as service dogs.

In reading the Fair Housing Act, I found information specifically about

condominiums. HOAs cannot prevent the service/support animal from entering all common areas of the property. This means that the pit bull and any other service animals here must be allowed to enter lobbies, party rooms, the Community Center, the Café, and other common areas, in addition to the outdoor area of the pools – not in the water. Since Montebello is a private property, there are no rules prohibiting the support animals from accessing common areas. There are no public areas on our property.

When I bought my unit in 2005, I was required to present a letter from a local veterinarian stating that the veterinarian certified that my dog (miniature dachshund) had no part pit bull as part of the required paperwork to openly register a dog here at Montebello. Based on the opinion of the Board and the association attorney, it appears to me that they were then violating the law by requiring additional documentation. My vaccination certificate and the county registration should have been sufficient. My recent dog registration in 2012 only required that I sign a document stating that my dog is no part pit bull. I wonder if the dog owner in Building 2 who now openly admits his dog is a pit bull, signed that same document.

Designating a dog as a service animal does not mean that the dog is well-behaved or not dangerous. A Google search revealed that one of the ways pit bull owners are advised to protect their ability to keep those dogs in areas where they are banned is to register them as American Bulldogs or service dogs. Further searches reveal that the most frequent attacks by service dogs are attacks by pit bulls – six times more likely than any other breed designated as a service dog.

We do not believe that the bylaws need to be changed to allow DNA testing on dogs suspected to be the one

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## *Some excerpts from Fairfax County Laws*

breed banned at Montebello. The current bylaw allows for additional documentation and the attorney and Board are choosing to ignore that possibility and instead trying to hide behind an interpretation of the law that others do not agree is accurate.

However, we are going to request that the Board consider changing the bylaws to add the DNA testing. We fully expect the Board to sit on this request and postpone it as long as possible – when they could easily add another document to the upcoming election packet addressing the issue.

Board President Doug Kennett approached two residents after the meeting earlier this week and asked what they thought about the decision on the pit bulls – both owners were in the group requesting a DNA test. They

*We assert that the certificate of vaccination is not a certification of breed by a veterinarian.*

were explaining that they do not agree with the Board or attorney when one of them told Doug that we fear the owners cannot control these dogs and one of the dogs will hurt another dog or person on the property. Doug's response was simply, "you don't have to get on the elevator with the dogs."

Resident concerns about safety and requests for the Board and management to enforce the existing bylaws have fallen on deaf ears. Please report either of these dogs if they display any aggressive behavior, such as growling, lunging at other dogs or people. Don't call the Montebello security, call the police and animal control. Our group is continuing to review legal means to remove both of these dogs and will continue to push to get these dogs off the property. 📌

### **Support Dogs**

Providing non-violent protection or rescue work; pulling an individual during a seizure; alerting individuals to the presence of allergens; retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone; providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities; and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.

### **Requirements of a Service Animal**

A service animal must be under the control of its handler, and should wear a harness, leash, or tether, unless that equipment would interfere with the service animal's performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (i.e., voice control, signals, or other effective means). The service animal must be housebroken and must not display aggression toward people or animals.

### **Legal Provisions for a Service Animal**

There are multiple laws that protect the rights of service animals and make it illegal to discriminate against or deny access to people who have service animals, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Air Carrier Access

Act, and the Fair Housing Act.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, public and private entities that serve the public must allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals into all areas of the facility where customers are allowed. This federal law applies to all businesses open to the public, including government agencies, restaurants, hotels, public transit, grocery and department stores, hospitals and medical offices, theaters, health clubs, parks, and zoos.

In 2011, the Americans with Disabilities Act was amended and substantially modified to define a service animal as a dog or miniature horse.

### **Fair Housing Act**

The Fair Housing Act is a civil rights law that protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in housing. Under the law, service animals must be permitted for people with disabilities. Rules about pets that housing entities may have such as a "no pets policy" or size and weight restrictions do not apply to service animals.

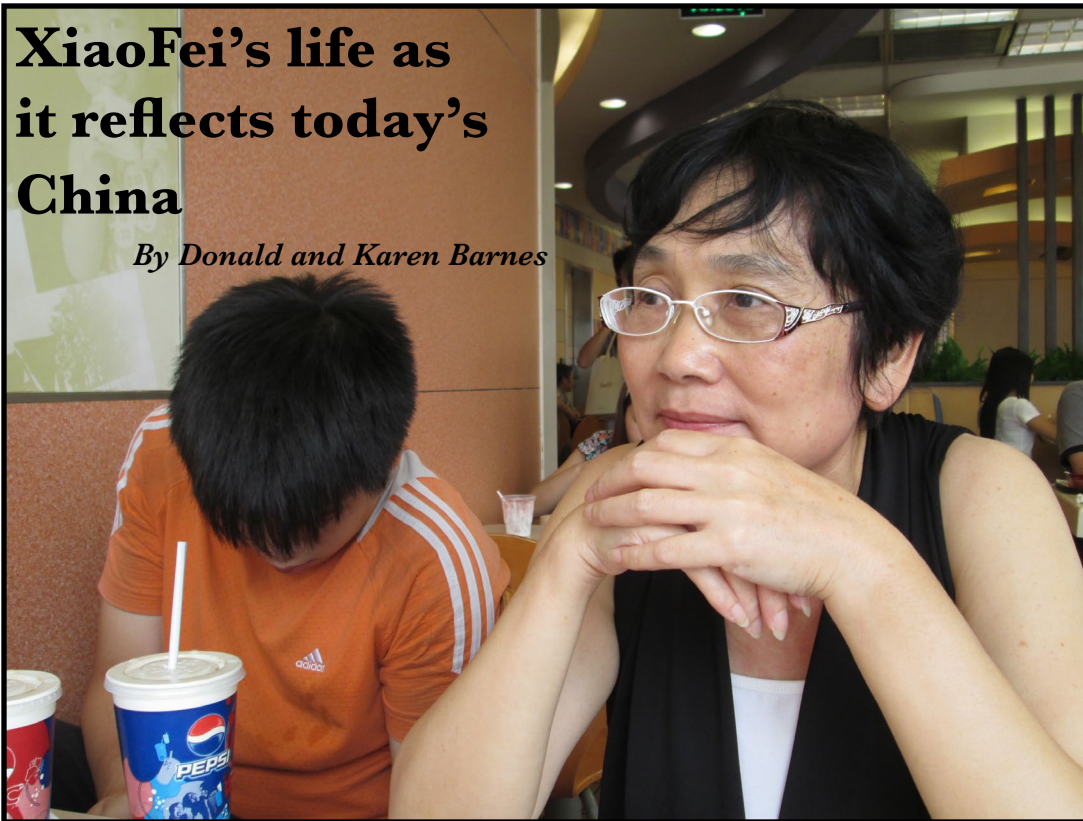
An individual with a disability who requests a reasonable accommodation may be asked to provide documentation so that the landlord or homeowners' association can properly review the accommodation request. They can ask a person to certify, in writing, (1) that the tenant or a member of his or her family is a person with a disability; (2) the need of the service animal to assist the person with that specific disability; and (3) the service animal actually assists the person with a disability.

*The Montebello Voice wants to hear from you: musings, travels, announcements, photos, book reviews, commentary, memoirs, essays, analysis, poems, suggestions, club news, photographs, and free ads*

*A publication for the residents and by the residents*

# XiaoFei's life as it reflects today's China

By Donald and Karen Barnes



**D**uring our 10 years of living in China, we met some amazing people. The story of one of them, whom we will call XiaoFei (a pseudonym), provides a glimpse of life in the New China.

The turbulent early life of this now 50-ish woman was somewhat less turbulent than it might otherwise have been. For that, she can be thankful that she was born after the end of the Chinese Revolution (1949) and before the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (1966).

XiaoFei's mother, however, grew up during WWII (known in China as the Anti-Japanese War) as the daughter of the leader of a large city in southwest China. Her father was a member of the Kuomintang Party that was the implacable foe of the Communist Party that gained victory and power in 1949. So, as the daughter of one of the vanquished enemy, XiaoFei's mother's fall was swift and deep. From a position of ease, privilege and honor, she was publicly "criticized" and humiliated, ending up cleaning floors to support herself and her family. She bore this sudden transformation with quiet dignity. Although she never shared any de-

tails of her early life with her daughter, XiaoFei gleaned bits and pieces of this history from relatives and friends. In retrospect, the daughter now holds her mother in even higher regard than she did when she was growing up.

XiaoFei was a pre-teen girl during the time of the Cultural Revolution, a 10-year spasm of intense nationalism, initiated in 1966 by Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong in an attempt to purify the Party and re-ignite the "true revolutionary spirit" among the rising generation.

Led by the exuberant, youthful Red Guard, the movement closed schools, destroyed "the old" (e.g., some priceless relics from China's 5000 years of history, places of worship and myriad symbols of authority) and inverted the power structure by raising farmers and workers to leadership positions and relegating teachers and bureaucrats to subservient roles in society.

*XiaoFei's most vivid memories of the park are of discord, not harmony; conflict, not peace; and sometimes death.*

Of course, this radicalization was not endorsed by everyone. Those in the upper echelons of power were loath to relinquish that power without a fight. Even those who were not a part of the power structure questioned the wisdom of turning the controls of society over to what they considered to be a bunch of rabble-roused, post-pubescent ideologues, and a gaggle of uneducated farmers and workers. The result was conflict – even on the streets just below the second story of the KFC restaurant where we were sharing

a bucket of the Colonel's finger-lickin' chicken as XiaoFei shared her still vivid memories with us.

**S**he remembers pitched battles in the small park in the center of the city. For most of her life, the park has been a gathering place where people could meet to talk, walk, sing, exercise, and simply to enjoy themselves. However,

XiaoFei's most vivid memories of the park are of discord, not harmony; conflict, not peace; and sometimes death. She can still describe

scenes of people carrying away dead bodies – some of them Maoists, some of them members of the opposition; but all of them dead. When asked if she was scared by what she saw, her ready answer was "No. That is just the way it was then."

As a girl of 10, XiaoFei had no real concept of what all the commotion was about, but she picked up the en-



ergy, anger, and passion from adults around her. As a result, exercising her fledging independent personality, she became directly involved in some of the demonstrations. In fact, once she was chosen to carry the flag at the head of a parade, enthusiastically shouting slogans that she did not totally understand, a fact that did little to diminish her irrepressible zeal.

But there were constant reminders that this struggle was not all fun-and-games. One of her uncles left for work early one morning before dawn and was caught in a crossfire between the contending factions. He was shot and killed. He was not the only relative who paid the ultimate price for The Cause, whatever that was.

**D**uring this chaos, school was a sometime thing. Regular teachers had been hounded out of the schools or were so cowed as to be ineffective. The new “teachers” were adept at leading rote memorization of revolutionary slogans and songs, but little else. Often school just did not happen, and the children just enjoyed being children... as much as they could in the middle of war zone.

Even at that age, however, XiaoFei was marching to her own drummer. A part of that rhythm included reading whatever she could lay her little hands on. Novels, newspapers, and family books that survived the all-too-frequent book burnings in those days – all were fodder for her inquisitive brain that somehow sensed that there would be more to life in the future than what confronted her now.

And better days did follow. Deng XiaoPing, who himself had suffered disgrace and demotion after serving as Vice Premier, took the helm of the government as the reformer who “opened up” the Chinese system and society, setting it on the path on which it largely continues today more than 30 years later.

XiaoFei was ready for the re-opening of the schools. Once she hit the academic world, she was determined, ambitious, and successful. Honors mounted as she plowed forward: top student in her class, top student in her school, top student in a province-wide English competition. One success led to

*Novels, newspapers, and family books that survived the all-too-frequent book burnings in those days – all were fodder for her inquisitive brain that somehow sensed that there would be more to life in the future than what confronted her now.*

another and strengthened her resolve to do the best that she could...and to do it *her* way. As a result, she became more determined, capable of achieving her goals, and prideful – a combination that both fueled and hindered the career that was just beginning to unfold for her.

**X**iaoFei’s academic prowess was sufficient to earn her a cherished slot in university. (At that time, only 3 students out of 100 who applied were admitted.) She made the most of her opportunity, earning high scores and, upon graduation, receiving a good job as a teacher in a good high school.

She was a good, creative teacher. At that time, there were no good textbooks for teaching English, so she developed her own material and methods that relied heavily on her ability to motivate, inspire, and charm the students into performing beyond their expectations. The headmaster and others came to

observe her classes. They were very impressed, with the headmaster sharing that it was the best English class he had ever observed. XiaoFei continued to work hard, always studying, always improving. But somehow – she was dissatisfied.

About this time she sat for a competitive exam, the winner of which would go to Australia for two years of study. Before the results of the exam were known, a new school term started. However, she was so dissatisfied with teaching that she simply refused to go to school. After a week of being AWOL, she was convinced by her mother that it was her duty to go to school. So she forced herself to return to school, thoroughly expecting to be “criticized” and otherwise punished for having neglected her duties.

**S**o she went to the large pre-school meeting of the faculty with some apprehension. To her surprise, the meeting was a more-or-less usual recitation of announcements. Pleasantly stunned that she had been spared public humiliation, she joined the crowd filing out of the room...only to be called aside by her headmaster, who instructed her to go to his office and await his arrival. When the headmaster arrived, he asked XiaoFei about her unexplained, unexcused absences and her total lack of communication with the school for the past week. She responded directly that she was no longer interested in teaching. She was burned out. Much to her surprise, the headmaster’s reaction was quite mild – no yelling, no recriminations, no blaming or promise of punishment. In fact, it turned out that she had won the contest to go to Australia. And in spite of her dereliction of duty and insubordination, the principal decided she needed – and had earned – the opportunity to “re-charge her batteries”.

What happened next adds to her – and China’s – story. 📖

## Folksinger Lee Murdock performs at Montebello



*Joann Murdock, Lee Murdock, Richard Lewis, and Joan Pope*

In celebration of their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, Richard Lewis and Joan Pope joined the Montebello Music Club in presenting well-known folksinger, Lee Murdock, in a recital for the residents on Saturday, April 2. Lee told wonderful stories of sailing ships on the Great Lakes and in Chesapeake Bay and sang beautiful songs to go along with them. Richard added a clever quiz for attendees to complete during the concert and the afternoon was spent learning interesting facts and listening to great music. A reception followed where everyone enjoyed visiting with Lee and his wife, Joann, and congratulating Richard and Joan.

*Text by Carla Jones-Batka  
Photos by Dian McDonald*

## Polaris Ensemble brings classical music to Montebello

The Montebello Music Club was thrilled to treat residents of Montebello to a beautiful concert by the Polaris Ensemble on Sunday, April 10. Mark Hill, oboist; Katherine Murdock, violist; and Audrey Andist, pianist performed several pieces for the more than 75 people attending the concert. In addition, each musician performed solo pieces to feature their instruments. The social time afterward provided opportunities to visit with the performers and friends.

*Violist Katherine Murdock, pianist Audrey Andrist, and oboist Mark Hill performed pices by G.P. Telemann, Johannes Brahms, Joseph Schwantner, George Gershwin, and August Klughardt*



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# Who do you think *YOU* are, Raymond Houck?

By Raymond Houck

**G**rowing up I heard very little about my Father's family, except that we had relatives in Cumberland, Md. My Mother's family, who came from Europe, told me not to worry about my family's history since I was an American.

Years passed, my parents died when I was young, I was more interested in college, graduate school, and starting a career. I was also one of the youngest of the cousins, affectionately called Little Raymond, so I knew bits and pieces handed down by different relatives, but never a complete ancestry story.

I was now in my 30s and wanted to find out just exactly who I was!

Access to the Internet was relatively new but expanding. I found many clues. Over the years, my research continued and grew. I joined a genealogy website (Ancestry.com), looked at census records, military records, church records, land ownership, immigration records and more.

One day, I was speaking to a cousin who was doing the same thing and we compared notes. Our combined research laid it out in front of me – my family history and ancestry going back to my 3-times grandfather Henry Houck, born in 1799 in Baden Baden, Germany, and his bride Mary Myers, born in 1795, also from Germany. They were married in Frederick County, Md., resided there for many years and were buried in a churchyard cemetery in a small hamlet in Maryland called Emmitsburg.

From there, the stories unfolded and I started conversations with my family, old photo albums were scoured through, forgotten faces and names reappeared, and family stories of marriages, children, deaths and lives full of happiness – and a few tears – came to life.

A rich Houck history unfolded and I think made us closer as a family, even

though we had spread across the country from Atlantic to Pacific.

Here are a few of the tales I found interesting:

The Houcks were part of the founding families of the

Cumberland Valley that includes Emmitsburg, Gettysburg, Frostburg, and the city of Cumberland.

My 3-times Grandmother's brother went to Baltimore to escort Mother Seton (now Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton) down to Emmitsburg where she established the Daughters of Charity order and started the first Catholic parochial school in the United States.

**M**oving forward, a couple of years... If you ever tour the Gettysburg Battlefield, there is a famous battleground site called Houck's Ridge on a family farm. That was us! If you go into the Visitor Center, you can view many artifacts from the battlefield, the majority of which were collected by another branch of the family tree, the Rosensteels, who owned an inn and restaurant in town. They would just go out for a walk and bring things home and store them in a makeshift museum in a back room of the inn. Later, they donated their collection to the Visitor Center and museum. A large plaque hangs on the wall inside the center thanking the Rosensteels for their generous gifts.



*My Karako grandparents, their sons (my uncles), and their daughter (my mother), the little blonde girl playing the cimbalom.*

**I**t's so funny to think that when I was a boy visiting them we would stop by for a bite to eat off Route 40, the National Road, and we kids would play "Army" with these items! Who knew they had such historical significance!

My Grandmother Rosina Swach grew up in Cumberland and there she married my Grandfather, William F. Houck, Sr. Her family was in decorative glass manufacturing and eventually ran Seneca Glass in Morgantown, W.Va., which has become very well known among collectible glassware enthusiasts.

As I combed through the family archives, I discovered farmers, mayors, soldiers, police, railroad men, steel workers, glass blowers and merchants. The family department store, Ed's Place, sat right in the main square of Emmitsburg where Route 15 crosses through town and the building is still there today.

Many generations of ancestors are buried in the area. Among the family, we sometimes chuckle that if you visit any Catholic cemetery in Emmitsburg or Cumberland and throw a rock, it would most likely bounce off the headstone of someone in our family.



*Houck Grandparents on their wedding day in the Cumberland Valley*

Another interesting thing about investigating the generations of Houcks is how names are passed down and repeated over the years. For example, there are many family members named Anthony Joseph and William Francis, there were “big and little” Rosinas and Loretas, five generations of men named James Edward Houck, the newest being James Edward V who lives in nearby Fairfax.

My Mother’s family was a different matter. Luisa Valeria Veronica Theresa Karako was born to Hermina and Barnabas Karako in Budapest, Hungary. She, her parents, and two of her brothers, Rudolf and Zoltan, immigrated to the United States and settled in Pittsburgh, where her youngest brother was born. Mom spoke no English upon arrival, but was immediately placed into Catholic school to fend for herself in second grade. I guess it worked since she went on to earn a college degree from what is now Carnegie Mellon University.

It was hard for me to find the Kara-

ko history because during World War II so many records were lost or destroyed in Germany and Hungary. My Grandmother often remarked that she and my Grandfather were never quite sure in which country their respective childhood villages were now located.

After much research, I found both towns. They started as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but because of war, border changes and being renamed many times by the government in charge, Grandpap’s home town is now in southern Slovakia and Grandma’s is in western Ukraine. Outside of a few relatives who came to the United States, that is about the extent of the documentation I could find.

One additional thing I know about my Karako grandparents is that they worked hard as a tailor and seamstress in their early years when they first fell in love. In

later years, after being seriously injured as wheelwright for the B&O Railroad, Grandpap had a Hungarian orchestra and my Mother and siblings all played instruments growing up. The boys played the violin and my Mother the cimbalom (sort of a mix between a piano and xylophone). And lastly, I discovered that my very staunch and proper grandparents were known in town as Barney and Minnie when they were young and just married. Totally out of context for the grandparents I knew!

I have been lucky to share this adventure with my husband, Holden, and many cousins. I have walked in my ancestors’ footsteps in Germany, Hungary, Maryland, Pennsylvania and other places. I also had my DNA checked, and guess what – I come from the Germanic countries and Eastern Europe!

If you want to know who *you* really are, get on a computer, visit a library, or start asking questions of your family, and get ready to enjoy an enlightening journey. 📖



*My Grandmother, Rosina Houck, celebrating her 60th birthday with all her grandchildren (at the time). I am the little 2-year-old in the back row (Little Raymond) second from left.*

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# Tribute to Board of Directors Treasurer Joe Riccobono

By Tom Lasch

*Note: Tom Lasch delivered this address at the April 12 Board of Directors meeting.*

**D**irector Joe Riccobono (known as just Joe) has served Montebello on the Board for three years. After finding his way on the Board the first year, his peers, with confidence, elected him to the important office of Treasurer for Montebello each of the next two years. In addition to the Treasurer, he was also the liaison director for the Finance & Budget Committee.

During the two years as Treasurer, in collaboration with the General Manager, and despite the unanticipated loss of revenue from rental space for cellular phone antenna on the property, the annual budget was approved with a condo fee increase under 2 percent for 2015 and 2016, respectively. This, in itself was an extraordinary achievement in view of the loss of revenue for the 2016 budget and anticipated opera-



*Joe Riccobono*

tional expenses.

As the Treasurer, one of the goals is to provide maximum transparency of association funds. In this regard, Direc-

tor Riccobono enhanced transparency by illuminating five categories of funds at Board and Finance & Budget meetings, to give owners a clear positive status of association funds.

Although the office of Treasurer was time-demanding administratively, he tirelessly and timely attended 10 to 12 scheduled Board meetings, frequent executive sessions, nine to 10 Finance & Budget meetings, and numerous Planning & Design Committee meetings annually to be cognizant of current and potential funding challenges.

In his two years as Treasurer, Director Riccobono strongly supported the Finance & Budget Committee, always demonstrated a high ethical image by avoiding participation in committee meetings.

Being the person he is, he has contributed generously and exceptionally to the governance, financial stability, and professional culture of Montebello, that make Montebello the envy of other condominiums in the area.

Finally, I'll say just two words, which I probably should say more often, "Thank You" Joe for your commitment and dedication and time you have generously given to our community. I wish you the best of health and happiness in your future endeavors. Good Luck!! God

*Seven Leyland cypresses, (Cupressus x leylandii), were recently planted on the hill behind Building 2 near the gazebos. A number of mature trees in that location were cut down during the Fitness Center construction for vehicle accessibility.*



Guess where?



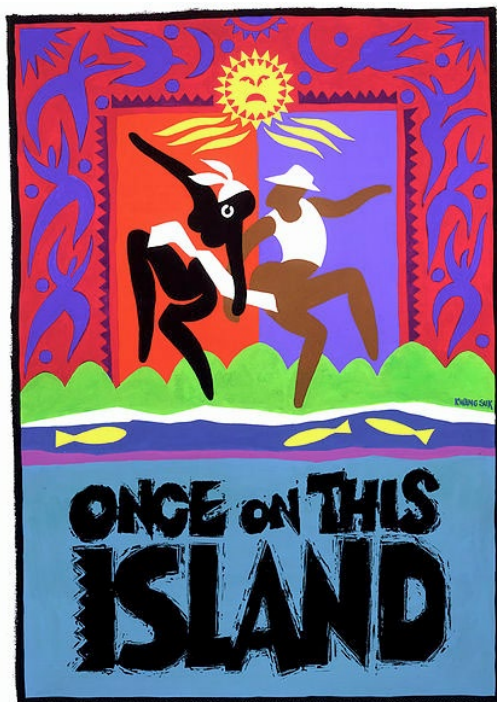
An exhibit of photos by  
Rita Adrosko  
Montebello Café

April 21,  
22, & 23

7 p.m.

Edison  
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School

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2015-2016  
Concert Season!

# National Concert Band of America

Sunday, May 15 at 3 p.m.

Hayfield Secondary School  
7630 Telegraph Road  
Alexandria, VA 22315

Our program begins with *Chester Overture for Band* by William Schumann, followed by *Hail to the Spirit of Liberty* by John Philip Sousa. *Mannin Veen* by Haydn Wood is next, followed by *The New Colonial March* by R. B. Hall. We continue with Grainger's *Irish Tune from County Derry*, followed by Persichetti's *Symphony for Band*. Next up is *America the Beautiful* by Ward, as arranged by Carmen Dragon. As always, we close our program with a musical salute to all veterans — past, present and future — with Bob Lowden's arrangement of *Armed Forces Salute*, followed by the National Concert Band's signature song, *This Is My Country!*

Please bring a friend and support excellent, live music!



ADMISSION	
Adults	\$10
Seniors/Military/Vets	\$ 5
Students (with ID)	Free
Children (with paying Adult)	Free



Melvin Paul Kessler  
Lt. Commander, USN (Ret.)  
Music Director

\*Program is subject to change. NCBA Contact, Judy Powell at 703-599-1075, or email: j\_v\_powell@yahoo.com  
NCBA is a Non-Profit 501 (c) (3) corporation. For further information on the group and future performances, please visit our website at [www.nationalconcertband.org](http://www.nationalconcertband.org), or look for us on **FACEBOOK**.

## Civil War Medical Living History Program at Fort Ward

Saturday, April 23

11 a.m.-4 p.m.

- Civil War army field hospital display and presentation featuring medical historian and surgeon interpreter Von Barron.
- View a variety of original and reproduction medical equipment and instruments of the period.
- Meet Civil War African-American nurse Susie King Taylor, portrayed by Heather Butts, author of *African-American Medicine in Washington, D.C.*
- View the Museum exhibit, "Medical Care for the Civil War Soldier."

Follow-up watching the PBS series "Mercy Street" by learning more about Civil War surgical practices & medical care!



Free!  
Rain Date April 30

Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site  
4301 West Braddock Road  
Alexandria, VA

703-746-4848 [www.fortward.org](http://www.fortward.org)

Fort Ward complies with ADA guidelines. To request an accommodation, please notify the Museum at least seven business days in advance.

