

The MONTEBELLO Vice

an independent gazette

happily ever laughter

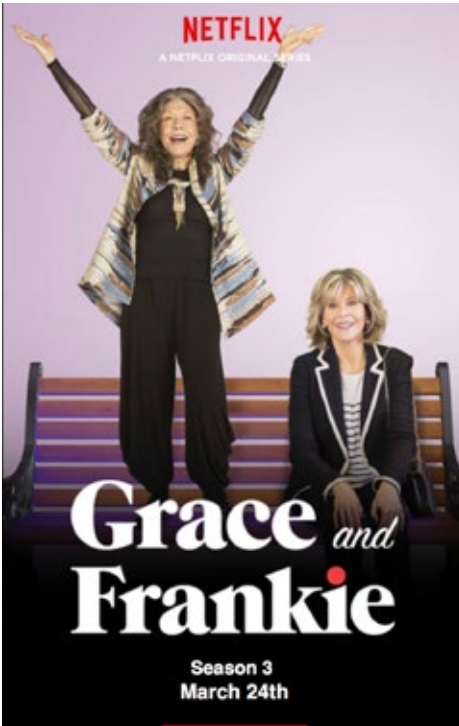
March 30, 2017



Montebello Board of Directors gave the thumbs-up to our Committee on Cost Savings brilliant suggestion that the Montebello entry gate is ideally suited for double duty as a fast-food drive-thru. A simple golden arch embroidered over the M on the security guards' uniforms would identify the dual role of our staff. A few dollars invested in building kitchens over the existing gate will yield a rapid payback and would produce an ongoing source of funds for future projects. Target date for offering the first Mburger is early August of this year.

Text and photo illustration by Joel Miller

voices on the 37



Sisters are doing it for themselves

As soon as I learned that the new season of *Grace and Frankie* would be available last weekend, I planned a decadent binge-fest with Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda.

Without giving too much away, this well-written and superbly acted dramedy, rounded out with Martin Sheen and Sam Waterston as their ex-husbands, examines relationships, aging, entrepreneurship, friendships, romance, sexuality, and everything in between. Grace (Jane Fonda) is a tightly-wound conservative WASP who recently relinquished the reins of her cosmetics company to her daughter. Frankie (Lily Tomlin) is a free-spirited, liberal, pot smoking artist who... well...you gotta watch it.

Many of the stories involve the women's four children, who are fascinatingly flawed products of their parents' upbringing. In the first few minutes of the pilot, the ex-husbands drop a bomb that sets this refreshing plot in action.

Catch it on Netflix any time. – *Mikhailina Karina*

Kudos

Just finished reading the March 16th *Montebello Voice* and wanted to let you know it was the best one that has come out so far.

Enjoyed the Incidental Musings section, movie reviews, outstanding article on water, updates on Montebello, etc., etc.

Saddened me to read the critical review of what has been happening with our Fitness Center.

All the articles were so well written, informative, and worthwhile. Visuals were great!

The Montebello Voice is an outstanding voice for the residents of our community and gets better and better with each publication.

Thank you again for this enjoyable and worthwhile community publication. Way to go! – *Vee Harrison*

M☉Perk begins on Monday



As another opportunity for community-building, the management is launching M☉Perk, an unstructured coffee time in the community center lounge on Mondays, Wednesdays,

and Fridays from 9 to 11 a.m. The first coffee time will take place on April 3.

Carole Appel, the initiator of M☉Perk, says she thought of the idea for additional socializing over coffee for people who may want to get out of the house to do some paperwork, read a book, knit, work on the computer, play games, or just hang out.

Association management has purchased a Keurig coffee machine that will be stocked with a variety of coffee pods. Visitors need to put in a dollar in a box to enjoy the coffee and the camaraderie. Disposable cups will be provided, but people may also bring their own mugs. – *Mikhailina Karina*



Time warp

If you somehow missed the recent '80s celebration or would like to relive those unforgettable moments, a video

on YouTube will take you down the memory lane.

Unlike most YouTube videos that are open to the world to see, this one has an "unlisted" privacy setting, which means it will not come up on common Internet or any Google searches under Montebello. (We tested it. Nada.) The only way to access and share it is by pasting the link into your browser.

To watch an hour of karaoke fun with your neighbors, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=db0bi2z5c_s – *Mikhailina Karina*

The MONTEBELLO Voice
an independent gazette
Alexandria, Virginia

This publication accepts no funding or oversight from advertisers, residents, or the Montebello Condominium Unit Owners Association. All opinions are encouraged and reflect the diversity of views in the community. All articles and photographs come from Montebello residents. To receive or contribute to this email-only gazette, contact montebellovoice@cox.net or visit on the web at www.montebellovoice.com.

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A new era of community excellence at Montebello

Improving board, management, employee services, owner relations

By Jim Bechtel

Owners! As one of a handful of owners present at – and impressed by – the March 11 board retreat on upgrading services, I share what I learned and foresee – encouraging you to help. *Embrace, appreciate, and support exciting improvements* underway across our community, with your *votes, voices, and actions!*

Board

Our current board is actively developing *compelling strategic visions* with our new General Manager; addressing *quality improvement* issues long neglected; *listening to owner concerns* in polls and focus groups; *informing owners* with clear summaries of board agendas, actions, and upcoming events; and *functioning more effectively* together than any group I've seen over 15 years.

✓ *Vote* for directors excited to partner in fulfilling vision and goals for a *New Era of Community Excellence* developing at Montebello, as articulated by our new General Manager.

✓ Ask our board to further enhance trends of *wise governance* and *open transparency*.

✓ Favor *fiduciary stewards* committed to *efficiency, structural changes, and cost controls* to keep condo fees reasonable below market, and limit increases below rates of inflation.

✓ Encourage directors to always *serve all owners* and *build lasting good will* by emphasizing *community spirit, mutual responsibility, and caring about others*.

✓ Oppose candidates and actions that may degrade unity, form cliques, suppress debate, exclude dissenters, censor letters & articles, hinder committees with narrow Terms, trivialize budgeting by declaring most expenses off limits, manifest appearances of deception, and/or bully owners with legalistic correspondence, threats, or unfair fines.

✓ Let's learn from and not repeat disruptive schisms and lingering disappointments like the design/decor projects. Despite contentious disputes, costly plans, and promises of decors resonant with our woodlands, carpets and decor installed clash hideously with samples that most owners supported at packed town halls.

✓ In future, look beyond short-sighted narrow agendas to *cultivate broad consensus*, and *honor majority views*.

Management

George Gardner, our new general manager, brings to Montebello exceptional strategic vision, solid professional credentials, strong leadership skills, and broad experience. His big ideas and enthusiastic leadership generate excitement about great opportunities for our future!

George portrays his role (in *The Times of Montebello* articles) as a *champion* to “bring community vision to life” to fulfill our collective values; to enhance future expectations; and to inspire everyone “to give and be their best” by “active and constructive homeowner involvement.”

Goals embrace being an “*accessible, visible, steward of community vision*” to “foster a robust sense of community” and “work as a team toward improved delivery of customer service.”

Core values for managing and exhorting staff to adopt include:

Accountability for actions

Work Ethic (high standards, commitment, concern for quality, initiative, doing one's job & beyond)

Passion for great service with joy

Self-Improvement and motivation

Integrity to speak and act truthfully

Team Work (togetherness, helping each other, contributing to and belonging to the community)

Passion Mr. Gardner concluded his written remarks at the retreat: “In order for a culture of customer service

excellence to grow and thrive, management must have a burning desire for it to be that way and the energy to ensure that this desire spreads throughout the organization and remains there permanently.”

Please do all you can to encourage and promote success of these outstanding goals, values, leadership qualities, and actions to challenge everyone at Montebello “to give and be their best.”

Employee Services

How amazing! Inspired by Mr. Gardner's leadership, employees, led by a core group of 12 managers, wrote their own vision for serving Montebello:

Mission Statement

“Our mission is to be the best part of our residents' day by delivering service excellence with responsiveness, consistency, accountability, passion, teamwork, integrity, and a positive attitude.”

Metrics and Drivers of Expectations for services are:

Timeliness

Staff Capability

Courtesy

Fairness

Satisfaction (while striving for “surprise and delight”!)

WOW! Give everyone credit for embracing major challenges to step up, aiming to serve with very best efforts! Let's cheer, help, and encourage as staff grow into working this mission.

Mr. Gardner challenges staff to *respond to owners within 48 hours of a request or need for service* (and immediately in emergencies). While we know such a high bar may be unreachable in early days, culture change and new concepts of great service are developing.

What an awesome, welcome paradigm shift after years of enduring bureaucratic defensiveness of status quo, resisting effort and innovation, stuck in routines, ordering owners to serve management's whims, and lack of responses to requests that disappeared into black

holes of unresolved correspondence, unanswered services forms, emails, phone messages, and confusing visits to the desk that blocked access to the inner sanctum.

Replacement of washing machine hoses offers a case study for improving both governance and services – starting with what went so wrong: (1) bad policy discriminated unfairly against owners with upgraded kitchens by refusing to service their units, (2) board members failed legal and ethical duties to treat all owners equally – and ignored influence of renovations to boost condo values, (3) demands to hire plumbers for simple tasks that staff, Montebello’s contractors, or owners could easily do always impose unreasonable cost burdens, (4) dictating only one model that wouldn’t fit my space was stubborn and irrational, (5) my requests to accept a 1-2 foot longer hose went unanswered, (6) when I proposed professionally recommended models with superior specifications, staff failed to respond to email and phone appeals over many weeks, (7) nobody cared that I had recently installed top quality steel covered hoses with a new washer purchase, (8) staff disregarded proof that MCUOA’s contractor installed lower burst strength plastic hoses (which may fail earlier), inferior to steel braided models demanded for owner paid replacements, and worst of all, (9) obnoxious threats of legal liabilities directed at owners with improved kitchens were unwarranted, inappropriate when we sought to cooperate and comply, and a further departure from fiduciary duties to treat all owners equally. Sadly, none of these wasted efforts and angst should have happened. I hope they won’t be repeated.

Solution – a model of service success Exasperated, I forwarded correspondence to Liz Foltin and Peter Ng. They quickly set a phone conference for productive dialogue. In under 10 minutes, we settled all problems. They offered to buy suitable hoses, and agreed I could install them without paying for a plumber. In a few minutes’

work, I easily pulled hoses through a hole in my cabinet partition with 2 simple pieces of string tied to valves at the other end. But, why couldn’t Montebello’s contractor (or staff) do the same months earlier?

With new mission and motivations, I believe that future staff services (and board policies) will do much better! Thank you as I look forward to prompt, caring, joyous responsiveness!

Owner Relations

To be our best, we need “active and constructive homeowner involvement.”

Dialogue Collaborate with Mr. Gardner’s approach to a thriving community: “Closer communication improves quality of life, lessens misunderstandings and conflicts, and brings people together.” Practice active listening to learn the whole truth and appreciate others’ concerns. Build consensus through lively dialogue, mutual respect, and caring to serve the greatest good

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of everyone in our community (beyond selfish interests of individuals or cliques).

Patience As Rome wasn’t built in a day, fulfillment of services excellence won’t happen overnight. Grant our new general manager freedom to lead. Give staff time to develop into new roles and modes of performance. Let them solve problems. Don’t try to micro-manage how people do their jobs. Trust that we will see fruitful results over reasonable time.

Thankfulness uplifts people to feel valued. Positive praises enhance motivation. When you see someone

working hard, or doing a great job, tell them how much you appreciate their contribution to keeping Montebello a great place to live. When service is exceptional, write a commendation letter, so outstanding performance is recognized. Support Mr. Gardner’s budget request for modest financial rewards to honor employee excellence.

Feedback Offer constructive suggestions about delivery or quality of services. George says he wants to hear comments – good, bad, or ugly. However, if performance falls short, don’t hurt people with mean criticism. Go beyond complaining to suggest how and why services improvements could benefit our community, upgrade skills, save costs, or deliver better results.

(For example, I’ve shared a model for *Friendly Neighbor Problem Solving*: make two amiable, respectful contacts to appeal for a neighbor’s cooperation, before disciplinary actions or legal demands for compliance. This worked incredibly well at my former condo to foster good will, set expectations for unity, save everyone’s time, and limit staff and legal costs.)

Participation Act, volunteer, help, encourage, and vigorously support efforts that our board members, management, and staff are undertaking to upgrade services and quality of life in Montebello. Community is strongest when everyone becomes actively involved.

Partnership As our name says, we are OWNERS joined in ASSOCIATION (not merely “residents” in housing managed by others). Our co-owners, board, management, staff, and outside contractors are all active stakeholders who mutually support quality and enjoyment of life at Montebello. Temporary tenants, vendors, and visitors also impact our social and physical environments. Envisioning our collective collaboration as an exceptional enterprise functioning for everyone’s mutual best interests, let’s work together to realize our best community possible! 🏡

out & about



Strata ensemble

Violinist/violist James Stern, pianist Audrey Andrist, and clarinetist Nathan Williams performed pieces by Aram Khachaturian, Béla Bartók, Pablo de Sarasate, and Max Bruch at a concert in the community center on March 26. The concert was sponsored by the Montebello Music Club.

Photo by Dian McDonald

Chess and more

Veteran and newbie chess players gathered in the card room last Thursday evening. One duo played backgammon. Chess Club generally meets on fourth Thursday of each month in the card room. Players of all ages and abilities – as well as aficionados of related games such as checkers, Scrabble, backgammon, and Othello – are welcome.



What's in a name?

By Joe de Angelis



When a man dies, and nothing is written, he is soon forgotten. When something is written and not read, he is also soon forgotten. *The Montebello Voice* is an excellent venue to record, preserve and share the rich and bountiful histories of our diverse community. I would like to begin this series by sharing a little of my family's history, the most important of part of which is the family name and how it was derived.

All people, places, and things have names. Names allow us to properly record history and to keep track of people, places and events. The evolution of names and their use in western society is fascinating and always evolving. But even more interesting are the people behind the names; where they came from, and where they were going. Whenever we first meet someone we immediately tell them our name or ask them their name. The first question asked on just about every form ever printed is "What is your name?" What

is your given name, your family name, your full name, your legal name, your married name? Names are important, very important, because they allow us to identify and set people apart from one another.

Many years ago, prior to my parents passing, I decided to start gathering and recording data about my family and our name. Ever since I was an altar boy in the fourth grade, I have known that the name de Angelis was Latin, not Italian, and that it literally translated to "of the Angels." I knew what the name meant but not how it originated, that is until I researched it.

In Italy the name de Angelis was usually given to foundlings left abandoned at the door of a church or convent. Now, the monks or nuns, who found those abandoned children considered them to be a gift, "a gift of the Angels" and since the language of the Church was Latin, it stood to reason that the names bestowed on such foundlings would also be Latin; hence the name de Angelis.

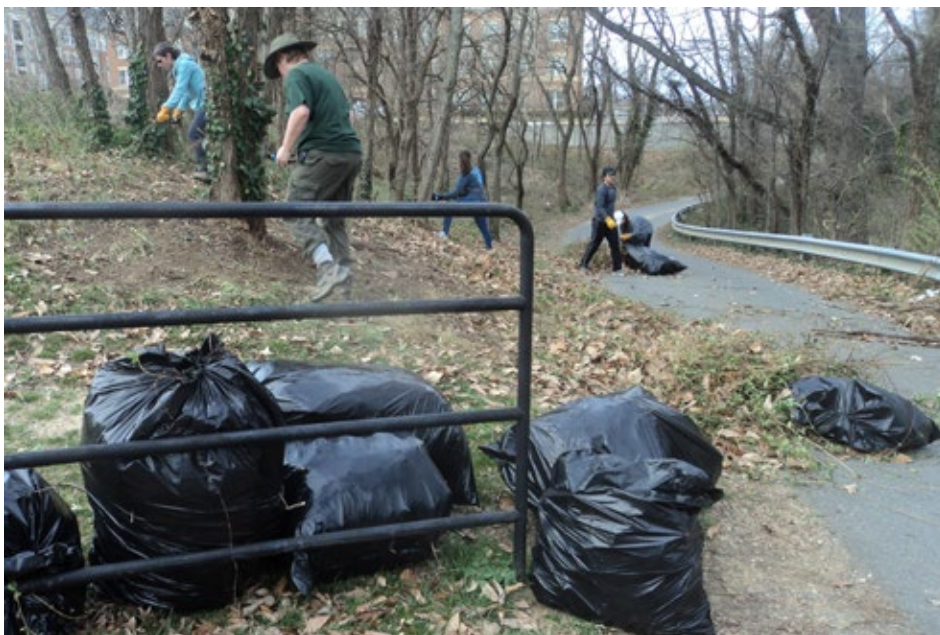
Conversely, babies left abandoned at the door of a church or convents in

England were given the name Abby. If you ever do a genealogical search of Italian names you will find the name de Angelis to be ubiquitous. These abandoned children were taken in by the clergy and raised as orphans because the parents, known or unknown, were either too poor to support another child, or the baby may have been given up to avoid a family scandal.

Having researched the de Angelis family lineage all the way back to one Realdo de Angelis, born in 1665 in Castel Baso, Abruzzo, Italy and finding no previous records of any prior de Angelis in the town of Castel Basso, I assume that Realdo was the first of my ancestors to bear the name de Angelis. What this basically means is that the parents of Realdo are unknown and that Realdo, as an infant was left on the steps of some church or convent, and given the name de Angelis; a gift of the Angels. The name de Angelis however, is a beautiful name, regardless of the circumstances under which it was bestowed.

What's in your family history? 📖

Mea culpa: this piece should have appeared in the previous edition of the gazette. My apologies to Karen and Donald Barnes.



A Clipping Event

On Saturday, Feb. 27, 14 folks, including two representatives from Montebello's Environmental Club, weeded and clipped ivy and other invasives along the Metro road. Fairfax County volunteers, led by Cathy Ledec (former Montebello resident) from The Courts at Huntington, and including adults and teens from as close as Jefferson Manor and as far as Chantilly, attacked a variety of plants for more than two hours. Look for the tidy appearance and listen for sighs of appreciation from the trees the next time you ride or walk from our back gate to the Metro station. – Karen Barnes

Driving and pedestrian safety

Encouragement before enforcement

The following article was sent as an email to the Board of Directors and the General Manager

By Jim Bechtel

When I attended driving safety focus group meetings and walk-around, participants suggested many good ideas to make our community safer. As a frequent walker around our property, and driver alarmed about recent near collisions by reckless vehicles, I want to see improvements ASAP.

Encouragement before enforcement

✓ While we need better safety and compliance, it's best accomplished by promoting community spirit, mutual responsibility, and caring about others. That will yield long lasting good will.

✓ Resist all demands to make Montebello a "police state" with radar guns, fines, mean-spirited accusations of neighbors, etc. That leads to counter-productive bitterness and rancor.

✓ Pareto's principle suggests that 80% of owners will cooperate readily, and 20% need to be managed. Further, the latter will include many persuadable by clear appeals to respect others.

✓ Likely only a very small minority would remain defiant – for whom fines, sanctions, or legal threats are required. Therefore, tough tactics should be the last resort, not a general policy.

Most difficult problem: policies to monitor and discipline vendors and visitors

✓ Delivery people and others with no stake in our community seem the most dangerous drivers.

✓ Thus, it's essential for the board to develop coherent, consistent policies to deal with them.

✓ Inform vendors and visitors of their responsibilities every time they arrive at our front gate – via a brief hand-

out of concise rules re: speed, lanes, pedestrians, courtesy, & parking.

✓ Repeat violators should be banned from the property. Guards need systems to identify them.

✓ Determine if other legal enforcement actions are possible?

Consider an ongoing, repeated communications campaign to educate and exhort owners about driving safety – and roadway improvements to highlight the most important concerns:

✓ Crossing center lines (for any reason) is the gravest vehicular collision threat. We need clearer, bolder, more prevalent center line indicators everywhere – and mindfulness to obey them!

✓ Vehicles blocking roads or view cause hazardous conditions. Add and enforce Compact Car Only signs at corners behind buildings 1 and 2 (as already posted on 3 & 4). Mark all such parking spaces with a clear line of outer limit for vehicle length.

✓ Also stop badly parked vehicles from blocking roadways around rear entrances.

✓ Yielding to pedestrians is both law and courtesy. We need crosswalks thoughtfully placed and well marked with yield signs at places where walkers can safely cross roadways.

✓ Pedestrians protect themselves and respect drivers by using designated crosswalks, staying off active roadways, walking on left sides in sight of oncoming vehicles, and avoiding danger zones (e.g., blind curves, unmarked lanes, or the widest area of roadway by planters near building 3).

✓ Sidewalks are sorely needed, especially on long Mt. Eagle Drive (an "original sin" safety defect).

✓ Speeding could be reduced by better signage, pedestrian yield markings, and humps or bumps before downhill blind curves – especially the curves on both sides before the gate.

✓ However, physical barriers should be limited to the minimum REASONABLE & NECESSARY to promote safety and compliance. The current bump is excessively high, causing vehicles to scrape bottom, and also an unwarranted hazard to suspension systems & wheel alignments.

✓ Gate controls should give first priority right of way to all vehicles entering the "residents" gate, permitted to make a right or left turn before guards allow visitors to proceed. Gates must remain open for drivers with genie gate openers to pass (and others realize this is not tailgating).

✓ Finally, I oppose deploying radar guns because they require expensive manpower time, don't tangibly improve safety, are too random, and inevitably lead to uneven, unfair enforcement bound to generate hostility. 🚫

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

A twice-monthly publication for the residents, by the residents

Management to study lobby monitors' capability to replicate pen-and-paper bulletin boards, a gecko posse to wipe out pestilence

By *Mikhailina Karina*

It was just another evening in community association governance with a smattering of about 20 regulars at the March 28 Board of Directors work session. Board spouses, former directors, committee members, civic-minded residents, and two ladies working on needlepoint sat in their customary seats.

Since last September, when 155 owners presented the board a petition asking for the return of garage-level bulletin boards, the discussion has been slowly inching along. A board subcommittee made up of directors John Powers, Guido Zanni, and Lynn Tjeerdsma has been mulling over how to handle bulletin boards.

Analyzing the results of the 30-second survey, which garnered 332 responses, many of which supported the boards, should make this a simple process, Tjeerdsma said. "But it isn't."

One possible solution the subgroup suggested would be instead of the physical boards, putting the three content categories – personal ads, real estate information, and community events – on touch-screen lobby monitors.

Director Jerry Stedje said he didn't want to "close the door on the idea of bulletin boards." Instead of the formerly three bulletin boards on each garage level, he suggested installing just one for personal ads, while letting the electronic monitors continue displaying real estate and activities information.

Because pen-and-paper bulletin boards are such a long-established medium of advertising, Stedje said perhaps residents should be free to post their own ads on the boards, which would then be occasionally monitored by building volunteers to make sure nothing inappropriate was posted.

While not ruling out the old-fashioned approach, Zanni wondered if a

bulletin board could go somewhere in the mail room, which would provide great accessibility because "everyone checks the mail." However, Zanni continued, "our first option is to see if the monitors have the capability to deliver the content."

The discussion will be picked up in a month at the next work session.

The board also addressed a novel solution for a pest management issue. An unusually warm winter has resulted in an unexpected overpopulation of pesky household insects, such as common cockroaches and stink bugs. Residents in the bucolic Building 5 have been prone to this pestilence that invaded their homes in recent days. To fight the insects in a green manner without toxic chemicals, the association has purchased 20 house geckos to naturally control the winged plague. Unlike other varieties, house geckos are harmless to humans and are mostly nocturnal feeders. The setae, or toe hairs, on their feet enable them to climb on walls to catch

their creepy-crawley prey. The only major drawback to this otherwise brilliant plan is the threat from other nocturnal predators, house cats, who will likely delight in chasing the scurrying geckos. In the end, it's all a chain of life. And fools.

The next board meeting will be on April 11. 🦎

Monday morning fog

Photo by Azita Mashayekhi



New Complaint Committee will take *kvetching* seriously

By *Horatio Michaelson*

Complaining is popular, but costly. Some do it to pass time, others engage to draw attention. Many complaints are frivolous, others are launched to create drama, and then there are those that are legitimate and are intended to draw one's attention to matters of previously ignored importance.

With consideration to the vastly increasing number of complaints, the Board of Directors has determined that it is time to manage and control the art of complaining. How much is too much? Are there limits? It is time for the association to govern complaints while providing each owner with the necessary tools and means to fairly launch their respective complaints. To accomplish this, I propose the creation of a Montebello Complaint Committee.

The Committee will monitor, administer and facilitate the airing of residents' complaints. Henceforth, complaints will be controlled, limited, permitted and issued proportionately and voiced in an orderly fashion during each meeting of topic.

Each resident will be allocated an annual allotment of complaints. Each complaint will be tracked by a coupon specific to a unique serial number, bar code and expiration date. Each of the 1080 owners will receive three complaint coupons and each complaint coupon is valid for a 120-day period running congruently within the first, second and third (4-month) period of the calendar year. Used properly, each resident will be positioned to lodge one complaint every four months.

The complaint committee urges each owner to redeem complaint coupons judiciously. They are a valuable commodity and should not be wasted or used in a frivolous or careless manner.

Renters will not be permitted to complain. All complaints from renters will be ignored. However, renters are encouraged to contact their respective unit owner to lodge and facilitate said complaint; the owner and/or his or her designee may initiate said complaint on behalf of their renter, but in no case may a renter initiate his or her own

Renters will not be permitted to complain. All complaints from renters will be ignored.

said auction. Of course, it would behoove said resident to be the highest bidder during the Complaint Coupon Auction (CCA) to secure an additional complaint. It is incumbent upon each resident to appreciate the ramifications of surrendering complaint coupons for auction in that after the time of surrender, they impose and retain no control whatsoever on whom may or may not win said auctions. By surrendering to auction, they may in fact establish a means for chronic complainers to facilitate additional complaints without regard to merit or the association's standard adjudication methods. Under no circumstances may an owner secure financial gain when surrendering their complaint coupons for auction, and the expiration date of auctioned complaint

MONTEBELLO COMPLAINT COMMITTEE

**Expires in 120 days
or when the cows
come home**

This valuable coupon entitles its bearer to a single well-considered complaint to the Montebello Complaint Committee. These coupons may not be transferred, traded, bartered, duplicated, or sold. Do not use them in a frivolous or careless manner. Unused coupons may be auctioned off by the association with proceeds hopefully going toward the water slide for the outdoor pool.



complaint. Moreover, in no case will a landlord's management company be permitted to lodge a complaint on behalf of said renter or unit owner.

Complaint coupons may not – under any circumstances – be transferred, traded, bartered or sold, however, complaint coupons may be surrendered for auction to the association. If a resident wishes to acquire additional complaint coupons, it is incumbent upon them to convince another owner with unused and unexpired complaints to surrender their complaint coupon for auction. Only then can owners acquire an additional complaint coupon by way of

certificates cannot be extended for any reason.

Expired complaint coupons have no value and cannot be renewed for any reason. There are no exceptions. During the first 10 months of the year, all surrendered complaints shall be auctioned on the last day weekday of the month. All proceeds will go to the complaint committee. All complaints surrendered in November and December of each calendar year will be destroyed and will not be auctioned or valued in any way. 📄

Childhood *chef d'œuvres* to go up in the ante-chamber

By Artemis Fartinsky

In a radical and bold change of direction, Artsy in Montebello (AiM) is planning a group show of our community's youngest artists in an upcoming Refrigerator Art exhibit.

AiM chair Hazel Duvalier, an early childhood educator with a quirky sense of humor, says children's art is "honest, uninhibited, and raw" in its simplicity of subject matter and style. In fact, she adds, many contemporary artists, whose works fetch hundreds of thousands of dollars, painstakingly imitate 5-year-olds' unsophisticated techniques. It takes years of un-schooling at the finest art institutions to be able to return to this primal state of perfection. And even then, Duvalier sighs, the "baggage of life is just too much to bear" for many artists

whose lives spiral into a depressing cycle of "soul-sucking day jobs" in order to support their art.

The idea for the show was hatched when AiM member Joelle Moller sifted through a trove of her daughters' childhood drawings she used to display on the refrigerator. She posted them on Facebook and received nearly 1,000 likes. "What is the definition of art?"

she asks rhetorically. "How old does an artist have to be to be called an artist? How many roads must he walk down, how many seas must he sail?"

In another departure from the usual highly selective jury process, AiM will accept any and all works by Montebello's current rapidly burgeoning population of children as well as some beloved pieces from parental treasure troves.

Because of the anticipated enormous volume of

works of children ages 1 to 9 be submitted. "They lose that innocent *je ne sais quoi* when they hit double digits," Duvalier laments.

A special display will feature multimedia creations composed of uncooked pasta, grains, yarn, dryer lint, popsicle



submissions, the mystery ante-chamber (a.k.a., Construction Oop-sie) leading to the locker rooms will be transformed into an art gallery with walls covered top to bottom with children's renditions of families, animals, nature, and super heroes.

To assure the authenticity of perspective and skill, AiM asks that only

sticks, beads, clay, paper, or whatever else the young artists found interesting and inspirational.

For more information about this exciting new exhibit, please contact Duvalier at MightyBrooklynity@hottie-mail.com. 📧

Residents get into a heated debate over a proposed community garden in the woodlands

By Lucy P. Whirller

Is it a coincidence that Montebello's new general manager's last name is Gardner and he has an extensive background in ecology and a passion for country living? Many see George Gardner's arrival as a good omen for the residents' deep-rooted dream for a community garden.

A last-minute addition to the agenda for Tuesday's board work session brought out vocal advocates and opponents of a proposed community garden in a large swath of the woodlands. They firmly planted themselves into green thumbs and green spaces camps as they debated the pros and cons of urban gardening.

One little-noticed recommendation in the rejected (and widely mocked) Landscape Master Plan was establishing one or two community gardens to improve Montebello's ecology and residents' well-being. With Gardner at the helm of Montebello, the green thumbs believed their green day had come.

According to the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA), "community gardening improves people's quality of life by providing a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulating social interaction, encouraging self-reliance, beautifying neighborhoods, producing nutritious food, reducing family food budgets, conserving resources and creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education." Since Montebello brands itself as a premier luxury condo community with enviable amenities, it's only natural to consider improving its green amenities to attract

a wealthier, health-conscious demographic to a unique environment.

Community gardening is as old as the proverbial hills. Both Alexandria and Fairfax County have community gardens people can cultivate for a small fee. In fact, several Montebello residents grow vegetables and flowers on their small, off-site garden plots in



A community garden blooms somewhere in Houston

Springfield. But it's no fun schlepping back and forth for a bushel of potatoes, they say.

In addition, many residents who downsized to a condo from a single-family home agree that one of the things they miss most is a small kitchen garden to grow herbs and a few vegetables. "Oh, the pleasure of sinking my hands into sweet-smelling earth!" exclaimed Mary Gold, a new owner, who misses her garden and the time she spent outside.

For the past year, a small band of back-to-the-landers have been quietly cleaning up the overgrowth in the abandoned secret garden behind Building 4. This space, which used to have flowers and herbs, already has water access. Another possible location for a larger gar-

den is the flat plot in the corner of the wooded area behind Building 1, where a dead deer is currently decomposing under a cover of branches. The recently completed irrigation-replacement project would make it easy to extend lines into the woodlands. Additionally, the Landscape Master Plan proposed rain-water catching cisterns attached to each tower, which could provide enough free irrigation to the gardens.

However, before arriving at any decisions about usage fees, land distribution, or crop choices, owners and the board need to come to a consensus on this potentially thorny issue.

During the spirited meeting, a number of residents vehemently opposed the garden idea, calling it "absurdly cockamamie."

Then dirt really started to fly from both directions. "We cannot allow a bunch of aging, Bernie-loving hippies turn our beautiful, serene woodlands into a hippie commune," said Alistair Woodstone. "What's next, a Saturday farmer's market on the Village Green? At this rate, we'll be having love-ins and hacky sack tournaments with wafts of cannabis. Sheesh, people, grow up and get real!"

Woodstone's sentiments were echoed by Harry Shivers, "Green space means green space. It doesn't mean wild flowers or zucchini blossoms or heirloom tomatoes or purple potatoes," he said. "Food comes from stores, not lawn gardens."

An equally passionate group of residents said they would relish "sinking their hands" into the earth and eating

the fruits and vegetables of their labor. They pointed out how the farm-to-table movement is thriving all around the country, where locally sourced foods leave a minuscule carbon footprint and improve the social, mental, and physical health of those who do it.

Rosemary Flowers passionately spoke in favor of the gardens. “In this day and age of climate change, we must revere our Mother Earth and cherish her gifts,” she pleaded. “There is enough negativity and divisiveness in our lives. We need to come together to reclaim our common goodness. Give peas a chance!”

“It’s not as if we’re building a chicken coop or letting loose a herd of goats to manicure and fertilize our lawns,” said Daisy Fields-Bloom. “Which is not an outrageous idea,” she continued, citing Mark Twain Middle School’s solar panel chicken coop in the interior courtyard and the goats marauding around Burgundy Farm school.

As a first step toward healthy living, the board agreed to consider placing compost boxes near the recycling bins on B-3 levels. A few environmentally pioneering residents already have apartment-size composters in their units for food scraps, which they use for fertilizing their balcony vegetable plots.

Director Geraldo Zinnia, chairman of the Quality of Life Committee, said he would send out a 29-second survey to gauge community interest in the proposal. The board’s ad hoc czar, James Mowery, plans to convene a committee to come up with a plan of action.

Gardner remained mum. 🏠

*The Montebello Voice
wants to hear from you:
musings, travels, announce-
ments, photos, and ads*

Red-tailed hawks rout crows 2-0

By Sarah Newcomb

It was a clean get away as our red-tailed hawks cleared out a corner of the Montebello campus against stiff opposition from two crows March 20th. Mr. and Mrs. Hawk-ins swept toward the finish line. Both Red-tailed Hawks pounded out a nest in one of our stately old growth trees. Mrs. Hawk-ins immediately set up housekeeping against blow-back

leave the nest at about 42-46 days after hatching.

Red-tailed hawks are raptors. Like eagles and crows, they hunt and eat meat. You will hear the red-tailed hawk’s thrilling, raspy scream. Courting red-tailed hawks soar in wide circles at a great height. The male dives steeply, then shoots up again at a steep angle. Sometimes, the pair grab each other, clasp talons, and plummet in spirals toward the ground before pulling away.

Building 3 residents of tiers 110



<https://stonerchie.wordpress.com/2011/10/25/thehawk/>

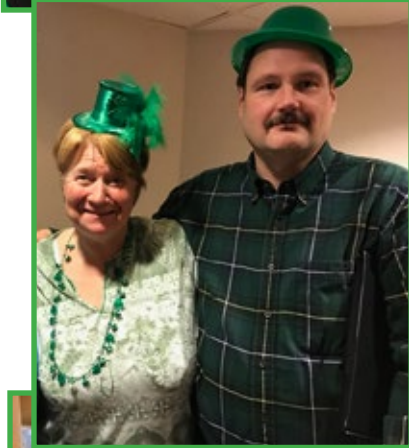
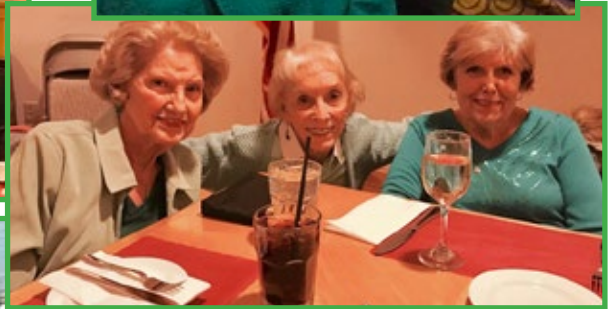
from team crow. Apparently the Crow team was down two since they crushed the Bald Eagles 4-2 on Valentine’s Day. Missing team mates may be crow females nesting.

Our red-tailed hawks are monogamous and may mate for life. They make stick nests high above the ground, in which the female lays one to five eggs each year. Mrs. Hawk-ins is occupying the nest full time. Mr. Hawk-ins is bringing her fresh food and defending their home, surveying from a perch nearby. His broad-winged protective dives run off intruders and scatter squirrels venturing into the Hawk-ins territory. Whether eggs are already in the new nest – and how the unseasonably cold weather has affected them – is too soon to tell. Red-tailed hawks usually

through 118 should have a front-row balcony seat to view the family’s development. Residents walking the trail behind Building 3 can observe some activity with the naked eye, and even more with binoculars or a long-lens camera.

Please use caution and do not go near. The red-tailed hawk is federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). They cannot be hunted or harassed without a special permit issued by the United States Department of Agriculture and United States Fish and Wildlife Service. 🏠

St. Patrick's celebration



Photos by
Dian
McDonald



Chess Game Night with Chess Club

All Levels! All Welcome!
Beginners to Grandmasters!
Play! Share! Learn! Practice!
No Commitment! Just Fun!



Thursday, March 23rd
Community Center
Card Room
7:00pm to 9:30pm (latest)



Bring your own Chess Set if you like! – And, if you're brand new to Chess, but you'd like to check out our Chess Club while playing a relatively "quiet" or "cerebral" game that *doesn't* "compete" with the ancient game of Chess from a noise perspective, you may bring such a game and hang out with us! (Examples of Games that partner well with Chess: Scrabble, Checkers, Othello, etc.)

Contact Lisa J. Stedge at lisa@stedge.com and/or Nick Nickerson at fnixson@gmail.com for more information. Also, visit the Chess Club's booth at Montebello's upcoming "Community Expo," Sat., 4/8, 10am-2pm, CC!



Music to My Eyes Montebello Café

March 18 – April 21

Opening reception

March 18
4 - 6 p.m.

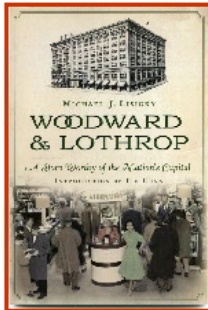
Refreshments

Featuring new artists

Cash bar



The Speaker Series Presents:



"Woodies"

Woodward & Lothrop: A Store Worthy of the Nation's Capital

Affectionately called "Woodies" by loyal Washingtonians, the beloved *Woodward & Lothrop* department store was at the heart of our metropolitan area for over a century. Department store historian, Michael J. Lisicky, chronicles the store's golden age.

Tuesday, April 4th at 7:30
Community Center Lounge

Sponsored by the Activities Committee



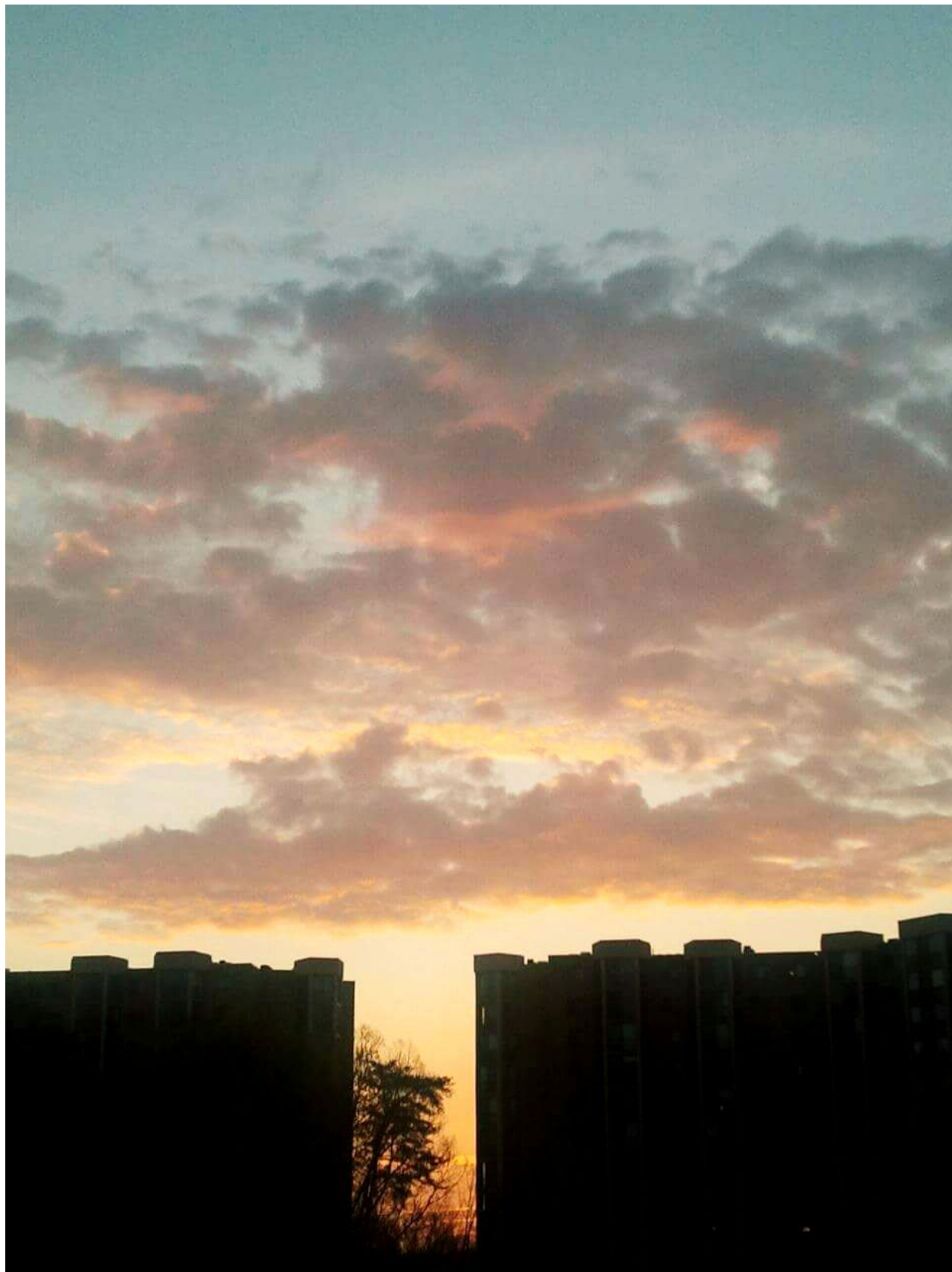
The Montebello Bowling league needs you!

We are still down a few bowlers on Monday and 1-2 bowlers on Wednesday. Subs are needed on both nights. No experience necessary!

We are looking for people who just want to have fun. It's a handicap league, so it really doesn't matter how good you are.

Contact the League President, Mark Woods at 703-498-0143 or at mjddwoods@earthlink.net. Stop by any Monday or Wednesday.

final glance



Montebello at dawn

Photo by Azita Mashayekhi