

The **MONTABELLO** Voice

an independent gazette

watch children play

April 13, 2017



Montebello activities expo on April 8

Photos by Dian McDonald

Flexible muscles give us a higher quality of life

Tight muscles resist extending fully, limiting the range of motion of the joints. If the bicep muscle is tight, it will be more difficult to totally straighten the arm. If chest and front shoulders are tight, it will be difficult to move the arms towards the rear of the body. If legs and hips muscles are tight, it will be difficult to take long steps.

All of the muscles should be flexible as possible. This will allow overall free movement of as many joints as possible, thus giving you a more able body. Even before the tightening effects that exercise has on our muscles, our everyday life movements warrant constant and sufficient stretching: going up and down stairs, sitting down and getting up from the chair, etc.

For most people, stretching isn't as exciting as other forms of physical activity. So most people (myself included) don't do enough of it. If that is the case with you, too, then it's a good idea to do a stretch here and there in order to stay consistent in stretching as many muscles as possible.

Be sure to stretch the leg muscles often because we use them so much. All sides of the thighs: quadriceps (front), hamstrings (rear), adductors (inner), abductors (outer), and calves.

Remember that you can relax your muscles the natural way: by stretching them. Warm them up with light movement before stretching though. This could be walking in place, shoulder shrugs, lifting the arms, raising the legs to the front, rear, and sides.

Hold each stretch for a minimum of 30 seconds. Stretch each muscle at least twice. Move slowly into the stretch and slowly out of it.

Keep loving life! – *Stephen King*

M☉Perk draws neighbors on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

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.

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*



Springtime building parties

- Buildings 1 & 5 Friday, April 21
- Building 2 Wednesday, May 3
- Building 3 Friday, May 19
- Building 4 Friday, May 12

The format is the same for all: bring drinks and snacks to share. Meet your neighbors and have fun. Each event will take place in the party rooms. Contact your building representatives for more information. – *Yo Frommer*

A quinoa of gratitude

I was in Whole Foods at the end of the day and was checking out just three items. The woman ahead of me had a very large order and was rushing home to make dinner for her family. It appeared that she had just come from work. She noticed what I was checking out and realized that she forgot to get quinoa, which was one of my items. She wanted to get off the line and come back again so I insisted she take mine. She thanked me profusely for saving her time. I went home and when I looked in my small pantry – I had two unopened boxes of quinoa. I should have thanked her! – *Leslee Levy*

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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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voices on the 37

Michael Bradley to offer two group exercise classes

This spring I will conduct group exercise classes in the lower level of the community center.

One will be a low-impact aerobics class that includes easy stretching, strength training, and cardio movements with special attention to the needs of the attendees. I plan to hold this class on Tuesdays at noon.

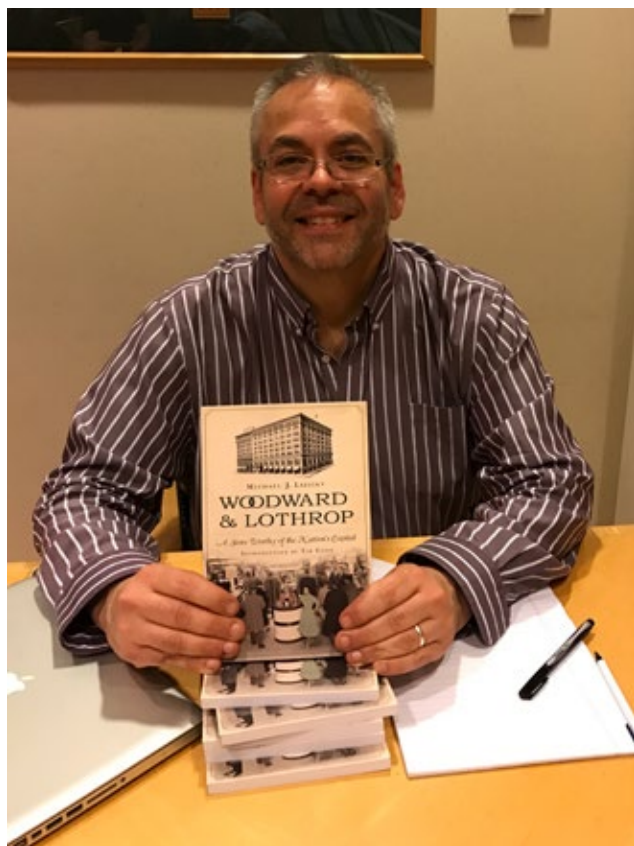
A mid-high impact aerobics class will have more rigorous cardio movements such as running in place, jumping jacks, squats, lunges, and other movements offering a full-body workout. It will also focus on the special attention to the needs of the attendees. This class will be on Thursdays at 7 p.m.

Each class will cost \$8 or a package of 10 classes for \$50.

I am a Montebello resident and currently work with several people here. I am a certified trainer accredited by the International Sports Association. For more information, please contact me at 407-760-6474 or at brad6078@aol.com – *Michael Bradley*

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

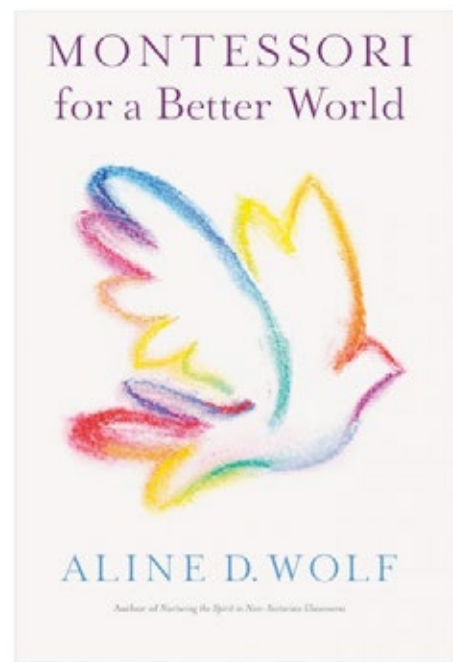


Affectionately called Woodies by loyal Washingtonians, the beloved Woodward & Lothrop department store was at the heart of our metropolitan area for over a century. Department store historian, Michael J. Lisicky, chronicles the store's golden age. He spoke at Montebello on April 4. The event was sponsored by the Activities Committee.

Photo by Dian McDonald

Aline Wolf's newest book on Montessori education

Our former neighbor and Montebello's notorious bridge club member has published a "greatest hits" collection of her writings on Montessori education. *Montessori for a Better World* is Aline Wolf's latest effort – she has written more than 20 books on the subject – to reflect on this time-tested educational approach. The book is a good read for anyone who cares about education: parents, grandparents, and educators. It is published by the Parent Child Press, a division of Montessori Services. – *Mikhailina Karina*



Hate in our back yard

On March 28, a family's home in the Huntington Courts apartments was burglarized and defaced with anti-Muslim hate messages. Here is the link to the channel 9 newscast: <http://www.wusa9.com/news/local/muslim-familys-home-ransacked-damaged-with-hate-message-1426259150>

Forgotten history – April 16, 1947

The One-Day War



From Tuesday in Texas by Rebecca Long Hayden

At a Christmas progressive dinner party in Atlanta in 1985, a woman I hadn't met – I'll call her Topsy – singled me out for scorn. The deep flush around her collar caused me to suspect she had too much to drink before the party even started. Her belligerent attitude wasn't personal; if it hadn't been me in her line of fire, it would have been someone else.

She began to grill me. Did I work outside the home? And I had kids? What about *them*? I eased away to another conversational group. With ten at the dinner table, however, I couldn't out-flank her. As clam chowder was served, she sat down directly in front of me.

"So where are you from?" she asked.

"We've moved around, but I grew up in Texas."

"Ah. I might have known," she said. "Where in Texas?"

The other guests sensed trouble, and it grew quiet enough for me to hear my inner voice. *This is a social occasion. Have*

a sip of wine. Calm down. "On the coast. Texas City, actually."

"Oh, yes," she said. "The town with the redundant name. I lived in Houston for a while. I've been to Texas City."

Keep it light, it's Christmas, I thought. "Well, did you know, it's even possible to live on Texas Avenue, in Texas City, Texas."

With that, the hostess brightly excused herself, explaining that the main dish must be about ready. Topsy looked at me with evil eyes. If there was a note on the scale called *sneer*, she would have sung her next words.

"Texas City's the tackiest town in Texas. Nasty place. Bad smells. Cowboys. And cowgirls."

"How would you like this cowgirl to come over there and put you face down in your chowder?" No one thought I was kidding.

At that moment the hostess came back to the dining room. My threat made her

My uncle, Raymond Morris, became an emergency air traffic controller for a day

stop abruptly, but the chicken didn't. The golden bird slipped off the platter and onto the Oriental rug. Our hostess breathed "Oh, no" as it settled onto the carpet with a pleasant little *plop*.

Joy to the world.

I won't explain the atmosphere of our bread and salad dinner. Grim will do. If only I had kept my mouth shut. If only the chicken had stayed put. I waited until the others had gone and made my apologies to the hostess. She didn't deserve to have her party spoiled. She was as gracious as possible under the circumstances.

I wanted to skip the neighborhood-wide dessert back at the clubhouse, but I made myself go. When I make a mess, I face the consequences. Topsy, however, didn't show, and in spite of my remorse, I hoped I scared the crap out of her.

But by the time we arrived at the clubhouse, the Battle of the Texas City Chicken was known to everyone, just as it would have been back home, when no matter how small the infraction, someone would call your mother. This Atlanta neighborhood was just another small town. So was Texas City just another small town, too? Exactly like Topsy said?

Why did I feel such a deep affection for it? Why did I miss it, even though I hadn't lived there in 20 years? Why did I love to talk about it, even though the place requires a surprising amount of





Texas City on April 16, 1947

explanation? First I have to explain that I didn't say "a city in Texas." I said *Texas City, Texas*, like New York, New York.

I've explained Texas City football (a ball game) and Tackle Time (a fishing contest), and that the two have nothing to do with each other. When people see pictures from my class reunions, decorated in school colors, orange and black, I explain that, no, it wasn't Halloween. This is quirky stuff, and fun, but none of it explains the loyalty I continue to feel for Texas City. What made it different?

It came to me at the Pentagon in 2003, in the Humanitarian Relief Corridor in the A Ring, which depicts places around the world where the U.S. Military has assisted the civilian population. Right up there with the Berlin Airlift, as a part of the permanent exhibit, was a black-and-white photograph of Texas City in flames. And there it was. That's what's different about Texas City.

Before 9/11, no other American city experienced a One Day War. On April 16, 1947, the port of Texas City suffered the greatest loss of life in an *industrial accident* that ever happened in the U.S., before or since. The *SS Grandcamp* exploded, followed by the *SS High Flyer*. The cargo: some five million pounds of ammonium nitrate, the combustible material in bombs. This became known as the Texas City Disaster.

The impact of 9/11 compares to nothing else, and yet, comparisons are interesting. The population of Manhattan on that day was 1.6 million, and 2,606 people died at the World Trade Center. That's .16 percent (*point 16 percent*).

The population of Texas City in 1947 was 15,000, and 600 people died. That's *four percent*. For the percentage of people who died in Manhattan to equal the percentage of people who died in the Disaster, the number would have to be 64,000 citizens.

On 9/11, 343 firemen lost their lives when the towers fell. In TC, the number was much smaller (27), but the entire volunteer fire department ceased to exist. NYC had a hero mayor in Rudy Giuliani. TC had a hero mayor in Curtis Trahan.

In a town the size of Texas City, the injured and dead were loved ones, friends, neighbors, and the paperboy who biked to the dock to see what was happening. The Class of '64 thought of the Disaster as history, yet to the survivors – our parents – it would have seemed like yesterday. Consider that 9/11 happened 14 years ago, and there are young people born after 2005 who don't remember that day in 2001 in New York, Washington DC, and Pennsylvania.

And that explosion was a One Day

War, with the full arc of that most awful of human disasters. The day was perfect, sunny and mild, but something was going on down at the docks. At 9:00 am Officer Bell of the Texas City police department said that as far as he knew – as far as anyone knew – everything was under control. Fire fighters were on the scene, and no one expected an explosion. At 9:12 the world according to Texas City blew to bits.

Over 600 people died. Thousands were injured. The streets looked like news footage of European refugees wandering through rubble, like something from the front lines of World War II.



Memorial service for the victims

Veterans of Pearl Harbor said it was like December 7, 1941, when warships buckled trying to ride out the chaos. It was worse than the buzz bombs at the Battle of the Bulge.

What follows is a first-person account of that day from my cousin, Ray Morris, who was in third grade at Danforth Elementary.

I remember seeing a huge, black cloud of smoke with flames at the base. I thought the Japanese had bombed us again. We were taking a spelling test when we heard a loud explosion. We looked at the windows where the sound had come from, and then the glass shattered, cutting all of my fellow students to some degree. The students close to the windows were cut the worst. I had a little cut on my ear and on my eyebrow.

We filed out like we were having a fire drill,

the teacher saying "don't run." I still had my pencil in my hand, and I thought, I don't need this. I dropped it. We ended up in the playground, in a daze and sobbing. Mom found me and gave me a big hug in relief. She said "if we find your dad alive, we are getting out of this crazy town and never coming back." I remember the large amount of debris on Sixth Street as we headed home. We were living in Snug Harbor. Yet, even that far from the explosion all of the nail heads were exposed in the walls. We headed for the little airport to spend the night.

There was shock, death, injuries, and destruction, followed by uncertainty. Who was alive? What friends and neighbors were gone without warning? And then human beings did the best they could to cope with the aftermath. All in one day.

My cousin's home five miles away was unsafe, so his family stayed with the owners of a municipal airport, not much more than a couple of dirt runways. The next day my Uncle Raymond, an ordinary citizen, became an air traffic controller. He stood in the middle of a muddy field directing airplane traffic as the National Guard and Red Cross all tried to land at the same time.

The people of TC experienced extremes of grief, post traumatic stress, and then the process of healing. Even the fact that there was no way to tell black body parts from white body parts had an impact. Amid the overwhelming tragedy, people wondered what difference it could possibly make, and they were all buried together. The memorial service for the dead was open to all races, and this was remarkable in Texas in 1947.

Social change is a lengthy process, but once people allow themselves to



business, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, but the One Day War changed the temperament of the town. Europeans in the 20th century understand war. When it's all over, they will say folks become gentler, more patient. They know life is fragile. They hold tight to what matters and let unimportant things go. They love their children better. I don't know how long it takes for the memory to become abstract and the post-war effect to dribble away. Maybe only a generation, but long enough for the children of the survivors to grow up in an environment of kindness that engenders loyalty to their home town.

Now, when I'm asked where I grew up, I go directly to the Texas City Disaster. People are astonished to learn that in 1947 in a small Texas town 600 people were killed, and 2,000 were injured. Neighborhoods were flattened, and school children wandered

think even for a minute that skin color might not matter, the hard resistance becomes softer, more penetrable, and in 1963, when African Americans integrated Texas City High School, there was barely a shrug.

The Disaster had an incalculable effect on the citizens of Texas City. Our parents survived a war, and they were never the same. Friends noticed something about Mayor Trahan after the WW II, and I think it applies to TC after the Disaster.

It was the same thing that they had seen in other men who had come back after surviving something immensely cruel, elemental, and furious. His sense of ease was now almost wholesale. His volcanic tendencies were gone. Curtis Trahan was a steady man. He had the glow of a good man who really had denied death its dominion. (From "City on Fire.")

Texas City had its share of pettiness,

and school children wandered among the body parts on Sixth Street. A major industrial plant nearly vanished. Just as 9/11 changed everything, April 16, 1947, changed everything in Texas City.

I think that's why, at a dinner party in 1985, I ignored personal insults and a snotty attitude about Texas, yet I couldn't let Texas City go undefended. I know why I would do it again. I owe that much to the generation who cared enough to call our mothers when we stepped out of line, the generation who survived the One Day War, the generation who understood what matters, and understood how quickly what matters can be lost.

Author's Note: Certain information in Bill Minutaglio's book, *City on Fire* (available from Amazon), was helpful in writing this piece. 📖

Between a rock and a hard place

By Donald and Karen Barnes

Since returning from China in 2015, we have been active in serving as volunteer English teachers/tutors in our neighborhood. As a result, we have met many interesting people with many interesting stories. Here is one of them we would like you to meet...and perhaps give him some needed advice.

As a youth in South America, Juan (a pseudonym) was pegged as someone who was going places. Those predictions proved to be correct, but not in the way most people expected.

Having done well in school, Juan graduated with a degree in engineering from a university in the capital of his country. After only a few years of working in the field, he started his own small construction company – raising capital, employing workers, and contributing to his community. He set up his office in a small building that housed the fledging organizations of two other entrepreneurs: a lawyer and the owner of a car rental agency.

Then things started to go downhill.

The three friends were visited by members of a gang who demanded protection money, an all-too-common occurrence in some South American communities. After some initial forays into those murky waters, the lawyer strongly advised the group to resist further demands and to cooperate with authorities in dealing with the gang.

Within weeks, the lawyer was murdered, and the gang made clear that the other two young men would be dealt with in a similar fashion.

The authorities also made it clear that they wanted no part of Juan's problem. It was "much too serious" for them.

Within a few weeks, Juan had left his home, his business, his workers, and his family, escaping with only his life, his skill, his energy, and his faith to find a refuge of sorts in the U.S. as an undocumented alien.

Over the past few years, Juan has lived in several locations in the U.S. In each case, he has tried his best to learn English, most often through low/no tuition classes at churches or non-profit

organizations. He has remained independent of any government-related assistance.

Juan has now started a small sub-contracting building maintenance business, paying taxes, employing a growing handful of other immigrants for whom he serves as not only an employer but also as a facilitator for those who have left a Spanish-speaking world and now are working to make a life in an English-speaking world. The principal contractor for whom his company works has been slow in paying him for the work he and his employees have done, figuring that an illegal immigrant is not likely to raise an issue with US authorities for fear of being deported.

What should Juan do?

- a. Return to his country of origin and face the music;
- b. Marry an American in order to gain legal status to continue to live in the U.S.;
- c. Report the principal contractor to U.S. authorities, although such action is likely to shine a spotlight on his immigration status and set himself up for being deported;
- d. Continue to try to live under the radar by moving to a new city in the U.S.;
- e. Continue attending volunteer-led English classes, with the goal of enrolling in engineering and business classes at a nearby community college;
- f. None of the above; instead _____.

What would you do if you were Juan?

This article is not meant to espouse a position for or against particular policies regarding immigrants. Rather, it simply illustrates how being a volunteer English teacher allows you to meet some admirable people who are between a rock and a hard place. More volunteers are welcome. Contact us at chinakaren@yahoo.com. 📧



A Hungarian refugee's American dream

By Paul Foldes

This year I celebrate 60 grateful years in America. As refugees from Budapest, Hungary, my parents and I arrived in New York on October 28, 1957 after a 63-hour



flight from Vienna on a WWII vintage DC3. The flight was interrupted by three emergency landings, including a foam landing in New York

Mine is a typical immigrant story. We were compelled to leave as a result of severe political and religious persecution. My father had a doctorate in animal husbandry, which was considered a “bourgeois” profession that clashed with the “worker class” preferred by the Communist regime. My parents had to make the hard choice to leave everything behind – friends, family, and what little possessions were left after previous forced expropriations by the Communist and Nazi governments in 1947 and 1944.

Ten days after arrival, I enrolled in fifth grade in a New York City public school. I did not speak English and my classmates constantly made fun of my appearance and mannerisms. You can imagine what English swear words my classmates taught me to tell the teach-

er when she asked my name and background.

Having skipped third and fourth grades due to being in refugee camps, I have been catching up ever since.

Within weeks of arrival, my parents got what clerical work they could do that didn't require English skills. We received no government subsidies and only limited financial aid from a resettlement agency. In spite of my father's education and my mother's considerable merchandising experience in Hungary, their only opportunity here – like many other middle-aged immigrants – was to work as clerks for over 20 years until retirement.

I took full advantage of the great free education offered by NYC public schools. I am a proud alum of Stuyvesant HS, one of the most competitive, solely entrance test-based high schools in the country.

I commuted and worked my way through NYU where I earned an electrical engineering degree (not knowing what an EE did really, but that's where the scholarships were in '60s). Between scholarships, summer earnings in the Catskills Borscht Belt, and tutoring, I graduated with minimal debt. I came

to Washington to attend Georgetown Law at night to become a patent attorney with General Motors, which paid an engineer-level salary as a trainee and my law school tuition. I was laid off from GM in a company-wide downsizing and then worked as a patent examiner at the U. S. Patent Office for two years (which also paid for law school); then transferred to the Federal Trade Commission to work as a legal trainee and stayed as an attorney for six years.

Following government employment, I became a self-employed entrepreneur in the commercial real estate business. Now I use my extensive knowledge of the Internet to create new opportunities in e-commerce, and to help improve the ability of patients and family caregivers to use smart phones, tablets and desktop computers to engage with the healthcare system more conveniently.

My greatest pleasure has been raising an American-born son who appreciates the value of the immigrant experience. He understands the lessons of resilience and the notion of wanting to give another immigrant the chance to succeed here. With hard work, America gives people an opportunity to become one's best, to answer one's calling. In spite of where you're born or what racial or religious minority you may be, you will be respected in America. 🇺🇸



Paul with his parents, Andor and Suzanne Foldes

Board searches for new SACM, approves new health and fitness ventures

By *Mikhailina Karina*

After nearly a year on the job as Safety and Access Control Manager, long-time Montebello security officer Raleigh Barkley stepped down from his position, announced General Manager George Gardner at the April 11 Board of Directors meeting.

In a written statement to *The Voice*, Gardner said, “Officer Barkley requested that he be reassigned to his former position as a Front Gate/patrol officer – a position he served in for the past 20 years. He made this request after serving for approximately a year as the program manager and after arriving at a personal decision that his preference

was a role with less management responsibilities. The Program Manager duties are presently being covered by Assistant GM Marco Mendoza. Montebello is recruiting for a replacement individual and is interviewing a number of promising candidates, both male and female. We hope to have a selection made within the next 10 days to 2 weeks and to have someone on board by no later than mid-June,” Gardner wrote.

The board heard from Jim Bechtel, who is developing “best practices recommendations” for improving pedestrian and driver safety. Based on recommendations from the focus group, he said the two-pronged approach will

include both an “educational strategy” and “infrastructure improvements in road safety.”

A traffic engineer has already walked around the property and will present his findings.

In administrative business, the board approved the lease extension for the hair salon at a monthly rental of \$300. The board also approved two new fitness-oriented proposals: trainer Michael Bradley’s group exercise classes (see page 3) and a wellness club proposed by Virginia Nickich. 🏠



Upstairs, downstairs. The rotting wooden staircase behind Building 1 has been replaced.

activities expo



Photos by
Dian
McDonald





MONTEBELLO KIDS CLUB EASTER EGG HUNT

Sunday, April 16, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.

Playground between Buildings 1 & 2

For: Children 0-12 years old, with an adult



Admission: Deliver at least 24 plastic eggs per child, filled with individually wrapped candy or non-food items, to the Rappa Family 1-1505 by **Saturday April 15th**

(703) 960-7445 montebellokidsclub@gmail.com

Rain site: Community Center, Building 2 entrance



Chess Game Night with Chess Club

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



Thursday, April 27th
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.



MONTEBELLO
FILM SOCIETY

and



Invite you to our opening night



THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

APRIL 27 7:30 P.M. PARTY ROOM 2



**Music to
My Eyes**
Montebello Café
March 18 – April 21

**Opening
reception**

**March 18
4 - 6 p.m.**

Refreshments

Featuring new
artists

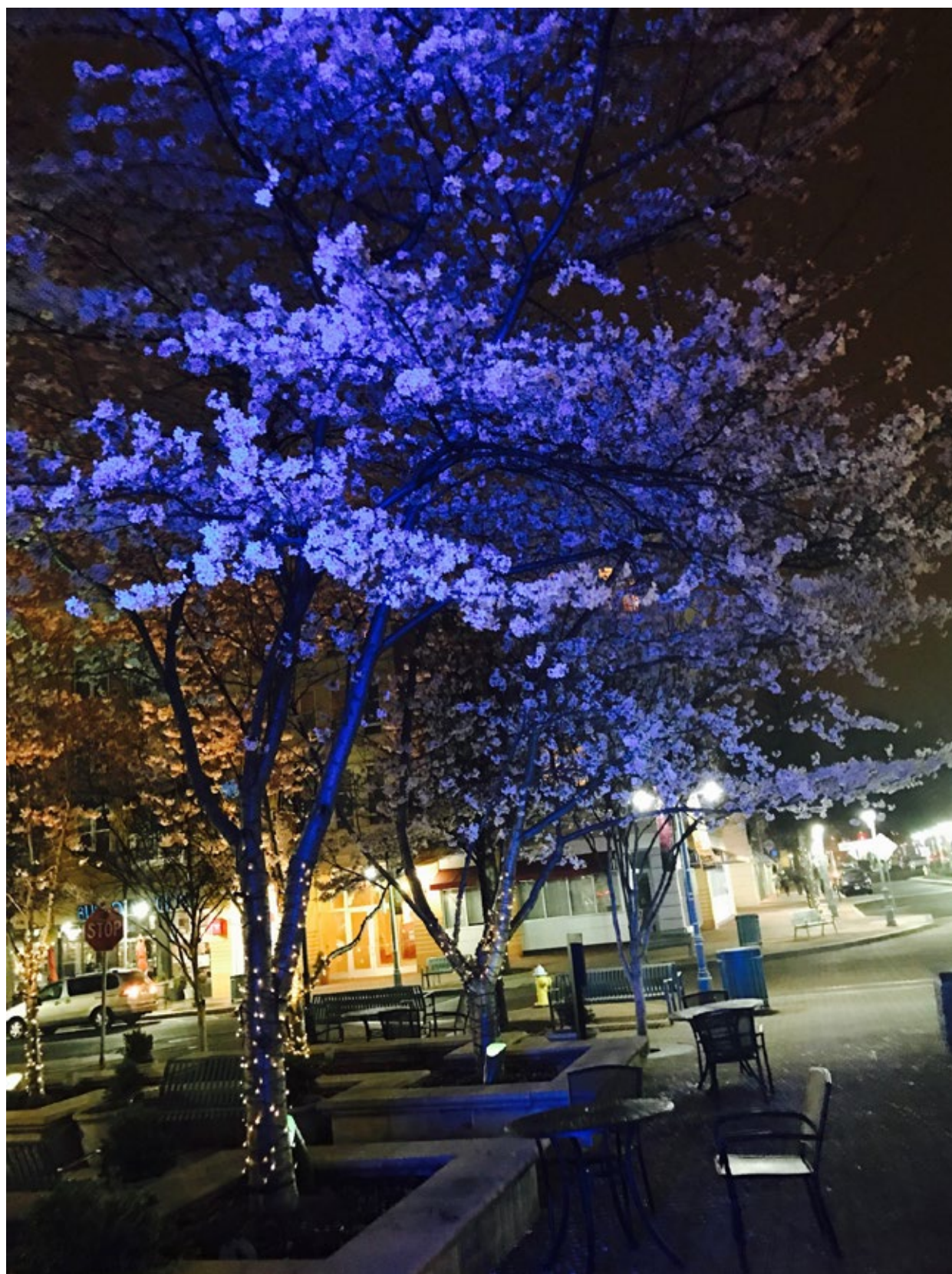
Cash bar



It is not just a scary movie. It is cinema at its best. Robert Mitchum's voice, Shelly Winters's vulnerability, Charles Laughton's directing, and a screen filled with every shade of black and white come together in 90 minutes of tension in this 1955 film that is on every credible list of "bests." Come watch it with us, be a little frightened by it with us, and then chat with us about it at AiM's film night.

Joel Miller will introduce the film and lead the post-movie discussion.

final glance



Blooms of the night in Shirlington

Photo by Dian McDonald