

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

let's roll!

September 7, 2017

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"We spent the quarantine week **leaving flowers** at our neighborhood fire station or writing **peace messages on white stripes of U.S. flags** hung on the fences at Washington Square Park or on brown paper rolled out at Union Square Park."

"As I stared at the screen everything around me dissolved. All that existed was the awful, graceful, perfect image of the swan-diving airplanes, right into the mighty buildings, planes full of people, offices full of people. **All dead.**"

"I saw Pentagon personnel walking by. They all looked like they had walked all the way from the Pentagon. All their **faces were ghostly masks of despair.** I remember the smoke from the Pentagon. It smoldered for what seemed like an eternity. The smoke hung like a **funeral shroud** hanging above our roadways."

"Shocked, Matt realized that he had previously reserved the jump seat (for pilots) on that same flight for September 11th, but canceled it when he learned that Greg was coming home. Shortly thereafter, CNN reported that a plane had crashed near Shanksville, Pa. Matt knew that Shanksville was in a direct route from Pittsburgh to Dulles. He immediately called me at work. **Amid sobs, he said he was certain that Greg was on that plane. I refused to believe it or think about it. I prayed.**"

Stop the destruction of Montebello's woodlands

By Michael Hora

It saddens me to witness the slow but steady destruction of our Montebello woodlands. As Montebello residents, we have about 35 acres at our

disposal representing a treasured piece of serenity. Why is the Association allowing our woodlands to be destroyed? Anyone that walks the trails with regularity will notice the ongoing removal of trees. I understand the importance of maintaining a safe environment for

tified the manager about a tree limb lying on the fence between markers 9 & 10. Rather than simply trim the branch that broke away from the tree, the entire tree was cut-down. When a tree is removed, an ugly 15 or 20-foot trunk is often left behind, protruding angrily from the earth.

Our most recent budget proposes approximately \$50,000 to pay for "probable increases" to our operating budget for a landscape maintenance contract that will go out to bid in 2018. One way to reduce these anticipated costs is to stop cutting down perfectly healthy trees. Will a portion of this budget be used to replant new trees? For a community that claims to recognize the incredible value of our secluded property, we sure have a funny way of showing it. I am calling on the Board to control these landscape efforts and preserve our woodlands. 📧

Photos by Michael Hora



residents and the preservation of personal property, but I simply cannot understand why the association is authorizing the removal of so many perfectly sound and healthy trees. During a recent hike, I identified three large trees that were recently removed at/or near trail-markers #5, #17 and at the large pedestrian bridge behind building 2; this is pitiful. There was no good reason to remove these trees. I am not suggesting that we ignore tree maintenance, but there needs to be some common sense in these decisions. I recently no-

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Pardon me for saying ‘pardon me?’

By a fictitious composite member of the Montebello staff (formulated by Karen and Donald Barnes)

Hello. It is good to see you again. I often see as you make your way around Montebello – in the resident buildings, the Community Center, the Fitness Center, or just walking around the grounds.

You may have noticed that, in the past, during such encounters I often averted my eyes and took sudden interest in a spot on the floor. It is not that I was uninterested or did not care about you. Instead, I was embarrassed by my poor English. Too often, when you offered a kindly greeting (“What’s up these days?”) or asked a simple question (“What did you think of the eclipse?”), I did not catch what you said or could not understand what you meant, so I found myself asking in response, “Pardon me?”

You see, I came to the US more than a decade ago. Conditions in my country were not good, and I managed to make it to America. However, my limited English has resulted in my spending much of my time with others who are also native speakers of my language. Even though we like working at Montebello and believe the residents are wonderful people, the language continues to be a challenge for us.

Now, conditions are changing. Some of my co-workers have become US citizens, and I am studying to take the citizenship test later this year. I know that speaking English well is important in passing the test and in becoming the kind of US citizen I want to be.

In addition, with the introduction of the new “Service Starts Here” program among the Montebello staff, there is an emphasis on our being more responsive to the residents as we do our work. But, here again, my limited English has been a barrier.

So I am thrilled that Montebello General Manager George Gardner has made it possible for nearly a dozen of us on the Montebello staff to receive oral English classes for two hours every week for the past three months. Building 1 resident Carole Appel enlisted Karen and Donald Barnes to serve with her as volunteer co-teachers to help us with everything from simple sentence patterns and everyday vocabulary, to clearer pronunciation and rudimentary spelling. But most important, they have been gently forcing us to speak English. In doing so, we have become more skilled and more confident in our abilities to communicate in English.

Now, we genuinely look forward to speaking with you so that we can serve you better. If there are other residents who would like to join in this effort to help us improve our English, please contact the Barneses at chinakaren@yahoo.com to learn more. 📧

Upcoming eclipse glasses and electronics recycling

By Diane Bastin

We found out that the Arlington County Public Libraries are collecting used eclipse glasses for the Astronomers without Borders who will be sending them to African and South American schools in time for the next total eclipse in 2019. We plan to recycle our glasses. Go to <http://astronomerswithoutborders.org> for more information.

If you have eclipse glasses you would like to recycle, you can drop them off at our unit 2-615 by September 8th (please list your name and unit number so that we can keep track of who dropped off glasses).

As promised, here are the dates on which we are available to pick up recycling

items from your units: Wednesday, September 6 between 4 and 5p.m. or Friday the 8 between 7 and 8:30 p.m.

If you are not available at those times, you may leave the items in front of your door and we will pick them up on either of those afternoons, or you are welcome to drop them off at our unit. Please make sure they are clearly marked with your name and unit number.

We accept all electronic and hazardous household items that Fairfax County recycles (and that fit in our van).

That includes: electronics such as computers, TVs, phones, printers, cords, etc., and fluorescent light bulbs, rechargeable batteries (not alkaline which must be disposed of in the trash),

paint, solvents, articles that contain mercury, fire extinguishers, and aerosol cans. For hazardous items, please make sure items are sealed and contents is marked.

We would appreciate it if you could help spread the word among the neighbors.

For assistance, email us at montebello_e_cycles@icloud.com. 📧

*The Montebello
Voice wants to
hear from you*

What do you know about Patriot Day?

By Elizabeth Card

It is, by law, a solemn annual observance to honor the individuals who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

On October 25, 2001, House Joint Resolution 71 was introduced and passed the House of Representatives without amendment by a vote of 407 to zero. Senate Joint Resolution 29 was introduced and passed the Senate without amendment by unanimous consent on November 30, 2001. On December 18, 2001, President George W. Bush signed Public Law 107-89, amending Title 36 of the United States Code to designate September 11 as Patriot Day.



According to a summary prepared by the Congressional Research Service, the legislation:

“Designates September 11 as Patriot Day. Requests the President to issue a proclamation each year regarding the observation of Patriot Day and the display of the U.S. flag at half staff in honor of individuals who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.”

Remembering our nation’s founding, every year on April 19 residents of Massachusetts, Maine and Wisconsin celebrate Patriots’ Day. According to Joon Lee of The Bleacher Report: “Historically, Patriots’ Day marks the anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the first battles of the American Revolutionary War, and is a state holiday in Massachusetts, Maine and Wisconsin. The history that underlies the holiday marks a point of pride for many in the Boston area, where re-enactments of the battles occur annually.” 🇺🇸

Data communication network renovation project

In case you missed the September 5 town hall meeting to discuss the data communication network to upgrade Montebello’s internal communications, the document on the association

website at http://www.montebello.org/document_category.asp?cat_id=8&name=Board%20Agenda has all the latest information about this major overhaul.

Bulletin boards reminder

Your friendly building representatives report how pleased they are with the first month of our new bulletin boards. They ask that residents be mindful of the posted rules: all notices must be on 3x5 cards, no religious or political ads are allowed, a resident’s name must be on the card, and all cards will be taken down the last day of the month.

Residents may recommend services of outside vendors, such as cleaning or repair. If a business card is used, it must be attached to a 3x5 card with the resident’s name on the bottom.

Connect with Wellness Club

Montebello’s new Wellness Club is now on the Internet. Connect with other health- and fitness-minded neighbors at mbwellness.club. One of the links is video tutorials for using the fitness center equipment. More resources are coming.

The club meets on the first Thursday of each month in Party Room 1 at 7 p.m.



The gazebos are undergoing much-needed repairs to the roofs



By *Melissa McClure*

Alexandra Deerr was the first person to be pulled out of Ms. Smith's 4th grade class on September 11, 2001. Alexandra didn't know why her dad was taking her out of class before lunch that day, she was the first of many to be called and taken home early. By lunch, what seemed like half of the school was missing. By the end of the school day, I was one of maybe four kids left in Ms. Smith's class.

As the day progressed, our teacher finally told what remained of the class that there had been an accident nearby and that's why so many students were leaving to go home early and be with their families. That was all the explanation that was given at school.

I was mad. At 3 p.m., I was picked up by my babysitter as if it was any normal day. When I got home to the Montebello, I saw that my parents were already there. That made me even more mad.

I was mad because my parents were just sitting at home and I hadn't been picked up from school early like so many of my classmates. The larger reason that I was mad was because this was all happening on my 9th birthday.

At this point, I didn't even know what had happened but I knew that I had not gotten to spend my birthday with my friends, I did not get to celebrate at lunch, and that something bad had occurred. It didn't seem fair.

That evening, my family watched the news and I finally got to see what happened. I saw the footage of the airplane that crashed into the Twin Towers. I saw the rubble from the

My 9th birthday

Pentagon. I heard the stories of the brave men and women who were trying to help. Yet watching all of this did not prepare me for the fact that this was an event that would forever impact American history and would make 9/11 such a well-known date.

The next morning, when we all went back to school, it was announced that a classmate's father had been killed during the plane crash at the Pentagon. This felt like a personal attack to have a classmate's father die, as if there was not enough to grieve already. This went on to affect the rest of our 4th grade year and the rest of my elementary and middle school experience, as every year on September 11th the idea of celebrating a birthday on a day marked by such loss became almost inappropriate. No one wanted to celebrate my birthday as a classmate grieves for the loss of his father and the nation mourns for thousands.

As September 11, 2017 marks my 25th birthday, I still have extremely mixed feelings about the day. It's hard to celebrate a day that will forever be one in which my home city was attacked, a day when thousands of people died at the hands of terrorists, a day which eventually led to not one but two wars, and a day which will forever go down as one of the United States of America's most infamous days in history. A part of me still wants to celebrate my birthday on the actual day. My friends and family always try to make it special regardless. However, everyone is more reserved about it, including myself.



By Kathie Price

On September 11, I returned to NYU from sabbatical in Europe by Amtrak from D.C., where I had stopped over in my townhouse to receive delayed luggage. While my cab headed south, we saw the first plane hit the World Trade Center. As we pulled up to the law school, the second plane hit.

No one yet knew what happened, so we were glued to TV, receiving word of **evacuations and escape attempts** from the upper floors of the buildings. Classes were just beginning for the fall, so the 400 foreign grad students and law students were strangers. We had rented a building near the WTC for our foreign grad students who were forbidden to go there to rescue their pets. Soon the Village was closed down and all of our students stuck in the city had to be housed with friends or law students. Brooks Brothers sent over

cartons of t-shirts from their end-of-season sale so the students could change clothes.

We spent the quarantine week **leaving flow-ers** at our neighborhood fire station or writing **peace messages on white stripes of U.S. flags** hung on the fences at Washington Square Park or on brown paper rolled out at Union Square Park. Since I lived in nearby faculty housing, I was on call to write passes for students seeking to leave the Village. Meanwhile, colleagues in the med school were manning emergency rooms **expecting non-existent survivors**. We hung on TV reports of heroism and tragic loss.

When the Village reopened, my sabbatical resumed. I headed for the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress and the anthrax scare that closed Capitol Hill!

By Ralph Johnson

It started as a beautiful morning. Gracie and I were invited to play tennis with Dr. Wally Eden, our dentist, on his home court at nearby Telegraph Road. While waiting to start, Wally came to the court saying that a plane had hit a building in New York. We talked, then Wally went to his home for additional information. He returned stating that a second plane hit another building. We and the nation realized that the second plane was **not an accident, but terrorism**. Wally was extremely concerned as his wife was on a plane flying to California at that moment. She reached her destination safely.



Pentagon Smoke 9/11, 11:30 a.m.

We then heard **a loud explosion**, which happened to be the third plane hitting the Pentagon. We forgot tennis. Gracie and I returned to Montebello to observed the smoke rising from the Pentagon and learned of Flight 93.

Americans will observe the sixteen anniversary of 9/11, which has been followed by additional death and destruction around the world. Will we be wise enough to know our real enemies and do all that is possible to protect and preserve our freedoms, our many forms of happiness and ways of life. Let us dedicate our sad memories of 16 years ago to **building a united America** with all citizens being one!



By John Powers

On September 11, 2001, I was in Salt Lake City chairing the Infrastructure Readiness Conference in advance of the 2002 Winter Games. The cyber threat was a growing concern and I was asked to chair the conference because of my stint as the Executive Director of the 1996-98 Presidents Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection. The purpose of the conference was to determine what actions were needed to prevent outages to the electric, communications and TV networks that were essential to the success of the games.

At 7:03 MT, while eating breakfast, I watched the second plane go into the South Tower. I quickly finished breakfast, pulled my materials together and proceeded to the conference room. By 7:40, there were already about 200 present but in total disarray. While arranging my materials, a civil engineer from the Sandia National Lab came up to the podium and said **“these towers are going to come down.”** I found this a bit incredulous and expressed my amazement but just before 8 a.m. South Tower collapsed.

At the 8 a.m. starting time, I called for order (33 years in the Marine Corps does help in situations like this even though most of my time was in the reserves). The room got quiet and I directed that **“everyone with duties related to what is going on in New York and D.C. please leave and attend to those duties.”** A FEMA Regional Director, the head of security for LAX and about 15 others got up and left. I continued, **“all of the rest of us have a duty to perform here and we will do what we came here to do. Please be seated.”** At about 8:10 the conference continued as programmed with the exception of two speakers who had departed.

After the conference ended the next day at noon, I was faced with how to get back to D.C. Fortunately I found an attendee who had a rented van so with one other we headed out at about 3 p.m. We shared the driving 2 on and 4 off, arrived in Denver near midnight, got hotel rooms, drove to Indianapolis the next day and on to D.C. somewhat the worse for wear on the next but **glad to be home.**

By Richard Titus

For me the most horrifying 9/11 memory is of people jumping to their deaths from 60+ stories in the air, to escape the flames. And the firemen of course, hundreds of them died in a vain attempt to help.

I'm saddened to think that we appear to have **learned nothing from 9/11**, and that something similar may await us before too long. The U.S. reaction to 9/11, then and now, is basically: **“We're such great guys; what kind of demons could do this to us?”** It remains to be seen whether historians years from now will describe us as the **innocent victims that we see in the mirror.**

But for now, a few things one doesn't hear in our 9/11 commemorations. First, this kind of mayhem is a very frequent occurrence in cities around the world, often with the support of U.S. dollars, munitions, and dictators. Our **media shield us from too much awareness** of this. Second, viewed purely as a military operation, it was brilliantly conceived and flawlessly executed, over a period of years. Only unforeseeable runway congestion at Logan In-

ternational prevented it from being 100% successful. Third, looked at as a frightening visual spectacle, the collapse of the Twin Towers can be ranked on a par with pictures of atomic bombs. (The PBS documentary **“The Center of the World”** captures it well).

Fourth, the negative long-term effects of 9/11 on our politics continue to this day. In a discovered tape Bin Laden can be heard telling some close associates that **he never expected it to be so successful.** But it was. Fifth, in the years before 9/11, the U.S. taxpayer had spent many billions of dollars annually to support our intelligence and spy agencies, of which there are close to twenty. What had all this money been buying? A few years before 9/11 an attempt had been made on one of the Twin Towers. And months before, field agents had alerted their superiors to such suspicious events as numerous Arab men taking flight training. Had the upper echelons of the intelligence bureaucracies followed up on any of these leads 9/11 could have been prevented. But they didn't follow up, did they? Why should we expect the performance to be any better next time? Which there surely will be.



By Carol Comlish

On **that fateful day** sixteen years ago, I was sitting at my desk at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda Md., when my son Matthew called. Matt was listening to the car radio on the way to Dulles airport. His voice shaking, he told me that a plane had hit the World Trade Center in New York but nothing else was known. Matt is a commercial airline pilot and he thought the plane must have been a Cessna because there was **no way a commercial airplane could accidentally**

hit the towers. The route from both airports doesn't go near the city. In those first few moments he, like everyone else who heard the news, waited anxiously to hear more.

Matt was on his way to Dulles to pick up his brother Greg who was flying home from San Francisco, changing planes in Pittsburgh, to celebrate his birthday with our family. **Greg's birthday is on September 11th.** When Matt arrived at the airport he joined a crowd watching CNN news on the terminal TV. Minutes later, screams pierced the silence as they learned that a second plane had hit the towers. The crowd, desperate to learn which airline had crashed, began accosting the gate agents with their cries for more infor-

mation. Pandemonium! All flights in the air were then ordered to land and stay put.

Trying to remain calm as he waited for Greg's flight, the steady stream of news was suddenly interrupted by still another horrifying revelation. American Airlines flight 77 had crashed into the Pentagon! Shocked, Matt realized that he had previously reserved the jump seat (for pilots) on that same flight for September 11th, but canceled it when he learned that Greg was coming home. Whew!

Then, CNN announced that a plane scheduled to land at Dulles had not yet landed and may have been hijacked. More worry. Where was Greg's plane? Matt could get no information on his flight. The gate agents had disappeared.

Shortly thereafter, CNN reported that a plane had crashed near Shanksville, Pa. Matt knew that Shanksville was in a direct route from Pittsburgh to Dulles. He immediately called me at work. **Amid sobs, he said he was certain that Greg was on that plane I refused to believe it or think about it. I prayed.**

Waiting in agony for more news about the Pitts-

burgh flight, Matt replayed in his mind all the good times he and his brother had spent traveling the world together. Where was he?

Sometime later, he glanced toward the jet way and saw Greg walking calmly through the crowd, completely oblivious to the chaos surrounding him. Running toward him, weaving through the crowds as fast as he could, he grabbed his brother and hugged him tightly, not wanting to ever let him go.

I have two other children who were living in New York city on September 11, 2001. Michael, who witnessed the horror as it progressed, has tried to erase the memories of that terrifying day, but still they linger. And Chrissy, who was working at Calvin Klein in Manhattan. Everyone at Calvin Klein was told that they could either shelter in place or try and make their way home. Chrissy decided to walk the **eighty blocks home amidst toxic, fuel-permeated smoke and particles of flying debris.** She arrived home safely. My worry was that breathing the contaminated air might, in time, affect her lungs. So far, she's fine.

I am grateful that my children survived their experiences on 9/11. Many did not.



By Rachael Bright

I'll never forget how glorious the morning was on my way into work that day. It was one of those cloudless warm September mornings. The sky was impossibly blue. I felt that today would surely be a perfect golden day.

And then I got the call. It was shortly after I had turned off the alarm and the shop was still mostly dark, I hadn't even set my bags down yet. The call was from my boss, Patti. She said something terrible just happened, a plane had hit one of the towers in the World Trade Center.

At this time we thought it was **just a horrific accident**. While on the phone with her, line two lit up from an incoming call. It was my co-worker Amanda calling to tell me she would be late, she was making an emergency trip to the vet for her sick kitty. I asked her if she had heard about the accident. Unbeknownst to me at the time, her husband was there for a conference. I will never forget the **sound of her wail**. I can still hear it echoing in my memory. I begged her to pull her car over as she was tearfully explaining that he could be in there.

Then the line one lit up again. Patti had called back, and she told me the horrible truth. The second tower was struck. It was most definitely not an accident. I told her about a distraught Amanda on the other line. Patti said, **"Lock up the shop, it would be an affront to those suffering to be open today."** I hung up with her, clicked over to Amanda and said, "Stay put. I am coming to get you."

I then tried to call my husband and parents, and the lines were all tied up. This is when the cold reality started sinking in. Never before had we had **a clogged grid**, and it scared me. I quickly locked up the shop and as soon as I was ready to run, saw the shop keeper across the street standing out front trying to get a signal. Seeing her there stopped me. I was suddenly compelled to run to her and we embraced and cried. I'd never seen her before or since.

The rest of the day is a jumble of memories. I spent most of the day with Amanda waiting by my the phone. We finally heard from her husband in late afternoon. He had been **one of the last people to make it out of Tower One alive**. He walked miles that day, down the many floors of the fire escape and then miles to safety, all the while being coated in toxic dust.

I remember finding myself among friends at a local restaurant at Hollin Hall. I saw Pentagon personnel walking by. They all looked like they had walked all the way from the Pentagon. All their **faces were ghostly masks of despair**. I remember the smoke from the Pentagon. It smoldered for what seemed like an eternity. The smoke hung like **a funeral shroud** hanging above our roadways.

Looking back on that black day and days following 9/11, I found **profound comfort in friends, family, neighbors, co-workers and even strangers**. I gave love, more love than I usually give in my day-to-day existence, as well as receiving an abundance of love. I remember lots of tears and hugging. Hugging people I hadn't seen in ages as well as my usual suspects!

To this day I still cannot watch footage of Twin Towers and the Pentagon burning without turning away in tears, and running to look for someone to hug.



The day our world changed

By Rebecca McNeely

The phone rang early that morning in Northern California and I jumped up, surprised at its insistence, and heard my daughter's voice across the line from D.C. "Mom, turn on the TV and don't go anywhere today."

The TV came on and my first image was one of the towers of the World Trade Center being pierced by an airplane and **bodies falling** from it. My heart raced.

What is happening? I asked groggily. "Planes have crashed into the World Trade Center. It's an attack. Please stay home today and be safe," she said. "There are two other rogue planes in the sky that may attack. One is scheduled to fly cross country to SFO."

My mind was suddenly overwhelmed with the thought that I may be a refugee before the day is over. I had seen so many heart wrenching images of political and war refugees. It had never occurred to me that **it could happen to us in the United States**. Then I realized that planes scheduled for nonstop flights across country carrying full loads of fuel would be the ones to crash into targets on

the East Coast – thus seeking maximum damage.

Moments later, as I hung on the phone with my daughter like a lifeline, the news came on that one of the planes had attacked the Pentagon and that another one was headed for the White House. A few moments later, the fourth plane was diverted and downed in a field in Pennsylvania thanks to the **brave men and women on board**.

The world changed that day. Never again would we Americans be so innocent and feel so secure. We had been **attacked within our nation in a simple, terrifying manner**. Refugees we had welcomed and taught to fly planes were now flying them into our most important structures.

I was in shock along with my daughter and the rest of our fellow Americans. I wanted to talk to my husband but he was in Austin, Texas at a conference and we were unable to connect for a day or two. Even though the Bin Laden family were flown out of the U.S. and back to Saudi Arabia for their own safety, my husband and many, many other Americans were stranded throughout the country while planes were grounded. My husband finally made it back to San Francisco five days after the catastrophe. "I would have rented a car if I had known it would take this long to get a flight," he said.

I have never been so glad to see someone as I was that day when he returned.

The fallout of this tragedy continued. **The loss of American life was devastating**. A colleague I had worked with at National Geographic died in the plane that crashed into the Pentagon. A good friend of my daughter was arriving at work late in Manhattan and as he came out of the subway, he saw the first building fall and wisely turned around and went right back down into the subway and home. Another acquaintance of mine was the sister of the man who mobilized the passengers on the plane that went down in Pennsylvania with the famous words, **"Let's roll."** Many tales like this were told. We all had personal connections with this tragedy beyond the nationwide body blow announcing that no one was safe anymore.

Repercussions continued. The stock options that my husband had earned over the years in Silicon Valley tanked as the stock market fell. Our options that had been worth \$114 per share on September 10 were worth \$14 per share the day the market reopened after a week of being closed. Layoffs were endemic as a result. Housing prices fell.

Suddenly the world we knew retrenched into a crouching position as we waited for answers to the inevitable question: What will happen next?"



A small part in a large tragedy

By Rebecca Hayden

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I went to work. I had obligations to myself, my family, and my employer, as did the people in the World Trade Center and at the Pentagon. They fulfilled their obligations and went to work.

On that day I was in a briefing at the Department of State at 23rd and C Street. After the briefing, I would spend the afternoon and all day Friday at on off-site, and I had much on my mind.

Did I pack the right clothes? Was my statement of goals boring? What about the work that wouldn't get done because I was away? These concerns loomed large at 8:30 a.m. They became irrelevant within the hour.

Just after 9 the meeting recessed, so I went to my office. I entered the suite to what I can describe as a *strangeness*, a standing around, **a blank look shared by my colleagues.** Something was wrong.

A plane crashed into the World Trade Center, someone said, and there was a remark about poor navigation. So a disaster – a plane crash, loss of lives, bad news, but there's always bad news.

And **then it changed.** News spread that a second plane had crashed into the

towers, and **at that moment we knew.** A terrorist attack.

We dispersed, looking for TV sets, the front office, in the auditorium lobby. That's where I went, confused and uncertain, but it was in New York, not in D.C. I stood next to a man I didn't know.

"The **towers will collapse,**" he mumbled. "I'm an engineer. They should already be down."

As I stared at the screen everything around me dissolved. All that existed was the awful, graceful, perfect image of the swan-diving airplanes, right into the mighty buildings, planes full of people, offices full of people. All dead.

And more shock. Scrolling across the bottom of the screen: "**The Pentagon is in flames.**"

My attention left the screen when two big men with earpieces ran past, yelling. *Get out, get out, get out!* I would learn they knew of another in-bound plane, maybe more than one. But they didn't know the target.

Another unimaginable scroll on the screen: "A plane crash in Pennsylvania."

No one knew where to go or what to do, because none of this was possible. On a normal morning in the heart of our nation, things were **exploding, burning, and falling from the sky.**

When the diplomatic security people began to evacuate the building, I went back upstairs for my purse. If a plane had been aimed at the State Department, I would have died for a little money

and a lipstick. People flowed like water out of the building, only to spend confused minutes standing on the sidewalks. A co-worker asked me something so trivial I can't recall what it was, but his tone was chatty.

"**What about the brillig and the slithy toves?**" he said. Apologies to Lewis Carroll, but that's how it sounds in my memory.

"The planes." I thought no further explanation would be required.

"Planes? I've been in a computer class. We broke, and I followed the crowd. I thought it was a fire drill."

Soon we were dismissed. No off-site. No worries about what was in my suitcase, which remained untouched at my desk for days. The rest of that day breaks into blurry vignettes.

@ The surreal exodus from the District. Thousands of people trying to get home, wearing suits and ties, carrying briefcases. I walked part-way to Crystal City, where I lived, and hitch-hiked the rest of the way. I jumped a center divider and cut my ankle – **my 9-11 scar.** The compelling need to get home, to be in touch, to talk to my kids, my husband, my mother.

& F-16s flying overhead, low, air-launched cruise missiles hanging under their wings. From my days working for the Air Force, I knew these missiles were usual-



ly dummies, but this time, I felt **an awful certainty they were live missiles.**

It was three o'clock, and I was home before my husband, who didn't make it for hours, caught in traffic. I had too many competing priorities – a bleeding ankle, dehydration, I needed a shower, I couldn't wait to turn on the television, 18 messages on the answering machine.

From my daughter, at the University of Georgia: **“Mom. Mom, call me.** Call me. Please, as soon as you can. Love you.” At the University of Georgia, she heard a radio report of “a massive bombing at the State

Department.” There were several such news reports saying this.

My son, at work in Savannah, heard them, too. His voice on the machine sounded angry. “Mom. Call me. Call Shannon. I talked to her. Call me. **Love you.**”

My sister-in-law in Minneapolis: “It's Ellen. We heard from Christa. She had to walk from

Manhattan, but she's fine. It's Ellen. Call me. Love you.”

My mother: “Hi, honey. It's me. I'm sure you're OK, but call me. I love you.”

Every single call ended with “I love you.”

I showered, stopped the bleeding, returned the phone calls, and turned on the TV, not to move away for many hours. The reporters said

nothing would ever be

the same. I didn't believe that. But sadly, they were right.

Nothing has ever been the same since that day.

By *Mikhailina Karina*

We had just celebrated our son's first birthday and Jerome's grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary in Eloyes, France. It was the first time I'd met the large extended family that converged in this small town in the Vosges Mountains in France's northeast corner.

On September 11, my in-laws drove us two hours through picturesque mountain villages to Strasbourg, where we took the first leg of our return trip to Alexandria. Our **flight from De Gaulle in Paris was due to leave at 4:30 p.m.**

(France is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time). Half an hour before boarding, airport officials looked very concerned and told us the flight was being delayed.

Then news began coming out about something happening in New York, something about airplanes hitting the World Trade Center. We still had no details about what had taken place, but the airport announced that all flights to the United States were canceled. The **U.S. air space**

and the borders were

closed. Mayhem ensued for thousands of travelers en route to the U.S. as people scrambled to find hotel rooms or make new travel arrangements.

With our son, Albéric, in a backpack carrier the entire time, my husband got into several of the long lines to get a return flight to Strasbourg. He called his parents to let them know we were coming back later in the evening. My in-laws made another two-hour trek back to Strasbourg to ferry us home.

Unlike other travelers who were in the air at the time of the attack and were stranded outside the United States, we were lucky that we could stay with family for the next 10 days.

The following morning, we went to Jerome's grandparents' house, where they had cable TV, and finally saw the devastation from the day before. My in-laws are not prone to touchy-feely discussions and the subject of why our vacation was unexpectedly extended did not come up.

Life went on as before in France, but I walked around within a thick

cloud of grief I could not express. I was suspended between the charming normalcy of a French countryside and almost no access to the news. I felt disconnected from what was happening at home and had to wait to experience the full grief.

Albéric took his first steps. I finally found a wedding ring that made sense. We drove to an orchard in Lorraine to buy apples for winter storage. A chilly and wet autumn had set in and we borrowed warm clothes. It was a very long 10 days that did not feel like a vacation, but living in limbo with **a sick feeling in the pit of the stomach.**

When we made it home, the full trauma of the attacks hit me anew as I finally had access to the news. I talked with people who shared their September 11 stories and vicariously relived that day when I should have been *here* to live through it.

A few days later I learned that I was pregnant with Amédé.

out & about



Our town, our gang

Families celebrate another Montebello native, Marco Colón, going off to college. Lined up in birth order, right to left, are Lucas, 20 (junior at Virginia Tech), Marco, 18 (freshman at NOVA), Albéric, 17, Sarah, 15, Sophie, 15, Amédé, 15, Tomás, 14, Sofia, 12, Dominic, 12, and Philip, 11.

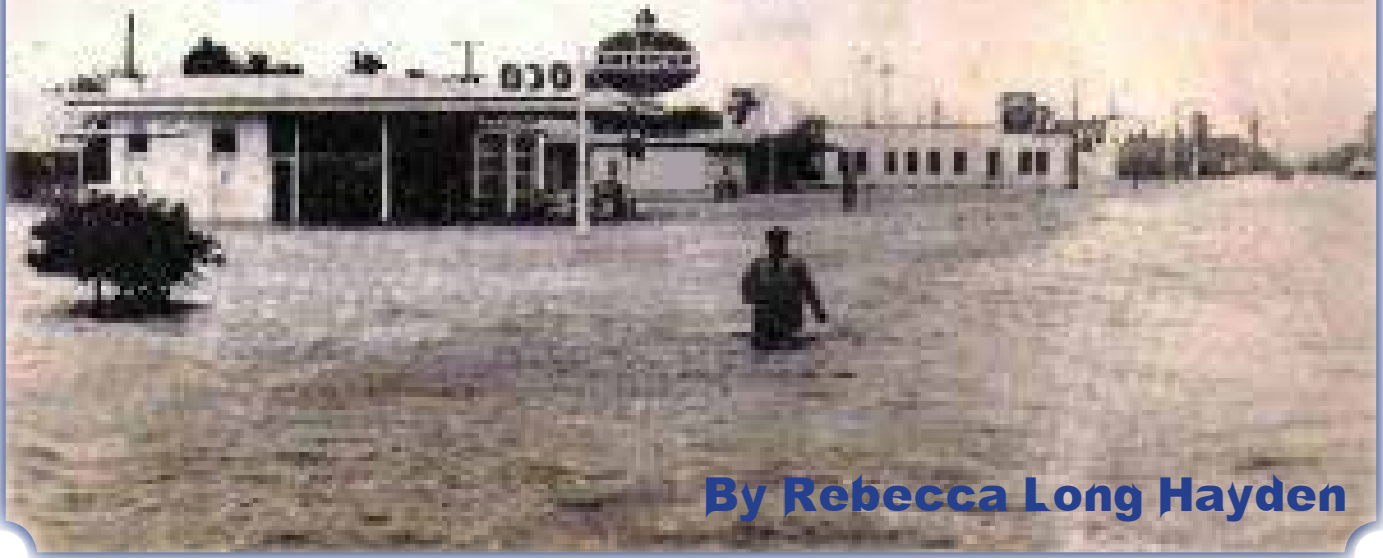
Photo by Diane Bastin



Retired journalist Frances Kilpatrick spoke at the Women's Club luncheon last week. She spoke of delightful memories of her professional life – a life that took her into many states and abroad. The Café prepared a lovely buffet and 53 women were in attendance.

Photo by Guin Jones and Gene Campbell

Hurricanes and heroes



By Rebecca Long Hayden

Texas City circa September 12

Tuesday, September 5, 1961 – A tropical storm forms off the coast of Honduras.

Labor Day passed, the picnic baskets were put away, the sun set and rose, and the first day of school arrived. Always a celebration, but especially in September of 1961, my first year at Texas City High School. The heat lingered, but the mood shifted overnight. Time for new clothes, new classes, and football. September, glorious as summer, but busy instead of lazy, focused instead of dreamy.

Sunshine pounded the treeless patio of TCHS, where I waited with Carolyn, my friend and next-door neighbor, for the first bell of the first day. The school spread like an amoeba over six acres of flat prairie in the middle of town, mid-century modern – flat roofs, catwalks, and sprawling hallways. It opened in 1957, so it still smelled new, and we were proud of it.

Wednesday, September 6 – The tropical storm reaches hurricane strength as it moves north past the Yucatan peninsula. It's christened Hurricane Carla.

By Wednesday at school I knew where all the restrooms were, and I had enough paperwork to read until

I was a senior, all about classes, drills, gym clothes, pep rallies, PTA meetings, clubs, student parking and more. If it existed in the well-established world of public education in Texas City, I had a handout about it.

Thursday, September 7 – Hurricane Carla skims the Yucatan peninsula and enters the Gulf of Mexico.

My hair was, in female parlance, *a mess*, but I couldn't help it. I heard Carolyn honking in her driveway next door. I rode to school with her, so I had to go. I only got turned around once that day, when I thought I was going toward the gym, but I ended up back at the patio.

Friday, September 8 - Hurricane watches are issued for the entire Texas coast.

By Friday I was a seasoned high school girl. Carolyn knew where to park. I knew I could sit in her car in the parking lot and still hear the first bell. I felt smug and grown up. Come Monday, no doubt, I would walk around looking like the self-assured juniors and seniors. What could go wrong?

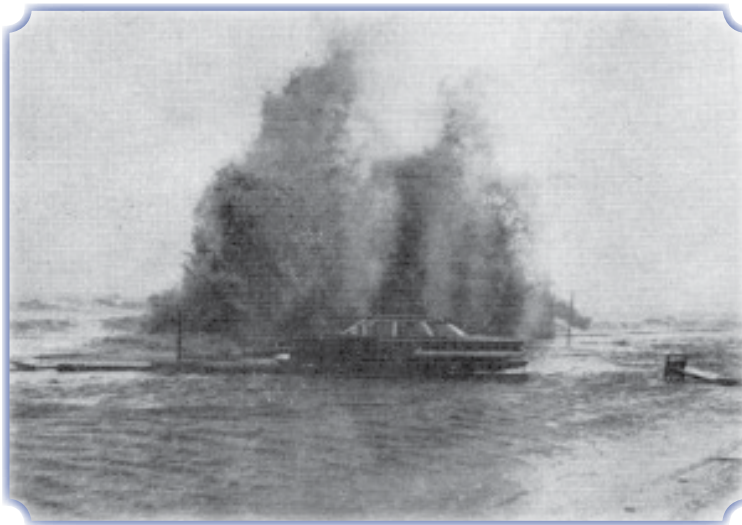
When there's a storm in the Gulf of Mexico, coastal dwellers watch and wait. My mother picked me up from school on Friday (saddle shoes were

on sale at Penny's), and after shopping we drove out on the Texas City dike, a long man-made finger of land between the oil refineries and the open gulf. This storm, still 400 miles out to sea, already shoved the tide a foot above normal. It was big, too – gale force winds covering an area of 500 miles in diameter.

My mother shook her head as she looked at the water. "Too high." She was a Texas City native. She had seen storms come and go, and she didn't like it.

When we got home Aunt Jackie called. She didn't like it, either. Tomorrow, Saturday, they were taking my cousin Beverly back to school at Sam Houston State College, which would also serve as their personal evacuation plan. Jackie suggested we come with them to Huntsville, in our own car. We could make do and stay in Bev's dorm room overnight. It would probably blow over by Sunday at the latest.

Saturday, September 9 – The Texas and Louisiana coasts are under a hurricane warning. By 1 p.m. Carla picks Texas, but it's a long coastline. Where? Tides are already two to three feet above normal. This hurricane's a tease, too, stalling, starting, stalling again, but it's expected to make landfall on Sunday, September 10.



Galveston, September 1961

My easy-going Uncle Raymond seldom made demands, but no matter where we were going, he gently insisted we leave at 4 a.m., which made us crazy, but this time it saved us from chaos. By noon people were leaving the coast voluntarily, and later in the day, the authorities issued a formal evacuation order. Not that everyone complied – as usual, many didn't. During the next two days half a million people evacuated the coastal areas, the largest coastal evacuation in U.S. history at the time.

Because of our 4 a.m. departure we avoided the traffic jams, but nevertheless, when we arrived in Huntsville it was full of returning students and others who thought they might as well go on up to Huntsville, *just in case*. No matter

the warnings, no one expected a catastrophe until it couldn't be denied. Our plans went south as the storm headed north. There was a mix-up, and Bev's dorm wasn't open for students yet, and every room in Huntsville was taken, every

motel had a waiting list.

Uncle Raymond had five females in his charge, my aunt and my cousin, my mother, my sister, and me, and that good man took this responsibility seriously. There were other men in the family, but my cousin Ray was away in the Army, and my stepfather, a towboat captain, was pushing barges up the Mississippi River.

After trying several motels, all full, all with waiting lists, Raymond got tactical. He nodded politely, and asked the manager if it would be OK to sit and read the paper. After all, said Raymond, he had nowhere to go, and five women waiting in the car, one of them just a little girl. The manager shrugged. About an hour into it, someone checked out. Raymond got the room, waiting list or not. He didn't threaten or insist. He just found a way.

He was a hero to me, even though it was just one room with two beds and a small couch. Poor Raymond got the couch. Fatigue and worry did us all in, though, and after watching the bad news on TV for a while, exhaustion overtook us, and we slept uninterrupted, even by our nightmares, until early Sunday morning.

Sunday, September 10 – Hurricane Carla stalls, then begins to move and stall, move and stall, and by noon, the storm is 160 miles from Galveston.

The next morning and throughout the day, the adults were glued to the TV. A crazy young reporter and stood in the wind and rain in Galveston. In 1961 the image of Dan Rather in hurricane-force winds was new and riveting. He waded into the surf to deliver ominous news. Instead of moving inland and dissipating, Hurricane Carla had stalled. The storm by all predictions would move inland on Sunday, but it didn't. Even with sophisticated weather techniques, hurricanes are ever unpredictable. When Carla decided to move again, it was by fits and starts.

Monday, September 11 – Hurricane Carla finally moves inland at Port O'Connor, 160 miles from Texas City and well within the 300-mile swath of the massive storm. Hurricane force winds and high tides pummel the coast, from Port Aransas near Corpus Christi to Sabine Pass on the Louisiana border.



Typical scene for weeks in Texas City after Carla

Bev and I woke up early, and the adults never went to bed. The storm had moved inland at last, so everyone assumed it would soon be over, bad as it was. Dan Rather and other reporters spoke of 15 foot tides and 40 foot waves.

The storm dropped from Category 5 to Category 4, but to make up for it, it stalled again, pummeling the coast with 150 mile an hour winds and gusts up to 175 miles per hour. Carla danced in circles off the coast for three hours, and the damage multiplied, as if to send a message to all coastal dwellers:

There, said Carla, you like living on the coast? You like the water, the gulls, the beach, the fresh breeze? Well, there's a price to pay, so pay up.

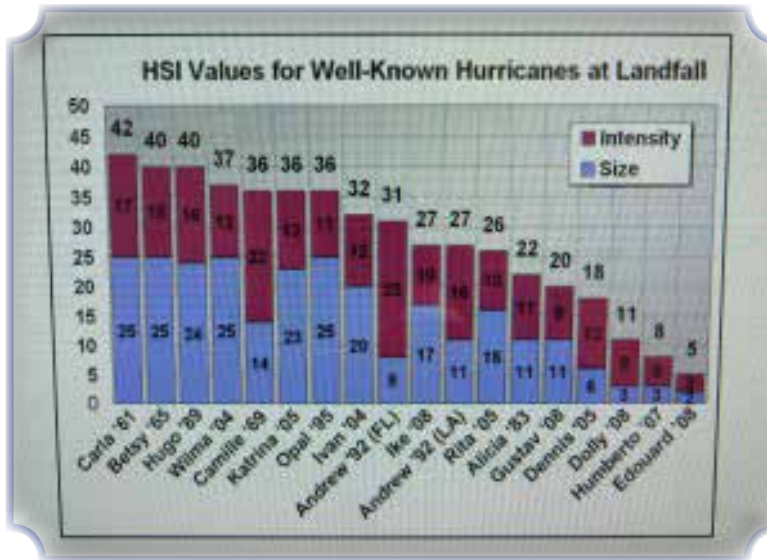
And pay up we did. Hurricane Carla did \$2.5 billion worth of damage (in 2014 dollars). Forty-six people lost their lives.

The rain had pushed inland ahead of the storm, and it was pounding outside our motel in Huntsville. The adults didn't look up when Bev and I donned our plastic raincoats and left the room. We sat down on the soaking wet furniture by the pool and cried. Rain pocked the pool surface and ran down our plastic-covered arms. The hood on Bev's raincoat had a tiny visor, and I can still see the drops falling off the visor onto her cheeks like a 60s love song – *is it tears I see, or is it rain?*

"That's it," she said, gathering her composure. "I can't register for school now. My parents will need the money."

I had nothing to offer or give up, though I wanted to. She looked like a hero to me. She would do what she had to do.

We went back inside, and Bev relayed her decision to her mother. Aunt Jackie thanked her, and said what mattered was Bev's education, more than carpet or furniture, more than the whole damned house. So Aunt Jackie was my hero, too, and Bev stayed in Huntsville.



Tuesday, September 12 – The storm loses its punch as it moves further inland, but still causes havoc across Texas into Oklahoma, up through Missouri, and Michigan, finally blowing itself out as stormy weather in Canada, ending its 13-day career as one of the all-time great and most destructive hurricanes in U.S. history.

We were all numb, and I don't remember how long before we headed home. We followed Jackie and Raymond, but we became separated, and my next recollection is sitting outside at a burger joint in the closest town to Texas City, La Marque, unsure what to do next. My mother spotted the only person she knew in La Marque. He was leaving the parking lot, and she ran after the car, arms waving, screaming "Bob! Bob! Stop! Stop!"

I thought I would perish with embarrassment. I didn't understand this was a break for us. No rooms were available anywhere, and Bob never hesitated. He and his wife put us up for days, fed us, and made us feel welcome, and we hardly knew them. They were heroes.

The authorities blocked the main arteries into Texas City, but everyone knew the back way and went home as soon as they could, even though it was terrible judgment. Hazards littered the town, downed trees, mud slicks, twisted wires, even boats gone loose from their moorings and resting in streets and yards. We got home and it was bad, for us and for all our neighbors.

Our house was blocks from open

water. Four feet of water swirled through our home for days. Every bit of furniture was piled against the walls in the direction of the mighty tides, and I couldn't believe the power of such a thing. Nothing upholstered was salvageable. No water or electricity. The water receded leaving four inches of mud behind. We heard slimy things. My mother broke down. I got to work.

The water supply was contaminated, and it gushed muddy and brown

when I turned on the hose and washed the muck from the garage. We found usable candles, lit them with a cigarette lighter, and sitting on damp lawn chairs in the shelter of the garage, we ate beans out of a can. We did what we could, and went back to Bob's house, stopping first at my Aunt Jackie and Uncle Raymond's house. We found them side by side on the floor of their home, scooping up mud and debris. There wasn't much to say.

We came back to our home every day, and it felt beyond peculiar to stand in my living room wielding a garden hose. The power was out for weeks, and we worked on without it. We put furniture in the sun to dry or stacked it at the curb. I was strong, but I had never done that kind of physical labor, dawn until dusk. Our neighbors had their hands full. My step-father and my mother spoke on the telephone, and although we could have used a strong man, they agreed he should stay on the river. We were going to need his paycheck. Almost all our furniture was gone, including the appliances – washing machine, stove, refrigerator.

We ate at a Salvation Army soup kitchen with everyone else. We got fresh water off trucks going up and down the streets. My mother managed to have mattresses delivered, and as soon as they came, we were home to stay, as damp and damaged as it was. The piles of soggy belongings at the curb grew

higher all along the street and all over town, and we worked and worked. I was the organizer, my sister, who was only ten, did what she could, and my mother got over the shock of seeing so much of her life destroyed. There was nothing left of our family photographs but soup.

The Williams' family next door had returned, and so had the sun. There followed a period of spectacular weather, sunny, warm, and dry. Carolyn and I sat on the porch and shared what there was to eat, then we went back to work, she with hers, me with mine. Every day there was progress, but for months we walked on wooden floors that felt like old-fashioned wash boards. The dampness dissipated some with the sunny weather, but the smell of pluff mud and dead fish lingered clear into spring.

We heard incredible stories from those who didn't evacuate. A classmate's stubborn father refused to leave, subjecting himself and his wife and daughter to a terrifying ordeal. They spent the hours during the hurricane in a boat in their garage. The water lifted the boat to the rafters, and as the wind howled, they weren't sure the roof would hold. They thought they were going to die.

A classmate came by in a pick-up truck, looking for ways to help. His home was among the lucky few that didn't flood. He asked what he could do, and my mother assigned him the worst task there could be, which he did willingly. He cleaned out our freezer full of rotten, liquefied meat, closed up in the heat for days. Bill was a hero that day.



May roads looked like this when we returned to Texas City

Dennis Black's home in another part of town was dry, but many of his friends had a foot of slimy mud. He remembers following meandering trails in the silt and finding water moccasins holed up in a closet. He shot at them with a .22 rifle. I don't know what's scariest about that – the snakes, the gun, the mud or Dennis. Or Dennis with a gun in the mud shooting at snakes.

When there are TV shows about the most dangerous hurricanes in history, sometimes Carla is mentioned, sometimes not. After going online for information, it seems the media prefers strong visuals over accurate stories. The old footage from Carla appears crude and uninteresting compared to the high-tech images of later storms, but here are a few facts about our own Hurricane Carla.

Carla shows up as No. 9 on the old Saffir-Simpson scale, which ranks storms primarily on maximum winds, which may be isolated. This scale doesn't consider size and scope of a hurricane's wind field. There's a newer ranking system called the Hurricane Severity Index (HSI) that assigns points to a storm based on size and intensity, encompassing sustained winds. In the HSI, taking everything into account, it

isn't Katrina at the top, nor Ike nor Andrew. It's Hurricane Carla.

November 1961 – Sunny, temperatures well-above average on the Texas coast.

School started again. The sun

Boats broke their moorings and ended up on beaches and in front yards



was out as it was the day after Labor Day. The wet seat cushions from the auditorium were still on the patio, laid end to end like big square fish drying for the winter.

In 1961 my neighbors, friends, and relatives, all ordinary people, met the challenges of a destructive hurricane. When I see pictures of recent storms, my heart goes out to those who lost so much, but I have mixed feelings. Some of the follow-up stories are five, ten, even 15 years later.

There's been a cultural shift in attitude since 1961. I don't remember people crying about Hurricane Carla for years and years. Texans were happy for the limited help we got, but we expected to dig ourselves out. We cleaned up and moved on. That was America in the 50s and 60s, and that was my hometown.

The Class of '64, raised by survivors of the worst industrial accident in U.S. history, entered high school on the cusp of the worst hurricane in U.S. history, and graduated on the heels of a national tragedy. Our first week of school terminated in Hurricane Carla; our senior year started with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Were we better prepared than some for the calamities of the future? We were born to it, weren't we? After all, the symbol of Texas City is the Phoenix. 🏠

This story is reprinted from *Tuesday in Texas*, a memoir.

coming attractions

A Sense of Place

By Rebecca McNeely



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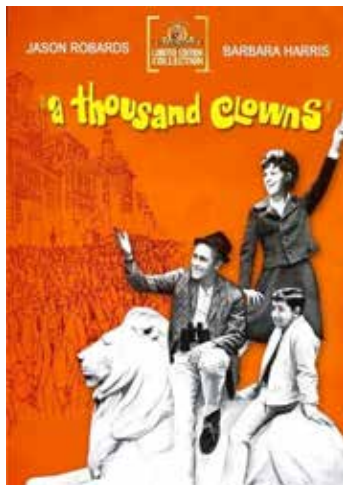


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A THOUSAND CLOWNS

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 28 7:30 P.M. PARTY ROOM 2



Based on the Broadway hit play, the 1965 film is a romp through New York, full of humor, wise cracks, and fun. Jason Robards plays a non-conformist uncle trying to raise his precocious nephew (Barry Gordon) while disdaining work in favor of play. The supporting cast includes Barbara Harris, Gene Saks and Martin Balsam, who won an Oscar for his role. Nominated for numerous awards, the movie is upbeat and what one reviewer called a "hidden gem."

Caryl Curry will introduce the film and lead the post-movie discussion

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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" or "cerebral" 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 fxnixson@gmail.com for more information.

Wednesday, September 27, 2017 Montebello CLASSIC MOVIE NIGHT

Only the most committed

Montebello lovers of wit, romance, and carefree adventure will embrace this selection for our Classic Film Festival!

The Captain's Paradise

will have you smiling from beginning to end ... and for days after ... and perhaps contemplating the "what-ifs" of life.

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From the respectable domesticity of Gibraltar to the Mediterranean delights of the North African bazaars ... and the troubled waters in between: "Captain" Alec Guinness makes sure he extracts all the joys of life. And so will you, with this 1953 gem in the Montebello Community Center. *Mark the time: 7pm. The date: September 27, 2017.*

FREE old-time Movie Night refreshments, popcorn, and confectionary!

With a brief introduction and back-story on the movie by Pamela Copley, in this, the second of our regular Classic Movies Contact PoolC@cs.cba.net for more details.

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Photo by Michael Hora