

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

get fresh air

October 5, 2017



London, September 2017

Photo by Dian McDonald

Restoring our woodlands

By *Chuck Amorosino*

Five short months ago, I could have written a concerned essay more critical, but not as well-written as the article with photos by Michael Hora in the September 7, 2017, issue of *The Montebello Voice*, entitled “Stop the Destruction of Montebello’s Woodlands.”

My Building 5 bedroom sits on the edge of the woodlands. I have looked out and lamented many times over what I have called the “graveyard” with the fallen trees, cut wood left where it had been sawed, and the dead tree “totem poles” – plus the erosion problem, perhaps intensified in places by the gradual elimination in recent years of the invasive English ivy without timely replanting of native ground cover.

About a year ago, I heard of the board’s interest yet again to address the Montebello landscape. I wondered what had happened to the related studies and proposals of the past 10 plus years. Then came the spring 2017 board retreat from which was issued the May 24, 2017 retreat consensus entitled, “Restoring Montebello’s Green Spaces – Visions, Issues, Strategic Actions and Governance.” The Grounds Committee also was created.

There was a Grounds Committee organizational meeting in July; soon at another meeting Virginia Hodgkinson was voted committee chair. Virginia then appointed subcommittee chairs. I was appointed chair of the Woodlands Subcommittee, mostly I believe, because I had lamented too frequently and loudly about the state of the woodlands.

Three months into the committee work with many meetings and lots of research reading, I have been pumped up by the board’s commitment, by the anticipated approval of the 2018 proposed budget which provides funding to support a Grounds 5-Year Strategic Plan (2018-2022). The Grounds Com-

mittee and its subcommittees are an energetic group with varied expertise and life experiences. We are very fortunate to have General Manager George Gardner with his knowledge and commitment, who is now just 10 months on the job.

I know the board, management, consultants, and the full Grounds Committee welcome community attendance and conversation at the several “show and tell” activities to be scheduled in the coming months. The Woodlands Subcommittee members, besides myself, are Heather Click, Bonnie Daniel, Bill Bryant, and Paul Zeisset. We welcome inquiries and dialogue with our neighbors. More members are needed on the Grounds Committee and its subcommittees.

Status of the Montebello woodlands

“Restoration” is the buzz word! Erosion and invasive non native trees, shrubs and plants are the primary enemies. Pre 5-Year Strategic Plan activities have begun with erosion control work anticipated next month and continuing into early spring. Consultants are assisting in the drafting of the 5-year plan and are currently conducting site analysis to assess the woodlands and the surrounding landscapes. The removal of invasive trees and plants continues. Invasive trees remain in our woodlands, such as Norway Maples and Trees of Heaven, that must come down and totally removed to prepare for replanting of native trees, shrubs, and ground cover.

What could be in 2022

I plan to be 79 years old in 2022 when the first 5-Year Strategic Plan is successfully completed! The photos attached to Michael Hora’s article could then be replaced with a 2022 photo of intermingled young native trees and plants with protective support against

deer browsing. Educational signage, properly displayed throughout the woodlands, would explain the ecological systems being supported by dead wood and snags (which I no longer refer to as “graveyard” and dead tree “totem poles”).

The 2022 photo could also show a comfortable bench facing into the depth of the restored woodlands with an increased number of birds chirping. Sitting on the bench, taking it all in, would be Michael and Chuck! 📷

The Montebello Voice wants to hear from you

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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Saying good-bye to Mary Woods

By Steve Woods

Each of you has kindly asked for information about the plans to honor my mother, Mary Woods.

We will gather Thursday, Oct. 12, at 1 p.m. sharp at the Old Post Chapel, Fort Myer. We're told attendees should come at least 30 minutes early to allow for check-in at the gate (see note below). Following the service, we will drive in procession to Arlington National Cemetery, where Mom's ashes will be committed to the columbarium.

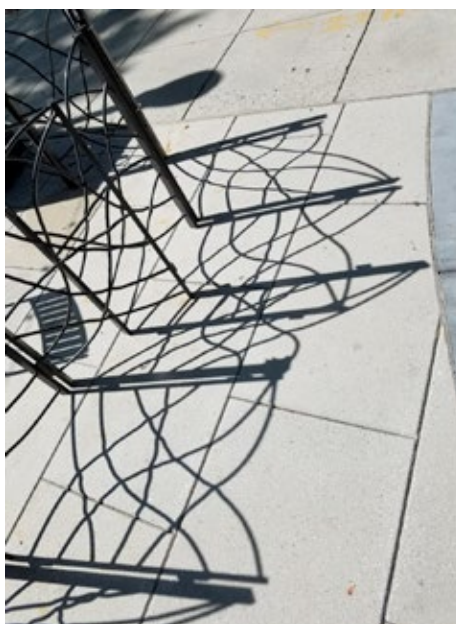
From 2:30 to 4:30, please join us for a reception at the Portofino Restaurant, 526 23rd Street S., Arlington, just off Jeff Davis Hwy in Crystal City (phone 703-979-8200). There's free parking behind the restaurant. Written directions will be provided after the service.

Friends are invited to attend the service, the reception, or both. We don't have a complete list of friends my mother would invite to a memorial. If you know of others that you feel might like to attend, feel free to contact them and relay this notice. I would also ask a favor, and that is if you feel there is a chance they will attend please forward their names to help us greet them.

We're very much looking forward to welcoming you.

Note: In theory, Ft. Myer security requires every attendee present a valid driver's license. Be sure to identify yourself as attending Mary's service. The gate is aware of scheduled functions. 📞

voices on the 37



Photos by Azita Mashayekhi

Volunteer weeds and weed volunteers

By Carole Appel

Every time I walk along the paths of Montebello from my building to the Community Center or to a friend's building and bend over to pull out a stray clump of crabgrass from the neatly mowed grass bordering most of our paved walkways, four thoughts cross my mind. First, a memory of the houses I owned over the 50 years I lived in small-town America before moving here and how my husband and I tried to keep our lawns looking good. Second, that any weed-pulling I do here is voluntary. Third, that bending is good for me, and bending with a tangible result is even better. And fourth: that if everyone walking along the paths of Montebello pulled one weed once in a while, we'd really be weed-free. In fact, if just a dozen or so people a day pulled a weed, their efforts would be useful.

A fifth unpleasant memory intrudes sometimes. A month or so after my husband's death in April 2013, a friend (who is now a former friend) was walking up my driveway to help me bring a desk down from my attic to the living room. I mentioned that Ken would have loved seeing how weed-free our grass was. Three days later, on Facebook, she bragged about the weeds growing in her lawn, posted a photo of some of them, and how grand it was to have a variety of flora growing in her mowed grass. Maybe that's okay to have low-growing weeds in grass, but boasting about it so soon after I'd mentioned the care my husband took with our grass was nasty. The most ironic thing about our perfect lawn in those New Hampshire days is that my husband hated pulling weeds when his father made him do it when they lived in suburban Queens, NY. He vowed never to force any of our kids to pull weeds, and he didn't. But he maintained a neat lawn when we had houses of our own, because he felt that it was what good neighbors did. And I agreed. 📞

Theater recommendation

By Sammy Simon

Alan and I just saw this show and recommend it to theater-lovers, history buffs, and any others seeking substantial entertainment totally unconnected with NFL, Donald Trump, hurricane damage, etc.

The Judicial Murder of Mrs. Surratt
Aldersgate Church Community Theater

Wesley Hall Theater
1301 Collingwood Road
Alexandria, Virginia
Oct 6, 7, 13, 14 at 8 p.m.
Oct 1, 8, 15 at 2 p.m.
<https://acctonline.org/>

Upcoming Music Club events By Carla Batka-Jones

Sunday, October 15, a resident of Montebello, Ernesto Bravo, will present Andian Folkloric Music at the Community Center at 3 p.m.

October 29 at 3 p.m., the daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter of Patty Pulju, director and pianist for the Montebello Music Club, will perform as the Strings Attached trio: Elizabeth Pulju-Owen, on viola; Drew Owen on cello, and Cecilia Owen on violin.

November has three events: Sunday, November 3, at 3 p.m., the Music Club will lead the audience in some favorite autumn and Thanksgiving songs.

Saturday, November 18, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., the Music Club will hold its annual Holiday Bazaar. Anyone wanting to rent a table for \$20 and sell their items is welcome. Just call me at 703-960-0865 (home) or 703-407-2516 (cell) to reserve a table.

New: Thursday evening, November 16, at 7:30 p.m., in Party Room 2, the Montebello Music Club and AiM Montebello Film Society will jointly present the DVD of the Metropolitan Opera's 2007 production of Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin." The cast stars Renee Fleming, Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Ramon Vargas, with conductor, Valery Gergiev. We hope to attract opera lovers and those who don't know whether or not they like opera to see this lovely production.

voices on the 37



Our first ride at Montebello was on a construction elevator at the south end of Building 1. We wore hard hats as we ascended to the top floor. There were no outer or interior walls; just a flat layer on concrete high in the air with a beautiful view. Buildings 2, 3, 4 did not exist.

We had done business with the head salesman previously. It was not difficult for him to convince us of the potential for Montebello as a rental and future residents. We purchased a condo on the 16th floor, the "E" model and garage space. We participated with the first closure group of about 12 who met on an October, 1982 evening in the Party Room.

We rented our condo for the first twelve years. As planned, retirement happened and our children began their adult lives. We did not need the larger family home, so moved to Montebello, July 1995. We use Montebello as our summer residence near children and grandchildren and the remainder of the year in warmer Florida.

Our original view was the Capitol, monuments, the river, National Airport, Old Town, etc. However, much has been added to enhance the view over the years as National Harbor, MGM, Patent Office, Federal Court House, etc. Sorry that there are no original photos, but two recent ones (above and below). – Ralph and Gracie Johnson



Mount Vernon at Home: an organization for the future

By Virginia Hodgkinson

Perhaps you have heard about Mount Vernon At Home from a friend or perhaps you saw their sign if you went to Sherwood Hall Regional Library. You might have seen brochures at local businesses. If not, you might want to belong to or volunteer to this great community organization.

In 2007, a group of Mount Vernon neighbors and friends in or close to their retirement years met to discuss their common goals of leading vibrant, engaged lives in their homes. With an eye to the future, our founders also wanted to create a network to provide the support they might need as they aged in place. After nearly two years in planning, Mount Vernon At Home, a volunteer-powered nonprofit “village” was born and is 10 years old this year.

Mount Vernon At Home now has 160 members, 70 volunteers, and offers a broad array of activities and services. Montebello, one of largest communities, has 16 members. The staff and volunteers take great pride in offering solutions to each call our office receives.

Mount Vernon At Home is one of over an estimated 300 villages interested in redefining the aging experience, creating community connections, and helping older adults retain their independence with practical help. What would our neighborhoods do without our active senior citizens volunteering at our hospitals, churches, thrift shops, local schools, churches, or serving at voting places on election days. We are fortunate that we have so many healthy seniors that keep our communities operating. And Mount Vernon At Home helps seniors age in place and remain a vital part of their communities.

As a membership organization, Mount Vernon At Home volunteers assist our members with transportation to local appointments, errands, gro-

cery shopping, light handyman help in the home, technology problem-solving (printers, computers, smart TV’s, and cell phones, etc.), home organization and de-cluttering and much more. When I recently called one of our members at Montebello, Jean Pizzo, she told me that one of our volunteers was in her home and had just finished fixing her printer.

Other members, Dolly Rowe and Henry Bobotek reported, “We enjoy

and have benefited from attending social events, informative talks on topics of interest to aging people like us, and referrals to vetted vendors for repair. We have also greatly appreciated volunteer help with electrical and computer problems.”

Member Guin Jones, a recent Montebello Volunteer of the Month, stated, “Because I do not want to move from this campus, Mount Vernon At Home offers extra security for me when considering any future illness. I have an only child. She and her husband are raising two small children, which identifies her as being in the ‘sandwich generation.’ Although an estate attorney and a financial planner are solidly in place, I believe that she would flail about while trying to stabilize challenges when making medical decisions whether large or small.”

“I will be interested in home-care personnel and am confident that Mount Vernon At Home can assist my daughter in securing this,” Jones continued. “I am aware of the very caring home-care personnel who take care of Bonnie and Bob Maust at the end of my hallway (they are also Mount Ver-

non At Home members.) Mount Vernon At Home will also be a tremendous resource for my daughter if/when I need to enter a hospital.

I also appreciate the excellent computer assistance that I have received from VERY competent volunteers. Extraordinary! Meeting people outside our campus has also been good.”

Barbara Sullivan, our fantastic executive director, reports that people join Mount Vernon At Home for many reasons, “Most of our members are very active. Some join for the activities and programs and others rely on dependable volunteer services to help them remain independent. Many see Mount Vernon At Home as insurance so that if they need extra help, we are just a phone call away”.

My children live far away in Europe, Florida, and California. Mount Vernon At Home has been a lifeline for me and for my husband in his last few years. I got involved with Mount Vernon At Home during its planning stage. Although I was younger than most of the founding members, I believed that the “village” concept for aging in place provided a solution for the future. Its major advantages are: 1) people can stay in the neighborhoods they love where many of their friends are; 2) they can remain active in the community activities and causes they are passionate about; and 3) through a network of members and volunteers they can feel comfortable that help will be there when they need it.

I served as president of Mount Vernon during its first three years of operation. Last year I was elected to serve another term on the board. It is a cause I believe in; it is great fun to volunteer; I have many friendships. I know there will be people there to advise and help if I need it. Without such an organization, it might be difficult to remain in my own home. The “village” movement of which we are a part of a



vanguard of the future. As one of our founding members Judy Rosen says, “Mount Vernon At Home has been a life saver for me! They take the place of my family who live too far away to help, Mount Vernon At Home events are always stimulating and the best part is that I have met some very interesting people who I now call friends. Mount Vernon At Home continues to be one of our best investments.”

If you want more information about Mount Vernon At Home, you can call at 703-303-4060; or email them at info@mountvernonathome.org or drop by their office on the second floor of the Sherwood Hall Regional Library at 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. There is an information session coming up at the Sherwood Hall Library on October 18 at 2 p.m., which you might find interesting and informative. 📖

An easy trip to the DMV

By Karen & Donald Barnes

On a trip to Sherwood Hall Library on September 16, we noted a sizable Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) van in the parking lot. Imagine our delight to discover that every month, the DMV sends one of its mobile customer service centers to the library to provide a convenient place to complete all DMV transactions. The curiosity that drove me take the first exploratory step inside the so-called DMV Connect van resulted in a relaxed 15-minute hassle-free process that led to my getting my driver’s license renewed. We learned that in addition license renewals and picking up license plates, customers can also obtain E-ZPass transponders, apply for hunting and fishing licenses, and update their voter registration address and organ donor status.

Details of these and other services available through DMV Connects can be found at dmv.virginia.gov.

The next scheduled appearances of the DMV Connect van at Sherwood Regional Library (2501 Sherwood Hall Lane Alexandria, 22306) are will be on October 18 and November 20.

Hello, baby!



LilythJan Adriana was born to Daniela and Derrick Rodriguez on September 27 at 6:30 p.m. She weighed 7.44 pounds and measured 19.5 inches.

Photos by ecstatic grandma Leslie Rodriguez

Local historian to talk about Mount Eagle

By Paul Zeisset

“George Washington Dined Here” could easily be the headline on a future historical marker on the Montebello Village Green, near the kids’ playground. That was the site of the Mount

print, copies of the volume can be borrowed from the Fairfax County library.

A new, concise summary of Mount Eagle’s history has just been published by local historian Jay Roberts, in *Lost Alexandria, An Illustrated History of Sixteen Destroyed Historic Homes In and Around Alexandria, Virginia*. The book includes his-

was destroyed in 1968. Metro obtained 20 acres of the Mount Eagle property for the Huntington station, and, in 1979, International Developers, Inc., purchased the remaining 35 acres of Mount Eagle for the construction of Montebello.

In addition to Mount Eagle, *Lost Alexandria* describes 15 other historic homes now gone from the area, including West Grove (replaced by the Belle Haven Country Club), Spring Bank (now Walmart), City View (now the Beacon Hill Shopping Center), and even Oxon Hill Manor across the river (now the MGM Casino). The fact that the author documents what is now at each location



Mount Eagle. Illustration by Chris Youngbluth, 2016. Copyright.

Eagle mansion that between 1790 and 1968 presided over parts of the green and the parking lots for Buildings 1 and 2.

George Washington was a long-time friend of Bryan Fairfax, who built the Mount Eagle mansion in 1790, and Washington visited here frequently and dined here only a week before he died in 1799.

The history of the Mount Eagle property, from the 17th century to the construction of Montebello, is well documented in a 1982 book by Nan Netherton, *Montebello at Mount Eagle*. Early Montebello owners received copies of the 92-page hardbound book when they bought their units. Now out of

torical photographs as well as beautiful illustrations by Chris Youngbluth.

The book quotes an article in the *Washington Post*, July 30, 1916, that declared that the Mount Eagle property was, with the exception of Mount Vernon, “perhaps the most historic and best known estate in Northern Virginia.”

The last residents in the Mount Eagle mansion were the Fifer family, and the author quotes one of the children, Lee Fifer, who now lives in Alexandria, regarding playing and doing farm work on the property. After the Fifer children had gone off to college, their parents sold the property to developers in 1966. While there was a verbal agreement to preserve the mansion, by 1968 the mansion had fallen into disrepair, and it

helps the reader relate to the historical locations.

On Monday, October 16, at 7:30 p.m., the Montebello Speaker Series will feature a book signing for *Lost Alexandria*. The author, Jay Roberts, and illustrator, Chris Youngbluth, will both be there. In addition, Jay will interview special guest Lee Fifer about what it was like to grow up at Mount Eagle.

Jay Roberts writes about local and regional history and other topics at his blog, “Jaybird’s Jottings” at http://jay.typepad.com/william_jay/. If you miss the book signing, *Lost Alexandria* can also be purchased at The Old Town Shop, 105 South Union Street in Alexandria. 📖

London calling

In September I was fortunate to travel to England for a ninth reunion with Evelyn Hewitt, my pen pal since 1954. We were connected through programs sponsored by the Girl Scouts and Girl Guides and have maintained a strong transatlantic friendship for 63 years. Evelyn traveled to visit me in my hometown, Poteau, Oklahoma, in 1979, and we have had two reunions in the D.C. area. Our earlier meetings in England were in Stafford, Whitley Bay, Drayton Parslow, Leominster, and Oxford.

The recent trip to England afforded some great photo-ops reflected in a selection of photos. – Dian McDonald



Our first meeting in Stanford, England, 1961



Drayton Parslow, England, 1981

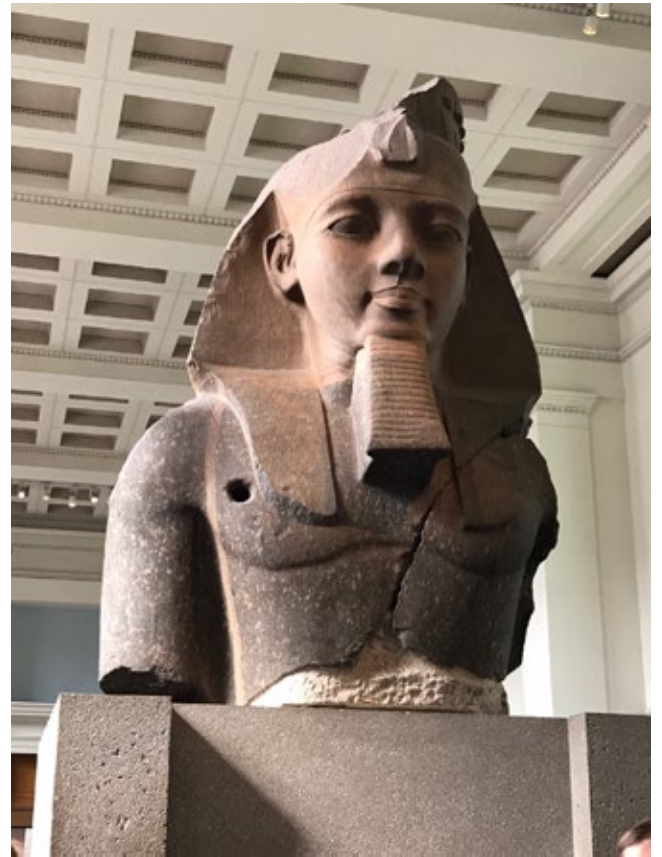


Montebello in 2012



Our ninth reunion in London, September 2017

London calling



London calling



London calling



London calling



book swap



Something old, something new. Neighbors donated and acquired books and CDs at the Activities Committee-sponsored book swap on September 30.

green thumbs



Our first volunteer project consists of planting flowers around the trees that are in the circle planters in the Montebello parking lot interchange area. This would include us cleaning out the liriopel grass, adding top soil, planting spring bulbs and then adding fall plantings on top of planted bulbs. We want to bring the centers alive with color: yellow daffodils, tulips, crocus, asters, roses, and golden rod. We will also plant annuals around the perennials! Our goal is to have this area compliment our new design around the Community Center entrances. – Mary Tjeerdsma

Last weekend's garden crew included Mary and Lynn Tjeerdsma, Bill Bryant, Brian Hayden, and Ellen Orlando.



photo by Christine Blair

Panda

Watching each breath
Thinking how long we've been together
Trying to love away the abuse
You innocently endured
Clinging, comforting,
Protecting, trusting,
Sharing my world.
You are leaving me
Separated by bodily failure
Slipping farther away
Our loss brings us closer
In the silent wonder of the love
We have shared

Sarah Newcomb

montebello marketplace



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My rates are competitive. Checks are accepted as well as cash.

References from Montebello clients can be provided on request.

I've been a Montebello owner/resident in Bldg. #2 since 2005.

From 2012 to 2016, I served as Montebello Pet Club Coordinator.

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coming attractions

An Artist's Journey



By Anna Schalk

October 14 - November 17

Ann Schalk's retrospective show in Montebello Cafe covers over 35 years of her painting life. This exhibit reflects moments from her roles as wife, mother, therapist and healing practitioner. Using the movement of color and brush strokes, the paintings flow from realism to abstract as she focuses on her inner response to the subject of the moment.

Opening Reception
October 14, 4 - 6 p.m.





Chess Game Night with Chess Club

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

4th Thursday
of Each Month (generally)
C.C. 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 fxnixson@gmail.com for more information.



Polymer Clay Play

Make And Take Or Just Have Fun!



Polymer Clay is a synthetic clay that can be cured in a home toaster oven. You can make home decor, jewelry, gifts for the holidays — anything you can imagine with ease!!! Anyone can do it!

This first ClayPlay session, I will be showing you a simple way to make beautiful designs in clay. You can use your design to make a pendant or keychain. You are also welcome to simply come and 'Play with Clay'!

Come join us for our first 'Clay Play'



Tuesday, OCT 10, 2017.

Party Room 4 6pm - 9pm



and



Invite you to our film & discussion



WASTE LAND

THURSDAY OCTOBER 26 7:30 P.M. PARTY ROOM 2



An inspirational film about the transformative power of art

In this multiple award-winning film, including an Academy award nomination for best documentary, contemporary artist Vik Muniz returns to his native Brazil to photograph the lives of catadores—entrepreneurial garbage pickers in the world's largest landfill, Jardim Gramacho, on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. As Muniz gets to know and collaborate with his subjects, we witness the transformational power of art at work and experience the beauty and dignity of even these "lowliest" of workers.

Leslee Levy will introduce the film and lead the post-movie discussion.

final glance



Zoobello

Photos by Joel Miller