

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

let's get together and feel all right

May 24, 2018



How dare you question Montebello management

By Joe de Angelis

Summer is around the corner and it is time for our annual Montebello Memorial Day picnic. Our Memorial Day picnic is one of the many community activities where residents have the opportunity to meet old friends again and make new ones. Such activities have been arranged by our wonderful and efficient Montebello activities staff headed by Mr. Thirasit Insisengmay, better known to all of us as Mr. T. However, this year when we attend the Memorial Day picnic, Mr. T’s smiling face will not be there to greet us: he has been fired.

Mr. T, a father of three young children, who has been a faithful and loyal employee of Montebello for the past 24 years, was abruptly fired by Montebello Management, without any notice, explanation or recourse. Granted, Virginia is an employment-at-will state, which means an employer may terminate any employee, at any time, for any reason, or for no reason. As a general rule, the employee has no right to challenge his or her termination. A logical extension of this maxim is that we, even as concerned residents, not only should not, but have no right to question decisions made by Montebello management. How dare we even think of such a thing? Well folks, how does that make you feel?

Without warning or explanation Mr. T was unceremoniously dismissed and escorted off Montebello property. The reasons for his dismissal are yet unknown. Based on conversations I have had with various individuals, I have

come to the conclusion that Mr. T’s firing was totally without any real justification. “I don’t think he was doing a very good job.” or “He took too long to accomplish a project.” in and of themselves are not reasons to fire someone without advising them of their deficiency and giving them the opportunity to take corrective action. Yet, Montebello management listens to such comments from individuals with alternative agendas.

Montebello, as the prime condominium complex in the metropolitan area, should and must have higher personnel management standards. Some board members prefer to say that “he was let go” but semantics does not lessen the impact of being fired. The BOD should implement and enforce a personnel policy that would afford our loyal employees, to include management personnel, the opportunity to correct job-related deficiencies based on established job performance standards. These standards should be developed, reviewed, and agreed to by both employer and employee. Counseling sessions should be conducted with employees whenever it becomes apparent that an employee is not meeting those standards. The firing of loyal employees without explanation or justification has created a hostile work environment for all of Montebello’s hard-working and loyal employees: They are all wondering “who will be next?” because there are ample rumors to support this angst among our employees. This is a slippery slope that Montebello does not need to go down. If valid reasons for

poor performance and possible termination have been documented, management should have no reason for not sharing their rationale for firing an employee, when and if appropriate inquiries are made. But when asked, comments like “I don’t have to talk to you” are grossly unprofessional and negate any transparency Montebello management is trying to project. Remember, “Service Starts Here” or does it?

My wife and I, as well as many other residents of Montebello, are very upset and concerned about the way Mr. T was fired. We consider such personnel actions by Montebello management to be arbitrary and capricious and a gross abuse of managerial authority. But how dare I question Montebello management? 📧

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.montebello-voice.com.

Editor & Designer.....Mikhailina Karina
 Contributors.....Joe de Angelis,
 Paul Foldes, Jon Kandel, Leslee Levy, Joel Miller, Dian McDonald, Sarah Newcomb

Cover photo: Life Survives in a Dead Environment
Photos taken on a tour of the SteelStacks in Bethlehem, Pa., where the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, founded in 1857, was once the second largest steel producer in the U.S. Bethlehem Steel ceased operations in 1995 in the face of overseas competition and declining demand.

– Dian McDonald

voices on the 37

Arlington 2018

By Sarah Newcomb

And then I saw him
just as they turned out the door
of their apartment building.

He was black and white
Round and curly
In his puppiness

He turned and looked at me
Sadly twisting his head in my direction
Asking for help from
This woman who smelled of dogs

His collar way too tight,
Painful as she jerked
His tiny neck along on
The first walk of the day –
Yet only to the car.

This stiff young couple
Departing an apartment that
Opens onto concrete streets
Relieved only by grass
Bravely filling the median strip

How much I wanted to help
But what could I do?
This couple seemed to have
Sought a small, round puppy
To hold their relationship

Finely dressed, both must be working
He seemed just an accessory,
A living designer bag
But he turned although it hurt

To ask who would walk him
On cool, green grass
Love him and play with him
Or even loosen the collar
Cutting into
His tiny neck



Owners of 403 units, representing 42.7308% ownership, voted in the May 10 annual election.

Incumbent Lynn Tjeerdsma received 39.5620%

Incumbent Bruce Shaw received 34.3710%

Incumbent Raymond Goodrich received 34.2704%

Newcomer Jon Kandel received 31.7639%



Photo by Michael Brownlee

The making of a family crest

By Joe de Angelis

In March of last year I wrote a short piece for *The Montebello Voice* about the research I conducted on my family's history, the most important part of which I maintained was the family name and how it was derived.

Today I would like to take that line of thought a little further and talk about family crests and their linkage to family names. When researching one's family lineage, you may, either consciously or unconsciously, hope to find a royal or aristocratic ancestor and a corresponding coat of arms or crest. You may also desire the crest to have a corresponding motto. This, however, is very rare. Even though there are many family crests bearing the same family name that you may be researching, it does not necessarily follow that it is your family lineage.

A case in point: during my research I found no less than seven different crests bearing the name de Angelis, none of which, however, related to any of my ancestors. I was able to trace my family line back to 1662 and the town of Castel Baso, in Abruzzo, Italy. Prior to that date there is no record of any de Angelis residing in Castel Baso or any record of anyone of that name moving to Castel Baso from someplace else. Italian birth records note whether a person was born in a specific town or village or if they moved there from someplace else; as was the case when one of my ancestors moved from Castel Baso to the town of Rosetto degli Abruzzo. Throughout my search I was unable to identify any titles, royal or otherwise, or coats of arms associated with any of my ancestors. I always thought that it would be nice to have a family

crest. However, when my research verified the fact that there is no crest associated with my family lineage, I decided to create my own.

If you are going to have a family crest you also have to have a family motto. I had my work cut out for me, but I had a head start on the motto. Many years ago when I studied karate, my instruc-



tor, Kiyohisa Hirano, always emphasized what he considered the basic principle of karate, "Not to conquer others, but to conquer the weaknesses within oneself." Ever since then I have tried to live by that principle. I thought that this concept, in some form or another, would be ideal for my family motto.

Even before I got interested in genealogy, I learned that this basic principle is fundamental to many cultures and religions throughout the world, and dates back centuries. The following are some examples: Lao Tzu: "He

who conquers others is strong; he who conquers himself is mighty"; Buddha: "A man who conquers himself is greater than one who conquers a thousand men in battle"; Book of Proverbs: "He who conquers himself has won a greater victory than he who conquers a city"; Jesus: "He who rules his spirit has won a greater victory than the taking of a city"; Mohammad: "The most excellent Jihad is that for the conquest of self."

I had the concept, but I wanted something more succinct, something that could be put into Italian or Latin. Eventually I came across a quotation of Publilius Syrus, who was a Latin writer of maxims in the first century BC. He wrote: "Bis vincit qui se vincit in victoria," meaning "He conquers twice who conquers himself when he is victorious." He went on to say, "Control your urge to be arrogant, smug, cruel, or vindictive when you win." The initial quote is generally abbreviated as "Vincit qui se vincit" and translated as "He conquers who conquers himself." I thought "Vincit qui se vincit" would be ideal as my family motto and that is what I chose. I felt that it related directly to my philosophy of life and that it was more in line with Western thought and Western philosophy in general.

As for the crest itself, I wanted it to be something that was meaningful, not only to me but also to my Italian heritage. I gave considerable thought to the design of the de Angelis family crest because I did not just want a collection of symbols and colors for the sake of having a crest. I wanted my crest to represent my ancestral homeland, Abruzzo, my grandparents, and the things that shaped our lives. To this end I decided to use the crest of the Province of Abruzzo as the background and then

ancestry

add symbols that I thought were meaningful. The crest that I created, which is shown above, is described as follows: The crest consists of a plain shield with three broad diagonal stripes going from the upper right to the lower left of the shield: one white, one green, and one blue. These stripes are separated by narrower stripes of gold. The white represents the snow covered mountains, the green represents the grass covered pastures, and the blue represents the Adriatic Sea. The two golden stripes represent the sunshine that floods the countryside of Abruzzo.

There are four stars across the top of the shield, one for each generation of the de Angelis family born in America prior to the time I devised my family crest. Centered beneath the four stars is a Roman sword crossed by a feather pen. The sword represents strength, courage, justice, and military service and honor. The pen represents learning, knowledge and the creation of destinies. I believe that the family crest that I designed is meaningful to me and my family and fully represents my Italian heritage.

If your family does not have a crest in its history you can devise one yourself just as I have. However, please take care to ensure that it is meaningful and true to your heritage. A family crest it can be registered with any of several heraldic registries, some of which charge for their services. I am presently in the process of registering my family crest and motto with the U.S. Heraldic Registry, which offers free registration, but charges for assistance in developing and designing a family crest. 📄



Say hello to our little friends. They are very tolerant of little peeks. Mom faces one way on the nest and dad the other. Yes, they did destroy our screen. Small price to pay, for we are looking forward to the hatchlings.

– Leslee Levy

If I could build my whole world around you

The screenshot displays the Montebello Condominiums website interface. At the top, the header includes the site name, a language dropdown set to 'English (United States)', and a user profile for 'Mikhailina Karina'. A left-hand navigation menu lists categories like 'Home', 'Resident Services', 'My Repair Requests', and 'NeighborNet'. The main content area is organized into several sections: 'Announcements', 'Upcoming Events', 'Bulletin Board Postings' (with an 'Add New Post' button), and 'Survey Questions'. A central 'Building Info' section contains a grid of service tiles such as 'My Repair Requests', 'Amenity Reservations', 'Send Message to Manager', 'Calendar', 'Staff Directory', 'Common Areas Maintenance', 'Vandalism', 'Landscape/Grounds concern', 'Committee Information', 'My Front Desk Instructions', 'Communicate with Mgmt', 'Building Library', 'Survey Questions', 'In Unit Service Request', 'Extermination Service', 'Common Area Housekeeping', and 'Club Information'. To the right, a 'NeighborNet' section offers a 'Dashboard', 'My Neighbors', 'Bulletin Board', 'My Public Profile', and 'Pet Park'. Below this is a 'Services And Offers' section with a 'Directory of Local Vendors' and 'Offers (2)'. A 'Local Links for 22303' section features a grid of icons for 'Menus/Reviews', 'Schools', 'Cafés', 'Parks', 'Movies', 'Groceries', 'Shopping', 'Fitness', 'Restaurants', and 'City of Alexandria'. The footer contains contact information, legal links, and app store availability for Google Play and the App Store.

In early August, Montebello will activate the BuildingLink software that “works like magic to save your employees time, delight your residents, and give you the insights on your building that you need to tackle issues and avoid costly mistakes,” states the website at www.buildinglink.com/marketing/public/main. (Seriously, folks, check it out) All residents will receive new ID cards/fobs that will open the front gate, front doors, and garage entrances. As shown on the Montebello page above, the software is one-stop shopping for everything from requesting in-unit repairs to keeping up with community activities. Resident directory will become Facebook-ish with voluntary information about your hobbies and pets – and you’ll even be able to “friend” your neighbors. All the information from our current clunky website will be transferred to this modern database that is used by “4,430 buildings, 57,316 property managers, and 1,718,354 residents.”

To expedite the process of data entry from about 115,000 pages of documents currently filling 23 file cabinet drawers, management will outsource the scanning to Digisource, a D.C.-based computer processing and data preparation and processing service, to scan documents in 1,016 individual unit owners file folders and save as searchable PDF files. According to the discussion at the May 22 board work session, the scanning will take place at a secure Digisource facility with special considerations for protecting residents’ privacy; non-essential documents will be shredded. The weeks-long endeavor will cost about \$18,000. – *Mikhailina Karina*

Board listens to deer management and front gate proposals

By *Mikhailina Karina*

A slide presentation by Joe Hirz and Lauren Wheeler from Natural Resources Design presented proposals for the deer management and front entrance revamp as part of the five-year grounds restoration plan spearheaded by the Grounds Committee.

Nearly 20 residents, many of them members of the Grounds Committee, attended the May 22 board work session. Director Lauren Pierce communicated via speaker phone and Raymond Goodrich was absent.

Hirz discussed the proposed deer management plan (available on the association website at http://montebello.org/document_view.asp?id=3397 or as a 37-page hard copy at the office), which explained the negative deer impact on Montebello's woodlands.

In a nutshell, Hirz, a landscape de-

signer, said the Montebello deer management plan would fall into four steps: exclusion with physical barriers such as installing cattle grates and additional fencing; removal via deer drives and controlled archery "culling"; maintenance and protocols for the future; and monitoring and evaluation with scientifically collected data.

Hirz and Wheeler presented a trio of posters, currently on view in the community center, that show where the proposed deer barriers would go: two sets of grates on both Mt. Eagle Drives, a line of fencing on the hill behind the guard house, and fence extension around the property. In addition, pedestrian walkways and gates would need to be installed for pedestrian safety. They did not give any cost estimates for the work.

The community has a week to mull over the proposals before attending a

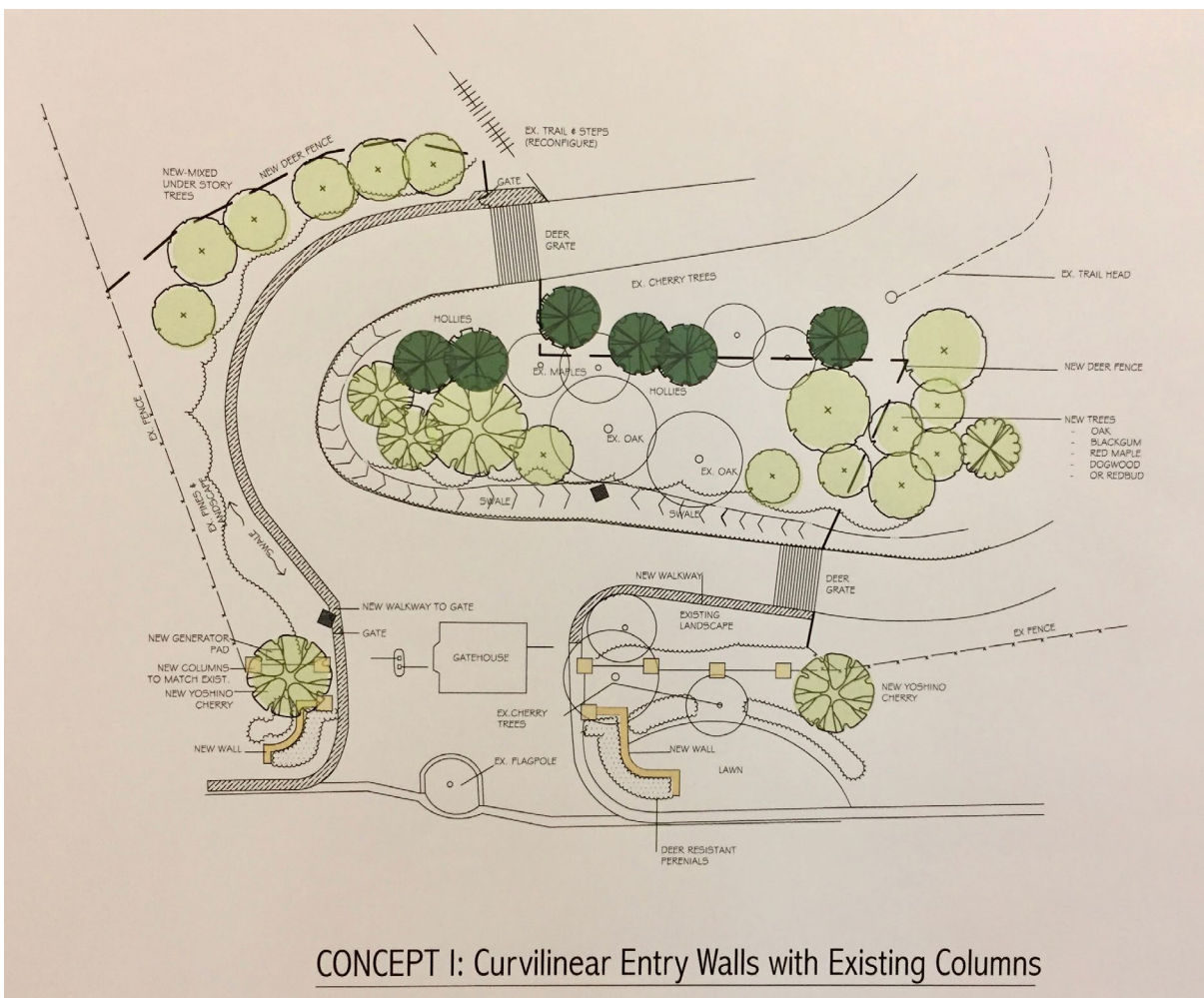
town hall next Thursday, May 31, to voice feedback.

In addition to deer exclusion, NRD was also tasked with beautifying the front entrance to improve Montebello's curb appeal as seen from Richmond Highway.

Wheeler, NRD's principal, presented three options for the front entrance. The first was a curvilinear entry, estimated at \$250,000; the second was columns with brick walls for approximately \$340,000; and the last was sculptural woodlands panels for about \$300,000. [NRD did not respond to a request for artist renderings of the proposed gates] These costs don't include deer grates, deer fencing, or pedestrian gates.

A non-agenda item at the end of the meeting was approval to almost double the budget for Kerns Group Architects design proposal for the community center rehab. When the original contract

for \$21,000 was approved in 2012, it did not include work on the café kitchen and electrical upgrades, including charging stations. The new design proposal that incorporates Montebello residents' wish list will cost an additional \$19,000. 🏠



One of three posters showing deer barriers and gate proposals on view in the community center.

After the fire

Text and photos by Joel Miller

A few months ago the AiM Film Society screened and discussed the documentary *Wasteland*, in which the artist Vik Muniz worked with the *catadores* (the men and women who pick through the refuse) in the world's largest garbage landfill in Brazil. Using recycled materials from the landfill and photographs of posed workers, Muniz created works of art that were ultimately shown in major galleries.

In contrast... Just a few miles down the Richmond highway there was a major fire at a huge consignment gallery several months ago. The resulting conflagration reduced the familiar yellow structure to a few partial walls as it reduced rooms full of antiques, jewelry, and collectibles to a pile of rubble reminiscent of the landfill mounds in the *Wasteland* documentary.

Struck by the yin and yang of the two events, I photographed the still-un-

cleared fire scene whose charred fragments included the remains of oil paintings, silver and gold jewelry, wicker chairs, Lionel trains, Mickey Mantle Baseball cards, and Truman campaign buttons. Soon the front-end loaders and dump trucks will begin to carry away ten thousand bits of history, nostalgia, and memories as the traffic speeds up and down Route 1. 🏠



a pile of rubble

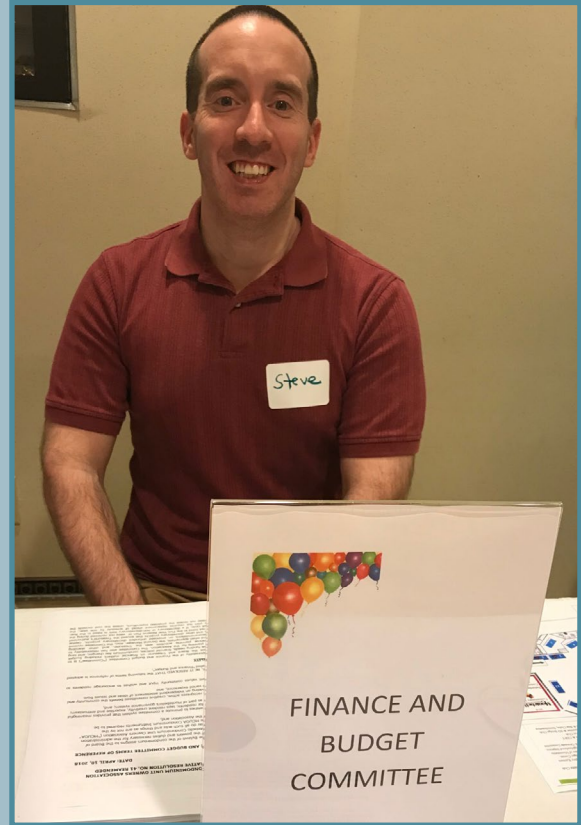


community activities expo



Photos by Dian McDonald

community activities expo



Photos by Dian McDonald

community activities expo



Photos by Dian McDonald

YOGA CAN BE FUN

**HATHA YOGA FOR ALL LEVELS
TUESDAY EVENINGS @ 7 PM ~ PARTY ROOM 1**



- ❖ SMILE
- ❖ STRETCH
- ❖ BREATHE
- ❖ RELAX

Feel your flexibility with SUN SALUTATION, Feel the strength of Warrior I & II, Enjoy the stretch of forward and backward bends.

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Chess Game Night with Chess Club

*All Levels & All Ages!
All Welcome!*
**Beginners to Grandmasters!
Play! Share! Learn! Practice!**

**4th Thursday, Each Month
(generally*)
C.C. Card Room
7:00pm to 9:30pm (latest)**



Make your move and
stop by to see a joust!
The Queen doesn't
even mind tardiness!

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.)

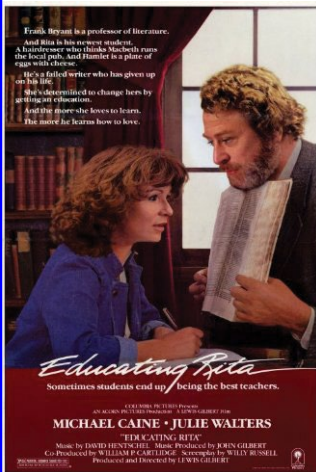
Contact Lisa J. Stedje at lisa@stedje.com
and/or Nick Nickerson at fnixson@gmail.com
for more information.
* (e.g., most holidays and holiday periods are excluded.)



Invite you to our film & discussion



EDUCATING RITA
THURSDAY MAY 31 7:30 P.M. PARTY ROOM 2



This 1983 comedy/drama earned various awards, and was voted one of the Top 100 British Films by The British Film Institute. Working-class hairstylist Rita (Julie Walters) with a passion for learning is tutored for university entrance exams by Frank (Michael Caine), a disillusioned, alcoholic professor of literature. Their interaction transforms both their lives. The film quietly treats issues of marriage, the class system, the joys of literature, independence and its ramifications, as relevant today as they were in the 1980s. It's Michael Caine's favorite of all his films.

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

**Come Dance with AiM's Art
Dance - Movement Expressed in Art**

Group Show Curators: Jeanne Tiff and Nancy Vogt

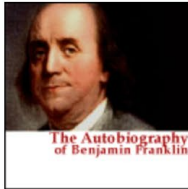


May 12 - June 29
Montebello Café

Opening Reception on Saturday, May 12, 4 to 6 p.m.



FREE RESOURCE - MAY 7TH, 2018



► Free Resource of the Day

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

Download our **free audio book** version of **The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin** by none other than **Benjamin Franklin**. Listen to one of the great works of American literature and one of the most famous autobiographies of all time, as the multifaceted Founding Father tells his life story.

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin chronicles Franklin's life as a leading author and printer, satirist, inventor, politician, scientist, civic activist, statesman, and diplomat. The story is not only that of one of the most famous men in American history; it is a tale of colonial life in a time just before the revolution, where men like Franklin were already defining what would eventually become the American character. This audio book has a running time of 6 Hrs. and 30 Min. and is available for **free on MP3 and bookmarkable MPEG-4 download**. It can be downloaded exclusively through LearnOutLoud.com.



► From the Free Resource Archive

Walter Isaacson on Benjamin Franklin: An American Life

In recent years, Walter Isaacson has become one of most popular biographers ever, with best-selling books that have charted lives as diverse as Steve Jobs and Albert Einstein. In this lecture, Isaacson talks about one of his earliest subjects, the early American statesman, inventor and writer, Benjamin Franklin. Here Isaacson traces the development of Franklin's career, touching on the unwavering work ethic, intellectual rigor and bawdy sense of humor that made Franklin quintessentially American. We also learn more about Franklin's roles as a founding father, and how his willingness to compromise, his notions of humility, and his overriding tolerance provide a model that modern politicians in particular could emulate to this day.



► 60 Free LearnOutLoud Audio Books

All 60 LearnOutLoud Audio Books are Now Free!

We've decided to make some changes at LearnOutLoud and focus primarily on free audio & video learning going forward.

First off, starting July 1st, 2018 we will no longer be selling audio books directly on LearnOutLoud.com. We've had a good 12-year run as an audio book retailer, but we realize there are many better options for buying audio books now (notably Amazon's Audible.com).

If you've purchased audio books from us in the past, you'll still be able to access them after July 1st, 2018, but we will no longer be selling audio books from that point on. We still plan to link to the best educational audio books as an affiliate of Audible.com and other audio & video learning companies, but our main focus now is going to be on providing you with the best free audio & video learning on the Internet.

Since we're soon no longer going to be selling audio books, **we decided it was time to give away all 60 of the audio books we've published on LearnOutLoud.com over the past 12 years**. Since 2006 we've been featuring a free audio book of the month every month. Well now we're giving away all 60 of those audio books we've published. Thanks for Learning Out Loud! We can't wait to dedicate our focus solely on providing you with the best free audio & video learning content on the World Wide Web!

coming attractions

The SPEAKER SERIES Presents:



Dr. Robert M. Knapp,
Chiropractic Physician

HEALTH CARE WITHOUT DRUGS

Dr. Knapp covers a broad range of subjects, including diet, exercise, and a drugless approach toward living more comfortably.

There will be a question-and-answer period afterwards.

Dr. Knapp has made a career of educating the public about maintaining a healthy, pain-free lifestyle. He constantly strives to improve and update his knowledge in the field of chiropractic medicine, completing extensive post-graduate study in spinal curvature, disc disease, arthritis, nutrition, headaches, sports injury, and carpal tunnel syndrome. He regularly provides screenings, lectures and seminars for federal agencies including but not limited to the ATF, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, EPA, National Park Service, USAID, USDA, US Department of Education, State Department, and Patent & Trademark Office, and has served as the resident chiropractor for the Kennedy Center and Shakespeare Theatre.

Thursday, June 7th at 7:30pm
Community Center

Sponsored by the Activities Committee

Wednesday, June 20, 2018
Montebello CLASSIC MOVIE NIGHT
On the Big Screen in the Community Center at 7pm



Mr. Peabody and the Mermaid

A Truly Romantic Comedy

William Powell: Is it a mid-life crisis?
Ann Blyth: Is she real? Or a fish tale?
Whatever it is, this movie is a gem.

With a brief introduction and back-story on this 1948 movie by Pamela Copley, in this, the tenth of our regular Classic Movies Contact PvonGruber@aol.com for more details.

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



and



Invite you to our film & discussion



THE LADY EVE

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



"If I were asked to name the single scene in all of romantic comedy that was sexiest and funniest at the same time, I would advise beginning at six seconds past the 20-minute mark in Preston Sturges' "The Lady Eve," (1941) and watching as Barbara Stanwyck toys with Henry Fonda's hair in an unbroken shot that lasts three minutes and 51 seconds." (1996 review by Roger Ebert)

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

UNFORGETTABLE:

FACES PAST AND PRESENT

A PHOTO EXHIBIT BY
DIAN McDONALD



JUNE 30 - AUGUST 10

OPENING RECEPTION ON

SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 4 TO 6 P.M.

MONTEBELLO CAFÉ



final glance



Pool deck

By Jon Kandel



Pool life

By Mikhailina Karina