

# The **MONTEBELLO** Voice

an independent gazette

flight of fancy

October 11, 2018



# Why and how do our condo fees rise

By Joe de Angelis

I think that we can all agree that the Board of Directors does an excellent job of managing Montebello; however they are sometimes overzealous in their desire to make Montebello a premier condominium community. Oftentimes the line between “need to have” and “want to have” becomes blurred in their eyes. A case in point is the partitioning and soundproofing of the Community Center lounge area into a multipurpose room. My wife and I have lived here for 27 years and we cannot recall ever having two or more functions or activities competing for space on the same day. As a matter of fact, there has never even been a picnic and a Cup of Joe on the same day, let alone two or more functions on the same night. The only calendar that is full seven days a week is that of the restaurant.

Based on residential outcry, the proposed condo fee increase of 5.7% was reduced to 4.5%. That is great, but it also raises a few questions. Automatically reducing our condo fees from

5.7% to 4.5% seems to be arbitrary and capricious. Could not this arbitrariness and capriciousness also be applied to the \$5 million programmed for renovating the Community Center?

As far as the Community Center goes, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” There needs to be constructive dialogue with the board to determine what is actually necessary and what will be of benefit to all residents, and not just what is nice to have. Remember the discussions about the fitness center, which were basically skewed towards the loudest voices? How did that turn out? Well we now have very nice fitness center, but we also have an anteroom that has been vacant and unutilized ever since. Adjacent to that anteroom we also have more wasted space disguised as an office. If well-planned, these two spaces could have been incorporated into the fitness center or at least better utilized. If properly planned, there would also be direct access to the fitness center and outdoor pool without having to go through the locker rooms.

Budget time is always testy, mostly due to the “need to have” and the “want to have” syndrome. We need to ensure that all of the changes to the Community Center that are being programmed are needed and wanted by the residents of Montebello.

John Powers made a good recommendation: “At a minimum, the board should be asked to detail the elements of the \$5 million Community Center renovation costs with an exact percent of the proposed condo fee increase required to fund each item.” This is a good idea even though it may seem extreme. The fact of the matter is that this breakdown, in some form, already exists because it was necessary to determine the stated increase in condo fees. Nice to have things, proposed by a consultant or some other entity, only increase the cost of the Community Center renovation, and by extension our condo fees. 🏠

# New entry system

By W.H. McGee

Open Letter to Greg Bender (President), George Gardner (General Manager), Earl Roberts (Safety and Access Control Manager) and The Times of Montebello

According to the article by Earl Roberts, Safety and Access Control Manager, in *The Times of Montebello* (October 2018, page 8) with regard to the Gallagher access control system: “Following the three-month changeover period, the old system will be removed and the old lock cylinders replaced rendering all old access keys ... useless.”

This raises the following questions:

In the case of computer/electronic failure of the Gallagher access control system, what is the back-up?

In the case of a power failure to one or all MB buildings, is the Gallagher access control system backed up to the emergency generators or is there to be a separate (or multiple) emergency generators specifically for power to the Gallagher access control system?

Will MB residents NOT be issued keys as a mechanical back-up?

With regard to the data collected, where is the Metadata stored and who has access? 🏠

**The** **MONTEBELLO** **Voice**  
 an independent gazette  
 Alexandria, Virginia

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Editor & Designer.....Mikhailina Karina

Contributors..... Joe de Angelis,  
 Mark Beerthuis, Catherine Cooke, Shane  
 Davies, Azita Mashayekhi Dian McDonald,  
 W.H McGee

Cover photo by Azita Mashayekhi

## Shane the TechGuy offers services



Are you having PC or TV problems? Is your smart phone acting not so "smart"?

Then Shane the TechGuy can help! If you need someone to help troubleshoot and solve any tech needs then call Shane at 202-827-6767 or email him at [shanedc123@icloud.com](mailto:shanedc123@icloud.com). He lives here in Montebello and can come to you. Appointments available weekdays and weekends. Several references available. Please call today! 📞

## Montebello Music Club



The Montebello Music Club is taking reservations for its annual Holiday Bazaar, to be held on Saturday, November 13, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Community Center. Tables will rent for \$20 each, limit one per exhibitor, Montebello residents only. The number of tables is limited with reservations on a first-come, first-served basis. A change this year: no clothing.

For more information or to reserve a table, contact Carol Coyle-Shea at [carolcoyle@cox.net](mailto:carolcoyle@cox.net) or 703-780-7955.

## voices on the 37

# Recycling do's and don'ts

By Catherine Cooke

I'm not a lover of trash but I do get great satisfaction from recycling and putting it in the proper place.

Even though I have read plenty of articles in the *Times of Montebello* and *The Voice*, it seems that we still don't have the correct details concerning trash etiquette and disposal. Our recyclables should be brought down to the B3 recycling area and not placed on the shelves in the trash rooms unless it is newspaper. Our Montebello staff work extremely hard to keep our home clean and they don't need to pick up after us unnecessarily. I have seen cartons of empty wine bottles, plastics and pizza boxes piled in our trash rooms assuming it is someone else's duty to dispose of it.

I read an interesting article on the do's and don'ts of recycling and learned some interesting facts. I have dumped many loads of shredded documents in the recycling bins. Apparently this is forbidden. Why? Once you shred documents, it shortens the fibers and lowers the grade from high grade to mixed grade. It also gets mixed up with recycled glass and affects the quality of glass and makes it unsuitable for recycling. You can use shredded paper for packing delicate china, animal bedding (hamsters, gerbils), donate it to an animal shelter, or use it for compost.

Pizza boxes are also unwanted. They are made of cardboard, right? The boxes become soiled with grease, cheese and other food parts and once soiled, the paper cannot be recycled because the paper fibers can not be separated from the oils during the pulping process. Frozen food boxes are also some-

times unacceptable. The plastic coating sprayed on the food boxes makes the paperboard underneath impossible to recycle because it will not break down during the standard pulp process.

If you are undecided over which plastics are recyclable, look on the bottom of the container. If it has a #1 or #7, then it is recyclable. Be sure to rinse them first so they are free of food residue. This includes most butter and yogurt tubs, plastic bottles, and jugs.

It's a noble thing to want to recycle as much as we can, but if done improperly, we can contaminate the whole process and the recyclable item can end up in the landfill.

Plastic bags can cause equipment damage at processing facilities when they get wrapped around moving parts. Recycle these at local retail stores. Target has a bin as you enter the store for plastic bags. Better still, if you reuse them during check out, you receive \$.05 for each bag! 📞



## Absentee voting

October 13 - November 3  
2511 Parkers Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22306

### Voting hours

Monday - Friday 3 - 7 p.m.  
Saturdays 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sundays: closed

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/absentee-locations/mount-vernon-governmental-center>



## literature



*Author Andrea Klein (Doug Klein's daughter) read and discussed her new novel, Eden, on October 10. Sue Allen moderated the event.*

*Photos by Dian McDonald*





## voices on the 37

### 2018 White House ornaments honoring President Harry S. Truman

The White House Historical Association's 2018 White House Christmas Ornament honors Harry S. Truman, the thirty-third president of the United States. This ornament is designed to illustrate three significant changes made by President Truman during his administration, one to the Presidential Seal, and two to the White House itself. One side of the ornament features his celebrated Truman Balcony, added in 1947-48 to the South Portico, and the other side features his renovated Blue Room, which, like all the rooms of the house, was dismantled and rebuilt during the renovation of 1948-52. These two images represent



Truman's White House alterations and restorations, the most extensive work on the house since President George Washington built it in the nation's dawning and Presidents James Madison and James Monroe restored it after the fire in the War of 1812.

The Presidential Seal featured at the top of the ornament reflects the design as changed by Truman. Originally the American eagle looked toward its left talons, which hold a cluster of spears, weapons of war. Truman, in the autumn

after he took office, had the seal redesigned, turning the eagle's head away from the spears to its right talons, which hold the olive branches of peace. 🏠

**Montebello Music Club**  
*selling White House ornaments for \$20*

Contacts for purchasing ornaments:

*Building 1*

**David Ransom**

[davidransom2@comcast.net](mailto:davidransom2@comcast.net)

703.960.0650

*Building 2*

**Joyce Elam**

[Jdelam@verizon.net](mailto:Jdelam@verizon.net)

703.780.8471

*Building 3*

**Mark Beerthuis**

[mbeerthuis@gmail.com](mailto:mbeerthuis@gmail.com)

703.360.7191

*Building 4*

**Carol Comlish**

[ccomlish@msn.com](mailto:ccomlish@msn.com)

301.613.2008

**OCTOBER 1-26, 2018**

Opening Reception to Meet the Artists:  
Friday, October 5 from 5-8pm

You're invited to a sumptuous show featuring the art of Jackie Afram, Elizabeth Hudgins, Kat Jamieson, Linda Maldonado, Elise Ritter, Anna Schalk, and Deborah Taylor.

**Gallery Underground**  
2100 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA 22202  
571-483-0652 [galleryunderground.org](http://galleryunderground.org)

Gallery hours: M-F 10am-6pm; Special opening hours for this show include talks and demos on Saturdays Oct. 6, 13, 20 from 10am-2pm

**VIENNA GOLD:  
INSPIRED BY KLIMT**

Front images, clockwise from top left: Ritter, Taylor, Schalk, Jamieson, Afram, Hudgins, Center: Maldonado

Questions? Suzanne or Mark Beerthuis at [beerms@aol.com](mailto:beerms@aol.com) or 703.360.7191.

Pay by cash or check made payable to: Montebello Music Club.

Proceeds go to the Grand Piano Concert Series

# A funny thing happened at the standoff

By Joe de Angelis

[Update: The suspect was taken into custody in District Heights by Prince George's County Police on October 9 after a vehicle chase that began in Virginia. Ed.]

September 29 was a beautiful sunny, fall day and my wife and I were sitting on our balcony discussing the week's political events. It was about 1:15 when I noticed four police cars at the motel across the road and as I was observing the situation I heard more sirens and almost immediately several more police cars pulled into the parking area of the motel. Since our unit directly overlooks the Virginia Lodge across from Montebello on Richmond Highway, we had a bird's eye view of what was going on. Now my curiosity was peaked and

lice. Because there were multiple warrants, including one for probation violation, and the individual's violent response, the police acted with an abundance of caution. Not knowing the mental state of the individual or whether he had any weapons or even a possible hostage, the police on the scene called for more backup. And the backup came.

As we watched, numerous police cars and officers arrived and positioned themselves around the motel. The entire area around the motel was secured with no one allowed in or out. It appeared that whatever was going on was occurring at the rear of the motel, which we could not see. The majority



the best way to enter the building and neutralize the situation. There were police, SWAT teams, dogs and firemen maneuvering around the motel for several hours.

We kept waiting and watching for the dramatic climax when they would enter the premises and arrest the individual. But that never happened. The motel was completely sealed off while police, SWAT and K9 teams kept going into the Taj of India restaurant, but we never saw them reemerge. We thought they were trying to get to the room through the attic or the air ducts. But nothing, that we could see, was happening. Then, unexpectedly, everyone started leaving. Police cars drove off, SWAT packed up and left the scene, and finally the ambulance left. But we never saw them arrest anyone and take them away in hand cuffs, nor did we see anyone being put into the ambulance. My wife and I were bewildered as to how we could have missed someone being arrested after having watched so intently for all those hours. Eventually the entire area was devoid of any police presence and everything appeared as though nothing had ever happened. The last police vehicle departed the scene at 6:42 p.m. During the course of the day my wife and I observed 37 police vehicles, marked and unmarked, two armored SWAT vehicles, 24 SWAT officers, three police K9 units, an ambulance, a fire truck and



I told my wife what was going on and she immediately got off the couch and joined me at the window. What unfolded next was a five-and-a-half hour police drama to rival anything on TV.

What we learned later was that when Fairfax County police went to serve an arrest warrant to an individual staying at the Virginia Lodge, a barricade situation ensued. When police tried to enter his motel room, the man made threats against himself and forced the door closed, denying entry to the po-

of the police officers were located at the front of the motel where they had established an active staging area.

Within the hour, SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) officers started arriving and then an armored SWAT vehicle arrived and parked on the shoulder. We could see the SWAT officers and uniformed officers huddled around a car that had what appeared to be blueprints of the buildings laid out on the hood. To us it appeared as though they were trying to determine



an undetermined number of police officers all in and around the Virginia Lodge Motel. Now there was no sign of them ever having been on the premises.

At approximately 7:30 p.m. that evening, frustrated at having missed the “arrest,” I decided to check the internet to see if I could learn anything about the event. What I learned was somewhat of a shock: the man the police were looking for had escaped even before they had secured the area.

I found the following article on the internet:

“Authorities are searching for a man who escaped from a barricade at a Belle Haven motel. The man had crawled into the attic through



the ceiling and escaped through another part of the building, according to police. The escape happened before officers secured the entire perimeter. Surveillance footage confirmed his escape. Police are asking for information on his whereabouts as the search continues. He is described as

6 foot 1, 175 pounds, with a beard and wearing a red hat and a white shirt. Police believe he is driving a silver 2013 BMW X1 with Virginia tags UZE-8869.”

Such are the fortunes of our law enforcement professionals. At the very minimum the events of the day were lessons to be remembered, at best it was a good practical exercise in real time in the real world.

Regardless of the outcome

I must say that the response and performance of the Fairfax County Police was immediate, overwhelming and professional, with public safety always at the forefront. 🍷

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## Party rooms renovations committee makes recommendations, board lowers proposed condo fee increase to 4.5 percent

By *Mikhailina Karina*

In response to the push-back and petition opposing the 5.7 percent condo fee increase next year, the board trimmed some expenses – notably tree removal and promoting Montebello efforts – to lower the proposed condo fee increase to 4.5 percent, which is more in line with the 4 percent increases in the past two years. The board will discuss the budget at its work session on October 23.

Slightly more people than the usual smattering of regulars attended the October 9 board meeting. Directors Raymond Goodrich and Lauren Pierce were absent.

In the coming days, 100 trees purchased with donated funds will be planted around Montebello, reported General Manager George Gardner. The effort will culminate with a ceremony on Arbor Day, October 20.

After several months of surveys and focus group meetings, the Ad Hoc Committee for Party Room Renova-

tions learned that people generally opposed spending \$200,000 per each party room; renovation plans need to be postponed until after the Community Center is revamped; and the design should be done by a firm specializing in hospitality design.

Other take-aways included:

- keeping all party rooms identical, but with variations for AV capabilities;
- refurbishing, but not completely renovating the kitchens;
- keeping existing flooring;
- replacing the HVAC with quiet and energy efficient systems resi-



dents can control on their own;

- installing new lighting with dimmers.

Board treasurer Jon Kandel cautioned that construction costs increase by 6 percent each year. If party rooms are redone in 2021, the cost could potentially creep up to the \$200,000 level with an 18 percent bump. 🍷



# fiestaDCtwirls





# fiestaDCtwirls







Art in Montebello  
presents

## And Now, Flowers!

BY REBECCA MCNEELY

**A**nd Now, Flowers! is a completely different subject than I have exhibited here in the past as I focus on the beauty of flowers.



Although most of these paintings are created with acrylic in the abstract expressionist style I have developed over the years, I recently challenged myself to paint flowers expressively in watercolor.

Watercolor has further developed my sense of color and value. I look deep into individual flowers and portray them with graphite and delicate washes.

Although it is quite a departure from my primary style, I've had so much fun learning this new medium. I hope you find my flowers joyful and peaceful.



**September 22 - November 2**

Opening Reception on

**Saturday, September 22, 4 to 6 p.m.**

Montebello Café



and



Invite you to our film & discussion



## TATTOO THE WORLD

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 27 7:30 P.M. PARTY ROOM 2



When does craft become art? I don't know... maybe it's like beauty, and is in the eyes of the beholder; or maybe it's like pornography... you know it when you see it. Regardless – come see *Tattoo the World*, a biography of master craftsman and artist Ed Hardy. Born in Southern California in 1945, Ed graduated from San Francisco Art Institute with a degree in printmaking. He applied his training and skill to a childhood fascination, and claimed tattoos as his preferred medium. Though tattoos may not be “your thing,” the evolution of Ed Hardy as a craftsman, an artist, and an entrepreneur is as interesting as it is dazzling.

Marsha Weiner will introduce the film and lead the post-movie discussion.



**SATURDAY OCTOBER 13, 2018**

6:30 TO 9:30 PM  
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In Celebration of  
**HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**  
The Speaker Series Presents

## LOCAL and NOTED ARTISTS CLAUDIA and SERGIO OLIVOS



CLAUDIA OLIVOS originates from Chile (B.USA). She holds an MFA from Vermont College, a BA in Psychology, and a BFA in painting from George Mason University. She has taught at Smithsonian Associates programs and currently teaches at the Art League in Alexandria.

Her husband SERGIO OLIVOS holds a BFA from Universidad Autonoma de Queretaro in Queretaro, Mexico, and upon graduating Sergio became a faculty member teaching painting, printmaking, and a variety of other mediums. He has exhibited throughout Washington, New York City, Miami, and San Francisco.

**Monday, October 15th at 7:30 pm**  
**Community Center Lounge**

Sponsored by the Activities Committee



## final glance



*Photo by Azita Mashayekhi*