

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

to freedom!

July 11, 2019



Age is just a number

By John Powers

I hope you will be just as delighted and challenged as I am by this dance number by a 90-year-old Chinese grandfather and his two grandchildren. They are moving their bods to the Bee Gees' 1977 hit, Stayin' Alive.

If you wonder why we do what we do in the Fitness Center, wonder no more. This guy embodies the why and has achieved the quality of life we all desire. He didn't get it by watching TV.

Many of us will live deep into our 90s and some into our 100s. Let's cut it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zou-51Plz30> 📺



S - T - R - E - T - C - H
is for everyone!

Mondays, Wednesdays,
and Fridays

9-10 a.m.

Community Center
down the spiral stairs

— Sarah Newcomb

Taste of Montebello is back!

By Leslie Rodriguez

Are you already an Instant Pot “pothead”? If so, come help teach this! But definitely come if you are a newbie, or you are just Instant-Pot-Curious, or if you have been wondering about this recent fad/bandwagon. (Even Rachael Ray!?)

Join us for a demonstration on Saturday in Party Room 1 at 7 p.m. We will take the mystery out of the process, show how it works, and demonstrate a few recipes. Taste-testing to follow, and a Get-to-Know the Instant Pot packet



will be provided at the end. We promise: no explosions! And if you don't already have an IP, you will probably be hitting up Kohl's, Wal-Mart or Amazon next week! 📺

Sponsored by the Activities Committee

Aldersgate Church Community Theater presents
Southern Hospitality
by Jessie Jones, Nicholas Hope, and Jamie Wooten
July 12 – 28
Aldersgate United Methodist Church
Wesley Hall Theater
1301 Collingwood Road
<http://acctonline.org/current-show/>
— Sammy Simon



Cover photos by Dian McDonald

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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Neighborhood ritual

By Raymond Houck

It was one of those oppressively hot, humid Sundays in Pittsburgh in 1960.

To cool off, we took a car ride out over the mountains to visit relatives in Cumberland, Maryland. All four windows were rolled down on our 1953 Chevrolet Bel Air because like most cars, ours didn't have air conditioning.

That afternoon my Dad, his uncle, and I drove over to the nearby Oldsmobile dealership. The showroom was

thin windshield. Two-door hardtops were called "Holiday Scenicoupes," whereas four-door hardtops were called "Holiday Sport Sedans." While many 1959 model cars featured bigger and sharper fins, Oldsmobile flattened theirs horizontally.

Dad said definitively, "Raymond, it's time to trade in old Betsy (what we called our brown Chevrolet Bel Air) and get us a new one of these!" I just about exploded. All the way home to Pittsburgh, I could only think of what it would be like to ride around in the

When we arrived home, it was early evening. We parked the new Oldsmobile in the driveway and it was time for the great ritual of new car buying in our neighborhood to begin.

If you remember history, the 1930s through the 1950s was a time of deprivation. My parents endured the Depression, followed by the War Years. At the time, a new car was a luxury few folks could afford. Some people had the same car for 15 or 20 years.

Slowly the neighbors noticed our new shiny automobile parked at the top of our driveway. One by one they came over to admire the car. My proud father wanted to show off his new gray and white baby. All doors open, trunk lid lifted up, hood popped so neighbors could admire that powerful V-8 engine. People would look at the outside of the car over and over again, commenting on this feature or that. They would sit in the front seat, then the back seat, crank the windows up and down,



closed because it was Sunday, but we were able to look at the cars through the window. To a young boy, it was almost too much to take in!

All the Oldsmobiles were completely restyled for the 1959 model year, with the 88 series given longer, lower and wider styling. The 88 shared its appearance with the top-of-the-line Oldsmobile 98. Styling highlights for the new models, promoted as the "Linear Look," included six-window styling on four-door pillared sedans, glassy semi-fastback rooflines on Holiday coupes and flat-blade rooflines with

gigantic land yacht.

Monday morning came and since I was out of school, Dad took me along with my Mother and him to see the Oldsmobile at our local dealership. Remember, back in the 1950s, a dealer had very little inventory on-hand, and most customers had to order the car from the factory, a process that took about six to eight weeks for the car to be built and delivered. So, when Dad said he wanted the one on the showroom floor, we were all thrilled. It was a big deal to drive a new car home the same day it was purchased.

turn on the radio, fire up the engine, and then stand around and discuss the car, politics, and neighborhood news.

Dad offered everyone a beer or a Pepsi. After a while they would file back to their homes, well versed in the features of our new car and inspired to begin planning their own purchases. It was a real happening in the neighborhood that was repeated throughout the summer whenever another neighbor brought home their brand-new car. 🚗

good ideas

Beautifying the outdoor pool with live plants and storage

By Scott Compton

I have some ideas for the pool to make it look more “alive” and better organized.

The association could purchase five or six planters to place along the hedge and perimeter of the pool, between the loungers and maybe one at the entrance by the guard stand.

They are hard plastic resin, from



Hayneedle for about \$125, and would blend well with the pool concrete. They are light and can be stored in the community center or in a shed during the winter months.

Crotons are heat-loving, colorful plants that grow naturally outdoors in Florida. Bugs don't like them and they aren't picky about water. They would look great in these pots and add a lot of variegated color to the all green and concrete in the pool area.

Green potato vines underneath the crotons could flow over side of planters. You have seen these in the front of the buildings planter boxes in the summer.

Another idea is a plastic shed to by the back gate to store all items sitting outside. This would match the concrete and the one for the tennis ball machine on the court. It would look great in that dark corner and allow to store items, such as resin pots, in the winter.

In addition, water bottles should not be sitting out all winter and summer with the extreme temps. I had to put a sign on the outdoor water cooler by the pool that said CLEAN ME! when I saw the green material floating in the water. Drinking from a unit with bacteria and

moldy pieces is a major health risk. https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/d75dkz/this-what-happens-when-you-leave-bottled-water-in-the-sun I'm surprised they even allow the tanks to be stored outside for aesthetic reasoning, let alone health risk.

An awning could protect the water



cooler on the tennis court. https://www.tennisuniversal.com/product/99/0/67/Fence_Mount_Awning_4_x_10.aspx



Do you have some bright ideas for improvements at Montebello? Share them here with your neighbors and management.



Zensuren hingen vierzig Jahre im Rauch

Grades hung forty years in smoke

By Joe de Angelis

The year was 1915; the location was a private boarding school in St. Goarshausen, a small town on the banks of Germany's Rhine River. The school year was coming to an end; however the majority of the students were almost in a panic because they were all failing. Not wanting to return home with failing grades they concocted a plan that they thought would spare them the wrath of their parents: They stole their teacher's grade book so that he would not be able to officially transcribe their grades. My wife's father was one of those students.

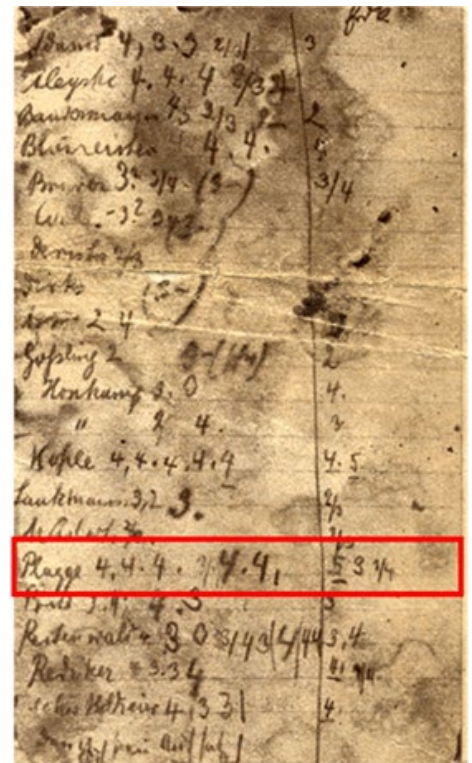
Hedi's father, Wilhelm Plagge, was a very intelligent man and spoke several languages: German, Dutch, French, and English. All through their school years, Hedi's father instilled in her and her brother the importance of a good education and the necessity of obtaining good grades. As an example to his two children he would often bring up the fact that when he was a child, his father sent him to a private boarding school in St. Goarshausen. What he

neglected to tell his two children however, which they found out later, was that when his parents divorced he became very unruly and his father, who was very wealthy, thought it best to enroll him in a private boarding school in order to instill discipline. The headmaster was very hard and strict and the rod was never spared and the teachers were relentless in their desire to impart knowledge to their young wards. Herr Plagge was always quick to point out, with a pride only a parent can project, that no matter how hard the learning environment was, his grades were always "ones."

At that time the German grading system was based on a numerical scale from 1 to 6, with one being the highest grade which was equivalent to an A in our American educational system. Having set himself as an example, he would accept no less from his children. This was how Hedi and her brother Wilhelm grew up, and even as adults they continued to hear the same story many times from their father. Needless to say, parents sometimes exaggerate in order to emphasize a specific theme for their children.

Let's fast forward to 1972 when I was stationed in Wiesbaden, Germany, where Hedi's parents lived. One particular weekend when Hedi's brother Wilhelm came to visit, he was very excited and said he had something he wanted to share with all of us. He had a copy of an article from an old German magazine, the *Stern*, from the mid 1950s. The article was titled "Zensuren hingen vierzig Jahre im Rauch" (Grades hung forty years in smoke) and was about a teacher's grade book that workmen had found in the chimney of an old schoolhouse in St. Goarshausen that they were demolishing. The article was accompanied by several pictures, including a class photo and a copy of the actual grade book that was found in the chimney. The grade book was still in good condition and legible.

When Wilhelm told his father about the article and the pictures, his father appeared somewhat uncomfortable. Wilhelm then showed his father the class



family lore

photo and after studying it for a few moments, his father pointed to a figure in the top row and said, “That’s me.”

But when Wilhelm told him what the article was all about, his father emphatically denied knowing anything about such an incident. But there was no doubt that it was the same school that their father had attended in his youth and the grade book pictured with the article bore witness to this fact: it showed their father’s name, Plagge, plain as day, and beside his name were his grades. Contrary to what their father had been telling them for so many years, his actual grades were not as he had intimated – they were all 4s. Hedi then said, “Papa, I always got ones and

twos because of what you always told us and now I see that you only had fours.” Wilhelm was quiet because his grades were not all that good either.

According to the story in the magazine, the entire class was doing so poorly, including Hedi’s father, that they decided to steal their teacher’s gradebook and hide it so it would never be found and their teacher would not be able to give them their final grades. Having obtained the grade book, they hid it where they thought it would never be found: the schoolhouse chimney. Their scheme apparently worked because the grade book was not found until the schoolhouse was torn down some 40 years later.

We all surmised that by placing the grade book in the chimney, the boys thought that it would eventually burn and be destroyed without them actually having to do it themselves. But even the best laid plans of mice and men can be thwarted by time. Although it took 40 years for the grade book to be discovered and another 30 some years before it found its way back to the Plagge family and one of those impish school boys who perpetrated the crime, it eventually came to light. Hedi’s father did not make any further comment, but just sat there looking at the article with a sly grin on his face. From that day forward he never mentioned his grades or his boarding school again. 📖



Rainbow over Montebello by Erwin Jacobs

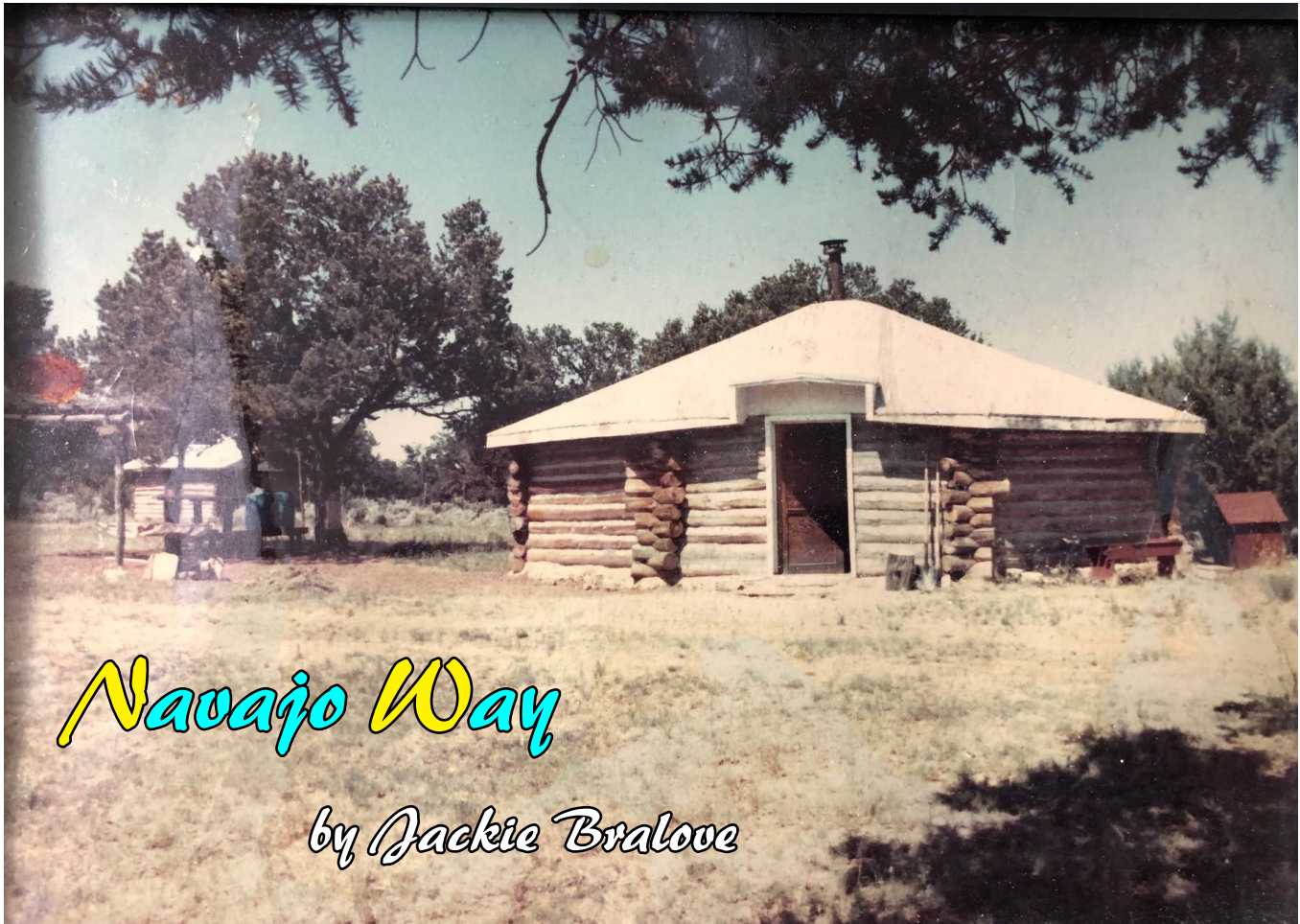
Navajo lessons

I used to live on Navajo.

That's the way Navajos taught me to say it. Not on the Navajo Reservation, but the Navajo Nation. So why "on Navajo" rather than "in Navajo" as one might say, for instance, in France? No

wonderful years. I lived in a traditional dwelling, a hoghan, which means, the place, or home, beautiful. My job, which honored me beyond my capacity, was to learn the Navajo Creation Story in order to abstract principles from it

pressed primarily through sound and sometimes in sand paintings which depict two dimensional instanding Forms before their manifestation in the third dimension. All they really wanted from me were principles expressed in "schol-



one spelled it out for me, but I think it is because of the way the land is held, sacred land in the Fourth World where the spiritual power of the Creation Story is encoded in the actuality of the third dimension: the land itself. Some of the People believe this is not Fourth World, meaning the fourth of six possible worlds, or planes of existence. This might be Fifth World, Glittering World, the surface of which catches the light and reflects it back to its source. In either case, one lives on the land as a part of it, among living breathing reality. The culture springs from that reality.

So, I used to live on Navajo for eight

which could then be compared with the principles of other world religions into an accredited college course. Along with other disciplines, this could become part of their bi-lingual, bi-cultural curriculum development program.

This process was like trying to learn and understand the Bible, or the Qur'an or the Tao Te Ching in a few years, impossible but exhilarating in the trying. Fortunately I had the guidance of several medicine men, properly called Hatathlis, or Singers, in the Navajo language. They are called Singers because ceremonial traditional Navajo is sonoral, meaning its power is ex-

arly language." My field is the Philosophy of Religion. Naturally, people from other fields were doing the same especially in the various sciences and other liberal arts.

I refrain from detailed explanation because I signed a contract not to do that. My work, as with other scholars engaged in the project, was meant for the College to use for itself, for their own people. They are the ones to decide how and when to impart their own culture. So I have not written about the Navajo Creation Story except short articles like this one in very general terms. What I want to say here concerns the

Navajo lessons



people who taught me, especially two men and one woman.

The first person was a man named Dean Jackson. He was the President of what was then Navajo Community College, the first totally tribally run college. It has since become Dine College, a four-year institution with campuses scattered around the vast Navajo land which is larger than New England. Dine means the People in Navajo.

Dean Jackson not only had a PhD in education but was also a medicine man, and a champion rodeo rider. His vast vision conceived the possibility of an accredited bi-lingual, bi-cultural curricula which credits could also be transferred to other colleges. The idea originally was to have each course taught in parallel perspective with a scholar in the relevant field teaching alongside a Native elder who would teach Navajo Way in Navajo language. There were many adaptations to this idea in practical application but the purpose remains the same: to preserve Navajo Way, and to transmit it to Navajo young people while also preparing them to operate within the prevailing dominant society. This is different than simple comparison which often takes the form of mea-

suring Navajo perspective against that of the dominant society to see how or if Navajo measures up.

The old approach indicates that if an idea or principle is seen as different that difference is taken to mean that Navajo is “primitive” or lacking, that it needs to “catch up” to be relevant. What a message to send to young people! That position implies or even states explicitly that who they are, that the knowledge and customs of their elders are deficient and irrelevant, and less than the members and ideas of the dominant society. President Jackson’s vision was to show that Navajo was sufficient to itself, that its distinct nature is what makes it profound and beautiful. Of course, not all principles in any given field are different from one another, but when they are they are simply dissimilar intrinsic parts of the whole of a particular paradigm.

Such an approach does not diminish the educational perspectives of the dominant society which are taught according to the established accredited standards of the state in which the college is located, allowing for a real broad based bi-cultural education. This may seem obvious, but until quite recently

Native young people were taught to measure themselves against dominant society values to the great detriment of their own dignity and self-esteem. Within tribal educational institutions today, more people are conveying the value of the traditional perspective of the various tribes but there is still a long way to go. However, even though Navajo is a sonoral and spoken tradition, in today’s world education requires that some sacred knowledge must be written down in order to preserve it. This controversial point is discussed widely among Native elders and educators from within their particular tribal perspectives. There seems to be general agreement that even though it is nearly impossible for the written word to properly transmit what has to be lived and spoken, still it is necessary to preserve what can be preserved on paper. As one wise man stated, “it is a canoe against the mainstream” but it must be attempted. Dean Jackson was one of the first to put this vision into action, and he has remained a Navajo treasure.

The second person I mentioned was a Navajo woman, a wise elder who taught me how to avoid certain mistakes Anglos, as white people are mostly called there (Bilagaanas in Navajo), often make when we become immersed in the culture of another country. The first thing she said to me was “Don’t try to be a phony Navajo! It doesn’t help us to have people come here who don’t even know who they are and try to become someone they are not.”

Popular cultures refers to such people as “wannabees.” Later someone said something similar to me: “Because you know who you are, it means something to me when you say that you find our ways beautiful.” I have applied that lesson to my great advantage in my travels and times in other countries also. The second lesson I found even more valuable and more difficult to apply. She said, “Every door here has opened to you, walk through them, but when they start to close, leave. This is not

Navajo lessons

your place, but you are invited. You will be in hozhojii as long as you are meant to be here, but not after that.” Hozho means something like harmony, order, and grace all of which combine to mean Beauty in the phrase you may have heard, “Walk in Beauty.” I agreed very readily, but years later when the time came it was harder to leave than I expected.

I loved it there, but she was right, it was not my place, and things did change at the end. I had always felt safe and protected, that no matter what happened I was where I belonged doing what I was meant to do. Once toward the end upon returning from a trip, something felt wrong around my hoghan, even before I got inside. One of the medicine men about whom I will write a little next, drove up soon after I arrived. (The first thing one does is get the fire in the wood-burning stove going to bring the hoghan back to life after having been away. When the medicine man saw smoke coming from my chimney, he knew I was back.) As soon as he got out of his truck he started looking around. Whatever I had sensed, he sensed even more strongly. I never knew what it was exactly, but he did a purification ritual with burning sage, smoked the area, as it is called, and even so, things felt off-kilter somehow. I knew my time was up, but I didn’t want to go. I dragged it out a while, but I finally did leave. It was not my place, but what a place it was, and how grateful I still feel for having been allowed to live there.

This same wonderful woman not only taught me many practical skills about living in a hoghan, but also how to avoid violating any taboos which might affront my neighbors. I had to learn everything from scratch. My only preparation was living on a sailboat for many years which at least taught me how to conserve water because I had to haul it up there. Water is heavy, and chopping wood is hard work, so it was good I was still relatively young and strong because I lived alone. Every

once in a while some Navajo neighbor would surprise me by the favor of perhaps fixing something without being asked. Once I came home to find that the corral fence around the whole place had been repaired. A friend told me my neighbors knew it needed to be done in order to let the “Holy People” know that I respected the order and harmony of the place. A broken fence was not only negligent of its purpose but also disrespectful on several levels.

Another time someone paid me the great compliment of borrowing an outdoor table without asking and then bringing it back, just as he would naturally do with any Navajo living there. A few days later I found two jugs of water outside my door in appreciation. There were so many examples of love and acceptance. Living there felt like being home, but it still wasn’t really my home. It did give me a profound sense of place though and how to act at home in my own community. I still dream about it.

The third person I saved for last. Mike Mitchell was one of the hatathlis who also was a “resource medicine man” at the college. In my experience, not all medicine men conformed to my idea of what a holy man should be like. Some of them were out and out coyotes! Remember, I was still young and I lived alone. Who knows what they thought? Yet, nothing bad ever happened. Mike was different though. He had an air of sanctity that was recognizable to me. He was gentle and quiet, always aware. Even though he had been assigned to me as part of our jobs at the college, he taught in the traditional way. Incidentally, I did study Navajo language, but I was certainly never fluent, to say the least. Mike’s English was better than my Navajo but we still had to rely greatly on intuition to communicate.

Part of the traditional approach of teaching is through questions and answers rather than by lecture. He started by inquiring if I knew the Four Elements: earth, water, air and fire, the most fundamental and foundational

teaching. Once answered, he told me their associated spatial directions, and four seasons, and times of the day, for example. Then he would stop. The next time I saw him he waited to see if my reflection on what he had said previously had given rise to questions on my part. To continue the example of the elements, I could figure out the colors associated with each element, and so to each direction, etc., which formed a kind of formula. I asked for confirmation, and then he would tell me a little more about the color, such as how it had been sung into existence in a previous “world.” Very slow learning, but as he said, he wanted to see by my questions whether the Holy People were teaching me anything or not.

We went on like that for eight years, little by little. By the way, I had agreed not to read any books about Navajo by outside writers. There were almost no books written then by Native people about their own ways so as not to subject precious knowledge to outside exploitation through romanticism and misinterpretation. New Age writers were held in particular disdain. Naturally Native people prefer the work of their own people. Therefore many safeguards were established to prevent as much as possible viewing things solely through my own eyes. Whenever I wrote anything I gave it to President Jackson, who translated it into Navajo if he thought it worthwhile, and then gave it to his own medicine people who corrected and refined it. I had access to scholars at my own college, George Washington University, who checked my writing on world religions from their specific perspectives. After all that, Dean Jackson would translate the Navajo back into English.

We tried to keep everything as authentic and impersonal as possible, another feature of his great vision. I am very fortunate to have been the beneficiary of this intense mental and spiritual process which still shapes my life today.

Navajo lessons

In the course of the years, occasionally Mike would say something like, “Okay, enough scholarly work. It is time to sit by the fire.” At first I thought he meant to relax, sit back and gaze at the fire. But then he asked me what colors I saw in the fire, and expected me to be able to correlate those colors with the four elements, and their combinations which were sung into existence by the Holy People in the various previous worlds. “Everything is born with a prayer and a song.” He expanded my heart as well as my mind.

Sometimes our poor language communication had its funny moments. Once he was trying to teach me about bears, not just bears walking around, but the Ideal of Bears in something like their Platonic Form and their symbolic meaning in the Creation Story. I just

couldn't understand what he meant no matter how hard we both tried. He knew it, and looked for ways to get through to me, but I couldn't “grok” it if you remember that term, which means something like tasted knowledge, that click of sapiential intuition. Finally, in desperation he leaned across to me, looking earnestly into my eyes, trying to push the information into my mind and said, “A bear can't take a joke!” Suddenly I saw the application in the particular phase of the Creation Story...inexorability! What a relief for both of us! Perhaps the humor of this doesn't translate well here, but if only you could have seen the serious look in his eyes as he spoke. “A bear can't take a joke!” Certainly true from any perspective. There is not much room for negotiation with a bear!

There is much I could say about his teaching that I cannot say here. One last reminiscence though. In Navajo one would not normally ask a person “how are you?” always assuming a person walking around is in relative harmony as the world unfolds before her or him. Nevertheless, most Navajos speak English and use English terminology. So if someone asked Mike how he was doing, he would always reply, “Pretty good, okay.” Pretty good, okay is really very well. It means balance, not too much one way or the other, but living out from the center of all directions horizontal as well as vertical, and so okay, really okay, in equilibrium and peace. That was Mike Mitchell. Harmony and beauty. Navajo Way. 🙏



Independence Day by Jon Kandel

July 4 picnic and parade

Photos by Diane Bastin, Candace Cowan, and Dian McDonald



Polymer Clay Fun Day! Come One Come All! July 17, 11am to 4pm in CC lounge



Techniques by Chris Kapono



Cane design - Meg Newberg

TILES AND CANES!

A cane is a cylinder with the same design all the way through. Tiles are elaborately decorated squares of clay that are small and used as mosaic tiles. You can use tiles or slices of cane to make kaleidoscopes, decorate frames, gift boxes, make a wall piece, sculptures etc.!

What better gift to make for someone this holiday season than something you made with love and care!!

These techniques are simple but make complex designs! Kids 8yrs and over will love these and will have no trouble following along so bring them with you!!

You can make these wonderful items even if you have had no experience with polymer clay before.

So Join me for a fun day of creativity and relaxation!!

Refreshments will be provided!!!!

Please email me for a supply list if this is your first time.

Pratibha Srinivasan 4/1412

psrinivasan@icloud.com



AiM Polymer Clay Group

Guido R. Zanni Going with the flow



This exhibit demonstrates the technique of "pouring acrylics," a technique originating in the 1930s. Acrylic paints are mixed with a thinning medium and poured onto a canvas. The flowing paint is then manipulated into the desired design. Brushes are rarely used; paint is manipulated with forced air, heat guns, chains, strings, and other non-traditional methods.

Montebello Café

July 20 to August 23

Opening reception: Saturday, July 20
4 to 6 p.m.



Montebello Classic Movie Night

Wednesday, July 24, 2019, at 7pm
on the Big Screen in the Community Center



The 39 Steps is an iconic 1935 British thriller directed by Alfred Hitchcock, starring Robert Donat and Madeleine Carroll. It's very loosely based on the 1915 adventure novel of the same name by John Buchan. "Everyman" civilian Richard Hannay becomes caught up in preventing an organization of spies called "the 39 Steps" from stealing British military secrets. And life never goes back to normal. Hitchcock makes it work. This will become one of your favorites.

Good, old-fashioned vices and virtues!

FREE popcorn, candies, and soft drinks for a great classic movie night!

Your host, Pamela Copley, will give you a pre-show briefing on the stars and the production, and then give you all the post-screening "back story" highlights. Pamela can be contacted at PvonGruber@aol.com.



and



Invite you to our film & discussion



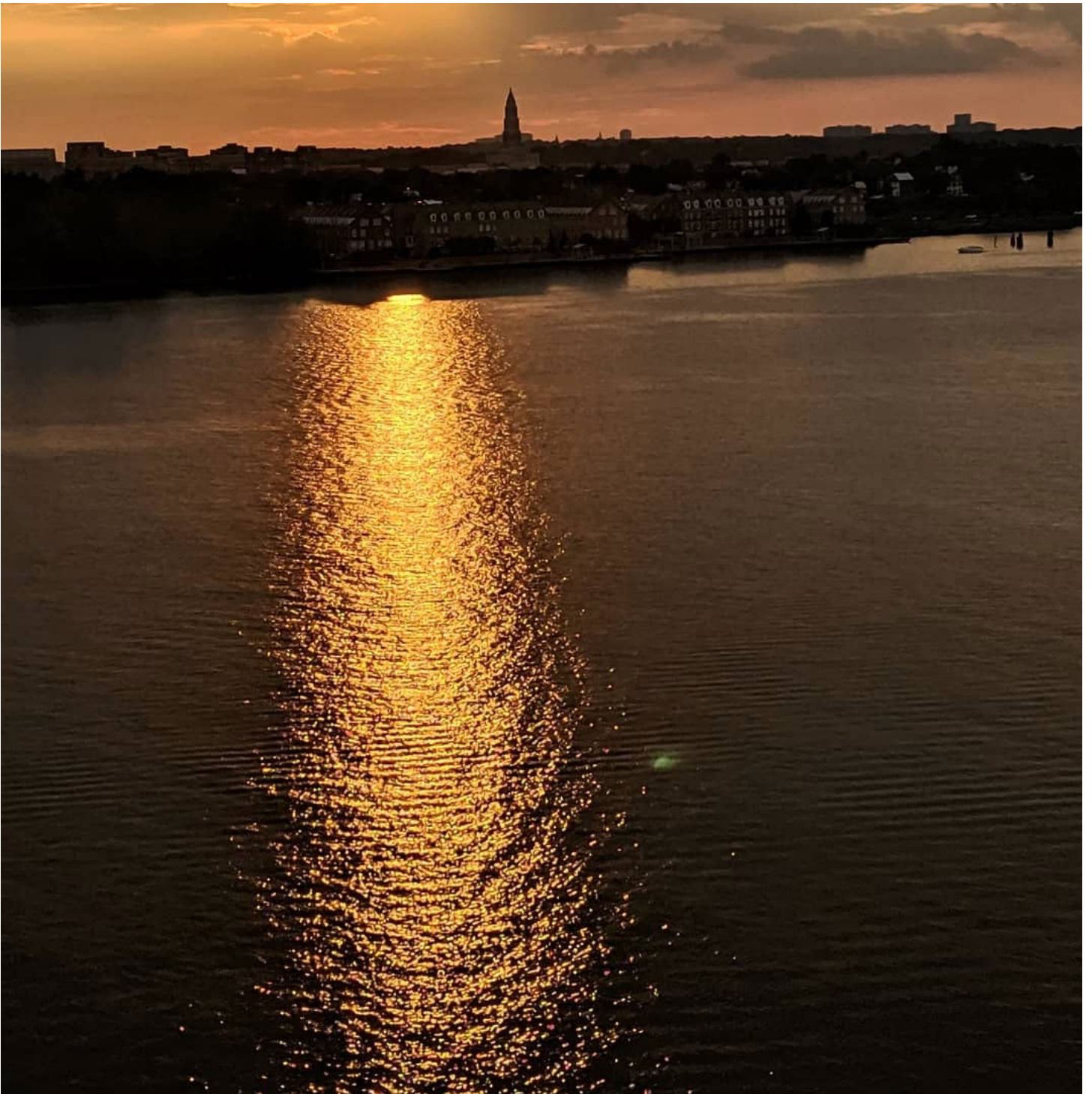
THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS
THURSDAY JULY 25 7:30 P.M. PARTY ROOM 2



In the late 1930s, in Ferrara, a group of young friends get together for afternoons of tennis and happy times. Some of them are Italian Jews and a rising tide of Fascism has imposed increasingly anti-Semitic restrictions in their lives. Barred from regular tennis clubs, they go to play at the grand, walled estate owned by the Finzi-Continis, a wealthy, intellectual and sophisticated Jewish family. Oblivious to the threats around them, life still seems to be sunny at the large Finzi-Contini estate, keeping the rest of the world at bay.

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

final glance



By Azita Mashayekhi