

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

Okay, Boomer

November 21, 2019



Oppose the Denial of Care Rule about to take effect

By Diane Schrier

Call 1-877-696-6775 and complain now. Two lawsuits have failed, although 2 more are still in the courts. Denial of Care Rule, sponsored by HHS (Health and Human Services) [<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2019/05/02/hhs-announces-final-conscience-rule-protecting-health-care-entities-and-individuals.html>, ed.] is due to start at the end of this week on November 22.

Anyone working in a medical facility has the right not to help a patient in any way if that patient is against the desk clerk, custodian, nurse, doctor, surgeon, specialist or any other employee's religious principle. It does not matter if it is an emergency. Worse, no one is allowed to ask the employee the beliefs in order to double staff and the employee does not have to tell anyone. If asked or questioned why a patient wasn't signed in, given blood, given emergency treatment, it is called religious discrimination. The hospital will then lose its federal funding. The patient does not have to be told that they will not receive treatment and may be waiting for help, others would give if they knew. All groups can be affected. Anyone can be discriminated against and not have a clue. 📖

Technical difficulties

Paul Krizek, who delivered a talk in the Community Center on Running Strong – American Indian Youth, has asked to share this video with our neighbors. The video did not work on the night that he was here.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m-L6jM0qgeAtX1jHqJ8fBsQOKrYK-g3cn7/view> – Guin Jones 📖

“Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.”

Mark Twain

“I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots.”

Albert Einstein

submitted by Carol Comlish

The Montebello Voice wants to hear from you: musings, travels, announcements, photos, book reviews, commentary, memoirs, essays, analysis, poems, suggestions, club news, recipes, and free ads

A twice-monthly publication for the residents, by the residents

Calling Montebello groups to celebrate the 19th Amendment

The 100th anniversary of women receiving the right to vote comes in 2020. All over Alexandria and throughout the nation people will be celebrating the 19th Amendment.

What will the different groups in Montebello do? Each group can decide for itself how it would like to honor this important milestone. Join Alexandria and make 2020 a year to remember. –

Diane Schrier 📖

Cover photo by Azita Mashayekhi

The MONTEBELLO Voice
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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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Fashion police vs. grammar nerds

top, noun. /tap/ 1. the highest point, place, or part. 2. a cover or lid used to close a container. 3. a toy with rounded sides that you can spin on a point at its bottom. 4. a piece of clothing worn esp. by women on the part of the body above the waist.

Source: Cambridge Dictionary

Fund established for tree planting in honor of Jorn Justesen

By Walter Peterson

Jorn Justesen, long-time resident of building 2, died at home on Sunday, October 27. He was with his wife Karen Justesen and his children Dines Justesen and Gunver Justesen, both from Denmark. Services will be held in Denmark at a later date.

Jorn was a wonderful human being and will be missed by his many Montebello friends. He lived a full and active life and participated in many Montebello events. He was a lead organizer of Cup of Joe. You could find him setting up (and then cleaning up after) and at many other Activities Committee events. The Tennis Club will miss his regular participation. He was a year-round lap swimmer, and even after his cancer diagnosis he often worked out in the fitness center.

When not participating in Montebello events, Jorn also greatly enjoyed Montebello's location. It was not un-

usual for him to ride his bicycle up to Bethesda, have lunch, and then ride home. A ride down to Mount Vernon was a regular short ride for him.

He also enjoyed Washington's many

cultural events, being a regular at the opera, symphony, and exhibitions at many of the local galleries. He and Karen were frequent travelers, visiting many locations in the U.S. and around the world.

Before retiring to Montebello, Jorn was a highly respected professor of electrical engineering at the Technical University of Denmark. A description of some of his work can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justesen_code.

In honor of Jorn's love of the outdoors and the woodland setting of Montebello, a tree planting fund has been established. The fund will be used to purchase and plant trees in the woodlands surrounding Montebello. You can contribute to the fund before February 28 by sending a check (made out to cash) to:

Walter Peterson
5903 Mount Eagle Drive, Apt 414
Alexandria, VA 22303 📧



Fall foliage east of Palmer, Alaska

Photo by Ralph Johnson

How should condo fees be set?

By Donald and Karen Barnes

According to Virginia condo law, the Board of Directors (BOD) has the responsibility and the authority to set condo fees through a budget process that is subject to approval by the condominium owners. The BOD has a legal fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interests of the owners. Discharging this responsibility is not one that BOD members take lightly.

There is a spectrum of ways that could be followed to carry out these duties. In simplistic terms, at one end of the spectrum, the BOD could develop a stellar vision of a future Montebello that they believe would serve the best interests of the owners. Then, they would set the condo fees at a level that would generate the funds necessary to

achieve that vision. At the other end of the spectrum, the BOD could focus on a condo fee level that they believe would be both reasonable and manageable for the owners who live here. Then, they would take the funds generated by those fees and make Montebello “the best that it can be.”

In actual practice, the process of setting the condo fee contains elements of both extremes. But to help the reader confront the difficulties facing BOD members as they propose condo fees, we are presenting below a hypothetical point-counterpoint exchange on the topic by two fictitious residents who articulate views that have been expressed by real residents who have commented on the issue. Our goal is not to convince readers of the correctness of either side of the argument, but to engage readers

in the reality of trade-offs that have to be made in reaching a decision.

The background: In this fictitious scenario, Mrs. Reality is a 75-year-old widow who has lived in Montebello since 2000. She and her husband were active members of the community until Roy’s death in 2014, participating in numerous clubs and functions on a regular basis. She served as a member of the Activities Committee for four years until health issues sapped her energy, but not her interest.

Mr. Dream and his wife have lived at Montebello since 1992. They own two units, living in one and renting the other. They have been active in Montebello events and are well-known throughout the community. They regularly attend BOD work sessions and meetings and make their voices heard.

Point

Mrs. Reality

I love living here at Montebello. In many ways, it is my life. My friends are here, my activities are here, and my purpose is here.

When Roy and I moved in here nearly 20 years ago, the condo fee was quite manageable. However, the fees go up year after year, seemingly without pause, at a rate of 3-4+%, while the nest egg of CDs that Roy set up for me are paying me an interest rate at about half of that.

On top of that, my tax bill is going through the roof, with a one-year increase of more than 10% most recently.

Now they are talking about the impact that “other improvements” will have on my expenses; e.g., the coming of the Amazon Headquarters in nearby Crystal City and the construction of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the Embark, both of which will mess up our lovely environment for the rest of my life while it adds value to my estate (so they tell me) that will benefit my heirs, although the associated real estate taxes will only add to the pressure of increased condo fees that may drive me out of what has been my lovely home for the past two decades.

Why can’t they set the condo fee by whatever process it is that the banks use to set the interest rate on my CDs? Is there any reason that condo fee increases must always exceed the increase in cost of living, not to mention the near-negligible increase in CDs interest.

Mr. Dream

My wife and I are happy here at Montebello. We certainly are enjoying “our golden years” in this active, attractive community that stimulates us and has enabled us to simply lock the door and engage in world-wide travel a couple of times a year.

However, the larger community around Montebello is undergoing rapid, irreversible change. If we don’t keep up, we – and our nearly 40-year-old development – will be left behind. Just look at the number of new condominiums that are being refurbished, reinvented, and newly constructed all around us. This is new competition, the likes of which Montebello has never faced before.

That is why I am glad that the BOD is protecting our interests by investing in repairs, renovations, and new features that enhance our unique features (e.g., the woodlands), update our aging facilities (e.g., Community Center renovation and outdoor lighting replacement), and keep us current with fast-moving technological advances (e.g., new inter-building communication and fire alarm systems). If we are to be competitive in this rapidly changing real estate market, we must continue to make necessary, prudent investments.

Mary and I also need to think about the value of our investment – both the unit we live in and the one we rent. Frankly, we need to have higher rental rates and sales prices

point/counterpoint

Bottom line: The BOD should set the condo fee at a level that is reasonable and manageable for those who live here. They should then use those fees to make Montebello the best that it can be.

to attract the kind of residents who can afford to live here and maintain their property; otherwise, we all suffer.

Bottom line: The BOD should develop a vision of the future Montebello and then set the condo fee that would allow us to achieve that vision.

Counterpoint

Mrs. Reality

I hear what you say, and I agree with you to a point.

You and your wife have done well in life, and I am happy that you are enjoying your retirement. I do not begrudge you any of that. However, Roy was a public school teacher for 30 years, and I stayed home raising our three children, one of whom had special needs. As a result, we have no “nest egg” other than our residence here at Montebello and some modest savings; i.e., CDs. I share your appreciation of the BOD’s taking action to increase the value of our units at Montebello, especially after the near-crash of 2008.

However, the fact is that if housing expenses (particularly condo fees and taxes) continue to rise at a rate faster than the yield in my investments, I will be priced out of the market here at Montebello.

It is cold comfort to be told that more affluent residents at Montebello will continue to reap rewards from arguably foresighted investments by the BOD, while I am forced to leave a place and people I love and end up in a place I never imagined.

Mr. Dream

I hear what you say, and I sympathize with your situation.

It sounds as if you and your husband did all the right things – productive career, coupled with an exemplary home life, prudent savings plan, and so on. Here, at the end of the day, you are coming up a bit short.

As presented, your analysis, in strictly market terms, seems correct. However, I would encourage you to sit down with your financial advisor and take a closer look at your expenses and your investments. I would like to think that someone well-versed in these situations could find ways to ease your burden.

At the same time, Mary and I feel that our long-term interests must be a priority for the BOD as they exercise their fiduciary responsibility to all of us owners. That means raising condo fees that will generate the funds necessary to maintain Montebello as a luxury property. The historical record and the experience of similar condominiums in the area shows that that means 3-4% annual increases or higher.

Perhaps we could work together to recommend to the BOD that they explore some imaginative financing options; e.g., longevity rates for long-term owners and reverse mortgages.



Fourteen residents share their photographs and paintings in the current AiM exhibit, If Walls Could Talk, on view in the café until January 10.

(From left, back row): Theresa Kritcher, Joel Miller, Bonnie Jacob, Rebecca McNeely, Eileen Jameson, Dian McDonald, AiM chair Harriet Duval, Joanne Conte, and Anthony Cascarano (Front): Rachael Bright, Mei Lung De Vight, Erwin Jacobs, Cheryl Browning, and Guido Zanni

Photo by Norman Lindeblad

holiday bazaar



Photos by Dian McDonald

holiday bazaar



Photos by Dian McDonald

holiday bazaar



Veterans Day



Montebello Music Club performed song tributes to the Armed Services



Some of Montebello's Armed Services veterans



Invite you to our film & discussion



THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 21 7:30 P.M. PARTY ROOM 2

THE MOST INCREDIBLE STORY-EVER!



Featuring groundbreaking special effects, this 1957 sci-fi movie stands out as one of the more ingenious, unsettling, and everlasting movies of its kind.

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

Please note the date change. Due to Thanksgiving, it's a week earlier than our usual time slot.

A UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL PICTURE STARRING
GRANT WILLIAMS-RANDY STUART
with APRIL KENT-PAUL LANGTON-RAYMOND BAILEY
DIRECTED BY JACK ARNOLD SCREENPLAY BY RICHARD MATHESON PRODUCED BY ALBERT ZUGSMITH

Wednesday, December 18, 2019
Montebello CLASSIC MOVIE NIGHT
The Holiday Big Screen: Community Center at 7.30pm



The Montebello Big Screen brings you all the joy of Christmas.

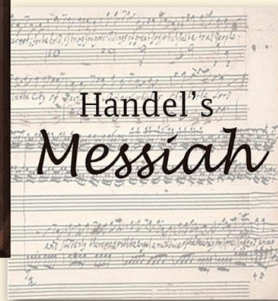
FREE old-time Movie Night refreshments, popcorn, and candies!

With a brief introduction and back-story on this 1951 movie by Pamela Copley, in our Classic Movie Series.

This is Christmas's Greatest Feel-Good Movie!

Contact PeterCruiser@aol.com for more details.

New Dominion
CHORALE
and Orchestra
Thomas Beveridge,
Artistic Director



featuring
Natalie Conte, soprano
Melissa Kornacki, mezzo-soprano
Patrick Kilbride, tenor
Jeffrey Tarr, bass

Sunday, December 15, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria, Virginia

Tickets and Information: www.newdominion.org / 202-244-7191

"SUNDAY AFTERNOON FEVER"
Dance Class & Social

Join your Montebello Neighbors each Sunday, 1pm-2pm, at the Montebello Community Center for these FUN & FREE Sunday Afternoon Dance Classes & Socials.

Share with your neighbors as Peter, Laura, & Cathy teach the latest fun Club Dances and moves from "The Salsa Room" Latin Night Club for Bachata, Cha-Cha, New York Hustle, Merengue, & Salsa.



RSVP to Peter ("Tall Tex") at PeterSalsaDancer@gmail.com

See Peter's Salsa Demo Video at:
<https://youtu.be/mAwErTGM38I>

See Bachata 2019 Video at:
<https://youtu.be/GY2fESxr6XU>

See Peter's Bachata Instruction Video
"Peter Blackledge Bachata Dance Class 3Nov2019" at:
<https://youtu.be/2c5j0srVQAE>



When you get the choice to "Sit It Out" or "Dance," we hope you "Dance"

final glance



Red and yellow leaves under street lamp

Photo by Azita Mashayekhi