

The **MONTEBELLO** Voice

an independent gazette

21,489

April 12, 2020



Let's not infect or become infected

By John Powers

Because COVID-19 is asymptomatic for approximately five days after contracting the virus, here are 10 recommendations for staying healthy:

1. Wash your hands when returning home for the requisite 20 seconds no matter how brief you were outside your unit (e.g., picking up mail).
2. Ditch acrylic nails and hand jewelry – they're harbingers for bacteria and viruses. Fingernails should be no more than ¼ inch from the nail bed.
3. Wear surgical gloves (others gloves will do) when retrieving and opening packages from the outside and when shopping.
4. Wear a surgical or N-95 mask in the elevator and in any crowded place. If you don't have either of these, cover your mouth and nose with a scarf or bandanna.
5. Do not push elevator buttons and door openers; consider using the tip of your key.
6. If you cough without a mask, cover your mouth with both hands or with the inside of your elbow
7. Keep a container of Clorox or hydrogen peroxide wipes in your car and wipe down door handles and any surfaces touched.
8. Be wary of any non-peeling fruits and vegetables that are not cooked thoroughly. Consider buying only prepackaged fruits and vegetables. Wash all grocery containers in your decon area.
9. Wash clothes that have come in contact with surfaces that have not been known to have been sanitized.
10. Use hand sanitizers when entering the community center and the towers.

Vigilance, vigilance, vigilance 📧

voices on the 37

Our local food bank desperately needs our help

By Doug and Eileen Kennett

The pandemic known as the Coronavirus has brought not only illness and death, but also widespread unemployment, causing food banks everywhere to be stretched beyond their limits. And we don't have to look very far to see the result.

United Community, formerly known as United Community Ministries or UCM, has for fifty years been the local mainstay for the working poor – our neighbors along the Route One corridor. Montebello residents have always been great supporters of this local mainstay – and they need our help now more than ever.

In the month of March, United Community's food pantry on Fordson Road provided more than 2,400 meals to hungry families. In addition, they served twice as many new families as they did in February. And the need keeps growing. Working with Fairfax County, they plan to set up a second food distribution site to fill the growing need.

They desperately need monetary donations to meet this growing need – and many of our residents have already responded – but the need continues to balloon.

If you can help, please log onto <https://www.unitedcommunity.org> and learn the grave need, and please donate. Let's help our neighbors get through this! 📧

Additional NoVa food banks:

<https://patch.com/virginia/arlington-va/coronavirus-hungry-here-are-some-food-banks-serving-nova>

– submitted by Sherrill Hendricks

For parents of Fairfax County students

In the latest email I received from FCPS was a link to opt out of receiving printed learning packets at home. Since all the information is available online and it will cost \$4 million to print and mail these packets, please consider opting out if you do not need them. My understanding is that it is for kindergarten through middle school, but I opted out for my HS seniors just in case. <https://isweb.fcps.edu/iscontacts/paperless.cfm?secure> – Diane Bastin 📧

Cover:

Yellow moon by Azita Mashayekhi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O87iUDZGDKs>

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an independent gazette
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Taking care of mental health during an epidemic

By Mary J. Quinn

There are many of us who have not yet experienced long-term trauma until this Corona Virus event happened to us all: The hunker down, grin and bear it, this will not end any time soon and does not have a timeline type of trauma.

You are exhausted and do not know why. You keep taking naps and don't understand why you can't think straight. You're having hard to deal with, invasive thoughts about a catastrophe that you can't turn off. You've been crying and don't know what got you started. You've been extra irritated and uncomfortable and feel like your skin is too small and every noise is too much. You've had your first anxiety attack

or are having significantly more than you're used to.

Those are all trauma responses as well as grief responses. Your body is trying to deal with a threat that you cannot fight and you cannot get away from nor can you control. This could be the threat of sickness, the fear for your friends and family, the sudden upheaval of your life and routine, the financial consequences of staying at home, the overwhelming stress of your essential job, or even just being isolated. All of those things are traumatizing in this current corona virus pandemic.

Please continue to be patient with yourself. Please continue to reach out to friends and family. Pay close attention to the thoughts you're having and

what triggers exhaustion or anxiety for you. If they're things you have to do, like go grocery shopping, what can you put in your toolbox to help you deal with that anxiety? If they're things like talking about the news or looking at articles, give yourself a strict time limit or don't do it at all. Ask a close friend to tell you the most important information and keep away from the rest of it. I can tell you that you're not alone and there are people and resources for you. Take it one day at a time and give yourself the love and space you'd give your closest friends. Remember that it's okay to reach out and ask for help. We'll get through this together. 🍷

What about America's homeless?

By Joe de Angelis

Millions of Americans are anxiously awaiting their tax free \$1,200-\$2,400 stimulus checks from the federal government. However, many Americans will not get a check for various reasons. For example, many students aren't eligible for a stimulus check and neither are some elderly and disabled people. Then there are the immigrants who don't have a Social Security number; they won't get a check either. However, I believe that the neediest and the most vulnerable are America's homeless. These individuals and families depend entirely on the good will and charity of others – the federal government's good will (stimulus) does not extend to the homeless.

Conversely, many people who do not need the extra money will receive a federal stimulus check. I firmly believe that there are many Montebello residents, including me and my wife Hedi, who are among the more fortunate that do not need the federal stimulus money.

We may all be in this together, which implies equity, but getting out of this together, for lack of a better term, is lopsided.

Therefore, Hedi and I have decided, and strongly encourage you, to donate your stimulus check to one of the local homeless shelters, of which there are many in this area. I have listed three homeless shelters below for your consideration.

Alexandria Community Shelter
2355-B, Mill Rd
Open 24 hours (703) 746-3660
<https://www.voachesapeake.org/acs>

New Hope Housing Mondloch
3516 Lockheed Blvd
(703) 768-3400
<https://www.newhopehousing.org/>

Carpenter's Shelter
5701 Duke St STE D ·
Landmark Mall
Open 24 hours (703) 548-7500
<https://carpentersshelter.org/> 🍷

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
uncut, uncensored, unofficial

How do you know you'll like a wine?

by Paul Jameson

You're in a "deemed essential" wine shop, looking at the "shelf talkers," the little tags under the bottles telling a bit about the wine, or you're reading a wine review. Here are some actual descriptions:

🍷 "Aromas of blackberry, cocoa and currant lead to a rich, layered mouthfeel, replete with black cherry, cedar and cassia. Structured with lush, mature tannins."

🍷 "Attractive, deep, intense, blackberry and black cherry fruit aroma with hints of dill, vanilla, dried herbs, and fall spices; full body, big, deep, rich, nicely balanced, firmly structured, dark berry fruit flavors with controlled tannin, and a long, lingering aftertaste."

Sound kind of similar, don't they? It might be hard to decide which one to pick, unless you're one of those who just love wine with hints of dill.

The first description is for a Rodney Strong Cabernet Sauvignon, selling at Total Wine for \$13.97 a bottle. The second description is for a Ridge Vineyards Monte Bello. Yes, there is a wine called Monte Bello (two words rather than one). If you want to rush out and buy some, be aware that it retails for \$210 a bottle.

People going for a wine certification like Master of Wine (MW) or Master Sommelier (MS) are trained to associate certain aromas/flavors with certain grape varietals. For example, "if you detect blackberry, that makes the wine more likely to be a, b, or c (like Cabernet Sauvignon) and less likely to be x, y, or z (like Pinot Noir)."

While this may be helpful in trying to identify a wine blind tasted for an exam, it's less helpful in conveying to consumers whether they will actually like the wine. But they persist in describing wine in these terms to consumers.

Furthermore, even with training, different people come up with different descriptions of what a wine tastes like. For example, a panel judged the 2010 Ridge Monte Bello the Top Californian Cabernet of 2010 (Monte Bello really is a very good wine – you may want to get some out of condo pride). Here's what they wrote:

Stephen Brook: "Refined blackcurrant and garrigue nose. Herbal but not herbaceous. Quite rich, and solid, concentrated and firm, with a good

and chocolatey aromas. The palate is generous and dense, yet showing firm tannins and characterful, stone character. Very well-made."

It is likely that the three tasters were sitting around a table, tasting from the same bottle at the same time. One is a well-known wine writer, one is a Master of Wine, and one is a Master Sommelier. One said it smelled like blackcurrant and garrigue (don't ask, long story), one said it had blue and black berry fruit, and one said it had spicy and choco-



tannic backbone. This is robust and structured, with refreshing acidity on the long finish. Still plenty of life in it. Delicious!"

Alex Hunt MW: "Masterful composure on the nose here. Some tannin (possibly wood-derived) to resolve, but there is abundantly classy and precise blue and black berry fruit, and a real richness of flavour achieved without resorting to high ripeness and alcohol. Still very young, this wine is a strong long-term bet."

Piotr Petras MS: "Fruit-driven, spicy

lately aromas. It's pretty clear they liked the wine, and you might like it as well, but the descriptions of the various fruits are not going to help you decide.

What about point scores? Are you going to like a wine that somebody rated a 92 better than a wine that somebody rated a 90? Again, this is not a reliable indicator. *Maybe*, if you've found a wine writer that you've consistently found you agree with her taste when you've tried wines she's recommended, if she likes one wine better than another wine you may, too. I've found that I know how



Catching some rays

Photo by Mikhailina Karina

good a 91 wine is *to me*. I can taste the same wine six times over two years, and look back at my ratings to find that I've generally given the wine the exact same score. But different people have different views of how good a wine is. I've tested this, giving ten people six wines, telling them to assign point scores, and charting the scores. The resulting chart looks like a plate of spaghetti.

So how are you going to find wine that you like? The answer is fun: be adventuresome and try a lot of different wines.

These days, it's truly hard to find an actual "bad" wine. They're all well-made. But they sure are different from each other. Actually, let's clarify that. There has arisen an "international style" of wine, made to a lowest-common denominator taste. If we pick out six Cabernet Sauvignons between \$15 and \$20 from the wine aisle at Safeway and tried them all at once, they would pretty much all taste the same. Even if they are from California, Chile, and Australia.

They all taste fine, and would do at a party where everyone is talking about their kids' college applications and not

paying attention to the wine. But wine should do more than taste good. Coca Cola tastes good. For the extra money that wine costs compared to Coke, wine should be interesting.

A good wine will not be mono-dimensional. It will have a number of different aromas and flavors all at once, and it will change as you sip through it. The short term is complexity. Some people make a game of trying to associate what they're smelling and tasting with aromas and tastes they know. That's why you'll see a description like "vivid aromatics of rhubarb, tangerine zest, fresh cranberry and juniper are immediately apparent while intriguing notes of eucalyptus, chanterelle mushroom, plum skin and green tea linger in the background" (a real descrip-

tion of a Melville Pinot Noir). I never detect the things that the committee who put that description together detect. But I can tell that the wine has a lot of different things going on that are delightful. The wine is "interesting."

Here is where wine gets personal. It should be interesting *to you*. If you have had a number of Virginia Cabernet Francs, try a Chinon from the Loire region of France, and notice what is different about a wine made from the same grape. When you go to a restaurant, try a wine on the list that is new to you, rather than an old stand-by. Perhaps ask a sommelier, if the restaurant has one. Buy a wine from a wine shop rather than a grocery store. You are likely to discover new favorites.

That's the point. Keep exploring. You will find that there are many wines that you like. 🍷



CC reno: pros and cons

In the April 3 edition of the Voice, Greg Copley wrote an article presenting arguments for canceling the upcoming renovation of the community center. He invited residents to respond with their opinions on the matter. More views are welcome in future editions. – MK

New CC will benefit everyone

By Carole Appel

I don't agree with my friend Gregory Copley's opinions about the value of the community center remodeling. I think that anything that makes Montebello look up to date, anything that makes the community center look like the 21st century and not a building from 30 years ago, is useful to all of us, whether or not we use the center's activities much.

In particular, the arrival in a couple of years, of the Amazon East Coast headquarters, with a projected 30,000 employees in the Alexandria area, will surely have an effect on Montebello values, and Montebello sales prices.

Now I do realize that some people don't want to see valuations go up, because they're afraid that real estate assessments will increase, but the way I see it is this: if I have sell my apartment, because I need to move to a retirement village (god forbid), or my children have to sell it when I die, the more money we get, the better.

But I can be cavalier about this, because my lifestyle will not have to change if I need to pay another \$500 or another \$1000 a year in county taxes. But some people here probably will have financial trouble. Nevertheless: the young couples at Montebello who move because they want to live in free-standing houses, the older people who move because they want to live at Greenspring, the people who move to another state for another job – all those people, if they get good prices for their condos, all of them will benefit. 🏠

Too many unknowns and maybes

By Rebecca Long Hayden

Yes, I agree with Greg Copley's letter. The letter is more comprehensive, but here are my thoughts.

Upon reflection, I must vote to cancel or suspend the project. Here are the questions I asked myself, some leaning toward go ahead; some leaning toward stop.

Question: Given the nature of the work, can it be done in such a way as to protect workers and residents from further spread of the virus? Uncertain. Maybe not.

Question: Will our monthly fees go up? Will there be residents who can't meet this obligation under whatever the coming economic conditions may be, thus reducing revenues? Will this have a significant impact on meeting our operating budget – including payroll? Should the reserves be our back-up? Unknown.

Question: Much work has gone into the planning already, many surveys, discussions groups, and so on. How long will the project be put off? Long enough that the turn-over is so great,

we will have to start from the beginning, in order to give new residents a voice? Maybe.

Question: Will the project provide much-needed employment for a lot of trade people – carpenters, electricians, plumbers – who may need work? Maybe.

Question: Since we can't use the facilities at this time anyway, is closing them for construction less painful, since the facilities are already closed. Maybe

The Deciding Question for Me:

Do we know enough about the future to go ahead? Is the economy going to collapse completely? Will the recovery take months? Years? Will there be a second wave of COVID-19? Even the experts either disagree or admit frankly they don't know.

Does it behoove us as a community to engage in an optional spending spree right now? Good sense tells me the answer is no. Although I support the project and have from the beginning, in the face of all the unknowns and maybes, I have to vote no. We just don't know enough to go ahead. 🏠

Thank you, Nanette!

When COVID -19 hit, Nanette Frank went into her community organizer mode by creating Neighbors Helping Neighbors volunteer corps at Montebello. She's putting together a database of residents who need help and those who can help. Everyone can do something, even just calling your neighbor to make someone feel less lonely.

Nanette Frank frankbears@aol.com 301-642-3982

CC reno: pros and cons

Increased condo fees, poor past performance, broken promises

By Richard Titus

Mr. Copley's letter refers to an MB history of "cosmetic improvements." Realtors call this sort of thing "curb appeal." In our case, it's a way for an MB owner or coalition of owners to increase the value of their units with mostly other owners' money. (As opposed to e.g., spending their own money modernizing the kitchen and bath of their own units).

The letter also refers to increases in the MB condo fee. It could have added that in recent years our condo fees have risen at twice the US rate of inflation. The Community Center project will make it worse.

There are other arguments to support Mr. Copley's case, viz.

1. Our track record on this sort of thing hasn't been very good. E.g., the hallways, the lobbies, the lobby monitors. Costly, not well received, and in one case non-functioning almost from day one.

2. The justification being offered includes a poor specification of what the problem is that's being solved, and where it fits versus other priorities. (E.g., the party rooms, which are heavily used, are shabby, and have HVAC systems that seem since the beginning to have had only two settings: freezing and roasting).

3. That the project will enrich the

lives of MB residents, commensurate with its cost and disruption, postulates the existence of activities that do not now take place but will do so after the project has been completed. Architects (myself included) make presentation drawings to sell their designs to clients. In the drawings are gorgeous people doing fun things. They will do drawings like this for us; it's part of the game. But given our history we can expect that the project will cost more, take longer, and be more disruptive than promised, and, that life at MB won't improve anywhere nearly as much as promised.

These aren't cheery times and this isn't a cheery letter, but that doesn't mean that it's wrong. 🙄



The water waits. The big splash will come.

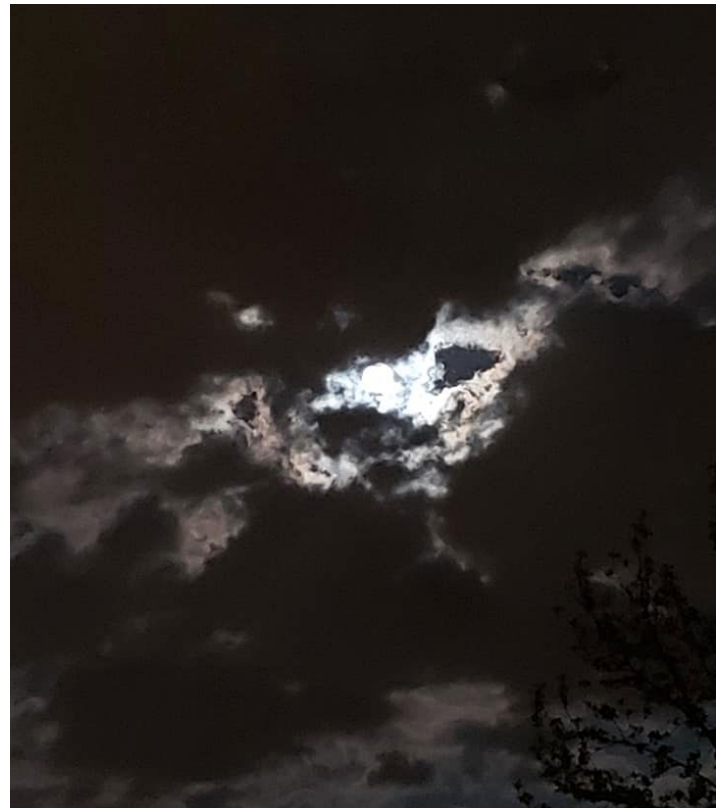
Photo by Dian McDonald

Coffee filters! Who knew?

You can buy 1,000 at the Dollar Tree for almost nothing.

1. Cover bowls or dishes when cooking in the microwave. Coffee filters make excellent covers.
2. Clean windows, mirrors, and chrome. Filters are lint-free so they'll leave windows sparkling.
3. Protect china by separating your good dishes with a coffee filter between each dish.
4. If you break the cork when opening a wine bottle, filter the wine through a coffee filter.
5. Protect a cast iron skillet. Place a filter in the skillet to absorb moisture and prevent rust.
6. Apply shoe polish. Ball up a lint-free coffee filter.
7. Recycle frying oil. After frying, strain oil through a sieve lined with a coffee filter.
8. Weigh chopped foods. Place chopped ingredients in a coffee filter on a kitchen scale.
9. Hold tacos. Coffee filters make convenient wrappers for messy foods.
10. Line a plant pot with a filter to prevent the soil from going through the drainage holes.
11. Prevent a Popsicle from dripping. Poke one or two holes as needed in a coffee filter.
12. Do you think we used expensive strips to wax eyebrows? Use strips of coffee.
13. Put filters on a plate and put fried bacon, French fries, on them. It soaks out the grease.
14. Keep in the bathroom. They make great razor nick fixers.
15. Use a filter as an easy-to-tear backing for embroidering or appliqueing soft fabrics.
16. Put baking soda in a coffee filter and insert in shoes or a closet to absorb or prevent odors.
17. Use them to strain soup stock and to bundle fresh herbs to put in soups and stews.
18. Use a coffee filter to prevent spilling when you add fluids to your car.
19. Use a filter as a spoon rest while cooking and clean up small counter spills.
20. Can a filter to hold dry ingredients when baking or when cutting fruit or veggies.
21. Use filters to wrap Christmas ornaments for storage.
22. Use filters to remove fingernail polish when out of cotton balls.
23. Use them to sprout seeds. Dampen the filter, place seeds inside, fold, and place in plastic baggie until seeds sprout.
24. To press flowers, place flowers between two coffee filters and put them in a book.
25. Use as a disposable snack bowls for popcorn, chips, etc. 🍿

– Submitted by *Rebecca Hayden*



Pink moon
The Montebello Voice

Photos by Rachael Bright
April 12, 2020

in the neighborhood

Montebello Tech Club update

By Paul Foldes

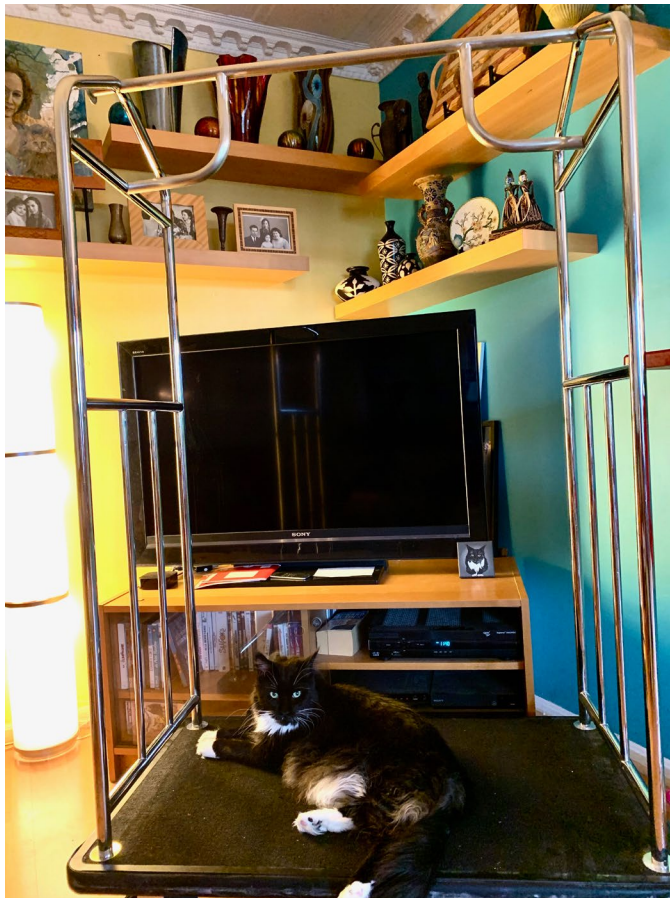
Eighteen folks joined the Zoom (<https://zoom.us>) online meeting on April 2 at 7:30 p.m. We used the free version of Zoom. We had heard on the news that morning that there were some security bugs reported with the product that might allow eavesdroppers to join, so we agreed that we would not divulge any Montebello secrets.

Cheryl Jobe downloaded the Zoom client software for Windows 10 in order to host the meeting. She sent out invites of the meeting ID and password earlier in the day. We all spent much of the meeting experimenting with the product. Most of us were able to see video from all folks joined, provided their computer or device was equipped with a camera and microphone. Cheryl was able to share her screen, and we explored the Giant Peapod site (<https://www.peapod.com/>), and some other grocery food delivery service sites, e.g. Amazon Fresh (<https://www.amazon.com>), Misfits Market (<https://www.misfitsmarket.com/>), and Moms Meals (<https://www.momsmeals.com/>).

We noted that given the unusual demand more of the sites would allow you to fill a cart but then have no delivery times available! Cheryl also mentioned for those who listen to podcasts, This Week in Virology podcast <https://www.microbe.tv/twiv/>, which one can subscribe to via Apple iTunes Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and other podcast apps.

Next meeting will take place on Thursday, May 7 via Zoom.

For information about the club, contact mbtechclub1@gmail.com. 📧



Myshka is ready to joyride the new luggage cart.

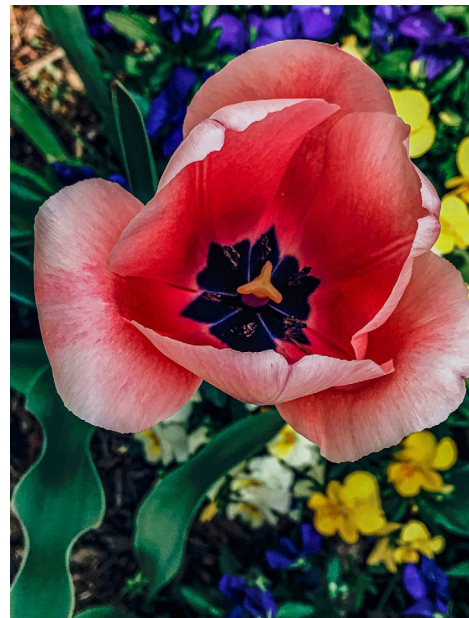
Photo by Mikhailina Karina

Una stops to smell the flowers.

Photo by Jackie Fleming



final glance



Spring at Montebello

Photos by Jeanne Tift