

# The **MONTABELLO** Voice

an independent gazette

the mask

April 27, 2020



## Boost your immune system

By John Powers

Since none of us has an absolute guarantee that we will not become infected, the best advice I have heard from authoritative sources is to boost your immune system.

The recommended ways are eating right, getting enough sleep, and vigorous exercise. The eating right list starts with broccoli, spinach, bell peppers and other vegetables, lots of citrus and other fruits, garlic, ginger, yogurt, almonds, papaya, kiwi, chicken or turkey and high zinc shellfish.

The tough question is how to get the requisite exercise with our fitness center closed. Here are some options. The first is a moderate intensity 20 minute cardio workout. Try this for starters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-U4aQWbmdvM&t=950s>

The second is a vigorous 10-minute cardio workout on YouTube. [https://www.google.com/search?q=home+cardio+workouts&rlz=1C1CHBF\\_enUS864US864&oq=hom&aqs=-chrome.0.69i59j69i57j35i39j0j69i60l2j69i65j69i60.3877j0j7&sourceid=-chrome&ie=UTF-8#kpvalbx=\\_HPiIX-uTsDuGqytMP3fOsoAk102](https://www.google.com/search?q=home+cardio+workouts&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS864US864&oq=hom&aqs=-chrome.0.69i59j69i57j35i39j0j69i60l2j69i65j69i60.3877j0j7&sourceid=-chrome&ie=UTF-8#kpvalbx=_HPiIX-uTsDuGqytMP3fOsoAk102). Try the exercises she is doing but don't try to keep up with her pace in the beginning.

The third is a three-day regimen consisting of day one: weights; day two: three trips up the stairs from 1 to 16; day three: two trips up from 1 to 16 (swing your arms rapidly on the elevator ride down to keep your heart rate up). The trips up the stairs are incredibly boring but altogether they meet the need for 75 minutes a week of vigorous cardio. The good news is that you will huff and puff the whole time. Accept the fact that getting the sort of lung benefit that you need will require huffing and puffing.

Keep a mask in your left pocket for the trips down and if you meet someone on the stairs. Wear a disposable glove on your right hand to open all doors and grasp the right hand stair rail. 🏠

## voices on the 37

### CC renovation raises health safety concerns

By Marilyn Keel

I don't usually write opinion pieces, but I'm making an exception with regard to the CC renovation project. First let me say that I am in favor of doing the renovations and believe that the major funding source for these renovations is the reserved funds and I am comfortable with that. I also believe that the myriad of other improvement projects and increased personnel expenses that have/are taking place since I moved here in the summer of 2017 are the cause for the rather rapid increase in our condo fees. Therefore, although I am in no way happy about the rate of increase in condo fees and feel strongly that this issue receive major Board attention in coming years, I separate that out from the CC renovations.

What does concern me with the CC renovation is COVID-19. I am not advocating that the project be put on hold until COVID no longer exists, as this doesn't appear feasible. The virus in some form will be with us for a long, long time. What I do want to know is what management and the contractors are going to do to protect residents from the resultant increase in potential infection from having a myriad of non-residents in the community on a daily and prolonged basis.

For example, I have contracted to have my master bathroom gutted and re-done with a start date of May 4. I have informed my contractor that I must delay that start date until the governor lifts the stay-at-home order for Virginia. Myself and my neighbors are all trying to limit the time outside our apartments and, as a result, I am not comfortable saying it's just fine having contractors carrying bathtubs and toilets up and down the hallway. Once the stay-at-home order is lifted, the contractor and I will negotiate on safety measures such a daily temperature taking.

So what I'd like to see is the Montebello management and Board do the same. Thus far both have been very responsive to resident needs in this area and I would like to thank them for that, but what I'd like to also see is some discussion and a similar understanding response to COVID concerns as it pertains to the CC renovation. 🏠



Cover:

In the mood by Joel Miller

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## Rethinking the Montebello Community Center renovations

By Gregory R. Copley

It was misleading of *The Times of Montebello*, in its May 2020 issue, to publish an article headlined “CC Renovation Will Continue; Has No Effect on Condo Fees.”

It stated that the CC renovation was not optional. But the scale of “renovation” is indeed optional. There has been no transparency of bidding on the project.

*Montebello Voice* readers responded in large numbers and with overwhelming passion for the proposal raised at the beginning of April, calling for a vote of unit owners to cancel the current plan to renovate the Montebello Community Center. Clearly, it was something on the minds of many owners from the time this project was put in play by the previous Board.

These are increasingly uncertain times. And it is significant that on April 22, 2020, the Virginia General Assembly “froze much of its ambitious two-year spending plan ... taking up recommendations from Gov. Ralph Northam to delay new programs until the state better understands the cost and impact of the coronavirus crisis.” [*The Washington Post*, April 23, 2020]

But it is not just the coronavirus situation and the even-worse economic consequences of it which dictated my concern over the Community Center project. It was that this project *at this inflated scale* was never initiated at a community-wide level, and neither was it subject to sufficient scrutiny. Questions on costs were routinely brushed aside paternalistically.

Much of my work for the past 50 years has been identifying strategic trends for governments and advising on options. So my original letter to the *Voice* was in that spirit: how do we cope with a totally transformed and unstable economic and social framework?

Montebello owners have endured sizeable condo fee increases on a scale unanticipated when many of us bought our property here. These increases are projected to continue into the foreseeable future at levels far higher than cost-of-living escalations. When we were told that the money for the Community Center renovation was in the reserves, the sponsors of the project neglected to say that much of these reserves would have to be made up.

*“We cannot put the bulk of our resources on a single throw of the dice. In this economic situation, to do so would be gambling on a bet which is sure to fail.”*

This can only happen through condo fee increases if we continue on the current route.

We need to focus solely on those renovations which we must do. With that in mind, we should be able to reduce the total cost for immediate work into the \$1-million to \$2-million realm rather than the current projected \$7-million (which would likely escalate).

We have heard board members state that the sunk costs make cancellation of the current package prohibitively costly, but that is not true when compared to the actual construction costs. The sunk costs are acceptable losses compared with the unsupportable losses of proceeding with the board-proposed mega-project. Fortunately, the board has not committed us to a construction contract at this stage.

Perhaps we need to send a requirement list which-ever contractor is competitively selected to provide us a proposed renovation – which includes *only* the essential renovations – at well under \$2-million. More to the point, we need to have a more open view of our real needs, and then ensure that we absolutely have transparent bidding

on our projects by a minimum of three qualified contractors.

One Montebellan, in favor of proceeding with the Community Center renovations regardless of the changed circumstances, said: “We are all affluent here at Montebello; we can afford it. And those who cannot should just leave.” But this is not merely about whether some – even most – can afford condo fee increases. It is about whether gambling with the bulk of our reserves in such a way is fiscally prudent, particularly in uncertain times. It is not about wealth; it is about common sense.

As someone who has not only advised governments on strategic planning for decades, but also has owned and run engineering, shipbuilding, airline, media, and chemical corporations, I would never countenance single-source or opaque bidding on projects on which the viability of our future depends.

So I would urge *Montebello Voice* readers to think seriously about the petition forms they have seen circulating, calling for a vote on whether or not to cancel the present project. Certainly we can look at priority renovations and improvements: we should, and must. We cannot put the bulk of our resources on a single throw of the dice. In this economic situation, to do so would be gambling on a bet which is sure to fail.

If you are supportive of this approach and have not already done so, please send an email to Gregory Copley at [grcopley@aol.com](mailto:grcopley@aol.com) or Pamela Copley at [pvongrubert@aol.com](mailto:pvongrubert@aol.com), saying “Yes, I support a vote proposing cancellation of the current Community Center renovation plan.”

Many thanks, and stay well. 🙏

## Calibrate your wine palate

# Sweetness

By Paul Jameson

*In the last article I urged you to be adventuresome and try new wines.* “Just try any wines?” you may ask. “I’m probably going to wind up buying a lot of wines I don’t like!” There are ways, however, to venture from your current comfort zone in a more systematic way that builds on what you already like.

Drilling down to the basic characteristics, wine is evaluated on sweetness, acid, body, and tannin (for reds, mainly). We will go through these characteristics one by one.

Let’s start with sweetness. During fermentation, the natural glucose and fructose that is in grapes is converted to ethanol (alcohol) by yeast (either the ambient yeast that is out in the world or cultured yeast that is specially introduced into the grape juice). Yeast can tolerate only so much of the alcohol that it produced, so when the alcohol level gets to a certain point the yeast dies regardless of whether all the sugar had been converted to alcohol. Or, if it gets too cold in the fall as the wine is fermenting, fermentation can stop before all the sugar has been converted (and then can start again when weather warms up – this is how sparkling wines like Champagne got their start, but that’s another story). Or, a winemaker can deliberately stop fermentation (by lowering the temperature, for instance). Or, fermentation can be stopped by adding brandy to the fermentation vessels (this is how

port is made). Or, a winemaker can simply add sugar (that almost seems like cheating, doesn’t it?).

These days, a winemaker generally knows before fermentation starts what level of residual sugar (called RS in the business) she wants to end up with when fermentation is complete.

Sweetness is detected on the tongue, but many factors can affect your perception of how sweet a wine tastes at a given level of sugar. For example, a wine that is more acidic will taste less sweet than a wine that is less acidic at the same level of sugar. In red wine, the level of tannin (to be discussed in a later installment of this series) affects the perception of sweetness. Whether or not a wine is sparkling (carbon dioxide

bubbles) has an effect. A dry wine may taste sweet but it is in fact merely very fruity (“fruit forward” in the business).

The amount of RS in a wine is expressed in terms of grams per liter (g/l), or as a percentage. Thus, a wine with an RS of 12 g/l could say it has 1.2% RS. The official EU classification of sweetness levels is:

*Dry:* up to 4 g/l

*Medium dry:* more than 4 and no more than 12 g/l

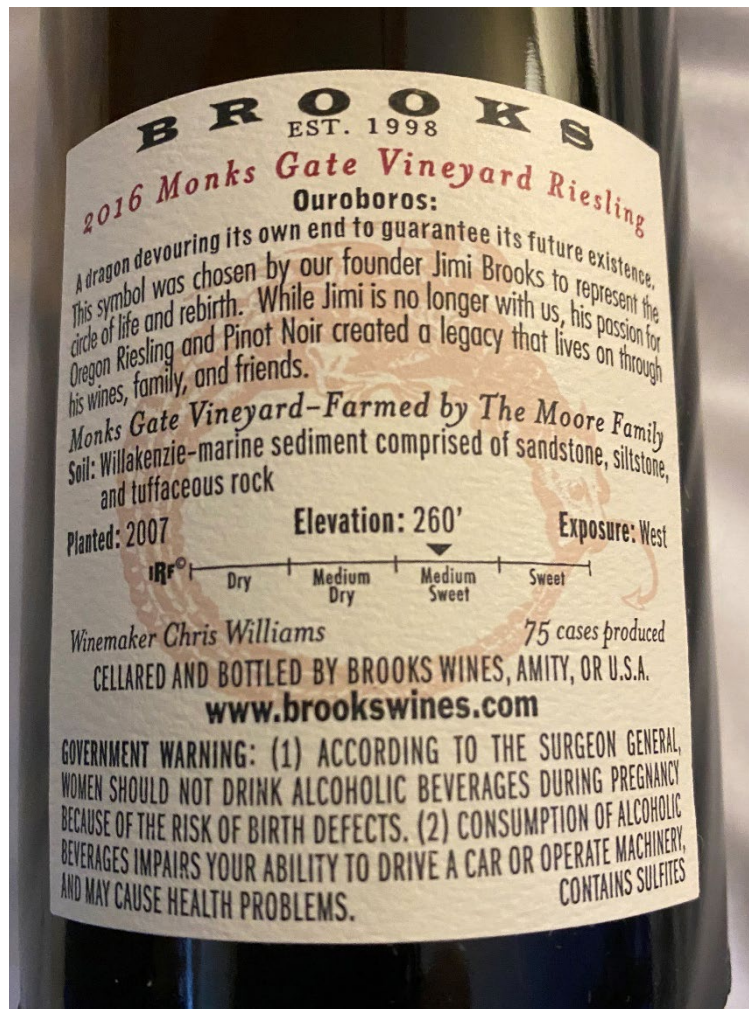
*Medium sweet:* more than 12 and no more than 45 g/l

*Sweet:* at least 45 g/l

Actually, the classification is a little more complicated, in that the level of RS in what is considered dry or medium can be higher depending on the acid levels, but this is a good general guide. For reference, Coca Cola has 108 g/l of sugar.

How can you tell how sweet a wine is, when looking through bottles in a wine shop (or online)? Sometimes, especially for white wines and especially for wines made from the Riesling grape, the label either specifies the RS level (either g/l or percent), or the back label includes a chart like this on the left.

The scale, created by the International Riesling Foundation (IRF©), considers not only the RS but also the acidity of the wine to indicate how sweet the wine actually tastes. Brooks Winery does not tell us the RS or the total acidity (TA) of the wine, just its IRF rating. (This is especially important for Riesling, because while it has a popu-



## oenology

lar image of being a sweet wine, in fact it ranges from bone dry to extremely sweet, dessert wine level.)

Chardonnay is usually vinified to full dryness, so that wineries generally don't even bother telling you the RS of their Chardonnays. But the extremely popular Sonoma Cutrer Chardonnay has an RS of 19 g/l, putting it well into the medium sweet category. Among popular red wines, Yellow Tail Shiraz has 12 g/l of RS, while Apothic Red has 15 g/l. Winemakers have discovered that even though many people say they don't like sweet wines (probably thinking back to the day they had Mogen David wine), their actual preference tends to run to the sweeter side.

For those wines, the RS of the wine is not on the label, and the descriptions don't include something like "slightly sweet." I had to find their sweetness levels through research. So, most of the time you're on your own. Maybe somebody in the wine shop knows, so give that a try.

But first, you may want to test your preference.

Try a dry white or red wine at the same time you try a white or red wine with some residual sugar. Yes, you'll have two open bottles, but they'll keep in the refrigerator. Pour the wines into two glasses, and go back and forth, thinking about the sweetness (or lack thereof) in each wine, and which one you prefer.

If you don't want to guess the level of sweetness of a wine, I asked the local wine shop, UnWined, in the Bellevue Shopping Center, for examples of each type. They recommended:

□ *Dry white:* 2017 Tegernseerhof, Bergdistel, Gruner Veltliner, Smaragd, from the Wachau region of Austria. There could be a whole article on what each of those terms means, but for now this is a dry

white that you should find interesting (\$26.99).

□ *Semi-dry white:* Domaine Pichot, Le Peu de la Moriette, Vouvray (\$22.99).

□ *Dry red:* 2017 Venge Vineyards, Silencieux Cabernet Sauvignon (\$59.99).

□ *Red with some sweetness:* Orin Swift, Eight Years in the Desert (Zinfandel blend) (\$44.99).

If you call UnWined at 571-384-6880, they'll deliver the wines to Montebello with no delivery charge. But of course you can go to your favorite wine shop and ask there for examples.

Your preference may also depend on what you're eating with the wine. For example, while my preference runs



to the dry side, I like pairing a medium-dry Oregon Riesling, Chehalem Corral Creek, with spicy stir fry (I add way more than the recommended number of piquin chilis to the pot). RS levels vary by the vintage for this wine – the 2015 and 2017 have an RS of 12 g/l, while the 2016 has 9 g/l. The combination of acid and sugar make it a great accompaniment to the dish.

But once you decide on your preference, you can explore other wines that are similar. Again, the best bet is to ask someone at a wine shop for other examples of wine that is either dry that that

has some residual sugar. You're bound to find new favorites, while expanding your wine horizons.

We have not yet discussed a category called dessert wines. These are wines that are deliberately made in a sweet style, through a variety of methods. A common method is to leave the grapes on the vines for well past the usual harvest time. Grapes will start to lose their water and shrivel, concentrating the sugar levels. The resulting wine can be sweeter than Coca Cola. But, obviously, since the grapes lost so much water it takes many more grapes to make a liter of wine, so they can get quite expensive.

An extreme example is Chateau d'Yquem, the top wine of the Sauternes region in Bordeaux, France. Back in the day, I used to have it remarkably frequently, going back to the 1948 vintage, which when I had it in around 1984 was still quite lovely. Now, recent vintages sell for in the \$300 a bottle range, so it's been a while since I've had any.

But other wines of this style can be found for much less. For example, Slater Run Vineyards in Upperville, Virginia, has a relationship with Chateau Kalian, a producer in the Monbazillac region, also in Bordeaux, and sells their dessert wine for \$23 for a 500 ml-size bottle. It's a good introduction to that style, and is much more interesting than Coca Cola.

The next installment will explore whether you prefer higher or lower acid wines. Until then, keep exploring! 🍷

## nature walk



*Photo by Page Dreher*

# America's pioneer circus family

By Raymond Houck

**B**ailey's Crossroads draws its name from the Bailey family of circus fame, which has long related to our local community. Hachaliah Bailey, one of America's first circus showmen, resided not far from where we live today.

In 1808, while still living in New York state, Bailey purchased an Indian elephant named Old Bet, which was one of the first such animals to reach the United States. Seeking a place for his circus animals to spend the winter, he moved to Virginia, and on December 19, 1837, he bought a tract of land on the outskirts of Falls Church, including what is now the intersection of Leesburg Pike and Columbia Pike (when you travel to Bailey's Crossroads, notice the windmill in the cloverleaf intersec-

tion purported to be from the Bailey's farm). It was on this tract he built a large house known as Bailey's Mansion or Moray that was reputed to have contained 100 rooms! The mansion sat at a location now known as Durbin Place, abutting Glen Forest Drive, the oldest outlet road to Leesburg Pike.

Circuses were part of the Bailey family business. Hachaliah's son Lewis Bailey (1795–1870) and his wife Mariah operated a travelling circus and pioneered the use of canvas circus tents before eventually settling in 1840 on farmland in Bailey's Crossroads. Hachaliah's nephew George F. Bailey managed several shows, too, designing a tank in which a hippopotamus could be moved from place to place. Another nephew, Fred Harrison Bailey, recognized a potential circus talent in James Anthony McGuiness who later adopted the Bailey name, becoming James Anthony Bailey.

James Bailey later associated with James E. Cooper, and by the time

he was 22, he was manager of the Cooper and Bailey circus. Shortly afterwards, the Cooper and Bailey was united with Phineas Taylor Barnum's circus to form the Barnum and Bailey Circus, which later joined with the Ringling Brothers Circus to form the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. Who knew how many mergers and combinations there would be along the way to fame?

The circus featured a Hippodrome with many performers, including stunt entertainers who could ride four horses at once while standing, including clowns and jugglers, just to mention a few. They had forty mule teams to pull the show from location to location. The circus acquired ten Singhalese pachyderms in the 1850s – at the time they comprised the world's largest group of trained elephants.

In the long run, what started out as a small, local circus became known as ***The Greatest Show on Earth!*** 🎪



# My mother's clothesline rules

By Raymond Houck

When I was a boy, laundry day had very specific rules and instructions that my Mother and Grandmother said must be followed. We had a Westinghouse ringer washer but no dryer, so all wash had to be hung outdoors, if possible.

Here are my Mom's clothesline rules:

- ✓ Hang sheets and towels on the outside lines so you can hide your "unmentionables."
- ✓ Socks must be hung by their toes.
- ✓ Clothes must be hung in order –



*Thank goodness someone invented a clothes dryer...*

The modern clothes dryer was invented by J. Ross Moore and a patent applied for in 1892. Although Mr. Moore is credited with inventing the modern clothes dryer, others can be credited with its evolution. The clothes dryer, one of the true marvels of convenience, slowly developed into its current form over the last hundred-plus years.

But that is another story! 📺

*Venetian laundry*

*Photos by Mikhailina Karina*

whites with whites and hung first, followed by other color groups.

- ✓ Shirts must be hung by the tail and never, ever, by the shoulders.
- ✓ Line up clothes so that each item shares one peg with another item next to it on the line.
- ✓ It doesn't matter if it is below zero outside, the clothes will be still be hung, eventually to defrost.
- ✓ Pegs must be gathered up, placed in a basket when taking down the clothes, and never left on the line.





The Montebello Grounds Committee Presents:

# A Kaleidoscope of Birds

## in the DMV region

Our presenter, **Kurt Schwartz**, is Conservation Chair of the Maryland Ornithological Society and past president of the Howard County Bird Club. He has been actively birding in this region for over 25 years and has a life list of 1100 species, including birds seen overseas.

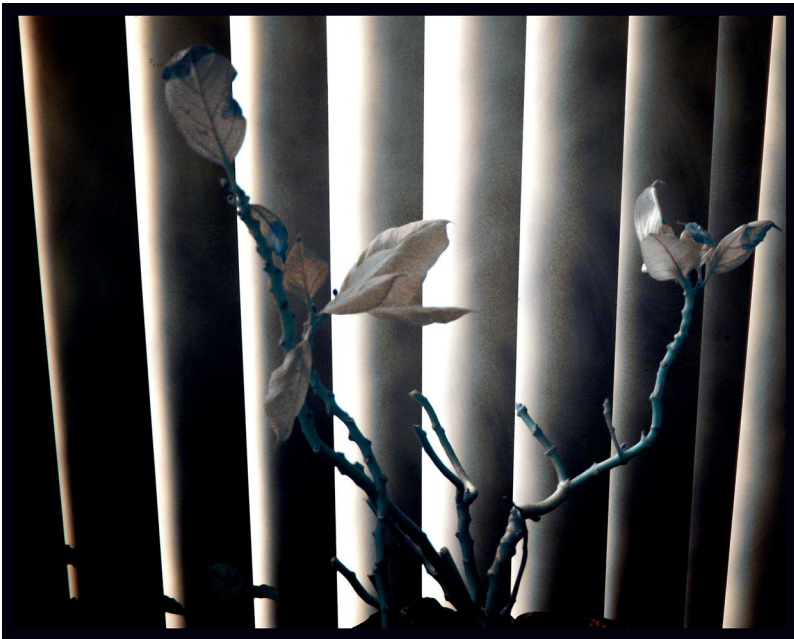
Spring can be the best time to see birds at Montebello. Brush up on your identification skills. After all, birds are not covered by the stay-at-home order!



**Thursday, April 30, 7:30 pm**

**Live, in your home via video webinar**

final glance



*Stripes and florals*



*Photos by Joel Miller*