

# The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

phase 2

June 5, 2020



## Our neighbor, Debbie Fairbanks, needs help



Ever since Debbie Fairbanks moved to Montebello with her son, Stan, six years ago, she immersed herself in community life with her participation on the Activities Committee, regular attendance of Cup of Joe and potlucks, as well as kindness and willingness to help.

Two years ago she underwent chemotherapy treatments for her breast cancer, at which time she lost her job at the Mount Vernon gift shop. She'd worked there for 19 years.

According to Debbie, her doctor sent her employer a letter stating that she was too weak to work and requested short-term

disability, followed by long-term disability. She says that although she was approved for coverage until 2024, the insurance company cut her off last October. "We have no income. I don't think what they did was legal. It's causing a lot of stress and hardship. My son is taking it badly." Stan graduated from Edison High School earlier this week.

Dear neighbors, if you have professional expertise and willingness to help Debbie *pro bono* during this difficult time, please get in touch with her at [dfbanks@yahoo.com](mailto:dfbanks@yahoo.com). – MK 📧

## Random thoughts from a bored and locked-down mind

By Bob Shea

Always thought Corona came from Mexico and was served with a slice of lime.

Finally reconciled to the fact that this is not just another "snow day."

New meaning to the question: "Who was that masked man?"

Wearing a mask requires less time than shaving.

With barbershops closed, if I were blonde and had a UK accent, I could be Boris Johnson.

My hands have never been cleaner.

Strange that banging on a pot lid at 7 p.m. is a daily highlight.

A new cottage industry has emerged: staging home bookshelves as background for TV talking heads.

Data on my car is now measured in weeks per gallon.

Contact tracing would be easy for me: 1.

Always thought zoom was a camera lens.

Robo calls have decreased.

I miss smiles from strangers....and friends.

Clorox has announced record quarter earnings.

**Life goes on.** 📧

## CC reno social distancing concerns

My concern about renovations is not the economic climate – actually I have a degree in economics – but rather what the common spaces should look like in the future where some type of social distancing will be the norm. A whole new study should be done regarding our common space renovations. I cannot imagine hundreds of people packed shoulder-to-shoulder for meetings, or side-by-side in the gym – who knows what we will have to do to keep from infecting each other, including having proper ventilation. We need to build for the future, not the past. We need to spend money to meet the future. Let's rethink what we are doing.

– Angela S. Anderson 📧

Cover:

*Jersey Girls, 1920*

*Restored from a glass negative by Joel Miller*

**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](mailto:montebellovoice@cox.net) or visit on the web at [www.montebellovoice.com](http://www.montebellovoice.com).*

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## My grandfather Sidney Hathcock is my role model for helping people

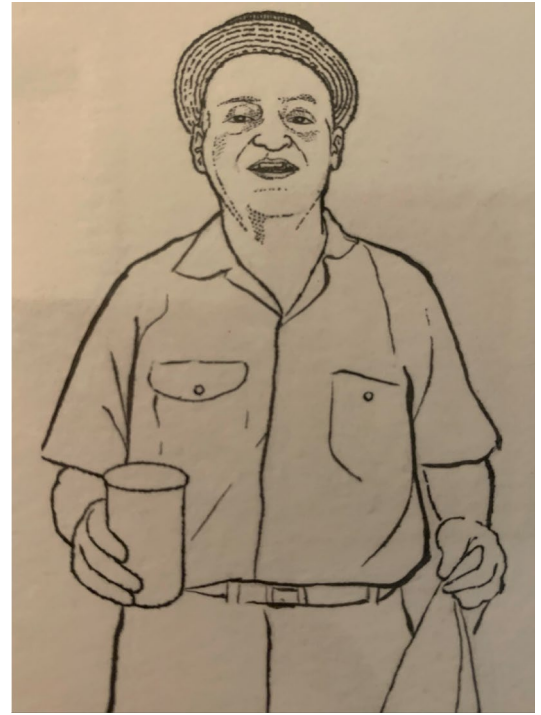
By Nanette Frank

I grew up watching my grandfather, Sidney Hathcock, being a neighbor helping a neighbor throughout my childhood. We would need to pile in the car an hour early on Sunday morning because we would go and pick up neighbors to drive them to church. We would drop off one group and then return for another group and then on third trip we would go back to pick up my grandmother to just barely make the service. I also remember having dinner in the kitchen of the small duplex on the hot St. Louis summer evening, a window fan spinning, when there would be a knock on the screen door and one of grandpa's friends would be there to pay back money grandpa had shared in their time of need.

Sidney Hathcock worked on the Frisco Railroad. He walked 6 blocks to work. He was a Southern Baptist. He took notes every Sunday in a tiny black notebook and though not formerly edu-

cated, was one of the most learned human beings I will ever have the privilege of knowing.

Throughout my life I have often asked myself: "What would grandpa Sidney do?" Well, I can tell you he would have been making runs to Safeway and Costco. He would have been picking up prescriptions at CVS. He would have been finding material to donate for masks. He would have been a phone friend to a resident who is alone. He would have paid for a grocery run and told me, "We are all in this together." He would have been delivering mail to a neighbor's door. He would have even offered excess toilet paper rolls to someone in need. He would have helped get someone connected with Zoom so they could chat with their family. He would have even offered to help walk a dog of a neighbor in need. Most importantly, when he would be asked how he was doing, he would have shared he was



happy and blessed.

The above are all examples of Montebello Neighbors Helping Neighbors. I was so blessed to have called Sidney Hathcock my grandfather. We are equally blessed here with so many Neighbors Helping Neighbors. God Bless! 🙏



*Dr. Antoine Chevalier, a resident of building 2, shows his appreciation for health care workers during the nightly 7 p.m. noise-making ritual by playing a few chords on his electric guitar from his balcony. Note the blue light bulb that is also lit during the evening to show appreciation for health care and essential workers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. – Paul Walden*

I'm interested in creating an email group of Montebello subscribers to *The New York Times*, so that if I have a comment about an article on a given day, I can see what my neighboring *NYT* readers think about the same article. Let me know at [appel.carole@gmail.com](mailto:appel.carole@gmail.com) if you're interested. – Carole Appel

# In support of the “overdue” renovation

By Scott Elkins

When I first purchased a unit at Montebello in 1991, I was impressed with the maintenance of the facility, the grounds and peacefulness. Proximity to Old Town and the Beltway were also compelling. However, I found the Community Center, even back then to be bit musty and dated. Frankly, it was a “net negative” in my assessment and a drag on condominium dues.

Last fall, when I had an occasion to downsize, I mustered-out of a large home in McLean. Now much older, I did my due diligence in terms of availability of condominium product, again considering the location, quality and affordability. Although initially I totally forgot about Montebello, it popped-up after weeks of surveying the market. I scheduled a view of a unit in building 3, coincidentally where I owned previously, and also stopped in the Community Center. I was sure there had been remodeling over the years, but to me it was the same old uninspiring monolith. My interest was waning until I learned of the \$ 7 million project to rebuild the Center. This was, in fact, the precipitating reason for my buying at Montebello!

My background, because it is germane to this writing, is 27 years in commercial banking in the real estate centric Northern Virginia, followed by 32 years of commercial and residential real estate brokerage and advisory services. Some of my clients over the years have been NV Homes, Miller & Smith, Stanley Martin, as well as large developers such as Peterson Companies (National Harbor).

Also, relevant, over the years I served as president of HOAs and unit owners associations on 3 occasions. Real estate and association management is not always a lot of fun. For a board to be successful, it takes patience, wherewithal, and leadership, but it also takes “vi-

sion,” a quality which does not always exist on a board of directors. What I immediately saw was a board with vision and a steadfastness towards doing what need to be done fiscally. There comes a time in the life of a commercial building where a “base-building renovation” should be done, generally every 20 years if you wish to sustain the property. The Montebello renovation is technically “overdue.” Fortunately, foresight has provided the accumulation of funds to accomplish this goal, and with a fresh new look.

I just read a flyer circulated expressing opposition to the project. This piece included comments by many well-meaning owners. In most cases the arguments seemed logical on the surface, but also reflected a misunderstanding of the global picture and a misunderstanding about fiscal elements surrounding the project vis a vis the ongoing income, expense, and reserves of Montebello finances. The reserve to be used for the project reflects the foresight of the boards and outside advisors over time. This was a capital reserve intended to be reinvested in the Condominium complex. It was not intended to reduce condominium fees, or even affect condo fees. Our existing separate reserve, also reviewed by outside advisors, is fully funded to meet all operating expenses and normal capital expenses as they may occur.

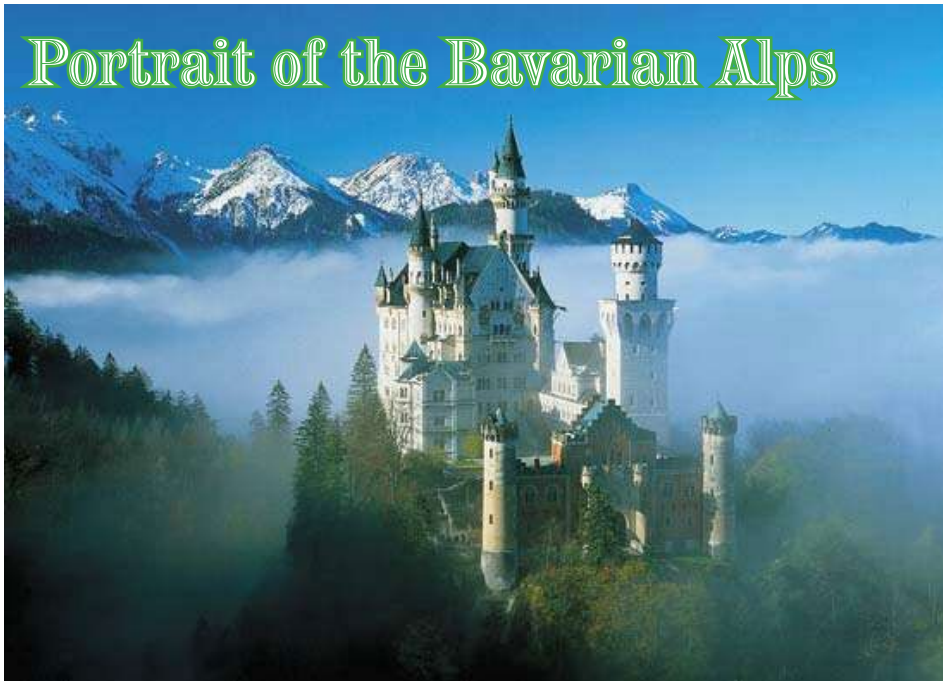
So, from my perspective, the Board is correctly and wisely executing their responsibility to the Ownership.

I certainly hear the anguish surrounding the condo dues. However, the \$7 million capital expenditure is outside on the operating budget. This is not unique to Montebello as every community with extensive amenities has commensurate charges for the maintenance and improvement of its facilities. Some have complained about low unit valuations. In part, this is due to the age of our complex. I am certain the infusion of the world-class community center will do a lot for values going forward as Montebello will have more appeal to younger buyers. 🏡



Photo by Dian McDonald

## Portrait of the Bavarian Alps



By Raymond Houck

In this time when travel is almost non-existent, it is helpful to stop and remember our personal heritage and past travels. You may recall from my previous articles that I come from a German/Hungarian background. Today, I would like to start where the Houck family story begins in Bavaria, or Bayern.

Bayern, or the Free State of Bavaria (in German: *Freistaat Bayern*) comprises the entire southeast portion of Germany. It is geographically the largest federal state in the country. Bayern shares international borders to the south and southeast with Austria and the Czech Republic to the east, as well as with Switzerland (across Lake Constance). Neighboring federal states within Germany are Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, Thuringia (Thüringen) and Saxony (Sachsen). Munich (München) is Bayern's capital city.

Bavaria is a country of high plateaus and medium-sized mountains. In the north are basalt knolls and high plateaus; in the northwest are the wooded sandstone hills. The northwest is drained by the Main River, which flows

into the Rhine. To the southeast the topography varies from the stratified land formations of the hill country and the limestone mountains along the Danube, which divides Bavaria north and south. On the eastern edge of Bavaria are the Bohemian Black forests, and in the north is the Franconian Forest. South of the Danube is a plateau upon which Munich lies, and beyond it are the Bavarian Alps. Bavaria's share of the Alps consists of wooded peaks of several thousand feet, behind which rise steep ridges and high plateaus. They reach their highest point with the 9,718-foot Zugspitze, which is also the highest point in Germany.

Historically, the north has been inhabited by descendants of the Franks, in the southeast by residents of old Bavarian stock, and the southwest by people of Bavarian-Swabian descent. The majority of Bavaria's inhabitants still live in small towns. Only about one-fifth live in cities of 100,000 or more. Munich is the third largest city in Germany and the largest city in Bavaria.

After World War II there was an influx of refugees from the Sudetenland and eastern Europe, where many ethnic Germans had lived for centuries.

A significant proportion of Bavaria's population at the beginning of the 21st century was composed of those refugees and their descendants. Beginning in the 1960s, the industrial areas received large numbers of migrant workers from southern Europe.

About two-fifths of the state's gross output in the early 21st century consisted of industrial and handicraft products. Trade, transportation, and services accounted for more than half, and agriculture and forestry for only a tiny amount.

Farms in Bavaria tend to be large and highly mechanized. A fertile farming basin exists along the southern bank of the Danube and is known as the granary of Bavaria. Rye, wheat, and barley take up about half of the farmland; much of the rest is planted with other grains and feed crops. It is also Germany's leading cheese and butter-producing region.

After World War II the government made efforts to attract industries, with the result that Bavaria attained a higher rate of industrial growth than the rest of Germany. Munich, the largest industrial center in Bavaria, is the focus of high-technology industries and a major transportation hub. Manufacturers there produce precision optical and electrical equipment, machinery,





**Linderhof Palace** *Linderhof Palace, Garmisch-Parten*

motor vehicles (think BMW), aircraft, and clothing. Other important products manufactured in Bavaria include electronics and aerospace equipment, chemicals, textiles, toys, beer, foodstuffs, and fine china and industrial ceramics.

Tourism is very important, particularly in the Bavarian Alps, portions of which are protected within the Bavarian Forest National Park. The Alps near the Austrian border are also a popular tourist destination, and many winter and summer resorts, health spas, and medicinal springs are located in the area. One of Bavaria's most popular tourist spots is the Neuschwanstein Castle, the famous "fairy castle" built for "Mad" King Louis II of Bavaria in 1869–86.

The largest Bavarian Festival is Oktoberfest. Folk arts and culture remain important in Bavaria, and traditional crafts continue to be practiced. Popular festivals occur throughout the year, the best-known being Munich's Oktoberfest. Bavaria is also well known for its music and theatre. The annual Bayreuth Festival features the music of Richard Wagner. There are theatres in all the larger cities, as well as numerous

orchestras, opera companies, museums, and art galleries.

Now that you have a feeling for my Homeland, let us make some of my family's comfort food! 🍲

### Goulash stew with mushrooms

My family learned to make this hearty goulash when they lived in Central Europe, where it is a popular dish in Bavarian, Hungarian, Austrian, and Czech beer halls. I grew up with this and I have enjoyed making it at home while remembering my grandfather Barnabas, my grandmother Hermina, my mother Luisa, and all the rest of the Magyar side of my family! Goulash was always a welcome comfort food on cold winter nights but is tasty anytime of the year.

1/4 cup of sunflower oil  
2 large white onions, chopped  
1/4 pound of bacon, chopped  
3 tablespoons of sweet (mild) Hungarian (preferably Szege) paprika  
1-1/2 pounds of boneless

beef (chuck or shank) or boneless pork shoulder, cut into 1-inch cubes  
1/2 pound of mushrooms, cleaned and quartered lengthwise  
4 large cloves of garlic, minced  
1 small can of tomato paste  
1 cup of beef stock  
1 teaspoon of salt  
1 teaspoon of freshly ground pepper  
1 teaspoon of horseradish

Heat the sunflower oil in a 4-quart stove top casserole or stockpot (a slow cooker works well too). Sauté the chopped onions and bacon over medium heat until onions are translucent and soft. Remove the pot from the heat, sprinkle the paprika over the onions and bacon, and stir to combine. Add the cubed meat and mix well.

Return the pot to the stove and cook stirring constantly, over medium heat until all the meat is browned on all sides. Stir in the mushrooms and garlic.

Dissolve the tomato paste in the beef stock and add it to the pot, along with the salt, pepper, and horseradish. Bring mixture to a boil over high heat, then turn down to simmer and let cook for 60 minutes.

Serve hot, garnished with parsley and accompanied by boiled potatoes or egg noodles (recommended) – and *plenty* of cold beer!

*Sich erfreuen* (Enjoy)



## Calibrate your wine palate

# Body and tannin

By Paul Jameson

*So far in our series, we have discussed the characteristics of sweetness and acidity in wine.* The next characteristic is **body**.

Body is a description for how “weighty” a wine is perceived to be in your mouth. Think about the difference you perceive as you drink skim milk, whole milk, half and half, and heavy cream. Wine is the same. It has components that are denser than water. It can be characterized as light-bodied, full-bodied, or somewhere in between. And there is no right answer as to which body style you prefer.

A number of factors add up to the sense of body in a wine. Probably the most important is alcohol, which is much more viscous than water. Alcohol is measured by volume (ABV), as a percentage of the total volume. A light-bodied wine will typically have alcohol levels ranging between 9% and 12%. Medium-bodied wines will typically have between 12% and 14% alcohol. Full-bodied wines will have between 14% and 16% alcohol. Above that level, the wine has probably been fortified by adding a distilled alcohol product like brandy. Sherry, Madeira, and Port are examples of fortified wine.

Unlike sweetness and acidity levels previously discussed, alcohol levels are easy to determine, because virtually every country where wine is made requires the alcohol percentage to be printed on the label. The wrinkle to that is that wine laws allow tolerances. In the EU, the printed alcohol percentage can be +/- 0.5%, which isn't bad, but in the U.S. Australia, and New Zealand, the tolerance is +/- 1.5%, so that a U.S. wine that states “alcohol 13%” can actually be between 11.5% and 14.5%; in other words, somewhere be-

tween lighter body and fuller body. In practice, the better wineries print the actual alcohol within a tenth of a percent.

But it's not so simple, since a number of other factors affect the perception of body in a wine. The level of tannin, discussed next, is important for red wines. The level of sugar can affect body. And certain grape varieties tend to result in lighter bodied wines, while others tend to result in fuller bodied wines.

Among white wines, Rieslings tend to be lighter-bodied, Sauvignon Blancs tend to be medium-bodied, and Chardonnays tend to be fuller-bodied. Among red wines, Gamays tend to be lighter-bodied, Pinot Noirs tend to be medium-bodied, and Cabernet Sauvignons tend to be fuller-bodied.

But in practice, this is a gross over-generalization. A super-sweet German Trockenbeerauslese Riesling will be very full-bodied. A French Chablis made from Chardonnay can be light-bodied. A Pinot Noir (or its German version Spätburgunder) can run the gamut from light-bodied to full-bodied. A wine made from Merlot from a warmer region can be more full-bodied than a wine made from Merlot from a cooler region. A winemaker has some leeway in how light- or full-bodied she wants to make her wine.

It cannot be over-emphasized that light or full body does not correlate with wine quality. There can be dreadful full-bodied wines and exquisitely elegant light-bodied wines. This can be forgotten when some wine critics with a preference for full-bodied wines would give higher scores to such wines. As a consequence, wineries around the world began “chasing Parker points” to go for more body in their wines. They were aided by changing climate that turned some cooler regions into warmer regions. They were aided by

improvements in vineyard practices, resulting in grapes with a higher sugar content and therefore a higher alcohol level after fermentation. They were aided by tricks of the trade in the winery, like reverse osmosis (we won't get into the weeds on the various tricks).

Let's calibrate your preference towards lighter-bodied or fuller-bodied wine. For this comparison, we don't have recommendations from UnWined. Instead, for a lighter-bodied white wine, look in your favorite wine shop for either a Riesling, a Vernaccia from central Italy or a Muscadet from the mouth of the Loire River in France. For fuller-bodied whites, look for either a Chardonnay from California, a Viogner or a Roussanne from the Rhône region of France, or a Gewürztraminer from Alsace. Open both bottles at the same time, and taste each to decide which you prefer. Concentrate just on the body, rather than other characteristics in the wine.

If you think you might like something in between your two bottles, medium-bodied whites include Arneis from northern Italy, Falanghina or Fiano from southern Italy, Grüner Veltliner from Austria, and Pinot Blanc from Alsace in France (and now from all over).

For light-bodied red, try a Frappato from Sicily, or a Bardolina or Valpolicella from northern Italy. For a fuller-bodied red, try a Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, or Nero d'Avola (from Sicily).

Medium-bodied reds include Cabernet Franc, Tempranillo, and Sangiovese. But as mentioned, most of these wines can be made in any style from lighter- to fuller-bodied, so if you really have a preference for body style, it's better to ask.

The last characteristic we'll look at is **tannin**. Tannins are a group of relatively complex molecules found in trees and many fruits, including grapes.

They precipitate proteins, which is why they are used in tanning animal hides (hence the name tannin). In wine, they lead to the sensation of astringency, giving a drying sensation – the opposite of mouth-watering acids. A tannic wine makes your inner lips stick to your gums.

Tannin is important in the aging of red wines. As wine ages, tannins polymerize, combining to form larger molecules, and they may precipitate out as sediment, which is why you may need to decant an older wine so that you don't wind up drinking the sediment. Carefully pour a wine with sediment into a decanter, with enough light at the neck to see when the sediment (which should be at the bottom on the bottle if it hasn't been shaken up too much) is about to enter the decanter, at which point you immediately stop.

You don't actually taste tannin, rather you sense its texture. Often in wine descriptions, you will see tannins described as silky, plush, or velvety, which can be the result of tannins becoming more polymerized, or a rough or raw, with particularly young wines, when they seem like they're almost attacking you. Other descriptions of tannins include, polished, elegant.

Some people really like tannin. Others think it gives them headaches. Practice will tell you where you fall.

To calibrate your preference for tannin, look for an example of a high tannin and a low tannin wine, and taste them at the same time, again just concentrating on the tannin elements rather than other characteristics.

Examples of high tannin wines include wines made from the Nebbiolo grape (Barolo, Barbaresco, or the considerably less expensive Langhe Nebbiolo); Cabernet Sauvignon from California, Australia, Chile, Bordeaux (will always be a blend of grapes); Petite Sirah (mostly from California); Mourvedre (or Monastrell) from southern France, Spain, or California; Tannat, originally from the Madiran region of France, but

now more often from Uruguay and a fair number of Virginia wineries; Petit Verdot, which seems to do very well in Virginia; or Sagrantino (central Italy).

Examples of lower tannin wines include Barbera (from the same region of Italy as Nebbiolo); Cabernet Franc, from the Loire Valley in France, and very successful in Virginia; Valpolicella from Italy; or Gamay (the grape in Beaujolais). Pinot Noir can also have fairly low tannin.

To sum up, the four characteristics we've discussed in three articles – sweetness, acidity, body, and tannin – all have a major impact on how a wine tastes or feels in the mouth, and you may find that you enjoy particular levels of each characteristic. Knowing your preference for each characteristic can allow you to branch out from your old standbys to other types of wines that you may not have felt confident enough to risk trying. You will find that your delight in wines increases.

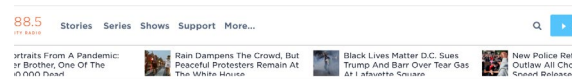
But truth be told, I like every type of wine characteristic that we've discussed,

depending on what food I'm having with the wine, or what mood I'm in if I'm not particularly looking to match wine with food. Sometimes I'm in the mood for a dry Riesling, sometimes in the mood for a sweet Riesling. Sometimes I'd prefer a low tannin Barbera, sometimes a high tannin Nebbiolo. For every wine characteristic, some wine-makers do a very good job, and some do a not so good job, or, more likely these days, winemakers are just trying to make a "good enough" wine that is not too expensive, like most of the wine you'll find in the supermarket aisle. So I seek out the good wines in each type of characteristic, and have a variety on hand for my various moods and needs.

Therefore, what I really hope is that after you've done the fun work of calibrating your preferences among these characteristics, you branch out and find good examples of wines that are on the opposite end of your preference for a particular characteristic. Then we can all get together and have a great wine-tasting! 🍷

***Former Montebello long-time resident and friend to many, Margaret Sullivan, was recently featured on WAMU 88.5 in Portraits From a Pandemic series. Listen to her story:***

[https://wamu.org/story/20/06/05/portraits-from-a-pandemic-her-brother-one-of-the-100000-dead/?fbclid=IwAR0HdLC3cn-wT2xe3CRstnyl6DKk3oPmZ\\_J2q92-vqarmk58qg8I\\_wM3GS-JMer-one-of-the-100000-dead/?fbclid=IwAR0HdLC3cn-wT2xe3CRstnyl6DKk3oPmZ\\_J2q92-vqarmk58qg8I\\_wM3GS-JM](https://wamu.org/story/20/06/05/portraits-from-a-pandemic-her-brother-one-of-the-100000-dead/?fbclid=IwAR0HdLC3cn-wT2xe3CRstnyl6DKk3oPmZ_J2q92-vqarmk58qg8I_wM3GS-JMer-one-of-the-100000-dead/?fbclid=IwAR0HdLC3cn-wT2xe3CRstnyl6DKk3oPmZ_J2q92-vqarmk58qg8I_wM3GS-JM)



WAMU | 6 HRS AGO  
**Portraits From A Pandemic: Her Brother, One Of The 100,000 Dead**

# PART OF PORTRAITS FROM A PANDEMIC  
 Jacob Fenston · Tyrone Turner

LISTEN



Margaret Sullivan's brother was one of the first 600 people to die of coronavirus in the United States. Jacob Fenston / WAMU

Margaret Sullivan and her husband Dan have a morning routine – coffee and the newspaper. On the morning of May 24, the thick Sunday papers came. Margaret already had an idea what she'd find on the cover of *The New York Times*.

"I just knew," she says.



## dog walkers



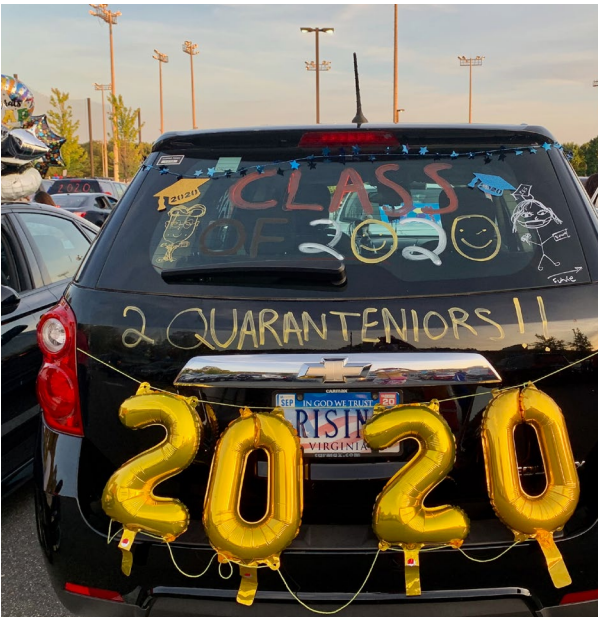
*Photos by Dian McDonald*

## class of 2020



UNIVERSITY OF  
MARY WASHINGTON

where great minds get to work



*Amédé Karina-Plun, a born and bred Montebelloan, graduated from Thomas Edison High School on June 1 with a 4.2 GPA.*

*He is pictured above with his parents, Jerome Plun and Mikhailina Karina, and his older brother, Albéric. He will attend the University of Mary Washington, where Albéric will be a junior.*

*Due to COVID restrictions, local high schools could not hold traditional graduation ceremonies. Instead, Edison parents organized a drive-by parade along Van Dorn Avenue that ended on the school parking lot. Families decorated their cars, students donned their caps and gowns, and spectators cheered along the two-block route. No marching band, no speeches, no podiums – but lots of memories with friends during an unforgettable year. These photos are a tribute to the 567 members of Edison's Class of 2020. We were there, we saw you, and we celebrate your achievements– MK*

class of 2020



NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY



OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY



# class of 2020



class of 2020



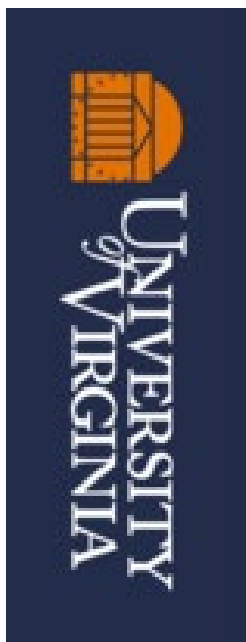
# class of 2020



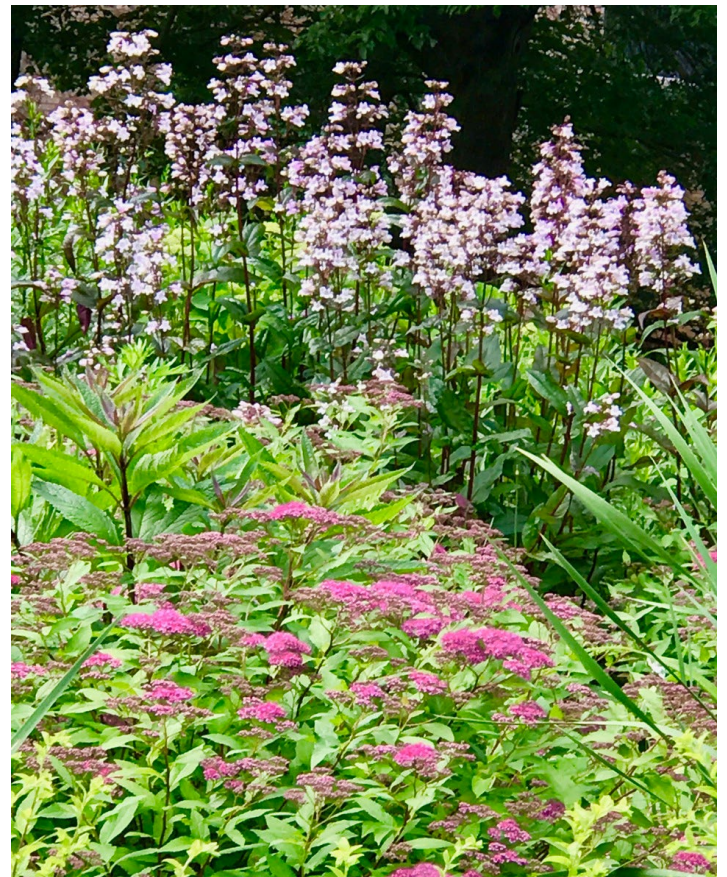
**NOVA**  
Northern Virginia  
Community College

GEORGE  
**MASON**  
UNIVERSITY

# class of 2020



final glance



*Photos by Dian McDonald*