



# The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

present

June 17, 2020

## The CC reconstruction – why bother?

Angela Anderson and Gregory Copley have raised major questions about the CC construction project. Another issue is that after all the money has been spent and all the disruptions have been endured, Montebelloans will find that their lives have not been improved to any measurable extent. A properly conducted study will demonstrate this unequivocally.

Using available records from a 6-month period ending with the coronavirus lockdown, inventory all activities taking place in the CC, their frequency, and the number of participants. Conduct another such inventory for the 6-month period following completion of CC construction. (Don't allow the BOD and management to play with the numbers). A pre- and post-comparison will show that the CC project has made almost no difference whatsoever in the richness of life at Montebello.

How can I say this so confidently? Simple—the CC we have now has easily accommodated the range of activities that people have wanted to carry out. If it's something they wanted to do, they're already doing it. This will NOT be a case of "if we build it they will come." If we build it, the condo fees will go up. Period.

It's not for me to speculate why some individuals are so fervently behind this project. It certainly has nothing to do with the need for it. – *Richard M. Titus* 📧

## Do's and don'ts this summer

An article with some advice from epidemiologists about what activities are safe to do this summer:

[https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/08/upshot/when-epidemiologists-will-do-everyday-things-coronavirus.html?campaign\\_id=29&emc=edit\\_up\\_20200608&instance\\_id=19182&nl=the-upshot&regi\\_id=87560629&segment\\_id=30354&te=1&user\\_id=541948f0e8273c6d0470bfd32d03d12&fbclid=IwAR0NCySk3sHo7YTxuGmCT7d04FCn1UPdaFTt-TVECELI-9duKbT3cKLGJnk0](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/08/upshot/when-epidemiologists-will-do-everyday-things-coronavirus.html?campaign_id=29&emc=edit_up_20200608&instance_id=19182&nl=the-upshot&regi_id=87560629&segment_id=30354&te=1&user_id=541948f0e8273c6d0470bfd32d03d12&fbclid=IwAR0NCySk3sHo7YTxuGmCT7d04FCn1UPdaFTt-TVECELI-9duKbT3cKLGJnk0) – submitted by *Paul Foldes* 📧

## A look back through the decades

"The '40s? The '50s? Where's the turning point? Change doesn't line up neatly by decade. The Class of 2002 would say the cataclysm happened on September 11, 2001, when the Twin Towers thundered down, and a different America emerged from the noise. For the Class of 1942, it was December 7, 1941.

For children of the '50s, the pivot happened on November 22, 1963. In 1961 President John F. Kennedy inspired a "new generation of Americans – born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage –."

That's who we were when we entered high school, but in November of 1963 JFK was dead, his head blown apart by a sniper's bullet. Even though it was 1963, "the '60s" in context refers to the late-'60s – the ramping up of the Vietnam War, the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the second wave of feminism. The '50s died with President Kennedy."

From *Tuesday in Texas* (Introduction) by *Rebecca Long Hayden*

And now we know the appalling events that will define the Class of 2020. I hope there's not worse to come, but we've got seven months to go in the year. – *Rebecca Long Hayden* 📧

## Take a walk

While cleaning out our kitchen drawers, my wife came across a small box containing several clippings of newspaper and magazine articles. Among the items found was a clipping that I think would be of interest to many of our Montebello friends and neighbors. The article is short, and was published in the *The Times of Montebello* several years ago.

Did You Know...

That our halls are 101 yards long and there are 14 steps between floors? For indoor walkers, it would take 17.4 lengths of the hall to make one mile. Two walkers measured their walk going down the first floor hall, up one flight, down the next hall, and so on to the top and back to the first floor and found their pedometer registered 2 miles. – *Joe de Angelis* 📧

Cover photo by *Dian McDonald*

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## Now and then

By Bob Shea

A TV talking head recently mused that “no event in our lifetime has stressed the US like this virus.” Whose lifetime? Those of us older than 8 decades beg to differ. We still remember World War II when opting out was not a prerogative, to wear or not to wear a mask, social distance or not. We were impacted whether you liked it or not. It was a way of life. We were “all in.”

I grew up in New Hampshire, about 40 miles from the coastline, and WW II was upon us, all around us, every day, and disagreement was not an individual choice.

For those who did not live it...and most alive today did not, consider these facts of everyday life:

Ration cards made our decisions...everything from sugar to gasoline to tires to meat was rationed.

Gold star flags were all too common, depicting a household with a war casualty.

Every family had a loved one in uniform somewhere in the world...often in a place we had never heard of.

Moms saved tin cans of bacon fat or grease on the kitchen stove to donate to the war effort.

There were soldiers in uniform on our main street from the newly-created Army air field.

We were required to have black-out panels for all windows, and during drills, an Air Raid Warden walked the streets, complete with a helmet and a "Civil Defense" armband, to enforce light discipline.

Our city park, The Common, had a chicken-wire enclosure where we gladly tossed in old pots and pans as scrap metal for the “war effort.”

Every family had a Victory Garden to grow the fresh vegetables not found in the grocery store.

The only vehicles produced for almost five years were jeeps, military trucks, and tanks.

## Gratitude

By Anna Schalk

*I want to share with the community my gratitude to Montebello Management, the Board, the staff, and the Café for the safety and concern during the pandemic. We are a community of more than 2,200 residents that have been spared from coronavirus.*

*We have been provided ongoing publications and posters with information on how to provide safety for ourselves and each other. We have become aware that masks and cleaning of our hands is not only for oneself, but extremely important for others.*

*Our household consists of two senior adults who both have health concerns as cancer survivors and other at-risk disease. As a result, we have continued to strongly observe the published guidelines. Knowing that our staff maintains an ongoing decontamination program throughout each building and the B levels provides us with feelings of security.*

*Also our beloved José has not only provided delicious ongoing food and free delivery, but has graciously stocked food and necessary household items in the store. We are truly blessed in our choice of living in Montebello.*

Nylon was used for parachutes, not women's stockings. Creative women painted a dark line on the backs of their bare legs to create faux stockings.

Many families raised chickens for fresh eggs with the added bonus of chicken feed being sold in bags made of patterned cloth suitable for little girl's dresses if mom had a sewing machine.

Strange letters arrived from uncles and dads that were shrunk to save space....once the letter had been read and approved by military censors.

The language changed: GI, Axis Powers, the duration plus 6 months, and 4-F were added.

A third-grade school project was to go to a swampy area and collect milkweed pods to be used to make kapok life jackets.

As the war went on, more and more

men were drafted as the minimum standards were lowered. My uncle Jim was drafted in 1944. He resembled an emaciated Barney Fife, but he gladly went to war.

Posters were everywhere that proclaimed “Loose Lips Sink Ships,” “Buy War Bonds,” or “Uncle Sam Needs You.”

The only news about the war came in black and white Movietone News between double features at the local theater...and it was only good news of victory and sacrifice.

We were part of the war and war effort 24/7, and no one questioned the rules or went to court.

A brief history lesson for those who did not live a time in our history when, like it or not, we were all in it together. 🇺🇸

# The call for a Community Center vote is far from over

By Gregory Copley

The call by the *ad hoc* Montebello Owners Working Group (MOWG) for a vote on whether or not to proceed with the major reconstruction work on the Montebello Community Center has been resisted by the Board of Directors of the Montebello Unit Owners Association, despite the fact that almost a quarter of owners have petitioned for a vote on the issue.

The Board has chosen to interpret the filing of the formal petition on June 9, 2020, as merely a request for a “special meeting” to discuss the MOWG petition. However, the petition did *not* request a “special meeting”; it requested a *vote* by owners on the project.

No clear answers are being provided by the Board on this issue; only obfuscation. The Board’s official response to the MOWG petition was similarly designed to deter decisive action. The letter from MCUA Pres. Jon Kandel to me on June 10, 2020, noted:

“I am in receipt of your letter dated June 9, 2020, and the enclosed listing of persons who you claim have placed their names on a petition. The Association will be reviewing the list to determine if units with sufficient common elements interest are represented to require calling a special meeting. If so, the Association will review your materials to determine if the requirements of the Bylaws have been met, and if calling a special meeting is required, the Board will make the arrangements to do so. If calling a meeting is not required, then the Board members will consider what action, if any, the Board desires to take.”

It is worth noting the tenor of the response, specifically, “Board members will consider what action, if any, the Board *desires* to take” [emphasis added]. This makes it clear that the Board feels that it can, effectively, do what it wishes. Moreover, note the paternalism, or

arrogance, of the comment “who you *claim* have placed their names on a petition” [again, emphasis added].

Significantly, since the petition was filed, we have had two signers withdraw their votes, and several more owners – having just learned of the petition – have requested that their names be added to the petition of those favoring a vote on the continuation of the Community Center vote. It should be quite clear: the petition merely requests a vote of all owners as to whether to pro-

***The petition merely requests a vote of all owners as to whether to proceed with the project. If a majority of owners wishes to proceed with it, then the matter is done, regardless of the consequences to our economic security.***

ceed with the project. If a majority of owners wishes to proceed with it, then the matter is done, regardless of the consequences to our economic security.

So why is the Board afraid of a vote on this issue? Or, indeed, why is the Board afraid of transparency in the project bidding and financial arrangements on the project?

Questions as to bidding procedures by contractors, or the independent verification of the *necessity* for some of the work have not been satisfactorily answered. It is worth bearing in mind that the Board has determined that it would proceed with the project based on the *necessity* of work to meet code and other requirements, whereas a view of the entire project shows that the initial basis for the work was not on necessity, but on *desirability* (to some) of the project.

Certainly, if some work is undertaken to achieve the outcomes the board *desires*, then it would or could trigger

some requirements for other work to be done to satisfy current code levels. So it is less than candid for the Board to say that the work has been initiated to meet code requirements. The project was initiated to meet the *desires* of some Board members (for their own, as-yet unknown reasons), and then justified on the basis that it would require work to meet resulting code requirements.

In other words, the argument that the project is necessary, from a code standpoint, is highly debatable. We know that these continued projects are feasible only because of the constant, above-inflation escalation of condo fees, and that these condo fee increases are proposed to continue unabated into the future.

So it should be up to the owners of Montebello to determine whether or not to demand clarity in the rationale and processes of such building programs (and let’s not be sidetracked by terminology such as “renovation” or “repair” to get around the legal necessity for an owners’ vote).

We do have effective legal counsel on standby, but what is disheartening is that a significant number of Montebello owners feel that the Board will not listen to any reason and that the only option voters have is to sell their homes in Montebello. But then, as one Board member has said: “We’re all affluent. If someone can’t afford to live here, then they should just leave.”

Still, even those who can afford to endure the unnecessary cost increases (and the damage it does to condo resale values) do not relish the paternalism, inefficiency, and possible corruption of our processes which all result from tolerating the unilateralism of certain Board members. 🏠

*Imagination in a can***Play-Doh celebrates 65 years of molding young minds***By Raymond Houck*

**B**efore I worked as a business, government and military consultant for the last 21 years at Booz Allen Hamilton, I had another long and exciting career in the retail industry of over 26 years. Some of my favorite positions include time worked as an executive at Woodward & Lothrop, a department store chain headquartered in Washington, DC. Woodward & Lothrop was Washington's first department store, opening its doors in 1887.



“snake” that would wrap around Earth 300 times! Hasbro also estimates that if you were to make a single ball of all the Play-Doh ever made it would weigh more than 700 million pounds.

The world's most popular modeling clay has an unexpected history, beginning life as a cleaning compound for soot-stained walls. The company hit the skids hard at least twice – first in the 1920s, and later in the 1940s – until an imaginative nursery schoolteacher convinced the compound maker, her brother-in-law, to think of this product in whole new way.

And soon there was no stopping Play-Doh. Once it caught on in the 1950s and early 1960s, demand was so high that Play-Doh was back-ordered for 16 months. In the years since, all kinds of fun facts have accumulated about Play-Doh, but the oddest may be this: On the toy's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Demeter Fragrance created an exclusive Play-Doh perfume.



Then again, perhaps it isn't so odd, after all. Anyone who grew up handling the clay recalls its distinctive aroma which Hasbro described in a 2017 trademark filing as a “combination of a sweet, slightly musky, vanilla-like fragrance, with slight overtones of cherry, and the natural smell of a salted, wheat-base dough.”

Or, as I prefer to call it, “the scent of childhood fun!” 🍪

Woodies, as locals lovingly referred to it, maintained stores in the Washington metropolitan area and throughout the mid-Atlantic region including John Wanamaker. Woodies' flagship store was a fixture of the shopping district in downtown Washington. During the time I worked there and in many of the branch stores, I heard countless stories about Woodies' impact on the DC area and the world. One of those was the “world premiere” of Play-Doh at W&L stores.

More than 2 billion cans of Play-Doh have sold since it first hit the shelves at Woodies in 1956. Toy company Hasbro estimates that if you were to put all that compound through a Play-Doh Fun Factory play set, you would create a



necessary kindness

# Neighbors offer snazzy free home-made masks



**Free Cloth Face Mask**  
 Giving away cloth masks we make here. Specify how many you need and your unit number. We will deliver within a couple of days to your door.  
 Respond to my email please - willirl@gmail.com

Sarah and Rick Williams are putting their pandemic time to good use: they have made about 200 cloth masks for friends and neighbors. Montebello business picked up after they advertised their venture on the B3 bulletin boards.

“I looked at a lot of videos on making masks,” Sarah writes. “Due to a shortage of elastic at first, I decided on making a mask with pleats and a fabric sleeve for a tie or elastic to pass through. This method allowed me to go ahead and make masks and add the elastic later. The masks can have fabric ties, shoelaces or elastic loops. They can be washed and reused. There is a pocket for a filter to improve the mask’s effectiveness.” 📖

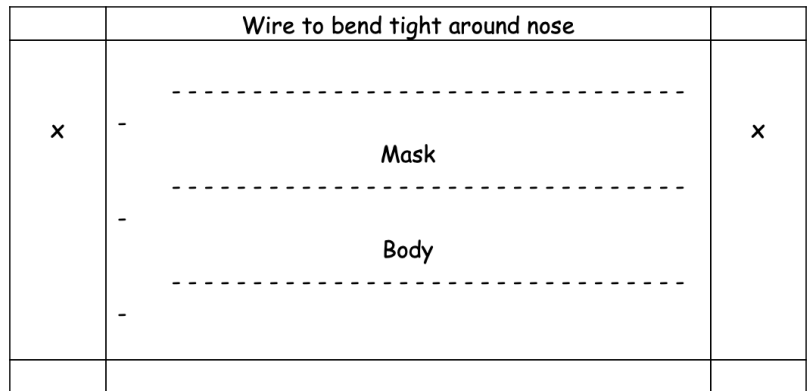
These masks **do not** replace the N-95 masks. They provide some coverage and can be used over the high-rated masks to keep them cleaner and used longer.

The mask has an inside pocket for a filter, such as coffee filter or fabric. The masks can be washed and reused (they have a wire on the top edge that bends to fit around your nose, so be gentle on the wash – **do not** put them in the microwave!).

To wash your mask, remove the filter and place in washing machine on gentle. Hang to dry or dry on low heat in dryer. Iron on medium or low heat.

To wear masks with single long tie, place mask on your face with filter opening and wire at top next to your face, then pull the upper loop behind the crown of your head, pull two bottom ends to tighten and tie them behind your head. If you want a long single tie, please email me and send a picture of your mask so I can use the right fabric for the tie.

For masks with elastic, you will need to adjust the elastic to give a snug, but not too tight, fit. – *condensed text by Sarah Williams* 📖



# A fitness trail for Montebello woodlands

By Joe de Angelis

Although we are all acclimated to living with COVID-19, there are many things that we will have to continue living with for the foreseeable future. Paramount among these are the wearing of masks and social distancing. These mitigating criteria have and will continue to have an impact on Montebello's indoor activities such as Cup of Joe and the use of our fitness center; two of our most popular activities.

However, Montebello has another major amenity that is not severely impacted by COVID-19 and that is its woods and walking trail. The woods and trail helps us maintain our fitness while at the same time they allow us to commune with nature. Because of the shelter in place requirement, many more Montebello residents are taking full advantage of our woods and trail. However, for those of us who workout regularly, the closing of the fitness center is a major disruption to our lifestyle, but there may be another avenue that may solve our fitness dilemma – an outdoor fitness trail.

An outdoor fitness trail is simply a trail that has exercise stations placed at intervals. These stations would contain various kinds of outdoor exercise equipment that has been permanently installed. Since Montebello already has a trail, all we need to do is to add a few exercise stations as space and terrain allow. Such exercise stations can be very simple in design, easy to build, require minimal maintenance, and do not cost very much.

Additionally, if it is decided, for example, to build four exercise stations along our trail, they do all have to be built at the same time but can be built individually as funding allow. Given the low cost of building such exercise stations, there should be no reason that we can not install three or four stations at

the same time.

Specifically I am referring to things like a pull up bar, a low level balance beam, stretching posts, sit-up board, and parallel bars. A pull up bar, which consists of two posts and a cross bar, can be either singular or multiple in design. Additionally, if a lower bar (3

cur a great financial burden.

Montebello's trail has sufficient room to accommodate four of these exercise stations and the cost should be minimal. Having such exercise stations along our trail would be most beneficial for residents, especially since the date for the reopening of our fitness center remains



ft.) is added, it can be used for reverse push-ups. Parallel bars can have either flat boards (2x4s) or round bars, either of wood or metal. The low level balance beams are 4x4s secured in the ground, while a stretching post is simply a 4x4 placed vertically in the ground. A shorter stretching post can be used for stretching the calf muscle. An effective sit-up board for abdominal exercises can be built in several ways. For example, two low parallel bars at different levels approximately three to four feet apart, or the traditional slant board for sit-ups. All of these items are very simple in design and should not in-

uncertain. I strongly urge our Board of Directors to favorably consider such additions to our walking trail so as to turn it into a fitness trail for the benefit of all. 🏡

*The Montebello  
Voice  
uncut, uncensored,  
unofficial*

# A ho-hum end to senior year

By Pedro Loayza

In regards our at home zoo enclosure time period, I would have to say that I am having a marvelous time. To be quite honest, I never had the fear of senioritis, considering the fact that most of the classes I took were those I was

to further my hoarding of certificates for cyber education. Quite honestly when I went to school I felt that I could have been doing so many other things out of school that could benefit me more than the courses I was already taking. (I'm sure that many others can attest to that statement).



actually interested in (I know a foreign concept to some seniors). The added plus being that most of them were already online courses, so really nothing has changed besides added time to pursue other hobbies of mine.

I now have more free time dedicated to conversing with foreign friends who are up as early than I am. More time to invest in voice acting roles I have submitted for (and some I have been accepted in) and other online courses

to further my hoarding of certificates for cyber education. Quite honestly when I went to school I felt that I could have been doing so many other things out of school that could benefit me more than the courses I was already taking. (I'm sure that many others can attest to that statement). If anything, all I was doing was giving myself early back pain from the constant seating in the classroom. I also wasn't very excited about prom or other end-of-the-year activities (60 bucks to go see other people in a dress when I can spend the same amount doing anything else with my friends wasn't helping either).

Speaking of friends, we've kept close in touch, making sure to wear gas masks while we speak online as not to contract Corona digitally.

They've much the same grievances as caged birds, as we all wish to go outside and hang out once more without having Homeland Security call the National Guard.

While life is a bit bland, I've been keeping busy with weightlifting and exercise (because if not now, then when?) following the advice of my old lifting buddy Arnie: reps till failure. If I'm not doing that, I'm speaking to clients about what specific voice samples they want



MARYMOUNT  
UNIVERSITY

me to record for their respective projects as they also take advantage of the time given to them by this pandemic.

Lucky for me, I was already accepted into a university long before this started happening. This coming September I will be going to Marymount University, majoring in computer science and deciding my minor at a later date, with the hopes that it will give me a degree I can show to my future bosses that I am proficient in computer sciences and policies. In the forthcoming future I hope to gain an internship while I study, so when I finish my studies I can straight to work and slave away quicker than the rest of my peers.

But I think that we all have to keep a chin up in these trying times, for what looks like to be a long while. We are going to have to settle for a long time in our homes locked up. But we should also see this as an opportunity to start fresh and new, we will probably struggle for a bit, but it doesn't mean you can't seek work. 🙏

*Ed.: A life-long resident of building 1, Pedro graduated from Thomas Edison High School.*

*“Being busy does not always mean real work. The object of all work is production or accomplishment and to either of these ends there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence, and honest purpose, as well as perspiration. Seeming to do is not doing.”*

– Thomas Edison



Finding Omega

A son's personal tribute to his beloved Father

By Peter Blackledge

Blackledge Urban Living Legend (BULL) stories about regarding events surrounding my birth.

BULL Story #1

When my Father, who was returning from lengthy deployment absences during World War II, called my Mother to advise of when he would arrive home, Mother put my then-5-year-old brother Michael on the phone to say, "Daddy, I want a little brother."

BULL Story #2

Although I was his fifth child, Dad was reportedly so ecstatic at my birth that the doctors asked if I were his first child.

BULL Story #3

After siring three girls and a boy, my Father was so desirous of having another son that he immediately asked to see the physical proof of my maleness, and then - to the shock, if not horror of all persons standing in the vicinity - hoisted me high in the air to publicly display and proclaim my manhood.

BULL Story #4

Having reluctantly acceded to my Mother's desire to name me Timothy, Dad took advantage of my Mother's

anesthetized bedridden post-birth status to change that name on my birth certificate to his favorite name, Peter.

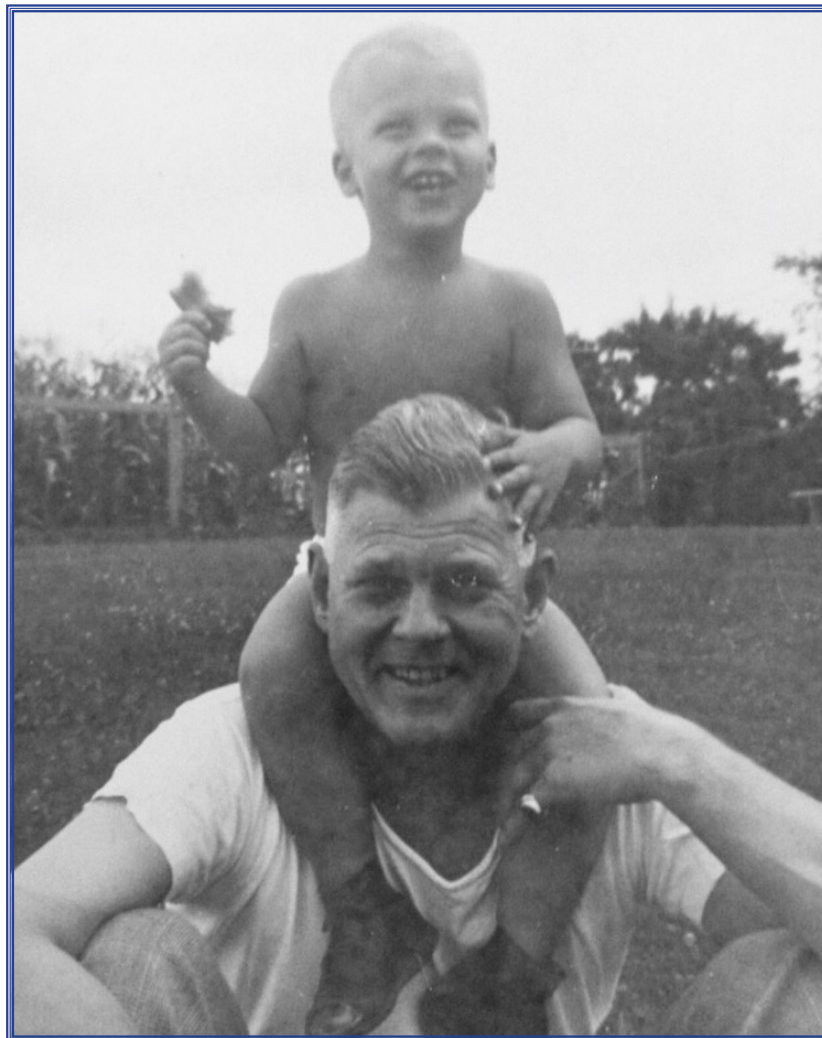
While I am not disputing such BULL Stories, there is one fact which I personally know to be incontrovertibly true: Much like the Biblical account of Jacob and his young son Joseph, my 51-year-old Father absolutely delighted in this "child of his elder years." And

Father - who had commanded thousands of sailors and Marines during the war - never failed to rush home each night to spend time with me, carrying me around our back yard on his shoulders.

Immediately following his retirement from the Navy, our family moved to Houston, Texas, where Dad became Vice President & General Manager of Cameron Iron Works. As I grew up, my very close relationship with Dad continued; he was always exceptionally kind, patient, understanding and supportive despite my many shortcomings.

Although Dad had been an excellent athlete in high school and college, I unfortunately was the skinny kid who seemed to always be chosen last for our neighborhood sports teams. And whereas Dad was always gregarious and outgoing, I could often be painfully shy. Even when, like the Biblical "Prodigal Son," I went far astray into a plethora of youthful indiscretions, Dad never gave up on me - he always encouraged me. He often referred to the two of us as The Alpha and The Omega (he The Alpha progenitor, me The Omega last progeny).

When in 8th grade I asked Dad to buy me a set of weightlifting equipment for Christmas, he did (disguising the gift under our Christmas tree, and labeling it for another family member, to make it a total surprise for me) - even though he was probably assuming that I would



although he was very busy with his high-profile position as Commanding Officer of Naval Ordnance Plant, Indianapolis (NOPI), receiving such Navy luminaries as four-star Admiral Ingram and five-star Fleet Admiral Leahy, my

## father's day

soon lose interest in it as I had with most other gifts and activities. But he had the faith in me to keep trying to help me find my spark and my direction. My father's confidence, and that gift, helped to turn my life around – as the scrawny, gangly, nonathletic kid amazingly began to gain significant muscularity, prompting Dad to start referring to me as “Little Abner, just 15 1/2 yar’ old” (after the muscular comic strip teenager drawn by Al Capp).

My increased strength and size, and the attendant athleticism which it brought me, surprisingly allowed me to even make my high school's basketball team and win my letter, and the resultant self-confidence transformed me to be much more social and outgoing, causing me to become active in various social and academic organizations, even being elected to be an officer of my high school fraternity – all of which probably contributed to my being selected by President Lyndon Johnson for appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy.

Dad was elated that his youngest child would be attending his alma mater, and I was pleasantly surprised to have been accepted to the same college from which both my father (USNA Class of 1920) and my idolized and extraordinarily accomplished older brother Michael (USNA Class of 1963) had graduated.

Dad suggested that I would be a perfect fit for rowing crew at the Naval Academy. As a Texas boy, I knew nothing about crew, had never even seen a racing shell, and was concerned that I could not compete on a collegiate level – particularly at a top rowing college like the Naval Academy, which the year before I was to start there had won every event at the Intercollegiate Rowing Association (IRA) National Championships – but I was determined to go hard for it. So I tried out for the crew team at USNA and was pleasantly surprised when I made First Boat on the Freshman Heavyweight Crew team and then again made First Boat each successive year on the Varsity Heavyweight Crew

team. Dad was so happy and excited at my success, and became my biggest fan – even sending me encouraging telegrams before each race.

When Dad learned that I had won a treasured spot to race in the IRA National Championships, my aging white-haired father flew all the way from Houston, Texas to Syracuse, New York to sit outside, in a driving rain storm, in the bleacher stands at Lake Onondaga to watch me race. When my boat decisively won our race, Dad was standing right there, holding my Championship medal in front of him, beaming with pride as the IRA photographers took our victory picture. Seeing him so happily multiplied my own exuberance. And when *Sports Illustrated* magazine took our picture as my teammates and I completed the ceremonial dunking of our victorious coxswain in Lake Onondaga, Dad tracked down the *Sports Illustrated* photographer, obtained a copy of that picture, framed it, and proudly put it on his wall. It was such a gift to have Dad there at the end of my victorious race to share all the accolades, and to have him embrace me while I was experiencing the most extraordinary, euphoric high of my life.

When I graduated from USNA and began my career as a Naval Officer, Dad even came to visit me on my ship, and our similar surface-ship Naval careers provided one more unique bond between us. Although my Naval career took me all over the country, and half way around the world, Dad and I always remained in close contact via phone calls, letters, and cassette tapes, as well as visits whenever possible. I enjoyed making our time together as memorable for him as he had for me, by always creating unique presents for him. In the year before Dad passed away, I flew to Houston to spend a full week with my then 85-year-old father and to bring him a particularly special gift. Dad had always delighted in gifts which I made for him during my child-

hood summer camp days, remarking that gifts made by hand are particularly cherished as they come from the heart. And so I had researched the Navy ships in which Dad had served during his 34-year-career, and I wrote to the National Archives to obtain a picture of each. I then purchased, machined, and stained a large wood plaque, and mounted the pictures onto that plaque beneath a brass plate which I had engraved with the words “Captain Allan Blackledge, U.S. Navy, 34 Years Of Service With Honor and Distinction.” Except when my Mother died, I had never seen Dad become emotional – but he did that day – and we tearfully but joyfully embraced. Neither one of us knew that would be the last time.

Dad subsequently entered the hospital for what was characterized as minor surgery. When his recovery from that surgery became extended, my siblings and I arranged to fly to Texas to celebrate Christmas with him. Wanting to continue my tradition of providing unique, personalized gifts for Dad during each of our visits, I made two particularly special presents for this occasion: I purchased a small Christmas tree, as well as five large heart-shaped ornaments, and affixed a picture of each of the five siblings to the five heart ornaments. At the top of the tree, I placed an angel ornament that I made, onto which I had affixed a picture of Dad. At the base of the tree, I placed a wooden plaque which read “The Allan D. Blackledge Family (Christmas Tree.” My hope was that Dad would be able to gaze at that tree from his hospital bed and be heartened as he felt pride and joy in the five accomplished and loving children he had raised.

Additionally, I made a set of large angel wings and a halo for each of us five siblings to wear when we greeted Dad, to portray Dad's frequent statement that the “Blackledge Angel” was always watching over us and protecting us.

For my second gift, I took my treasured Navy Varsity Crew Team racing jersey from its honored position on the wall of my home, split it down the back,

## father's day

and sewed additional matching blue-and-gold material to its base, making a hospital gown nightshirt which Dad could proudly wear, as he had been so very proud of my becoming a member of the distinguished Naval Academy Varsity Heavyweight Crew Team.

But our planned time together was not to be. Only days before we five siblings were to arrive for our Christmas celebration, Dad suddenly and unexpectedly passed away. I was absolutely devastated. Dad had been my rock. While my much older siblings had moved on to become spouses and parents, my primary identity remained as “My Father’s Son.” So I wanted to somehow create a special memorial for him. I knew that when a crew racing shell is taken out of its rack at USNA to practice or race, the oarsmen call out the name of that shell as they lift it onto their shoulders to carry it to the water. What better memorial than to have Dad’s name called out each day, at his beloved Naval Academy, in the sport which he had encouraged his youngest child to pursue, as oarsmen lift his named racing shell onto their shoulders just as he had once lifted me onto his shoulders?

So I asked my four wonderful siblings to join me in donating a racing shell to the Naval Academy in Dad’s name, and all four graciously joined me in that donation. The Naval Academy held a special dedication and christening ceremony for the CAPT ALLAN BLACKLEDGE racing shell, complete with Naval Academy officials and photographers, in which all five of us Blackledge siblings participated.

The USNA Varsity Heavyweight Crew subsequently rowed that shell to a decisive victory in the IRA National Championships. And at the end of its long, illustrious racing career, the CAPT ALLAN BLACKLEDGE racing shell was retired and permanently mounted to the ceiling of the USNA Varsity Crew Awards/Banquet Room where it will continue to be honored in

perpetuity.

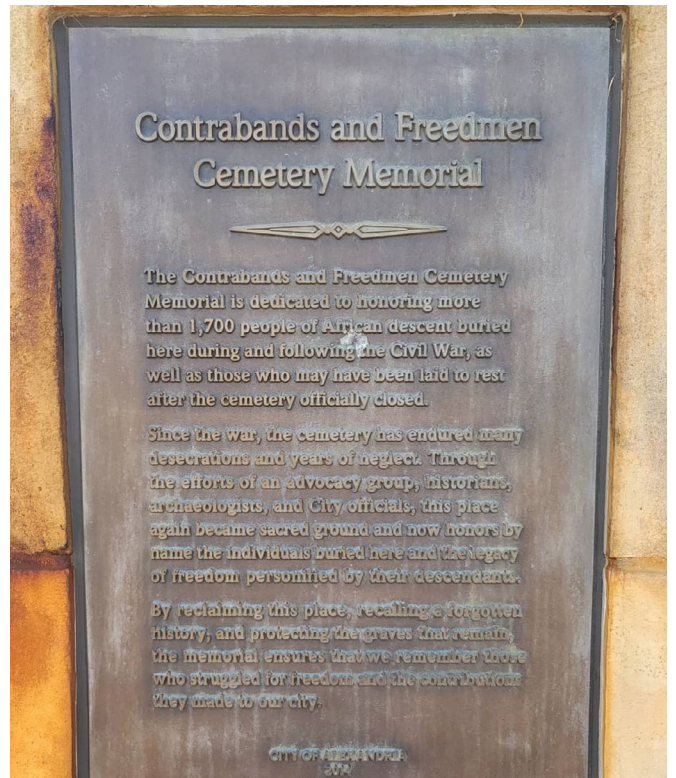
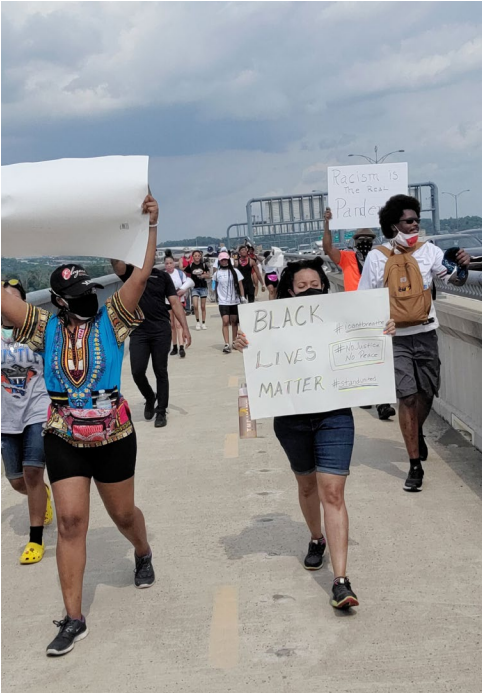
In 2016, as my USNA Class of 1969 was making preparations for celebrating the 50th Anniversary of our USNA graduation, and my family was looking forward to celebrating the 100th Anniversary of our father’s USNA Class of 1920 graduation (which graduated USNA on June 6, 1919, exactly 50 years before our Class of 1969, under a compressed three-year curriculum instituted due to World War I), I felt that a special moment had arrived. Accordingly, I withdrew funds from my Re-

tirement Rainy Day savings to donate a second Racing Shell to USNA Navy Crew. This Racing Shell would be the PETER BLACKLEDGE, ‘69, thereby celebrating and completing the sacred connection which I had with my Dad. And so was fulfilled the culmination of our precious bond, and Circle of Life as the Father lifts up and supports his Son, so does the Son his Father. A promise made, a promise kept, a dream fulfilled. Thank you Dad, my Father and my Alpha, for all you were and are, for all you gave to me, and for helping me to find my Omega. 🙏



*Photo by David Hochberg*

# #blm in alexandria



## Get safe pet help while supporting a local small business

By Lisa J. Stedje

Do you need a little “me time” break from your furry friends for a few hours? Is it too hot for your dog to stay in the car while you run some errands? Would it be best if your buddy stayed overnight somewhere nice for a day or more? Would you like the safety of curbside pet drop-off, pet pick-up, and payment?

Then, I highly recommend Sonny’s Place Daycare, Boarding, and Grooming, where my dog, Misha, loves to go. And I really do mean he **loves** it there. He and his doggie pals at Sonny’s Place get to play, leash-free, all day. When

I need to board him, Sonny’s Place is perfect because he’s able to romp, cage-free, with a kind human companion who actually stays and sleeps with him, overnight. As for the kitties, they have their own Cat Room with crates and tender loving care, 24/7.

The people at Sonny’s Place are super-nice, helpful, and enjoy playing with dogs and cats. Their service rates are very reasonable. The crew even checks all visiting animals for good temperaments and updated records, so everybody stays healthy.

Sonny’s Place is near Montebello, in the Rose Hill shopping plaza, between the laundromat and the karate place, where you can just drive up to Sonny’s

front door. You won’t even have to get out of your car, and you’ll be supporting an important small business while knowing your furry friend will be with more friends in a loving, caring, and fun environment.

Please call Martha at Sonny’s Place if you have any questions. Sonny’s website has a way for you to contact them directly via a message form.

Sonny’s Place  
6118 Rose Hill Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22310  
571-257-6420

<https://sonnysplaceva.com/> 📍

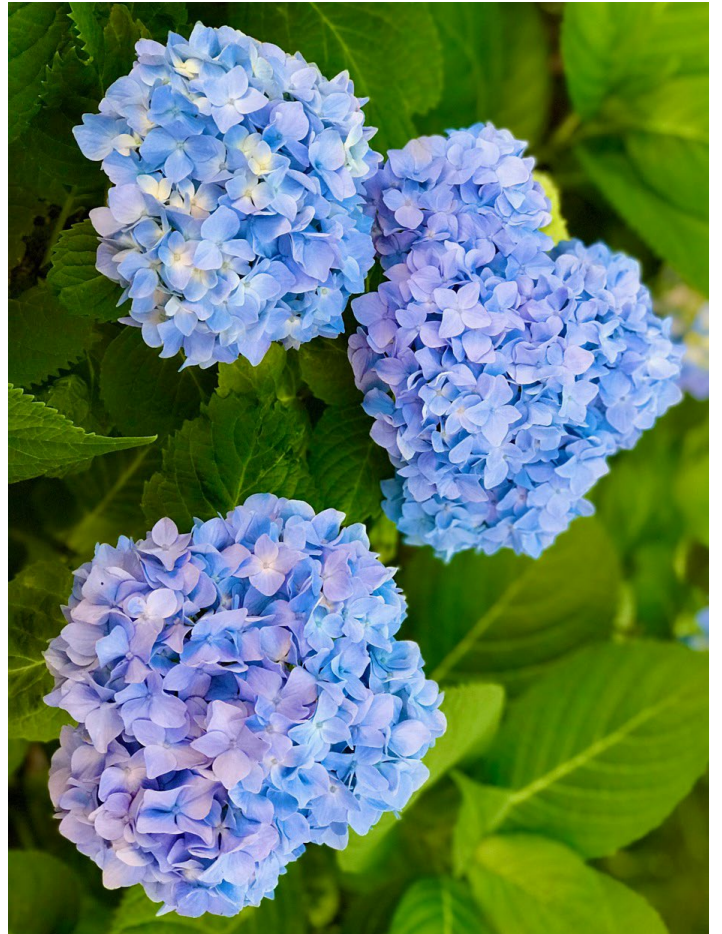


Photo by Beth Copps

# dog walkers



*Photos by Dian McDonald*



# Virtual Polymer Clay Play! Join Us To Celebrate Butterflies!

**Tuesday July 7 , 6pm to 9pm**



**Butterflies come in all shapes and patterns! Just like our polymer clay imaginations !**

This time, we will make simple butterflies that *don't need a pasta machine*. We will make a cane — which means its a long tube which will give you many many butterflies to cover items or make jewelry!

**We will be meeting in my adobe connect classroom. Email me for the link and password as well as the supply list if this is your first time. The link will be active about an hour before class begins.**

Pratibha Srinivasan 4/1412

[psrinivasan@icloud.com](mailto:psrinivasan@icloud.com)



AiM Polymer Clay Group



# final glance



*June 16 sunset*

*Photo by Jenifer Amie Ehrlich*