

# The **MONTEBELLO** Voice

an independent gazette

spread your wings

August 12, 2020



### Farmers markets

One of my favorite springtime activities is to attend the local farmers markets. I arrived at the Arlington Farmers Market on a Saturday morning just before 8 a.m. and there was ample parking available. The line to enter the market snaked around the AMC Theater all the way to Clarendon Blvd. Between waiting in line and purchasing from three vendors, I spent about 35 minutes at the market. Social distancing was well respected. Everyone wore a mask. Vendors asked you to point to their wares and they bagged them for you. It's no longer the relaxing social activity that it used to be, but it was well managed and efficient.

Check out the local farmers markets websites to find out more about each vendor. Some allow you to pre-order and pick up:

<https://www.freshfarm.org/markets>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets>

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/FarmersMarkets> – Diane Bastin 📧

### HOA has been rounding up

The company that is in charge of our HOA has been rounding up due to an Excel spreadsheet algorithm. Please check your fees versus what you are charged. Most people are paying .02-.04 cents a month more. Check your automatic withdrawal, if you have it, because some of those are higher. One resident reported to me that they had incurred a \$40 fee on top of normal HOA and did not know why.

You might be saying, "A couple of cents a month, who cares?" That is not the point. The point is the amount you were quoted might not be the same as the amount you are paying. So please check your rates versus your deductions. If they are not the same, contact George Gardner, our manager, at [gmg@montebello.org](mailto:gmg@montebello.org) and he will get the company to make it right. They sent me a very nice letter apologizing for the mistake. – Jackie Fleming 📧



### Make noise on Sundays

The 7 p.m. nightly noisemaking has been reduced to Sunday nights. If you're still tootin', whistling', and bangin', umm, it's not a thing anymore. Please save your energy and rhythms for Sundays. – MK 📧

### Hummingbird

Cover photo by Linda Brownlee



Photo by Dian McDonald

**The** **MONTEBELLO** **Voice**

an independent gazette  
Alexandria, Virginia

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## upstairs, downstairs

# Please fix the terrible, dangerous stairs behind building 1

By *Mikhailina Karina*

It's been three years since the crumbling wooden staircase behind building 1 was replaced with an even worse staircase. From the beginning, residents complained about the uneven stair height and the infill that provides no foot support. Management has politely acknowledged the problem and promised to fix it. *Mañana*.

With more people using the trails during the pandemic, this kicking-the-can approach is getting old. Other staircases in the woodlands are made of solid material, either wood or concrete. The wooden staircase behind building 4 is simply *mwah*. So what's taking so long to fix these stairs? I wish I had a good answer.

In an August 10 email to the management, I received the following response from General Manager George Gardner: "The stair replacement is presently scheduled for 2022. The board may upgrade that to next year depending on what happens with contingency reserve set aside for the community center renovation."

We are not talking about a super-costly project. In an email interview about this question exactly one year ago, GeoG wrote a lengthy explanation, "The cost was \$9,915 and was obvious-



ly not at level of redesign and installation in the proposed replacement of the stairway system. [It was] approved at the March 2017 Board meeting. At the time we did the timber replacement project it was a scheduled maintenance due to timber deterioration and we were not receiving complaints about the steps and railings. The complaints came in after the repair project. The project failed to adequately define the manner in which the replacement timbers were to be installed and a dispute developed between the contractor and Montebello as to how the timbers were actually installed. (They were in-

stalled 90 degrees different than they should have been, resulting in higher step height between steps and minor spacing differences). The intent was to replace timbers in kind. The contractor maintained that he replaced the timbers matching the positioning of what he took out. We were unable to definitively establish what came out in terms of timber positioning. Hence the discrepancy.

"Further, the wood chip infill, although what was previously there, is not a good solution and is being changed in the upcoming step replacement project. Railing replacement was not a part of that contract. The contractor in question was subsequently not awarded a bid on our grounds contract going forward. Also we have since hired a full-time contracts manager who is providing vastly improved contract oversight of our many contracts to help prevent a similar contracting problem with our contracts in the future," GeoG wrote.

So we're talking about a \$10,000 project that any decent carpenter should be able to handle. I really don't care about a dispute with the contractor or the trig function to figure out the degree difference. It doesn't take an engineer to tell you that a 3-inch gap between the edge of the stair and where the back of the foot lands is not a good idea. If "service comes first" or whatever vapid slogan the management is using these days, then open the Yellow Pages and

Process / Timeline	
<b>•Phasing</b>	
<b>Overall Project in Two Phases:</b>	
<b>Phase I</b>	<b>Phase II</b>
Stairs/Railings	Trail Surfaces
Bid – Fall 2019 Constr. – Spring 2020	TBD
<small>Preliminary Cost Estimate (Q1 2019)</small> \$135,000 – Hard + Soft Costs \$35,000 – ~25% Contingency <b>\$170,000 – Budget</b>	<small>Preliminary Cost Estimate (Q1 2019)</small> \$145,000 – Hard + Soft Costs \$35,000 – ~25% Contingency <b>\$180,000 – Budget</b>
Montebello Process / Timeline	Trail Renovation Project Board Presentation – June 2019

Why Renovate the Trails?	
<b>•Improve Railings</b>	
<b>•Improve Trail Surface</b>	
<b>•Improve Steps</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2x4 rails not easily graspable</li><li>• Rope option did not provide firm, steady support</li><li>• Mixed Materials<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wood Chips</li><li>• Stone</li></ul></li><li>• Uneven landings/treads</li></ul>	
Montebello Why Renovate the Trails?	Trail Renovation Project Board Presentation – June 2019

*Slides from a June 2019 presentation to the board by architect Karl Riedel (pages 9 through 39 in the board packet at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/137zckYqpuHjK-8XWx-QsQ4w9aCgSyqKkR/view>). Looks like spring 2020 should have been construction time for the stairs.*

## upstairs,

get someone to fix the stairs. (And don't even get me started on the beautiful, but perilous slate stairs going nowhere behind building 1.)

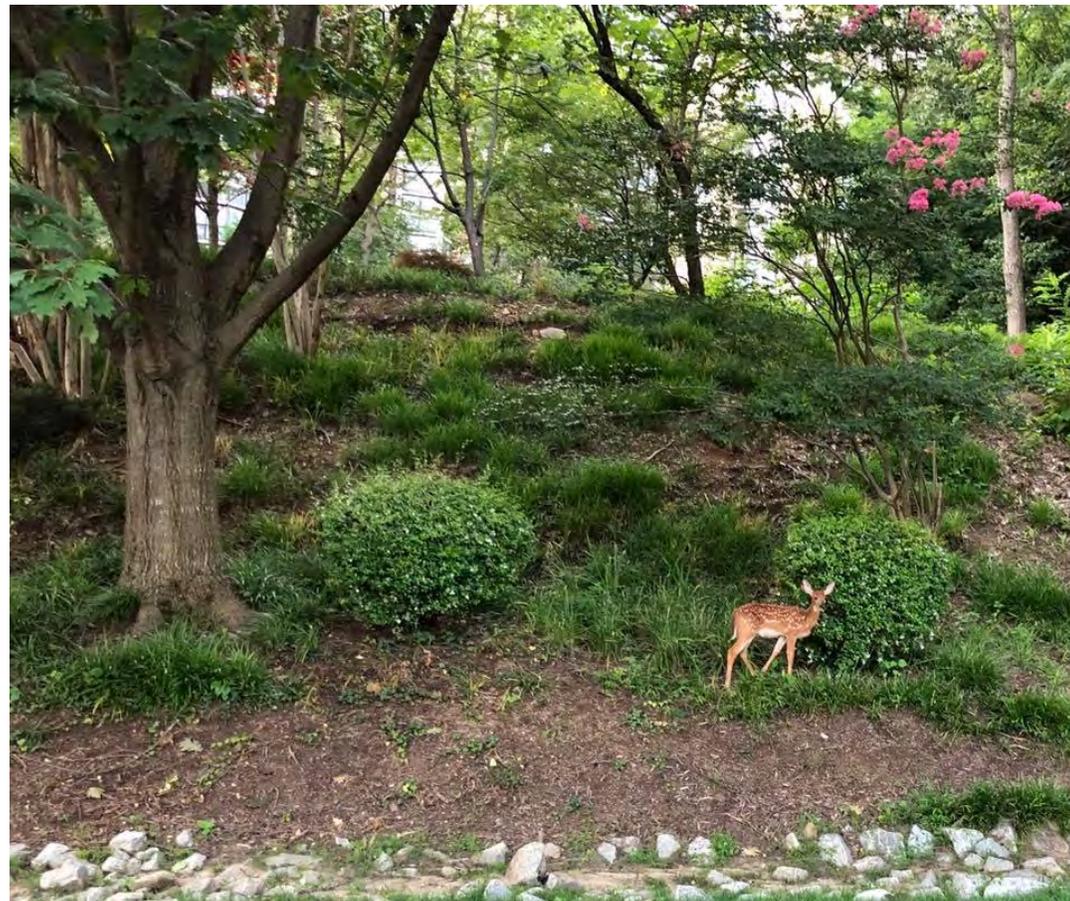
Furthermore, GeoG continued in the June 27, 2019 issue of *The Voice*: "We have made efforts to improve on the existing surface over the last couple of years and the overall trail is in sufficiently good shape that we feel the resurfacing can wait until later years – probably 2021. The trail will require continuing maintenance during the intervening time period. **What is needed now is the replacement of steps and railings and that is what the Board is being asked to approve at the September Board meeting. That project would be scheduled for early spring 2020** [emphasis added].

"The cost of the trail renovation (with a price tag estimated to be \$350,000) involves many trail improvements in terms of timbering, water bars, proper installation of surfaces, improved drainage in terms of trail placement and other design improvements in order

to produce a top-quality trail that meets industry standards for such a system. We will be doing slightly over a mile of trail work. The stairs and rails are approximately half of the overall cost and are being completely re-engineered," GeoG wrote.

The association has funds for new benches and plantings in the transition areas and apparently, more work, worth about half a million dollars, is slated to happen (see Grounds Committee report image from August 11 board packet at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fIO\\_UQS-B6Q0eTBCri60x-biY3iC4ye2k/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fIO_UQS-B6Q0eTBCri60x-biY3iC4ye2k/view).

Why am I suddenly so angry about the stairs? Because several weeks ago one of our neighbors fell on the rolling



Montebello Condominium Unit Owners Association															
Grounds Committee Minutes															
July 9, 2020, 4pm - Regular Meeting via Zoom															
<i>Attendees:</i> Virginia Hodgkinson, Chair; Paul Zeisset, Brian Hayden, Heather Click, Rich Klimoski, Christine Blair, Vince Vogt, Barbara Brennan, Chuck Amorosino, Kierra Reynolds, David Furth, Rebecca McNeely, Patricia Jacubec, Amy Garcia, Carole Appel, Don Hinman, Joe Hirz															
Agenda Item	Discussion	Recommendations	Person Responsible												
Approval of June Minutes	Approved														
Approval of July Agenda	Approved														
Buildings 3 & 4 Transition Area Presentation															
Review of Conceptual Ideas	Joe Hirz from Natural Resources Design presented conceptual ideas for the redesign of the transition areas at Bldg 3 and Bldg 4. He presented a draft of proposed elements and also a draft including major extensions. The difference being mostly the extension of the sidewalk to run the entire distance behind both buildings.	Joe presented very rough cost estimates for the proposed work.  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Bldg 3</th> <th>Bldg 4</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Proposed elements</td> <td>161,000</td> <td>113,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Add extensions</td> <td>100,000</td> <td>159,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>261,000</td> <td>273,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Virginia expressed interest in a more accurate draft plan being prepared. The uncertainty of the coronavirus and the community center renovation make budget restraints uncertain for next year. If we have reliable estimates for these projects we may be in a better position to move if money becomes available.		Bldg 3	Bldg 4	Proposed elements	161,000	113,500	Add extensions	100,000	159,500	Total	261,000	273,000	Virginia Joe
	Bldg 3	Bldg 4													
Proposed elements	161,000	113,500													
Add extensions	100,000	159,500													
Total	261,000	273,000													

rocks just below the staircase and broke her leg. For years, we've been complaining about the rocks on the trail that cause even the most sure-footed people to slip and fall. This generated a lively discussion on the Montebello Facebook group with nearly a dozen residents sharing their stories of falling and getting injured on the trail. At least this problem is finally getting addressed with finer materials being spread around the trail, what GeoG calls "spot maintenance." Thank you. But to use a legal term, the stairs remain "an attractive nuisance" awaiting mishaps. You know they're dangerous and not doing anything about it. Now please show the residents your famously good service and take care of these stairs before anyone gets hurt. 🙏

*Photo by Jerry and Lisa Stedge*

## My final moment with Felix II

By Mary J. Quinn

I received this painting 6 months to the day of when Felix II passed, and rode on Rainbow's wings on February 6, 2020. I decided to put him to sleep and avoid any further decline and suffering with his advanced kidney disease.

Shortly after, I commissioned an artist here at Montebello, Anna Schalk because she like me, is a very spiritual person and understands and has experienced that deep connection to the Divine and the Angelic realms. I shared with her what happened that morning at the Belle Haven Animal Medical Center.

The painting depicts what happened the moment Felix II passed, and the veterinarian and I saw him riding on Rainbows wings. Felix has a frown on his face because he did not want to leave me, he wanted to stick around, but I decided to end his life gracefully. He communicated this to Anna Schalk to show the frown on his face and how much he misses me and how sad he is.

The iridescent colors are lit by the living room lamp by night and by natural light by day. I feel Felix II's presence. It's comforting and has been healing my broken heart as well as his broken heart.

The minute Felix II passed, more like the second, the vet held up stethoscope and we both saw a huge iridescent bubble and a pair of wings as Felix II did indeed ascend on

angel wings, the wings of Rainbow. It was a very Holy and Divine moment. As soon as he ascended, his body went limp in my arms and the vet and I both felt a chill. And that was my final moment with Felix II.

As Anna Schalk told me when she painted this experience, "I am deeply touched by your appreciation and especially by the gift of their (Felix II and Rainbow) presence in my studio and in my life." 🙏



# Calling all Montebello cooks!

The Activities Committee presents the first monthly Taste of Montebello (Covid Edition). Here are the first three videos for your cooking, eating, and drinking pleasure.

*Chicken Taco Soup with Leslie Rodriguez*

[https://youtu.be/uU\\_GdoJXVCU](https://youtu.be/uU_GdoJXVCU)

*Cosmopolitan with Doug Kennett*

<https://youtu.be/80IBTNw5ib4>

*Manhattan with Doug Kennett*

<https://youtu.be/cKjf4vYBhuY>

Would you like to showcase a favorite recipe for food or drink, and teach it to your neighbors? You will demonstrate a recipe while being filmed on a cell phone by a family member, friend, or Leslie Rodriguez (with appropriate Covid precautions).

The goal is a lesson that is no more than 15 minutes, including the reveal of the finished dish. It can be filmed in two segments, which will be combined.

Please provide a copy of the recipe (by email or printed out), which will be made available to your neighbors. The recipe can be from the internet, a book, or your own original creation. The link to your presentation will be sent to your neighbors via BuildingLink, MML and Facebook.

Our goal is one new video per month, but maybe more?!

To sign up or for questions, contact Leslie Rodriguez at 703-400-3010 or [lrodriguez4@gmail.com](mailto:lrodriguez4@gmail.com). 📧



*The Montebello  
Voice  
uncut, uncensored,  
unofficial*

Photo by Dian McDonald

# The academic great escape...at what price?

By Robert Shea

*"There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in."*

– Graham Greene (1904 - 1991)  
British writer

With eight years in two rooms in my rear-view mirror, and a diploma in hand, I was ready for the next step in being educated. Being the son of a carpenter and a stay-at-home mom, I planned to go to the public high school in the city of Manchester, NH, where the town paid a stipend to the city for each of its high school students enrolled to learn a trade or rudimentary business skills. But I promised myself: never, never the mills.

Surprisingly, the parish priest called my folks to see if I wanted to be considered for one position the parish had been allotted for a new all-boys Catholic high school that would open in the fall. It was an all-college-prep curricu-



lum and would be free. Why not?

So I entered Bishop Bradley High School in the fall. The faculty members were Christian Brothers and priests. Their mantra was "if you don't like our rules, go to the public high school. They have to take you." My home room teacher, Brother Leo, looked like Mike Ditka in a cassock. He taught us

religion and English. He would often ask, "Do you want to be #1 on my hit parade?" And he meant it and he practiced it.

Intellectual reasoning and independent thought were not valued. Rote learning was prized in religion, English, algebra, biology, and Latin. I had homework for the first time in my life. I perfected verbatim answers, and at the end of my first year I managed to have the second highest grade point in the entire school. I was being educated, yeah? I also managed to avoid the "hit parade."

Since the 6th grade, I had been involved in the Manchester Boys' Club. Two 4-cent student bus tokens on the local bus line got me there and back. In the summer months I was a counselor at a day camp for under-privileged kids from the inner city, a Junior Leader, and had been recognized with a few awards.

I became a frequent guest speaker at local civic association, labor union, and business meetings, talking up the United Fund that provided financial support to organizations like the Boys' Club. I went to Boston, met Gene Austry (and Champion, his horse), and was a guest on the WBZ radio The Bob and Ray Show. It was heady stuff for a young kid.

During my year at Bishop Bradley High School, the director of the Boys' Club, William R. Bricker, told me he wanted to take me to meet someone in Exeter, NH. That someone was Hamilton H. Bissell, the director of scholarship boys at Phillips Exeter Academy, one of the oldest all-boy prep schools in the nation, founded in 1781. I met Mr. Bissell and took some aptitude exams in his office, actually sitting at his huge desk.

Fast forward. I was offered a 4-year all-expense scholarship to Phillips Exeter Academy, a school that prided itself on having only 12 students in



class, sitting around an oval table with a teacher who had at least a Master's degree, if not a PhD. The one setback was that I would have to repeat the 9th grade for, despite my academic success at Bishop Bradley, I would be ill-prepared to compete as a sophomore. So true, by October, for example in Latin I, we had covered all that I had learned in a full year at Bishop Bradley.

A new world of button-down shirts and regimental neckties from Brooks Brothers, and first-year classmates whose last names included Heinz (57 varieties), Rockefeller (Standard Oil and later politics), Koehler (plumbing), Kazan (theater), Tripp (Pan American Airlines) along with about 200 others boys from a world that was totally foreign to me and that intimidated me. Each class had about 20 scholarship boys whom Mr. Bissell had found from across the nation through his contacts with local civic leaders. We were Hammie's Boys, and he was our godfather.

Classes were five and a half days a week, mandatory athletics (not physical but intramural-to-varsity in 21 different sports depending on the season), dorm living, no TV or radio, and more homework than you could ever finish were a way of life. You learned time management fast.

Rote learning had no place at the

## old school

oval table. Discussion, challenging the norms, and writing were prized. With only 12 boys in a class, one could never hide in the back of the room. You were part of the discussion, like it or not. Each teacher had a way of drawing you into the discussion.

It was terrifying. Daily classes in English I, Latin I, French I, algebra, and physics. It was relentless, and I struggled. Classrooms, dorms, athletic fields, dining rooms, the grassy campus were my world. It was like sipping from a fire hose.

I was one year out of Severance Grammar School. I had gone from academic T-ball to the major leagues in 12 months. Had I made the right choice? Were Mr. Bricker's and Mr. Bissell's hopes and visions for me misplaced? I had to survive, for the alternative was going back home as a failure. Late-night cramming, demanding but patient teachers, Mr. Bissell, and stark terror molded my days.

Teenagers are fragile at best. I was away from home for the first time in

a sink-or-swim environment. Was it worth it? I went home on vacations to work in a mall while most of my classmates returned to school tanned from the Caribbean or Vail. Self doubt, adolescent angst, fears of opportunity in jeopardy – I had them all.

Would I achieve the Great Academic Escape? I had no choice, but what price was to be paid? Graham Green's door was ajar. Would I manage to get through it? 🏠



*Photo by Mary Alice Herman*

animal kingdom



Photos by Mikhailina Karina and Dian McDonald

# The secrets of Fort Hunt

By Raymond Houck

We have spent a lot of time visiting Fort Hunt Park with our puppies before and during this time of quarantine. Fort Hunt is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) as part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The park preserves the remains of Fort Hunt, portions of which date back to the time of the Spanish-American War. The park was named after Brigadier General Henry Hunt, who served as Chief of Artillery of the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War. Remains of several of the fort's original batteries have been preserved and may still be visited today. The structures have been stabilized enough that visitors are able to climb on them without difficulty. In addition to these structures, the Battery Commander's station still stands and a flagpole has been erected as a memorial to the intelligence officers who served at the fort during World War II.

Residents living in this area have likely driven past the park many times, yet they may not know the secrets of Fort Hunt; allow me to share some historical information with you. During World War II, Fort Hunt was the location of a top-secret military intelligence installation where high value German captives were interrogated, and plans were developed for the escape of captured U.S. servicemen.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the War Department determined that two domestic military intelligence centers would be needed and selected Fort Hunt as the center located on the East Coast. On May 15, 1942, the Department of Interior issued a special use permit to the War Department for the duration of the war plus one year for the establishment of the center. The site became known

only as P.O. Box 1142, the center's mailing address in Alexandria, Virginia. At its height, P.O. Box 1142 had 87 temporary and permanent structures.

At least three key secret programs were conducted at P.O. Box 1142. The first was a temporary detention center where strategic interrogation of high-value POWs was conducted by the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Service (MIS) and the Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). The second program was an Escape and Evasion (E&E) Program, which instructed servicemen before their deployment to

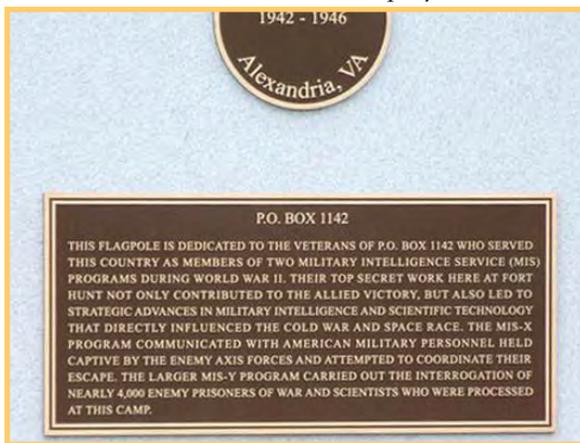
Even more secret than the strategic interrogation program was Fort Hunt's Escape and Evasion program. The fort's commandant was unaware of this mission to prepare U.S. servicemen to evade capture by the enemy and, if captured, to escape. The nerve center of this program was located in the renovated old post hospital, the site of the current picnic pavilion A. On August 20, 1945, the War Department ordered all records of the E&E program at P.O. Box 1142 destroyed.

As the war in Europe wound down and then ended, several hundred Axis scientists, military figures and political figures were also brought to P.O. Box 1142 for interrogation. The intelligence obtained from them helped the United States in the Cold War that soon followed.

The servicemen stationed at P.O. Box 1142 were sworn to secrecy never to divulge their role in World War II. After Fort Hunt was declared surplus in November 1946, the Army Corps of Engineers removed dozens of temporary wartime buildings. The property was returned to the National Park Service in January 1948, with only a handful of buildings remaining. The NPS converted Fort Hunt into a park unit within the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

After the war, some German scientists who chose to come to the U.S. rather than go to the Soviet Union were debriefed at Fort Hunt. Thereafter, almost all the buildings were leveled and the servicemen who worked there sworn to secrecy. As a result, no one knew the importance of what had occurred there until the 1990s, when the information was declassified. Even now, information still is only slowly coming to light.

Just a short drive away, a visit to Fort Hunt is well worth it – if you haven't been there, go for a visit! 📍



Europe on E&E methods and provided them with devices to help to evade capture or to escape if captured. The third program was a military intelligence research service. The Navy interrogated U-boat commanders and crew at the Fort. Interrogators sought technical information about the submarines and their weapons, crew composition and similar information.

A total of 3,451 prisoners were processed through P.O. Box 1142 from 1942 through July 1945. Information was derived through interrogation, listening devices, and the use of stool pigeons. Interrogators prepared reports, which were then evaluated, and when finalized, sent to the Army, Air Force, or Navy for their use. More than 5,000 such reports were generated by the end of August 1945.

## Dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st century

By Sarah Newcomb

This all started when I wanted to buy a gift for my friends' precious girl. She was celebrating her second birthday. Coronavirus has put buying anything in such a terrible state that, like everyone else, I turned to Amazon. This little one's parents like her to have books. I happily found some cool books about animals and put them in my cart. Then on to payment.

But, no. At some earlier point I had added 2-step authentication to my account. It seemed like a good idea when Amazon recommended it, without much explanation. After all, Amazon has a worldwide reach. I have limited resources.

So when I tried to pay, Amazon stopped me. They sent a pass code to my email. Amazon instructed me to simply pick up this number and insert it in a space in the Amazon program still on the Amazon website to prove that I was, indeed, me.

What Amazon did not explain when it pushed 2-step authentication to me was this: their authentication system rests on Amazon's assumption that everyone in the world has computer skills and everyone – at least who is *not* a criminal – owns a smart phone.

Well, Amazon. My old cell phone was not smart. Neither am I. I already was on Amazon's website using my laptop. By the time I could navigate back to Cox email, also on my laptop, and pick up the code Amazon sent, I could not get back to the place required to insert it on Amazon's website. That place was no longer displayed. Instead, Amazon issued a new code, sent it to my email (on my laptop) and instructed me again to pick it up.

After going around this obstruction several times, I called Amazon customer service. I explained that I am a

senior citizen; I have only basic computer skills; and 2-step authentication is preventing me from buying books for a 2-year-old's birthday. And, no, Amazon, I do not have a smart phone. My very old flip phone is not smart. After some discussion, Amazon's representative dropped my call.

So I called back. I patiently reiterated all of the above. The new Amazon representative was more helpful, and believed me. She told me that the only way I could take 2-step authentication off my account was... to be in the account. But, wait: I could not get into the account due to 2-step authentication. She said I could buy the books if



I had another phone number and another email address and set up another account. Then she dropped my call.

That is when it hit me. No one is a legitimate functioning human being in the United States *unless* you have a smart phone. Having a smart phone is how you prove to everyone that you are not a criminal low-life son-of-a-gun, but really an honest senior trying to buy a 2-year-old books for her birthday.

My previously mentioned old flip phone had been gradually dying. No one services it any more. In the middle of a pandemic, going to a mall to find a phone store (if I could find any open)

seemed a terrible idea. So, I did what any thinking human would do: tried to buy a smart phone online. My laptop is a Mac so I went to [Apple.com](https://www.apple.com).

Unfortunately, neither Apple nor Verizon (holder of my basic flip phone's very basic plan) would sell me anything online until I picked up a security code and put it into a location on their website. You get the picture. I was still a criminal son-of-a-gun.

In and around these goings on, I talked to my friends about their phones, read material that a computer-savvy friend recommended to me, and phoned various providers. I could not hear much on my flip phone so I used the landline. Finally the best prospect seemed to be to have Verizon try to move data from the very old flip phone that they serviced and put these on a new iPhone 11.

Because I could not buy a new phone online, without already having a new phone to do this security-code picking, I had to physically go to a Verizon store. Many of the Verizon stores were still closed, but a Verizon customer service agent told me by phone to go the corporate store on Fordson Road. Verizon had just re-opened it after closing for Covid-19. He said that I had to make an appointment. Also, I'm not allowed to call the store, he told me. No one is. I must make an appointment on the Verizon website. All calls were being taken by the national Verizon customer service office.

So I found the Fordson store on the Verizon website and made an appointment for the following day, which was over 90 degrees. I put on my mask and gloves and drove to the store for my 11 a.m. appointment. Verizon employees were standing outside the door. No one without an appointment was allowed in. Well, OK, I had made an appointment.

"Sorry," the manager told me.

## phone tag

“These appointments are only for troubleshooting.” Did the website state that? No. Couldn’t I just buy a phone? N-o-o-o. The manager said I would have to come back the following day (also slated to be above 90 degrees) when “customers are allowed in the store.” Wow. The manager told me that the store opened at 10 a.m. the next day. He would meet me then and help me get a phone.

Desperate, masked and gloved, I drove back to the store the following day and was standing outside at 9:45 a.m.]. Ninety degrees seemed about

right. At precisely 10 a.m., employees opened the door, and thankfully, the manager was there.

I bought an iPhone 11, a case, a cover, and, oh yes – special deal – if you buy the case and the cover *and* the car charger, you can discount the car charger. I probably will not need the car charger, but why run out of cell phone usage while traveling around? Now about insurance...I signed a lengthy purchase agreement and bought the accessories outright. It all cost a fortune.

The manager, Ben, was very helpful

to me, and even provided his name and personal cell phone number in case I had questions later, so I did not have to drive down to the store yet again. If you have any sort of problem, go see Ben.

This iPhone 11 does a 100 things I don’t yet understand. Maybe I never will. But I’m warning you: if you plan on calling me to tell me that I’m a criminal son-of-a-gun, my iPhone will not only record your voicemail, but also create a real-time written transcript that I can give to police.

Welcome to the 21st century! 📱



*Photos by Linda Brownlee*



## 'shrooms



## 'shrooms



*Photos by Patricia Jacobec, Dian McDonald, and Linda Brownlee*

# 'shrooms



*Photos by Dian McDonald Warren Pierson, Christine Winter*

# The way we were

By *Mikhailina Karina*

You can trust a good Realtor to have a historical perspective on real estate. Montebello's own Weichert Realtor Leslie Rodriguez kindly shared a cache of original marketing materials from when Montebello was being built nearly 40 years ago.

How much did it cost to buy a unit back then? Prices ranged from \$80,000 for a one-bedroom to \$154,000 for a three-bedroom (between \$210,000 and \$395,000 in today's money).

While most of the marketing verbiage is pretty much the same we still

use, some of the language is, well, dramatic and just a teeeensy bit exaggerated, such as "luxury appointed kitchens and bathrooms," "glamorous master suites include dressing rooms and enormous wardrobes," "a vacation that goes on forever," and baffling "tennis like Acapulco." In addition to the "castle, high on its hill," my favorite bit of lingo is calling the humble door peephole an "individual one-way front door vision port."

I am also enthralled with photographs that date to the days I was in high school. I kinda dig the dramatic wallpaper in the model unit. Our security officers used to wear brimmed

white hats? The sporty silver fox in just about every photo (the dude with gray hair) sure was popular with the ladies! The orange, blue, red, and olive tiles in the indoor pool are eerily similar to the proposed color scheme in the community center renovation. The jungle atop the porte-cochère is more interesting than the rock garden we have now.

Thank you, Leslie, for this trippy stroll down the memory lane. Let's raise a toast to the next 40 years! 🍷



## Compare Location.

Montebello is a residential retreat, deep in the woods in Alexandria. Close to Old Town, close to downtown, Montebello is on a hilltop overlooking the Potomac . . . next to Rte 1, the G.W. Parkway, the Beltway and the Huntington Metro Station that opens in 1983. You know what happens to property values around Metro Stations! There's no comparison.

## Compare Design.

Continental style and elegant living within a forest. A forest that surrounds Montebello as though protecting a castle, high on its hill. And Montebello's elegant towers are built on the top of that hill, curving around a central plaza, commanding incredible views of the river and the countryside below. 35 acres of drama and distinctiveness. No wonder Montebello has already won 2 Finest for Family Living awards.

## Compare Security.

Montebello is exclusively residential, totally owned and controlled by its residents. This community starts at an attended gatehouse, proceeds along a winding, tree-lined driveway through its private forest, and winds up in a carefully controlled private environment. Want more? Electronically secured lobby doors, closed circuit TV security system, and your individual one-way front door vision port.

## Compare Year-Round Recreation.

Tennis like Acapulco, overlooking the hillside one way and water the other. A series of contoured pools. Jogging and nature trails, picnic and forest shelters. A fabulous clubhouse: an indoor pool, whirlpool, sauna, gym, snack bar, lounge, billiards, ping pong, video games, card room, meeting room, bowling lanes, beauty shop, bank, convenience shopping. All private, all for the exclusive use of Montebello residents.

## Compare Floor Plans.

There are 11 of them. They're refinements of prize-winning Rotonda floorplans. (Did you see The Rotonda co-starring with Burt Reynolds and Goldie Hawn in **Best Friends?**) See the floor plans. They're all spacious, innovative, exciting, loaded with features. Visit our sales center, make a real comparison!

## Compare Features.

Quality is paramount. The tall towers are ribbed with vertical bay windows and extra deep terraces that can be enclosed totally in glass to make solariums. Each building has its own porte cochere entrance to an elegant split level lobby. Its own party and hobby rooms. Individual homes have large walk-in closets, distinctive entrance doors, luxury appointed kitchens and bathrooms, sound insulated walls, multiple television and telephone outlets, individual storage compartments, to name a few of the many features.

## Compare Energy Conservation.

You're the master of your own energy with individual electric metering, helped along by an efficient heat pump system for heating and cooling year round. Insulated glass doors, insulated and tinted windows, wall to wall carpet and padding, and insulated walls.

## Compare the Developer.

How many condominium developers have been mentioned favorably on the editorial pages of the Washington Post? IDI has. How many developers have been publicly honored by their purchasers? IDI has. And IDI has won major awards for many successful projects including The Rotonda in McLean, Parkfairfax in Alexandria, Burke Centre in Fairfax. Not to mention other activities that include office buildings, hotels, and condominium conversions all around town. You don't build a reputation like this by accident, but by consistency of excellence.

## Compare Value.

"High quality at reasonable prices," that's IDI's secret for success in projects like Montebello. By combining the buying power of a large company with the careful standardization of proven design elements, we are able to pass large savings on to our customers. Compare our prices with the competition and you will be amazed. We're well known for leaving part of the potential profit in our product for our purchasers to share.

## Compare "What" You Buy.

That's impossible. If you were just buying a condominium, you could compare it with others. But at Montebello, you are buying a piece of a unique environment. A share of a unique lifestyle. An atmosphere. Style. Comfort. Happiness. And peace of mind. What is there to compare?

**Alexandria's  
most  
successful  
condominium.**

**A  
mountain  
retreat  
overlooking  
the  
Potomac.**

**Montebello**

# A Mountain retreat overlooking the Potomac and adjacent to Metro.

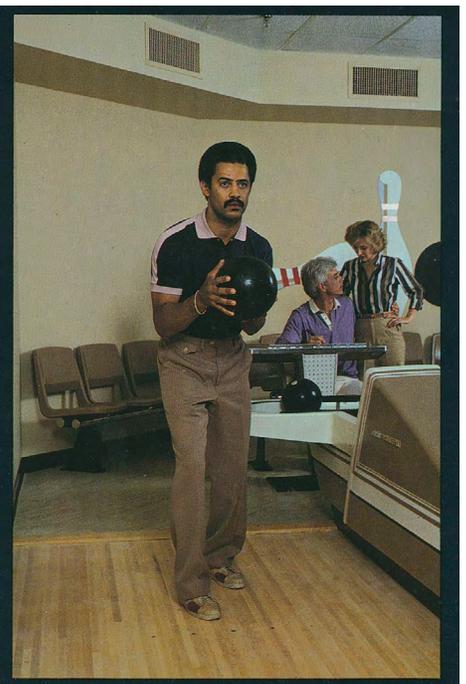
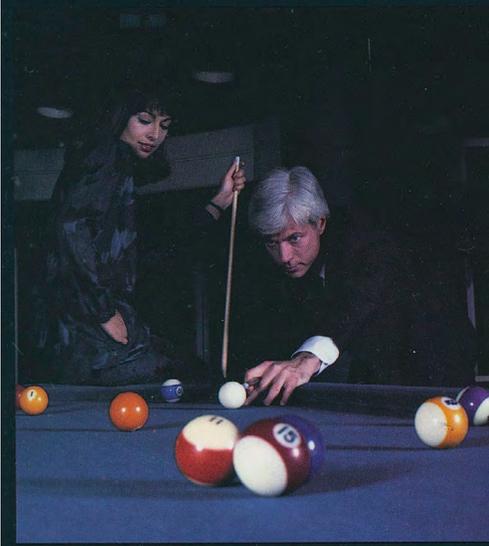


Montebello offers prestigious homeownership in a perfect location. It's conveniently adjacent to the Huntington Metro Station. You'll walk or ride the Montebello shuttlebus through a county park to catch the Metrorail for an easy ride downtown, or to any part of the metropolitan area. Property around Metro stations has become the most desirable real estate value around, and you will own a piece of it. At the foot of the Montebello site, you'll have easy access to anywhere via Route 1, the Beltway, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Old Town Alexandria is a five minute drive away. The Belle Haven Country Club and Golf Course is right around the corner. Fairfax County's excellent schools and shopping surround you. And to the east of Montebello—the Potomac River.

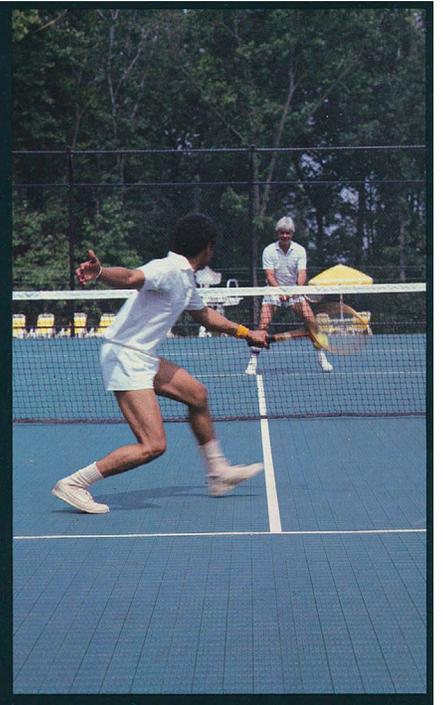
Once inside the gatehouse, and up the winding, tree-lined road, you're at home. The distinctive porte cochere at the entrance to each tower is just the beginning. Twelve distinctive floor plans break away from standard apartment configurations. Angled walls open up rooms into exciting space. Glamorous master suites include dressing rooms and enormous wardrobes. Living rooms open onto hexagonal terraces that can be customized into seasonal Florida rooms. Second bedrooms can become dens with double-door entrances. Selected apartments can even be joined to create homes of over 2500 square feet. And there's so much more. Montebello's four 15-story towers include many of the quality features first introduced at The Rotonda, IDI's highly successful, award-winning condominium community in McLean. Features like individual electric metering, an award-winning energy conservation program, sound insulation, privacy, excellent traffic flows, exclusive style and solid construction. Now you can enjoy the same kind of value at Montebello.

More than just a home, Montebello is a vacation that goes on forever. And it's as active or relaxed as you choose. Montebello offers a full array of social amenities and recreational facilities, custom designed for its unique forest site. Outdoor tennis courts, indoor and outdoor swimming, bowling lanes, billiards, health spa, lounges, party and game rooms, convenience shopping, and more. All within the relaxed atmosphere of a stylishly appointed clubhouse. All within Montebello's greatest amenity of all . . . nature. The 35-acre forest wilderness surrounds Montebello as though protecting a castle, high on its hill. And like a castle, Montebello's towers are built on the top of that hill, commanding incredible views. With nature trails, forest shelters, hiking and jogging paths, all winding their way through the wilderness. The castle. The forest. The views. Nature. Metro. The river. It's a dramatically beautiful environment that offers you the ease of getting quickly to where you are going . . . and back home again. It's a remarkable place to live.

# retropolis



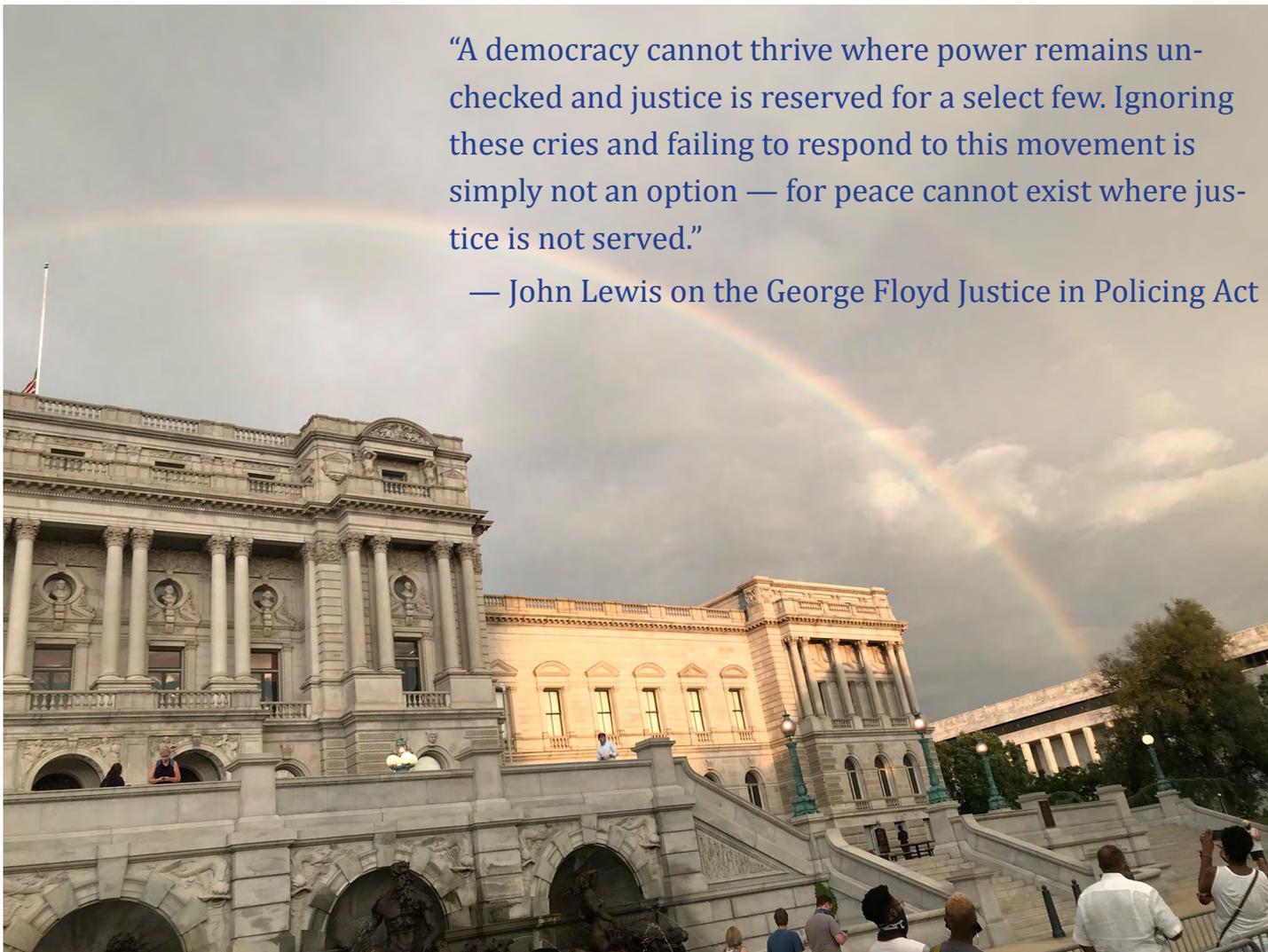
# retropolis



## final glance

“A democracy cannot thrive where power remains unchecked and justice is reserved for a select few. Ignoring these cries and failing to respond to this movement is simply not an option — for peace cannot exist where justice is not served.”

— John Lewis on the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act



*Dear Congressman Lewis,*

*You said hello to me on the car rental train in Atlanta 6 years ago. I was in awe. Tonight, the rainbows shine in their glory, the sky is on fire. I bid you farewell, on this earth, and hope, one day, to be in your section of Heaven, to chat from time to time, throughout all eternity. I am in awe.*

*Love,*

*Damali Mason*