



The **MONTABELLO** Voice

an independent gazette

2021

December 20, 2020

Neighborly

By Nanette Frank

I hope this finds you well and looking forward to a healthy and happy 2021. This past April we coordinated the Montebello Neighbors Helping Neighbors program and many of you have been involved in picking up groceries and medicines, chatting with a phone friend, helping with computer and phone concerns, walking a neighbor's pet, and the list goes on. We had an overwhelming response for volunteers and some of you may not as of yet been asked to help. To all of you on behalf of all of your neighbors who you have helped, please accept our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude.

We never expected to be venturing into these winter months in still uncharted waters and quarantine, but as you all know, the expectation is that we need to practice safety measures until early summer. Once some of you were matched up with a neighbor, you have continued during these 9 months with tasks and yes – some special friendships. In moving forward, safety continues to be vital – wearing masks, social distancing, not entering condos.

I would also like to highlight the simple task of stepping up to be a phone friend. It is safe and can be done from your condo. A 5-minute call could mean the world to someone who is sitting alone or is just in need of a chat from a new friend.

Do you have suggestions or tasks that you feel should be included in NHN? Would you also be willing to step up and be a coordinator for matching up volunteers with neighbors who have called asking for some help? Also, anybody interested in writing a short monthly article regarding NHN and some of the friendships and tasks that are being accomplished for the Times or the Voice?

Please give me a call at 301-642-3982 or email me at frankbears@aol.com to let me know if you are willing to continue volunteering or if you have suggestions to share. 📧

The Montebello Voice

voices on the 37

Hooray for the café

By Mary Quinn

As 2020 comes to a close (thank goodness), let's reflect on how lucky we are as a community here at Montebello to have our café. José and Ugur have ridden the COVID-19 wave with us by providing a myriad of tasty cuisine ranging from classic cheeseburgers (the best since they use a real grill!) to savory specials such as steamed shrimp, crab casserole, and baby back ribs (all served with freshly cooked vegetables). They also have a well-stocked bar that definitely meets your taste for a libation, well maybe two or more....

Due to unforeseen circumstances, our café was not able to reopen for indoor dining (29 May) as other Fairfax County/Northern Virginia restaurants were. However, José and Ugur overcame the situation by providing daily specials with wine pairings that compliment these specials. Recently, they served a fabulous Thanksgiving dinner that had them very busy (and that is a good thing!)

As the Holiday Season sails into January 2021, the café will be there to provide us not only daily specials, but Christmas and New Year's Eve meals for very reasonable prices.

I have been enjoying the Montebello Café for nearly 21 years and have found and felt it to be a huge part of the soul and ambiance of our Montebello community (come unity).

In the spirit of the holidays and giving, please keep riding this cosmic wave with our café as we close out 2020 and welcome 2021. They are here for us. Please call 703-329-4868 and place your order for takeout or delivery. You will be glad you did for keeping them afloat during COVID-19. And order a libation or two or three, too. Cheers! 📧

Cover photo by Susan Dexter

In gratitude

By Dolores and Tony Bauer

As old, long-time residents of Montebello, we are extremely thankful to be living in a great community. This is a time to give thanks. Good friends who watch out and care for one another are abundant here. A management and staff who work hard and do their very best to please as many residents as they possibly can.

This year has certainly been different, but our neighbors have stepped up to the challenge and paid attention to all the new rules and suggestions to keep everyone safe. When we think of how annoying this virus has been, we think of how much worse life could be. God bless all who live and work in this great community. 📧

The MONTEBELLO **Voice**

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My poetic gift of thanks

By *Peter Blackledge*

'Tis weeks before Christmas
and all here is well
Thanks to our Coronavirus Working
Group
led by President Kandel

Though outside our gates
Coronavirus is surging
Inside Montebello we're safe
due to Jon's prescient urging

His Montebello Bulletins
keep our hatches well battened
Shutting Coronavirus out
and Montebello's curve flattened

And our Community is blessed
with Montebello Superstars
There could be no better residents
than we have in ours

Venerable Board Members Doug Ken-
nett and Guido Zanni
Lend extraordinary support
their energy uncanny

GM George Gardner is
his Likeable Curmudgeon self
AGM Marco Mendoza is
our Smiling Cherubic Elf

Hutch is securely nestled
behind his plexiglas shield
Maintaining constant vigilance
and our Front Office sealed

Officer Barkley & Security
tirelessly watch and wait
Lest Montebello be threatened
by transgressors of our gate

Peter Ng faithfully keeps
our services coming
Repairing water leaks,
and machinery humming

Cerie Kimball is busy
preparing The Times
She's our Poet Laureate
without all the rhymes

Kim Santos is snapping
his beautiful pics
On which Nancy Vogt does
her editing tricks

Writer Sue Allen is conducting
her interview sessions
While her economist husband predicts

Eight of
three next
recessions

Mikhailina
Karina is at
work
completing
The Voice

She's our
"Voice of
Reason"
giving us
choice

Nanette & Bill Frank
are doing Good Labors
Their arms are outstretched
Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Ugur and José are preparing
delicacies galore
Scrumptious Montebello Café meals
delivered to our door

So though we don't have
an Angel named Clarence
The blessings we do have
are bountiful and apparent

For while outside our gates
rage Pandemic and Strife
Inside Montebello
"It's A Wonderful Life" 🍷

Photo by Patricia Jacobec



A Montebello Christmas visit

By *Bob Shea*

with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, and
on top of the hill,

Not a creature was stirring, we're with
COVID still.

Purell dispensers hung in the halls with
great care,

In hopes that no nasty germs we would
share.

The residents were down, all snug in
the beds,

While visions of no lock-down danced
in their heads.

Mama was almost asleep, as I was too.

An exciting event? We had not a clue,

When out on Mount Eagle, there arose
such a clatter,

I sprang from my bed to see what was
the matter.

'Way to the balcony, I flew like a flash,

Tore open the blinds, out of breath
from my dash.

The moon on the asphalt and parked
cars below,

Gave a lustre of midday, a holiday
glow.

Then what to my wondering eyes did
appear,

But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny
reindeer.

With a little old driver, so lively and
sexy,

I knew in a moment, it was our next
prexy.

More rapid than eagles, his coursers
they came,

He whistled and shouted and called
them by name.

Now Fauci, now Klain, now Kamala
the VeePee,



On Fact, on Truth, on Plans, all come
ride with me.

To the top of the drive, to our own
village green,

A more noble group, the eyes have not
seen.

As leaves that before the wild hurri-
cane fly,

When they meet with an obstacle
mount to the sky.

So up to the rooftop, the coursers they
flew,

With a sleigh full of truth, and Joe
Biden too.

And then in a twinkling I heard in the
hall,

The footsteps of the lifter of our dark
pall.

I left the balcony and was turning
around,

In the front door Joe came with a
bound.

Big Irish grin and aviator glasses too,
Gray suit, white shirt, and necktie of
blue.

A briefcase of orders he held tight in
his hand,

He looked like a guy with a plan for
the land.

His eyes how they twinkled, his grin
was a plus,

His calm was assuring to each one of
us.

His toothy grin was like the sun in the
morn,

His white hair was real, not like straw
or corn.

A copy of the Constitution he had in
his hand,

He waved it aloft, the proud law of the
land.

He was tall, stately, dignified like the
man,

That we voted for, open and honest,
without orange tan.

A wink of his eye, and a twist of his
head,

Soon made us believe we had nothing
to dread.

He paused a moment, then went
straight to his work,

He outlined his vision, then said to
THE JERK,

“Come on, man, let us all go forward
as one,

Out of my way, you go to Mar-a-Lago
for fun.”

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team
gave a yell,

Down Route One they raced like a bat
out of hell.

But I heard him exclaim as he drove
out of sight,

“No more MAGA for us, and to all a
good night!” 📖

The reasons for the season's traditions

By Raymond Houck

Many of us might be able to pinpoint the start of our Holiday traditions. Maybe it was “why did Aunt Loretta always bring a fruitcake?” Or “why did Dad always play a specific Holiday song?” As a young boy, when the Holidays approached, my Grandmother and Mother always were sure to explain our Hungarian-German heritage, complete with Christmas-Hanukkah traditions. It was wonderful growing up with an appreciation of my family’s history and Yuletide customs. But beyond our personal histories, many well-loved traditions have stories that go back decades, or even centuries. Here, I share a few little backstories on the origins of what makes this the most wonderful time of the year.

Christmas trees & evergreens

Evergreens have decorated winter homes since the early times of the Romans, Druids, and Vikings, but Germany is credited with displaying the first Christmas tree in the sixteenth century. When Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Germany, she began decorating a tree as a nod to his heritage. After an illustration of the royal family around their tree was published in 1848, putting up a tree became a coveted symbol of the season. A few years later, a New York woodsman opened America’s first Christmas tree lot.

Lights

Tree lights began when German theologian Martin Luther was inspired to recreate his view of the stars while walking through the Black Forest. Luther attached candles to a fir tree he took home. But in 1882 Edward Johnson invented a safer way by string electric light bulbs on a tree.

Ornaments

Early Christmas trees were decorated with apples, beads, paper, painted nutshells and tinsel until a German glassblower made the first holiday ornament in the 1840s.

Tinsel

As early as the seventh century, families draped trees with long, thin strands of silver. Despite their tendency to tarnish, the strands in later years were added to enhance the glow of flickering candlelight in the room.

Pickle in the tree

Every year, many families like mine hide a small pickle ornament on their Christmas tree. This practice springs from a late-1800s Woolworth marketing campaign. The retailer received an unexpected shipment of pickle-shaped ornaments and had to find a way to sell them. And so just like that, the tradition of hiding and finding a pickle in the tree was born! In my family, the child who found the pickle received a special small gift as a reward.

Fruitcakes

Most Americans only think of this cake during the Holidays, but it is a year-round favorite for the Brits. Both Princess Diana and Kate Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge, served fruitcakes at their weddings!

Candy canes

Legend has it that in 1670, a German choirmaster bent candy into the shape of a shepherd’s crook to keep his young singers quiet during the Nativity pageant.

Snacks for Santa

While American children leave milk and cookies, Santa enjoys a variety of treats as he travels the globe, including pints of Guinness in Ireland and rice pudding in Denmark. Leaving food for Mr. Claus is a custom popularized in the Great Depression to show gratitude for blessings, even in times of hardship.

Poinsettias

Considered as the Christmas flower by Americans today, if you travel to Hawaii you can see them growing on the hillsides during the Christmas season. Also common in Mexico, it was in 1829 that was the first U.S. Ambassador to that country brought the plant back home with him.

Christmas cards

The first holiday card – a simple cardboard greeting – was sold in 1843 in England. In 1915, the Hall Brothers, (now Hallmark) sold a folded Christmas card with an envelope in the United States. More than 100 years later, Americans send and receive billions of greetings in the mail each Holiday season.

Oranges in stockings

Origin stories abound, but the American traditions from the Great Depression when fresh oranges were a rare treat are lovely: the segments of the fruit were easily shared with friends during the season and became a symbol of giving.

Figgy pudding

Some know figgy pudding from the lyrics in the song “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.” Others know it from Charles Dickens’s story “A Christmas Carol.” This dessert, also known as plum pudding or Christmas pudding, is *not* a pudding at all! The British holiday food is actually a steamed cake full of raisins, currants, and brandy, spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg.

Wishing a Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night! 🍷



'Twas just before Christmas...in 2020

'Twas just before Christmas, and all 'cross the Earth
the angst of the people outmeasured their mirth.

The Yule celebrations were coming up soon,
but how to be festive amidst all the gloom?

They sat quarantining alone in their homes
with memories of better times deep in their bones.

The year 2020 had been quite a sight;
every month had arrived with a new kind of blight.

It started aflame in the great land Down Under
with bush fires scorching and burning asunder.

But no one expected that this year would list
quite so many things we wish didn't exist!

Who knew murder hornets were even a thing, or that Harry
and Meghan would exit the ring?

We lost Kobe, and Boseman, and Ruth Bader G,
and with the loss of Trebek, why watch Jeopardy? The
west coast was burning – the Rockies were too. An explosion
in Beirut, stock market askew

Donald Trump was impeached, but then got acquitted
and too many hurricanes brewed to be listed.

The people, while shaken by all the disasters, heard a
life-changing cry ringing out – Black Lives Matter! How
systemic is racism? Defund the police? How much pain
has been caused by abhorrent beliefs?

Then Trump vs. Biden got all the attention
with debates so chaotic, they made a mute button.

A fly upon Pence brought some comic relief
but then cries of election fraud resumed the grief.

And if all of these things weren't distressful enough,
the COVID pandemic made every day rough!

It was March when the virus first entered the scene,
and soon "uncertain times" made the whole world
careen.

With COVID-19 cases always increasing,
with school days and weddings and grad parties ceasing,
with showers made drive-by, and good times postponed,
with holidays and birthdays all spent all alone...

While some mourned their loved ones in grim isolation,
while others lost jobs, and faced devastation,
while Main Street was drowning, despite best intentions,
while vaccines became the most vital inventions,
we all seemed to lose any sense of the days. They all
blurred together in "new normal" haze. "Corona fatigue"
took its toll on the nation and "six feet apart" left
us all in frustration.

Yet through all the dark, there were glimmers of light:
from the doctors and nurses who took up the fight,
to the teachers who braved the remote learning scene,
and the neighbors who checked in on neighbors unseen.

While the workers all gave up their daily commute and
held meetings in jammies while toggling "mute,"
all the "shelter in place" helped to clean up our air and
the work-to-life balance improved everywhere.

And our four-legged friends! So thrilled we were home!
Their tails all a-wagging, no longer alone!

We took lunchtime walkies and spoke with our neighbors,
all much-needed break time to rest from our labors.

New hobbies erupted, creativity flowed, and puzzles and
crafting helped ease all our woes.

We were challenged by Tik-Tok while binge-watching
scenes, even those as annoying as the Tiger King.

So thank God for tech, and for meetings through Zoom,
and for FaceTime and Hangouts from anyone's room.
And for church from the couch, and for first dates
online, and for virtual happy hours – pour some more
wine!

2020 was not what was promised – it's true.
And "distanced" Thanksgiving left all feeling blue.

But with Christmas beginning, let's all make a pact – to
make the bad better by how we all act.

Because Christmas is not about parties and trees;
it's for living the meaning behind all of these.

The love in a manger that one silent night
is the same love that's with us in uncertain times.

So this Christmas, I pray to the Lord up above asking Him
to remind me each day of his love.

Because I know just this – that I'm never alone.

Because Jesus has entered my heart as His home.

So reach out to a neighbor, a stranger, a friend – either
online or distanced – for this too shall end!

Aim for one act of kindness each week of this season,
and we might teach the world of our ultimate reason.

Share the good news of Jesus; we all need the cheer!
For now is the time to remember He's near!

And as we close 2020, there's just one more task...
Embrace Christmas with all, and please wear a mask!

*Composed by mother and son poets, Joanne Rach and Kevin
Rach. Submitted with permission by Mari Cote*

Tragedy on Richmond Highway

By Joe de Angelis

Every morning as I look out from my balcony on the 14th floor, I survey the river, the forest, and Richmond Highway below. Several months ago, approximately September or October, I noticed water seeping out of the road on the northbound side of Richmond Highway. Specifically, the water was seeping out from the center lane, directly in front of the culvert opening on the side of the road which Fairfax County worked on for months. Since the roadway sloped downhill, the water emanating from the roadway flowed north and spread over all three lanes, which was exacerbated by the continuous flow of traffic. After observing this phenomenon for over a week I decided to contact Fairfax County authorities and report the problem. My main concern was that if the water flow continued, it would erode the roadbed and cause a sinkhole in the middle of the highway.

I initially contacted the Fairfax County department for Road Conditions & Maintenance and voiced my

concerns. However, I was told that I should contact the department for water main maintenance, as this was not their responsibility. Long story short, I was transferred to four different departments, none of which accepted responsibility for the water leak in the 5900 block of Richmond Highway. I tried again about a week later and had the same unsatisfactory result.

As you may be aware, on the morning of 9 December there was a horrific automobile accident in the 5900 block of Richmond Highway that took the life of a 6-year-old child. According to the police report, the driver of a vehicle traveling north on Richmond Highway lost control of his car on an ice-covered area of the roadway. Consequently his car transversed the highway going into the southbound traffic lanes and crashed into an oncoming vehicle. Four people were rushed to the hospital, including a 6-year-old child, who died at the hospital.

That evening Fox 5 News reported the accident with the teaser “What did Fairfax County know and when did they know it?” The report went on to say that “FOX 5 has uncovered that weeks before Wednesday morning’s fatal crash that took the life of a child in Fairfax County, state officials were notified about a pothole causing water to pool at that exact location.”

I contacted FOX 5 News to explain that water seepage on

the road formed a sheet of black ice that caused the accident, not a pothole. The person I spoke to was rude, telling me that they have already reported the story, and that it was a pothole, and that I should read the news article. Then he very abruptly said “have a good day” and hung up. So much for honest investigative reporting.

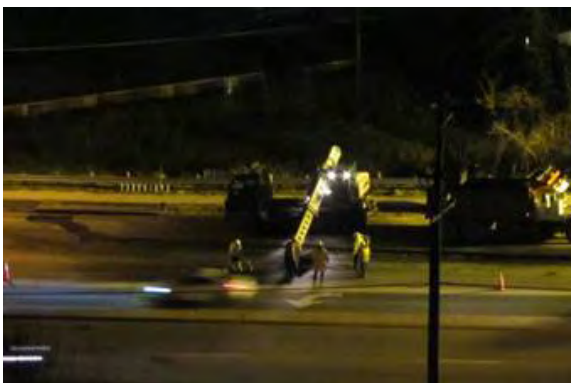
There may have been a pothole, but all three northbound lanes of the 5900 block of Richmond Highway were covered with ice caused by the seepage of water onto the roadway. With the temperature as low as 24°F that morning, the water most likely froze instantly.

For months the issue was not given any priority for repair; however, after the death of a 6-year-old, road crews worked day and night for three days to fix the alleged “pothole.”

Bureaucratic indifference, “not my job syndrome,” or just simply a “I don’t give a s---” attitude seems to be prevalent in our society today. But it took the death of a 6-year-old to get the County of Fairfax to repair a major problem in its road system that they knew about and which had been reported months earlier. The sad thing is that I may not have been the only one to report the water hazard on Richmond Highway, there most likely were others. In any case, and sadly, all complaints were ignored to the detriment of human life.

The repair of the culvert, drainage ditch or whatever it is, quickly became a major priority for the County of Fairfax as evidenced by these photographs

of crews working to repair whatever caused the water to seep onto the roadway, freeze, and cause an accident that resulted in the death of a child. A little too late, don’t you think? 🙄



My weatherman days

By Erwin Jacobs, MD

In early 1942, with the war in progress, the draft starting and all of the Reserves being called to duty, a shortage of meteorologists developed. The Newark Airport was said to be the busiest in the world – until La Guardia (1939) and Kennedy (1948) airports were built. Warplanes of various types were being flown there, wrapped in blue water-proof tape and sent on flatbed rail cars a short distance to ships in Newark Bay for the wars in Europe and on the Russian front.

Someone from the Weather Bureau contacted our Weequahic High School science teacher who had a science club. He asked if any of us would like to train as weather observers. About six of us signed up and during a very brief training period were given Circular N to read. This was the manual we had to memorize and use. Only two of us went on to finish and work there. We were just 16-year-old seniors. To get to the airport there was a bus trip downtown and a change to the airport for 5 cents. The salary was \$.75 per hour (\$11.98 today), but after three months we were called junior meteorologists and the salary went up to \$1.25 per hour (\$19.97 today).

Surrounding the airport was a high wire fence. There were soldiers with rifles and bayonets at intervals and various anti-aircraft guns and huge searchlights around it. These were also in the park about 1.2 miles from my house. The administration offices were in a small red brick 2-story building. The first floor had a waiting room and offices for the commercial flights. Our office was a large open room with a teletype office adjoining it on the second floor. After our observations were recorded, they were given to the teletype operator. He put them in at the exact time in

sequence of stations – ours was with the stations in the eastern United States.

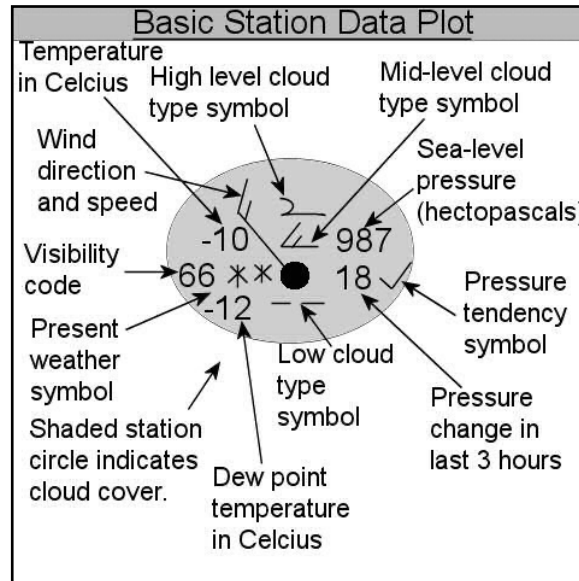
Every 15 minutes we had to record the temperature, wind velocity and direction, cloud cover and type, barometric pressure with a mercury column, and visibility (miles). Every two hours we went to a small, white wooden slot-

all the data from the teletype entered with various symbols in specific spots. Then they were to be connected by isotherms, isobars, and fronts. The pilots would come in to look at them before flights.

In addition, we began to hear the German submarines off the coast radioing the weather back to Germany. They also were noting the large flights of bombers overhead going to England. We then obtained a series of codes each day at midnight. Every symbol had a code change each day so that we could radio the weather ahead to our airplanes.

When I had just turned 17 and left for college, I thought that I would be drafted at 18 and would try to be a meteorologist. My mother wanted me to be a lawyer (she already had two doctors), but I preferred medicine. I did well in freshman physics and asked the professor if I could take meteorology. He said it was for second-year students, but relented

when I brought him maps and manuals after a vacation. In the meantime, after the second trimester, those of us who were interested in medicine could take a test that was the precursor to the MCAT. After a few weeks I received a letter saying I was accepted to medical school if I kept up my grades and had good letters of recommendation. Wake Forest College Medical School had recently moved from the small town of Wake Forest, where it was a two-year school, to Winston-Salem, a new four-year school. My physics professor was very friendly with the medical school staff and gave me a nice letter of recommendation that helped me get admitted. After registering for the draft in Zebulon, NC, I was deferred with a 1-F rating due to the admission to medical school. I never became a meteorologist and was able to train in specialties until service in the Korean War. 🏠



ted box that had equipment to measure the wet and dry bulb temperatures and figure the humidity in addition to other observations. Once during a storm, lightning hit the nearby fence. During the daylight we estimated cloud height, but at night there was a light pointed to the sky, and by measuring the angle we could determine the cloud cover. Sometimes a radiosonde was sent up with a helium balloon, but I did not do that. A plain helium balloon could be used in the daylight until it entered the cloud cover – 16 feet per second. We used the Staten Island Bridge (Goethals) as a visibility landmark (9 miles) and the Empire State Building (12 miles).

The most consuming job was to enter all the data on a 2x3 foot surface map. It was about 2x3 feet of the country where we entered the data for stations east of the Mississippi River. Each weather station needed to have

Fort Hunt receives the royal treatment

By Raymond Houck & Holden Coy

In June 1939, King George VI became the first reigning British monarch to visit North America. As World War II was looming on the horizon, he wanted to visit Canada and was invited by President Roosevelt to also come visit the United States. On June 9, he and Queen Elizabeth, accompanied by the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, visited Mount Vernon, where the King placed a wreath at the tomb of George Washington. Afterwards, the party drove by car to nearby Fort Hunt to visit the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp.

England was experiencing the same problems with their economy and unemployment as the United States and the King thought that the people of England could potentially benefit from a CCC program of their own. The President and First Lady showcased the camp for the royal couple, who toured the entire facility and spent time meeting the CCC enrollees. They asked many questions concerning the boys' views of the CCC program, their food, their pay, and especially what they were learning that would make them productive citizens.

King George was surprised at the

amount of money the boys were required to send home each month, which was the bulk of their pay. After the "in the ranks inspection," the head of the CCC told the King that the boys had prepared an exhibit in one of the barracks, but if their schedule did not permit them to see it the boys would understand. The King replied, "If the boys expect me, I shall go," and off he and Queen Elizabeth went!

Following that presentation, the royal party visited the dining hall for a light snack before returning to their cars and heading to Arlington National Cemetery, where they laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Following their visit to our area, the King and Queen would continue on to visit New York before going to Canada, and then home to England.

Shortly after the royal visit, Dr. Richard St. Barbe Baker, a renowned conservationist and forester who conceived and organized the CCC, planted two pin oak trees in honor of the occasion, one of which survives today. The Royal Visit Pin Oak commemorates not only the arrival of the King and Queen on their inaugural visit to America, but also cele-

brates the success of the CCC facility established at Fort Hunt. The tree looks back at an uncertain time in history. The royal visit was not just a goodwill tour, but was meant to garner the support of the United States for what ap-



peared to be an inevitable war against Nazi Germany. Less than two months after the visit and the plantings, Hitler ordered the invasion of Poland in September 1939, marking the start of the World War II in Europe.

On your next visit to Fort Hunt, you can easily find the Royal Visit Pin Oak tree: as you drive along the ring road that circles the park, across the street from the parking lot for the Area B picnic pavilion on your left, you will find a tall tree on the right side of the road standing alone – a living marker of an important time in world history.

YouTube has an interesting news-reel/video of the King and Queen's arrival at Union Station – click on the following link or copy and paste this URL into your browser: <https://youtu.be/tDB-coIYtFI> and see all excitement and pageantry that visited Washington, DC on that hot day in June. 🇺🇸

Parting the waters of Venice

By Joe de Angelis

It is a well known historical fact that Venice has been plagued by flooding from storms and high water (aqua alta) of the northern Adriatic Sea for well over a millennium. Many of you may be familiar with St Mark's Piazza being under water, and some of you may have even experienced it. However, Venice has finally found a solution to its dilemma. With genius and ingenuity to rival that of Leonardo da Vinci the Italians have developed a system to thwart the ravages of the sea. Dubbed MOSE, a reference Moses (Mosè in Italian), known for his parting the waters of the Red Sea, the MODulo Sperimentale Elettromeccanico (Experimental Electromechanical Module) system, has recently, on two separate occasions, proven effective in keeping the high tides of the Adriatic Sea at bay.

On 10 July 2020, amid much fanfare, the Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte activated the mobile barrier system, which constituted the first full and successful test of the MOSE. However, and most importantly, it was not until 3 October 2020, that the MOSE system was activated for the first time in defending the city against a high tide and it was successful in preventing the low-lying parts of the city (in particular piazza San Marco) from being flooded. Then on 15 October the system was activated in defense of the city and again it was successful. For the first time in over 1,200 years, Venice was able to protect itself from the devastation wrought by aqua alta.

The MOSE project was initially conceived in 1966 after Venice suffered its most devastating flooding in recorded history. The water level at that time rose to over six feet, flooding the city



and damaging many of its numerous cultural heritage sites. However, this herculean feat of engineering did not occur overnight; in fact it took several decades for this visionary project to become a reality. Construction on the project did not begin until 2003 after decades of deliberations, testing and bureaucratic infighting. Consequently, the project scheduled for completion in 2011 at a cost of 800 million Euros is still incomplete, with project cost ballooning to over 5.5 billion Euros.

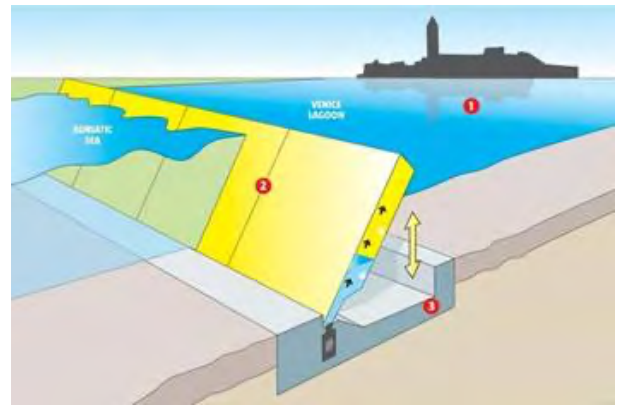
MOSE is an integrated system of coastal barriers and mobile dikes designed to protect the Venice lagoon from exceptional aqua alta as high as three meters above normal sea levels. The MOSE system consists of a total of 78 mobile gates or panels, divided into four rows of barriers installed at three of Venice's inlets: the Lido, Malamocco, and Chioggia. These gates are designed to isolate the Venetian Lagoon temporarily from the Adriatic Sea during high tides, literally separating the waters of the Adriatic and the Venetian Lagoon. These rows of mobile gates are built entirely on pylons just like the city of Venice itself.

At the Lido inlet, the widest, there are two rows of gates, one with 21 pan-

els and the other with 20 panels, which are linked by an artificial island housing the system's operating plant. There is another row of 19 panels at the Malamocco inlet and one row of 18 panels at the Chioggia inlet. All of these panels are hollow metal boxes 66 feet wide and varying between 61 and 95 feet and they are from 12 to 16 feet thick. The panels are connected to an underlying concrete housing structures by hinges, the technological heart of the system, which secure the gates and allow them to pivot or swing like a door on hinges.

Under normal tidal conditions, the gates are full of water and rest in their housing structures. When activated, compressed air is forced into the sluice gates emptying them of water so they rise up above the water level and block the incoming high water from entering the lagoon. When the tide drops, the gates are filled with water again and return to their housing. Depending on weather conditions and the tide, the MOSE system can simultaneously close all three inlets, or just one or two of them at a time. It can also partially close any or all of the gates of any given inlets, giving the system extraordinary flexibility to prevent partial or complete flooding of the city.

marvels



Although the MOSE system is a monumental engineering achievement, the City of Venice still faces severe environmental challenges. It is often said that Venice is sinking, but the fact of the matter is that Venice has only sunk 2,75 inches in the last 1,000 years. Although the majority of Venice's 118 islands are still sinking, the city's biggest threat

is climate change. Climate change is causing ice caps to melt thereby raising sea levels which in turn directly threaten Venice. If not abated, scientist estimate that Venice could be underwater by the year 2100. But the year 2100 is a long way off and the MOSE system has proven to be effective and should hold the rising sea levels in check for sever-

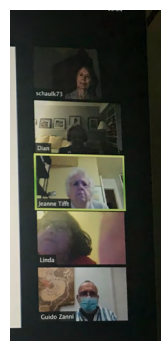
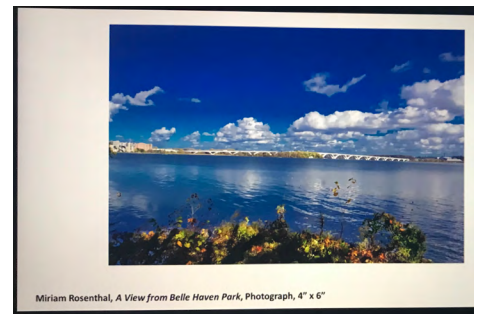
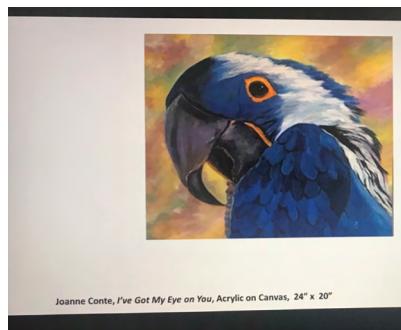
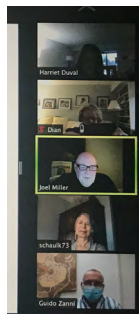
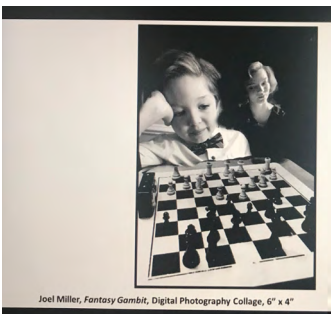
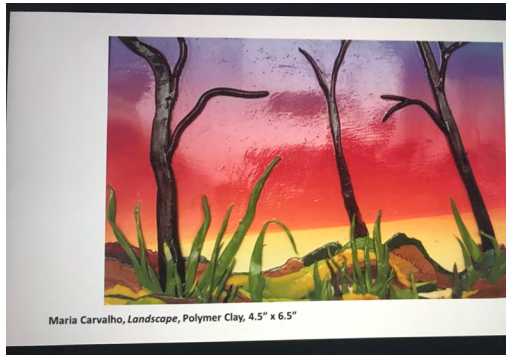
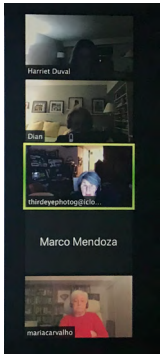
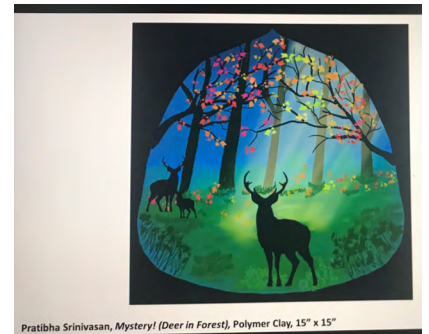
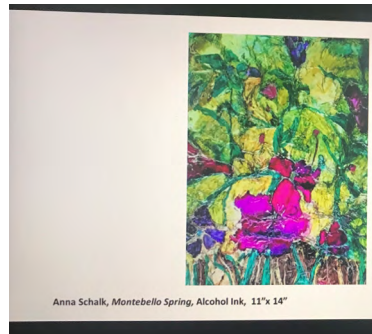
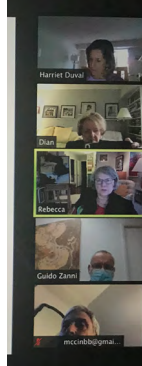
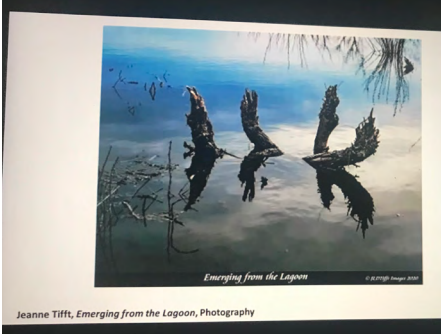
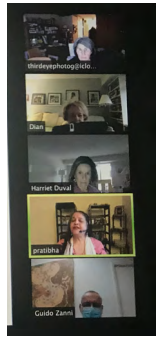
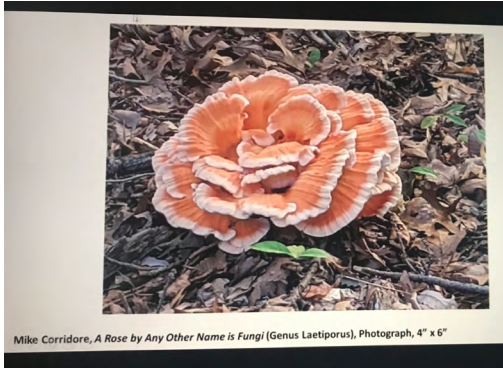
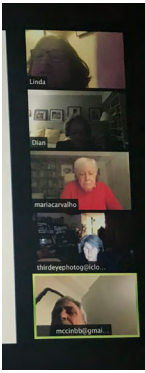
al years. Although the MOSE system may never make its way into the Bible, it is nonetheless a modern day miracle and should be celebrated as such. The jewel of the Adriatic will be around for many more years for us to enjoy thanks to MOSE. 🙏



book & film clubs



mélange aux arts



Meet the Winners

The Grounds Committee's 2020 Nature Photo Contest

Saturday, January 9 at 4 p.m.



Twenty-six residents ages nine to near-90 participated in Montebello Grounds Committee's 2020 Nature Photo Contest. Awards will be presented and photographers will be honored at a Zoom reception on January 9, 2021, at 4 p.m.

Join the event to hear comments from the juror and photographers and view the photos of Montebello's beautiful flora and fauna documented through the four seasons of 2020.

A link to the presentation will be emailed prior to the event.

Next year's contest will accept photos taken as early as November 2, 2020. Montebello's winter wonderland awaits your photographic eye.

MontebelloGrounds.com



Photos by Alex Biero

December 20, 2020

final glance



Photo by Joel Miller