

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

since 2016

February 18, 2022



Respecting the flag

We were all taught as children (for me, it was while overseas and in a Girl Scout Brownie troop), that a U.S. flag should always be treated with respect. That it never be allowed to touch the ground. That no flag can be flown above the U.S. flag. And that a U.S. flag should be repaired or replaced immediately upon it being noticed to have a tear, split seam, wear marks or upon having become soiled.

Apparently, some things are not the same in the modern world.

For multiple weeks now, Montebello's residents and guests have been greeted by a torn U.S. flag, waving gaily from atop the flag pole at the Front Gate.

Numerous times this issue has been raised with the Front Gate. Numerous times has Montebello Security been entreated to have the flag replaced or repaired.

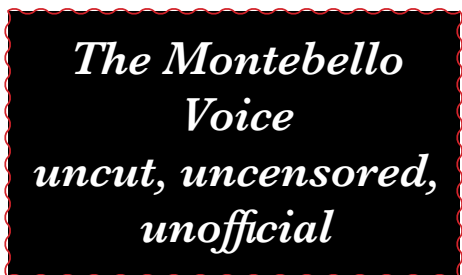
All to no avail.

We're not talking about a major monetary expenditure, nor a great rarity requiring a major undertaking by the Board of Directors. Just a simple replacement of a U.S. flag.

As we watch the Olympic Medal Ceremonies being held nightly in Beijing, China, there seems to be no shortage of U.S. flags available at the many and varied venues.

Perhaps a U.S. flag made in China could be brought back by an enterprising Montebello resident to replace the one at Montebello's Front Gate?

Just a thought. – Elizabeth Card 📧



Rough waters

In poor survey research, the questions can be stated in a manner that makes it clear what a more desirable response would be. An example is “demand characteristics.” As a junior officer in small-ship Navy, I saw another version of this. There was a war going on but my ship didn't operate in a combat area. Nonetheless, we still had a dangerous enemy, the sea. In heavy weather, if we screwed up in any way, we could capsize and there's a good chance that all hands would perish.

Once at sea on my watch we got hit by a rogue wave and rolled 63 degrees. According to BuShips, two more degrees of roll and that would have been it for us. What did I do on that occasion? I made a joke about it. Interesting, because I had never been in combat while the guys in the wheelhouse had seen it all and the fear in their voices was apparent. But, I was an officer and probably had decided that I wasn't supposed to show fear, or to experience it.

In some pretty nasty storms during my two years at sea, I never once felt fear, got seasick, or failed to stand my watch. I don't know what you call this, but it definitely wasn't bravery. Nor ignorance. On my DE the Officer of the Deck stood his watch on an open bridge and was fully cognizant of what the sea was trying to do to us. – Richard Titus 📧

FYI

Here are a couple of links to stories about technology neighbors may find useful: https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/investigations/5g-3g-shutdown-may-make-some-devices-go-dark-tech/65-cdf7b5f4-f40e-4903-a2cb-ba4c1f6ad288?utm_source=PERSInsiderNewsletter

Another one about potentially life-saving alerts one can set up on their phone. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/ask-help-desk-how-to-never-miss-an-emergency-alert/ar-AATJy2B> – Paul Foldes 📧

Change is gonna come?

I wish to commend Chester Taylor for his recent excellent summary of the serious challenges confronting our nation, and each of us as individuals. Being in my final decades, I would like to continue taking the long view, but it is now undeniably apparent that our time for solving problems (e.g., global warming) is quite finite. We need action now on many fronts, and he's right that we are distracted by politicians who argue over power and control while doing very little. With his knowledge and perspective, how does he manage to sleep at night? – Christine Winter 📧

Cover photo of daffodil blooms in the woodlands by Linda Brownlee

The MONTEBELLO **Voice**

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Board elections 2022

*By Guido R. Zanni
Former Board Treasurer,
Vice-President, and President;
and Chair of the Ad Hoc Com-
mittees on the Community Cen-
ter Renovation and Design*

Board candidates cannot fabricate history

Monica Sangbong's campaign statement on her involvement and subsequent removal from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Community Center Renovation and Design is a complete fabrication. She states, "Only a few months in service, I was unilaterally dismissed from the Community Center Committee without the courtesy of a discussion or explanation." Director Sangbong served on the committee from April 2019 to December 2019 for a total of nine months. Along with Director Sangbong, Directors Kennett, Gleason, Harrelson, and Zanni were also on the committee. All five directors had voting rights on a committee comprised of 18 members. The statement that she was dismissed without an explanation is untrue. At the December 2019 board meeting, which Director Sangbong attended, I and others argued that if the board was serious about establishing a process for a community-driven renovation and design plan, then the committee should go forward without board members. Committees are for resident input, ideally devoid of board participation. Following a lengthy discussion that included Director Sangbong's participation, the board agreed with the revised process. For the record, both Directors Harrelson and Gleason agreed that board members should not be on the committee and voted for the resolution knowing that they would be dropped from the committee. Douglas Kennett and I were appointed as Chair and Co-chair as non-voting members. Director Sangbong's participation in the discus-

sion is clearly documented in the meeting's minutes.

Director Sangbong's campaign statement asserts she possessed all five qualifications to be on the committee. This is false as there were no listed criteria to serve on the re-appointed committee. The only requirement was that committee members could not be board members.

Finally, Director Sangbong states that the purpose of the surveys was not clear and perhaps they were used as a means of appeasement. Surveys were used to update the renovation plan and refine the design. In each instance, surveys, focus groups, and town hall meetings resulted in significant changes. For example, the majority of owners wanted an elevator to the lower level – which was added to the final plan – and rejected a spa, business center, and additional windows – all of which were deleted from the plan. Approximately 80% of the changes were resident driven. To demonstrate the board's commitment to a community-driven process, committee and town hall recommendations bypassed board approval and were forwarded directly to the contractor. To question the findings of surveys, town meetings, and focus groups is truly insulting to the 400+ residents and owners who participated in the process. At no time did Director Sangbong voice that she found the process confusing.

Hard questions for board candidates

This year we have a slate of nine candidates. I am most appreciative for all the candidates' willingness to volunteer their time and talent to Montebello, but there are critical issues that each candidate needs to address for the community. I intend to raise these concerns at Meet the Candidates Night. Hopefully, some candidates will address these issues in their opening statements.

Candidate Goodrich: Within the next 12 months, COVID restrictions will be lifted, and the board will convene in-person meetings. As an absentee owner who lives in West Virginia, how can you assess and address the sense of community at Montebello? How will your commute affect in-person attendance at meetings? Also, what is your number one priority as a future board member and how would you address it?

Candidate Campbell: Considering your unit had been listed for sale last summer, what motivates you to run for the board knowing that you have been thinking of leaving? Also, do you currently reside at Montebello? As a member of the Finance and Budget Committee, please state your strategy for keeping condominium fees below inflation.

Candidate Clark: Our current treasurer is on record as stating huge condominium fee increases are necessary. As Chair of the Finance and Budget Committee, do you agree with this assessment? What will you do to keep condominium fees below the rate of inflation?

Candidate Kleine: The Promoting Montebello Sub-Committee, Quality Improvement Committee, Grounds Committee and the Finance and Budget Committee all deal with various aspects of strategic planning. What steps would you take to integrate strategic planning and what role will owners have in the process? As a former Treasurer, do you agree that huge condominium fees are inevitable?

Candidate Biero: Historically, you have not attended board and committee meetings. How will your lack of experience with Montebello's governance impact your ability as a board member? If elected, what is your number one priority?

Candidate Nickerson: Prior to being appointed to the Board last year

governance

you did not participate in Montebello's governance. How has this affected your performance? As Assistant Treasurer, are you in agreement with the Treasurer's statement that large condominium fee increases are needed along with a possible special assessment. Please note that several former Treasurers adamantly disagree that huge condominium fees are necessary. If elected, how will you resolve these discordant opinions?

Candidates Click, Kandel, Sangbong: A fair question for existing elected board members is, "What have you done for me lately?" When you were elected, each of you made a commitment to improve communication and increase engagement with residents. Please list your accomplishments on improved communication and resident engagement. What is your number one priority and your strategy in accomplishing this priority?

In closing, Montebello's assets, including owner equity, total approximately a half billion dollars. The board serves as trustees for owner equity. When I was on the Board, I always reminded owners that when you elect someone to the board, you are metaphorically handing over your deed to the Board of Directors to safeguard your equity. Of the nine candidates, who do you believe has the qualifications to safeguard your home and investment?

Please vote. 🗳️

On the record

Next Sunday our community will get a chance to hear all nine board candidates during the Meet the Candidates session from 7 to 9 in the evening. In the pre-covid time, the event took place in the community center lounge in front of a capacity crowd. Instead of asking questions directly, residents submitted written questions on index cards provided by the roving volunteers. For me, the biggest draw was Joel Miller, who exceeded the event with witty humor.

As the evening wore on, the crowd became thinner and thinner, until a few dedicated diehards squirmed in the metal folding chairs.

Last year, like everything else, the event took place on Zoom, where candidates' heads bobbed in tiny boxes on the screen. Although I was in the comfort of my home, staying focused was at times challenging and I confess I spaced out a handful of times while taking notes for an article.

Since we're using technology once again, I suggest that our Zoom operator press the "record" button to give residents a chance to view the event with a fresh brain and be able to pause for breaks. Nine opening statements, a couple dozen questions for each candidate, and nine closing statements – it's a lot to process on a Sunday night.

In addition, please enable the "chat" and "attendees" functions to let people

know who's in the audience and be able to post comments.

I don't know how my request comports with Election Committee rules and whether a special vote must be taken to amend the procedure. I hope it isn't so difficult to make this tweak.

My ultimate goal is to enable more neighbors to hear from their potential elected representatives and to make the best-informed decisions for our community's governance.

If you think this is a good idea, please email the office at MCUOA@montebello.org to ask for Meet the Candidates to be recorded and made available for our viewing pleasure. – MK 🗳️



Art in Montebello meeting

Photo by Dian McDonald



Search



Eric Finke is Montebello's new general manager



First mentioned in the January 11 minutes of the board meeting, Eric Finke will officially begin his position in late March. He will replace the current general manager, George Gardner, who is set to retire.

Eric Finke
 General Manager at Lexington Square
 Vienna, Virginia, United States · [Contact info](#)
 16 connections

[Connect](#) [Message](#) [More](#)

About

Having started in real estate development 13 years ago, I am now a experienced property manager active in CAI with multiple designations including my CMCA, AMS, and PCAM. Currently I am a General Manager for a 400 unit luxury condominium in Arlington, VA with a \$2+million annual budget where my daily focus is on quality service to the residents and operating the property in the most efficient manner while increasing property values. I always welcome any introduction to fellow industry professionals and the opportunity to learn about future growth opportunities that will further my career.

Experience

General Manager
 Lexington Square Condominiums
 Oct 2013 - Present · 8 yrs 5 mos
 Arlington, VA

General Manager of large luxury 400-unit condominium property in Arlington accountable for the daily operations including 4 separate mechanical plants, staff of 7, and space exceeding 500k square feet including commercial easements. My accomplishments include doubling of capital reserves in less than 5 years via reduction in expenditures especially in utilities, holding assessments steady for multiple years, implementation of detailed risk management plan, and extremely minimal staff turnover via leading with a team-first mentality.

Senior Portfolio Manager
 Delbe Real Estate Services
 Jul 2009 - Sep 2013 · 4 yrs 3 mos
 Washington, DC

Senior level representative of 30 year old real estate management firm reporting directly to the President. Manage a diverse portfolio of 14 multifamily residential and commercial (Class A and B) properties consisting of more than 700,000 square feet in DC, MD, and Virginia. Being a Senior Manager, I also assist with the business development and overall marketplace strategy of Delbe Real Estate as a local leader of property management. As a detailed and organized portfolio manager, I am dedicated to the industry and the clients of Delbe, providing continual growth and impeccable service at all levels while increasing property values. Being an experienced Portfolio Manager, my expertise and diversity stems from having been on both the Development side and now Management side of DC area real estate. I am a long-standing member of CAI and hold the PCAM, CMCA and AMS designations.

Project Manager
 The Haven Group
 Nov 2007 - Jun 2009 · 1 yr 8 mos

Leader of projects throughout Southeast region responsible for cradle to grave success. Have dedication in fostering team approach with design, estimating, and sales to aggressively support the needs and goals of the firm. As a result of onsite and remote project management, developed policies and procedures to streamline processes and maintain efficiencies. Developed a strong knowledge base of LEED, Earth Craft, and NAHB Green Building standards. Completed thorough review of each project in all facets of blueprints verifying accuracy, project objectives, and proper engineering to meet code requirements. Project Manager for 1st NAHB Green 'Emerald' project and Home of the Year at 2008 IBS.

Education

James Madison University
 BBA
 1995 - 1999

Skills

All [Industry Knowledge](#) [Other Skills](#)

Sales

Property Management

Business Development

Commercial Real Estate

Project Management

CMCA

Notary Public

PCAM Certification

Underground Explorer Redd Foxx Ping Pongs over Mount Eagle to Club 52 Grille

By *Mikhailina Karina*

The latest 30-second survey from the Quality Improvement Committee to name spaces in the community center initiated a lively discussion in the Montebello Facebook group. Nearly all commenters agreed it was a bad idea to give the spaces names.

“Most of these sound like they belong in a pretentious golf club or a sad assisted living facility in Middleburg. Lord Fairfax already has enough things named after him. Arcade sounds like a cheap carnival. The Game Room should be called the Game Room. The Cafe should be given the name that the Cafe managers prefer. The word grill should be spelled correctly if we must use it,” wrote one resident.

“I couldn’t agree more. In fact, I noted at the bottom of the survey in the comments line. ‘This is stupid. Call them what they are,’” chimed in another person.

Three more added, “Glad I’m not the only naysayer. Simple is good. Who in the world do they think they are.”

“Those are horrible horrible names. I prefer simple, game room, cafe, etc.”

“Yeah, the ‘underground?’ Is this the 1960s? or London? How about the Swan Lake room. Isn’t there going to be a barre?”

Why are we even having this conversation? The message on top of the survey states, “The current Code requires signage for most rooms in the Community Center.” Seeking to clarify the Code’s requirements, I received the following email response from board president Jon Kandel:

Current Fire and Building Code requires a “map” at the entrance to indicate to fire personnel. Each room inside needs to be identified. There are some of the changes in Code since the building was built:

- Signage will require explicit ID

for rooms containing fire-related equipment. In other words, where we used to call some rooms “Utility” rooms, we now have to label a couple of them as ‘Utility-Sprinkler’ because there is a part of the sprinkler system valves or fire alarm controls inside.

- The signs will have Braille on them
 - Some signs — entrances, bathrooms, and locker rooms — require AIS pictograms, the international wheelchair symbol
 - More rooms require occupancy signs than before.
- I can’t refer you directly to Code. While I have been shown parts of Code when questions have come up, I don’t keep electronic references.

It appears that naming rooms is required for Fire and Building Code compliance. Unfortunately, after numerous searches in the county’s online sources, I can’t provide the exact wording of this regulation. However, the reason does not explain the need for quaint room names.

This is the second survey on the same topic because the first survey didn’t generate any winning monikers for the refurbished community center spaces known for the past four decades as the café, the lounge, the card room, the game room, and the lower level. We also had front desk, office, market/convenience store, bathrooms, bowling alley, locker rooms, indoor pool, and gym. (Hair salon was called Hair Expressions). But since so much time and money has been spent on the new center, which shuttered before the pandemic in 2020 and is slated to reopen in April, powers-that-be are trying to create charming new names for the café, the lounge, the card room, the game room, and the lower level. How are we supposed to memorize these new designations, which will undoubtedly be fol-

The first survey to name rooms in the Community Center had no clear-cut winners. This second survey narrows down the choices and incorporates some new suggestions. We are looking for names suggestive of Montebello’s history and the use of the room; “Montebello Café” and “Montebello Lounge” are no longer considered viable choices. “Grille” stood out as the descriptor of the eatery.

1. Cafe

Montebello Grille
Red Fox Grille
Mount Eagle Grille
The Fox and Eagle Grille

2. Main Lounge

Fairfax Lounge
Eagle Lounge
Red Fox Lounge
Mount Eagle Lounge

3. Lower Level Space

The Underground
Huntington Room
Explorer Room

4. Card Room

Club 52
Hearts & Diamonds
Cards & Dice Room
Huntington Card Room

5. Game Room

Fox Game Den
The Arcade
Pool & Ping Pong Room

lowed by their function, such as Kings & Queens card room. It’s also so much longer to say than plain ol’ card room.

The facility’s contemporary new de-

sign incorporates our natural setting, hence the popularity of Red Fox in the names for the café, the lounge, and the game room. What about the ground-hogs, racoons, deer, chipmunks, elusive bobcat, and thousands of squirrels that also roam Montebello's grounds? If we start naming rooms after adorable animals, it's going to resemble preschool classrooms. Ditto for the birds and the trees.

Other naming options are geographical designations, such as Mount Eagle, Huntington, and Fairfax. Do we really need to have our street name in our eatery or lounge name? Talk about redundancy.

The name Fairfax is both redundant and historically problematic. We live in unincorporated Fairfax County, which is named after Thomas, Sixth Lord of Fairfax (1693-1781). While we have City of Fairfax and Fairfax here, there, and everywhere, let's be cognizant of the history this prominent Virginia name carries. Old buddy of Founding Father George Washington, who famously hosted his Mount Vernon friend for dinners atop our hill, comes with historical baggage we cannot in good conscience sweep aside. In Virginia Baron: The Story of Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax, (Genealogical Publishing Company, 2008), Stuart E. Brown wrote, "Fairfax depended on hundreds of enslaved persons who worked among his 30 Virginia plantations. He was active in trading slaves and, at the age of 84, he participated in the 'little talked about' activity called 'bedding down with a negro wench,' for which Lord Fairfax would pay a fee to the person who supplied the 'wench.'" Our county was named after this particular man, not another Fairfax namesake.

The cynic in me believes the survey was an empty gesture to make the residents think they have a say in the new CC – a notion frequently emphasized during town halls where people had a chance to vote on the décor. In reality, I suspect the naming is a done deal and we're wasting our mental energy arguing about nothing. Nevertheless,

without disrespecting the creative individuals who came up with names for CC spaces, I can't resist poking a little linguistic or cultural fun.

According to the blurb on the survey, "Grille stood out as the descriptor of the eatery." Eatery?! Synonyms for eatery include cafeteria, cantina, bistro, brasserie, diner, restaurant, pub, saloon, concession, greasy spoon, or dining hall. The word "grille" is linguistically problematic because it's simply wrong in this context.

Grill: a grated metal cooking utensil (noun); to cook over direct heat (verb).

Grille: a network of metal, wooden, or plastic bars that acts as a barrier or screen. <https://www.grammarbook.com/homonyms/grill-grille.asp>

Grille is often used instead of grill in restaurant names. There's no good reason for this. It's just something some restaurateurs do. <https://grammarist.com/usage/grill-grille/>

Furthermore, if I wanted to get linguistically super-persnickety, our café is not exactly a classical definition of a café, but a restaurant with a bar. The Merriam-Webster defines café as "a usually small and informal establishment serving various refreshments (such as coffee)." A restaurant is an eating establishment in which diners are served appetizers, entrees, desserts, and drinks at their tables. But since we're so used to calling the "eatery" a café, it's really a moot point.

Now to the proposed names:

Fox and Eagle Grille [sic] sounds like an Aesop fable. Wonder who wins this battle of wits, claws, and talons.

The lower level is a multipurpose space for exercise classes and special events. It will be accessible via a new straight staircase, elevator, and outside ramp. The Underground sounds rock 'n roll badass (think Velvet Underground) with a whiff of the London subway. The Explorer Room doesn't make sense for the lower level and harkens to preschool classrooms named for exciting early childhood activities.

Club 52 clearly refers to a deck of cards (Full Deck, anyone?), but is two bits short of the notorious Club 54 in New York City. Hearts & Diamonds sounds like a strip club. Cards & Dice? Heck, just call it a casino.

What exactly is a Fox Game Den? There are fox dens and house dens, but how do the two concepts work together? If we call the game room The Arcade, does it mean we're getting coin-operated video game machines?

Ladies and gentlemen of the CC naming committee: the names are staring at you in boldface. Café, main lounge, lower level, card room, and game room. Please stop wasting time and energy on a non-issue.

"People being human will most likely refer to spaces by the old name anyway out of habit," wrote a sensible neighbor on Facebook. 🙄

Call it by its name

Elevators

The Cheerful Lifts

The path

The Path to Nowhere

The long bridge

Bridge over the River Dry

Stairwells

Upstairs, Downstairs

The retention/drainage ponds

Tadpole Heaven

The back gate

Point of No Return

Our deer

Bambi Grows Up

– Christine Winter

Taillefer at the Battle of Hastings

By Chester Taylor

When King Edward the Confessor of England died on January 5, 1066, the event created a power struggle that significantly reshaped history. Because Edward had no children, three powerful men claimed the throne. They were Harold Godwinson II, an Anglo-Saxon, who had essentially acted as Edward's under-king; King Harald Hadrada of Norway, who had been promised the throne by Edward; and Duke William I of Normandy, who also had a promise by Edward. Upon his deathbed, Edward gave his approval for the English nobility to crown Godwinson. King Harald of Norway decided to invade England, and in August with 300 warships and merchants and 10,000 Viking warriors, he landed near York on the English coast. After initial successes, he was at last defeated and killed at Stamford Bridge.

William, Duke of Normandy, also decided to invade England and take the throne. In late September, with a force of 700 ships, 10,000 men, and 3,000 horses, he landed his force at Pevensey. In early October he decided to maneu-

ver his force to a better position near Hastings. King Harold of England, after reconstituting forces post-victory at Stamford Bridge, moved his forces to Hastings. On the morning of October 14, 1066, both forces faced each other and prepare for battle. A knight of Duke William, a Norman baron named Taillefer, descendant of the first Taillefer, asked permission to ride forward to test the enemy and have the honor to kill the first Saxon. He was a very tall man and liked to sing. With permission granted, Taillefer boldly rode out slowly in front of the Norman's standard-bearer toward the Saxons. All eyes were on him. This was the first move. Accounts described his actions thusly:

"He seemed beside himself with the joy of battle. As he rode, and as he chanted, he threw up his sword in the air like a gleeman, catching it nimbly as it fell, and flourishing it wildly, till, as if



Norman conquest of England (Bayeux Tapestry)

unable to restrain his fierce exhilaration, he put spurs to his horse and dashing forward to the front of the detachment of Saxon riders, he shouted: 'A Taillefer! A Taillefer!' And by voice and gesture challenged forth someone to single combat. A fiery, young thegn [soldier] started forth and crossed swords with him. Taillefer, again throwing up and catching his sword with incredible rapidity, shore the unhappy Saxon from the helm to the chine, and riding over his corpse, shouting and laughing, he again renewed his challenge. A second rode forward and shared the same fate. The rest of the English horse-

men stared at each other aghast. Leofvne, the Saxon King's brother, came in front of the detachment not drawing his sword, but with his spear raised over his head and his body covered by his shield. Taillefer rushed forward, his sword shivered on the Saxon shield, and in the same moment he fell a corpse under the hoofs of his steed, transfixed by the Saxon's spear. A cry of woe, in which even William joined his deep voice, wailed through the Norman ranks." The Last of



The Normans' cavalry charge against the Saxons by Tom Lovell

the Saxon Kings by Bulwer.

Now 10,000 Normans, wanting bloody vengeance for Taillefer, began the battle. They proceeded up a slope towards the 7,000 Saxons, who had formed a line in depth between two hills that protected their flanks. The Normans were led by their archers, who flung arrows without success into the great wall of kite shields formed by the Saxons. The Saxon line held against the Normans' initial assault.

The battle became a push-and-shove match for most of the day, but eventually the Saxons' line began to come apart. Through William's perseverance and leadership, the Normans with their more mobile archers and cavalry eventually enveloped the Saxons' static position with devastating consequences. King Harold himself caught an arrow (some say in the eye) and lay dead in the mud amidst a heap of 4,000 men. The battle was decisive.

William was crowned King of England by Bishop Ealdre on December 25, 1066, at Westminster. William was bitter that so many brave died because Edward had made promises he couldn't keep. William had not forgotten his promises to those brave warriors and loyal souls who rode with him at Hastings. Thirty knights had survived, and he began immediately to reward them with large estates in England. William hosted a victory banquet in their honor at his new castle under construction in London. After the dinner feast, a minstrel sang a ballad:

Ho! Taillefer, a Taillefer! Give place,
ye men of Rou!

What deed of might in battle bright,
but Taillefer can do.

To hurl the spear, to bend the bow,
a fearful arm hath he,

Like his no hand can wield the brand,
in warlike Normandie.

With brand or bow or rushing spear,
his equal ne'er hath seen

For rash the wight, would dare the fight,
with Taillefer I ween.

So sang the warrior minstrel and
straightway, loud, and long,

Burst forth the pealing tribute of
thousands to his song.

Then King William shouted, "Drink
to Taillefer, all!" Cups were raised high
in reverence, not just to Taillefer, but
to all of the fallen. Then the King pro-

nounced, "His heirs shall have a whole
country, free-simple deeded and the
motto, "*Consequitur quodcumque petit!*"
(whatever he aims at he accomplishes).



The benefits of coffee

By Chester Taylor

Coffee a health drink? Yep, it is. We get more alert, slimmer, happier and the risk of serious diseases diminish when we drink it. Forty years of research done at Karolinska Institute shows that coffee speeds up your metabolism and safeguards you against type 2 diabetes.

The study also found that coffee diminishes the risk for Parkinson's and

In a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, women who drank one to three cups of coffee per day, significantly reduced their risk for cardiovascular diseases compared to women who did not drink any coffee at all. The study was done with the help of 27,000 women between the ages of 55 and 69 over a period of 15 years. The highest mortality was found among women who didn't drink any coffee at all.



different kinds of tumors, like prostate cancer and skin cancer. Bertil Fredholm, Senior Professor of Pharmacology at the Karolinska Institute, explains, "coffee blocks the body's adenosine (the binding of adenosine causes drowsiness by slowing down nerve cell activity). That way you lose less dopamine in your brain during aging, and the body's defense against tumors get stronger."

Harvard researchers say it makes women happier. They tracked 51,000 women for 10 years and carefully recorded the amount each drank. Those who drank four or more cups a day reduced their chance of getting depressed by 20%. No such decreased risk was found among the women who drank decaffeinated coffee. So go ahead, meet with your friends, talk, and have a cup of coffee. 📖

A Pacific cruise

By Bob Shea

On the day after Christmas in 1966, 55 years ago, my unit flew from what was then Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina on a chartered DC-8 to Oakland, California, where we boarded the military troop ship, the USNS William O. Darby. It would be our home for the next three plus weeks. The USNS Darby was an old ship with a storied history that began after World War II, under another name, when it brought war veterans and refugees from Europe to the USA. Later renamed for General William O. Darby, it then carried troops to Korea and back, shuttled troops and their families between New York and Bremerhaven, and finally spent its last years moving units to Vietnam. My wife and two young daughters sailed on its sister ship, the USNS Upshur, from New York to Bremerhaven in January 1965.

It had a U.S. civilian crew with a three-man Navy detachment on board to act as the liaison between the troops and the ship's captain. My commander, a colonel, was the senior military officer on board so he was designated the Commander of Troops for the voyage. He then used his staff to flesh out the various duties inherent in his responsibilities. I was appointed the adjutant and administrative officer for the 1,507 troops. We also had several artillery batteries, a military police company, and two transportation companies on board, each with their own structure and chain of command reporting to my boss.

We spent three days tied up at the Oakland Army Base as the various units arrived and were assigned space

on the ship. Finally on December 28, 1966, we sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge enroute to a place called Vietnam, our home for the next year. Our one-year tour started on the day we left the continental USA, so part of our Vietnam assignment was spent on board the Darby. That was a good thing.

The voyage was a series of adventures for all of us, making it a unique experience.

One day into the voyage, we discovered a miscount of actual troops on



board. Somehow an artillery battery had counted one man in two different compartments. Not good! Since the number of souls on board was important, I, as the troop adjutant, had to meet with the ship's captain and explain the miscount to him. There was an entry in the ship's log explaining the situation, which I had to sign. We had 1,507 troops on board, not 1,508. The captain, a civilian mariner, was a no-nonsense guy.

A troop ship is the world's best incentive for being a commissioned officer. We had three-man cabins with private toilets, and we ate in a dining room with civilian mess stewards waiting on tables where we had a choice of two entrees at lunch and dinner. On the other hand, the enlisted soldiers lived in troop compartments with canvas bunks stacked five high festooned with their equipment and had to line up with trays for each meal. On some

days, finishing one meal almost meant getting back in the mess line for the next one. The officers had an upper sun deck with deck chairs; the troops were allowed on a lower deck for one hour daily for fresh air on a rotating basis by troop compartment.

One of my roommates knew he was going to be seasick, a self-fulfilling prophecy. He was sick starting while we were still tied up at the pier in Oakland and stayed miserable until well into the voyage, living on crackers and dry toast. He did not enter the dining room until about day eight of the trip. Poor guy!

We had to deviate from our planned course so that we could approach the Hawaiian Islands to enable a Coast Guard helicopter to rendezvous with us and airlift an NCO off the ship when we were notified that his family had been killed in

an auto accident in Alabama. Without a helipad on the ship, he was lifted off suspended in a horse-collar cable-sling to begin his tragic trip back to the mainland. Shortly thereafter, the civilian crew realized that they were missing a dishwasher who failed to show up for a crew muster. Since he might have fallen overboard, the rules of the sea dictated that we reverse our already altered course and search for Juan Toledo, galley-man 3rd class until the hours of darkness. He was never found. I recall his name for the ship's PA system kept repeatedly calling for him to report to Chief Steward.

Our headquarters unit had three Army chaplains assigned, one of whom was a young Catholic priest (also a captain) named Bernard Chrystal. As a cradle-Catholic, to me a priest is always Father. He insisted we call him Bernie. Each chaplain was given a hard-sided case to carry six bottles of sacramental

anchors aweigh

wine. In those days, before Vatican II, only the priest celebrating mass drank any wine, so Bernie needed only one bottle of wine. Being resourceful and somewhat devious, he also carried five bottles of Jack Daniels, something totally prohibited on a troop ship. Each night after he had completed his chaplain duties with the troops, he would gather our unit's officers in one of our cabins, except the other two chaplains and the colonel, and using small paper cups, he would dispense a shot of Jack Daniels to each of us. He looked after our morale as well as our spiritual needs, a group of sinners and rule breakers. What might be the punishment? Send us to Vietnam?

Each time a bottle was empty, Bernie would give it to me, and we would go out on the deck where members of the military police company were standing watch. Standing watch was really unnecessary, but it gave the MPs an on-board mission away from the stifling troop compartments. Bernie would talk to the young MP about the stars, the night sky, and the Lord's creation while I threw the empty Jack Daniels bottle over the rail into the Pacific. Hopefully, the young MP had a spiritual uplifting as I consigned a glass bottle to the ocean's depths. All part of a master

plan but before recycling.

We had a minor disturbance when, during a Sunday evening meal, a major started loudly complaining about finding "no rabbit" in his Welsh rarebit. Obviously he was culinary challenged. We all wished he could have been issued a tray and sent down to the troop mess lines. He might then have had a real complaint. The same misguided major created another disturbance at our first Vietnam destination when, as the ship's anchor was raised, the anchor chain created a vibration within the ship. As the lifeboat chains rattled, being a true warrior, he screamed "incoming" and flattened himself on the deck covering his head. The rest of us just smiled and ignored him. Again, a hopeless case even though he was a field-grade officer. "Be all you can be," as we used to say. Go figure!

We stopped and had eight hours of shore time at the port of Naha in Okinawa. At the appointed hour, everyone was back on board despite the various temptations of the port city, an accomplishment in and of itself, and we sailed for Vietnam, again taking a circuitous route due to a hurricane/cyclone in the area. The Darby really did not sail but rather wallowed, lurched, and stumbled through the strong wind and large waves. The bow and stern went up and down as we rolled from port to star-

board, sort of a corkscrew motion. My roommate again stayed in our cabin. At night our cabin bunks had side rails to help one stay in bed, especially important for the guy in the upper bunk. The troop compartments were almost unliveable with seasick soldiers stacked five high in canvas bunks.

On the 19th of January we finally saw the green coastline of Vietnam. We off-loaded some units at Vung Tau, east of Saigon, with the rest of us disembarking at the port of Cam Ranh Bay. A whole new set of adventures awaited us.

The USNS Darby was on its last voyage. It sailed through the Suez Canal back to New York City, where it was decommissioned late in February 1967 and sailed to the Reserve Fleet on the James River near Williamsburg where it stayed until 1996, when it was towed to a scrap yard to be cut up and hopefully was recycled to begin its new life as bridge girders, re-bars, automobile frames, and other steel products. The good old ship has reached the end of its life after almost 50 years of moving military members and their families around the world.

Old ships never die. They are repurposed, but they do live on in the memories of those who sailed on them. 📖



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