

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

1973

May 13, 2022



Spanish Club seeks native speakers

Recently the Spanish Club started meeting weekly in person again, to practice our Spanish conversational skills and speech. We enjoy discussions about contemporary news; readings or poetry or song lyrics; movies, restaurants, and any light-hearted subject. Plus we have the occasional grammar review.

Our leader, Lorena Aceff Coorsh, has been our teacher, our supporter, and our friend. When we polled our members about their goals for the group, we found that all of us agreed that the opportunity for improving our conversational Spanish was our primary interest.

To that end, we are asking for the assistance of Spanish speakers and teachers from Montebello. We are aware of so many residents from Spanish-speaking countries around the world and would welcome the opportunity to interact with them. Please join our one-hour weekly sessions as a special guest on an occasional or on a regular basis, whatever suits your schedule. We'd like to set up conversational pairs, conversing about any topic.

We are currently meeting on Sundays at 11a.m. in Party Room 2 in Building 2. Vaccination status: all of us have been double boosted, and we request that our guests be at least single boosted. Please email your interest to Lorena at Spanishclubmonte@gmail.com. We would so much appreciate your help. – *Christine Winter*

Drop off your recyclable glass and compostable food scraps

Fairfax County continues to provide “purple cans” where we can drop our glass for recycling. Glass bottles and jars, all colors, are accepted. The nearest sites are at Lee District Park; across from Sherwood Hall Library between Mt. Vernon Hospital and the Government Center; and at Jones Point at the southeastern tip of Old Town under the Wilson Bridge.

Fairfax County has also begun facilitating the collection and composting of food scraps from domestic kitchens. In addition to the I-66 Transfer Station on West Ox Road in Fairfax and the I-95 Landfill Complex on Furnace Road in Lorton, several local farmers’ markets will accept food scraps during their operating hours. The Mt. Vernon market at the Sherwood Hall Library is open on Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to noon. All kinds of food waste, as well as compostable paper plates, bags, towels, and napkins, are acceptable. Not acceptable, however, are plastic bags (you must dump out your waste into their collection bucket if you bring it in a plastic bag), yard waste, or anything used with cleaning products, or for personal hygiene.

We may not be able to dig our kitchen waste into our own gardens here at Montebello, but we can still play a role in reducing food waste and providing soil enrichment for local farms. – *Karen Barnes*

Are we there yet?

Astronomers just discovered HD1, which appears to be a galaxy, and, at 13.5 billion light years distant, is the farthest known object from Earth. So, how far away is that? Let’s try to grasp it.

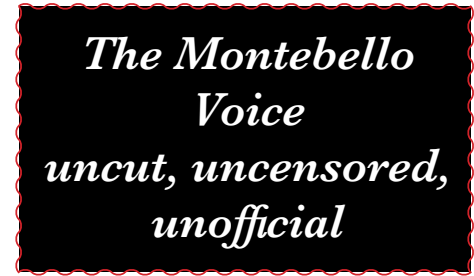
From DC to LA is about 2,500 miles (most of it fairly boring). Earth’s circumference at the Equator is about ten times that, or 25,000 miles. Light trav-

els at 186,000 miles per second, so in one second light would go around the earth 7.44 times. (Once is more than enough if it includes Kansas).

Let’s take 7.44 times around the earth, straighten it out, and head for HD1. If we were riding on a beam of light, in the first second that’s how far away we’d be from Earth. In a light second. But we’re talking about light years. So we have to multiply 60x60x24x-

365.25x186,000 to see how many miles we’ll go in the first year. And we have 13.5 billion more years to go before we arrive at HD1.

Don’t take the kids. Imagine how many “Are we there yet?” there will be. And no Happy Meals. – *Richard Titus*



Cover photo by Miriam Rosenthal

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Losing Pat

By Sarah Newcomb

As you slip away,
 an unknown nurse
 holds your hand.
 When they tell me,
 it is already too late
 to say good-bye.
 I remember the flowers
 I sent
 when you were ill
 The ring I replaced
 with a mere imitation
 of a treasure, once stolen,
 your parents gave you.
 Weekly calls I made
 though you were far away –
 lost in your own world.
 The comfort I gave
 saying your Mother
 was peaceful and happy
 And you had done
 everything a dutiful daughter
 was expected to do.
 Now, you are finally at peace
 I must take time
 to remember my own words. 📖



Life-long Montebelloan, Albéric Karina-Plun, 21, graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Mary Washington with degrees in Historic Preservation and Geography, plus a certificate in GIS (geographic information systems). In early June he will start his professional journey as an urban planner with Albemarle County in beautiful Charlottesville.

He attended the Montessori School of Alexandria and Aquinas Montessori, followed by Mark Twain Middle School and Edison High School. Albéric’s parents are Mikhailina Karina and Jerome Plun; younger brother, Amédé, also studies at UMW.

Lawn furniture for our lawns

We have a lovely lush Village Green with a variety of trees that provide pleasant shade and breeze. Neighbors like to gather in this welcoming space to meet their friends, to read, or to simply enjoy the natural setting. Unfortunately, this idyll is shattered by the light blue and green pool furniture strewn about the lawn. In a community that prides itself on classy and elegant surroundings, randomly scattered pool chairs and a white table look unbelievably, insultingly trashy. The chairs were originally placed on the lawn in the summer of 2020 to give sunbathers a place to bask when the



pool deck was closed due to covid. For some reason, this practice persists even when the pool deck is back in business.

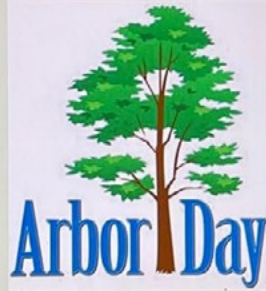
So here’s a radical idea – let’s take pool furniture back to the pool and invest in inexpensive classic lawn furniture, such as adirondack chairs and tables in lightweight and sturdy resin. Unlike sitting on an immobile bench, people can move them into any configuration for group conversations, *al fresco* meals, or quiet contemplations. Let’s have attractive lawn furniture on our beautiful lawn. – MK 📖



into the woods

Arbor Day Program 2018 - 2021

- 342 trees planted
-
- 193 residents have contributed
 - See donors and dedications at MontebelloGrounds.com
- MCUOA has supplemented resident contributions

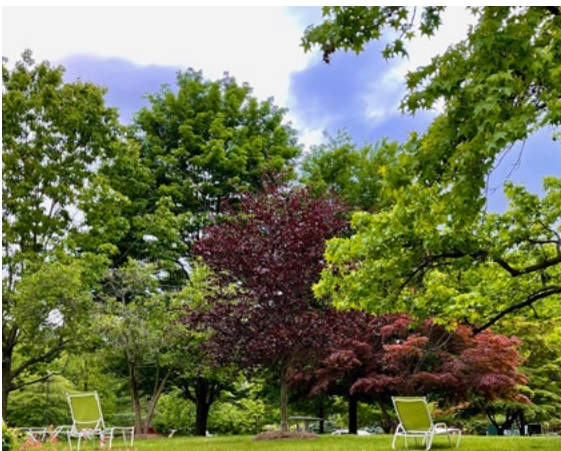
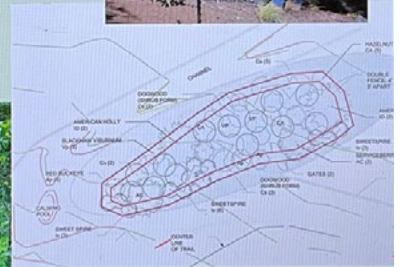


Why Do Our Trees Matter?

- They cool our grounds
- They improve air quality, remove pollution
- They absorb CO₂ and generate Oxygen
- They reduce precipitation runoff
- They enhance property values
- They contribute the quality of life here at Montebello

Pocket Forest – Deer Protection

- Double fences
 - Around entire area
 - Not individual plants
- Gate allows maintenance



Adding Diversity with New Native Species



Sweetbay Magnolia



American Hornbeam



Pawpaw



Eastern Cottonwood



Black Willow



Fringe Tree

NATO: A national security option for Sweden

By Chester Taylor

Since President Vladimir Putin's invasion of non-NATO aligned Ukraine this past February 24, Sweden has reconsidered its national security options. Should it remain neutral or seek NATO membership?

The world has changed since the Berlin Wall was being knocked down and the Russians talked of *glasnost*. Now it is a more dangerous place. Over the past several decades, Putin has spent over \$730 billion in a massive effort to rebuild his military with 100 new war ships, 600 new planes, and 1,000 new helicopters. He has added 400,000 additional military personnel to the 800,000 that had already existed. He has the largest nuclear arsenal in the world and even threatens to use them against members of the EU and NATO.

Last year, Sweden elected its first female Prime Minister, Magdalena An-



dersson. She is a Social Democrat. Prior to being prime minister, she served as Sweden's Minister of Finance. She learned quickly that Sweden must balance the demand for social programs and defense. In addition, Sweden has taken in over 163,000 refugees and is now taking in 4,000 Ukrainian refugees. All of this comes at a cost. Initially, Andersson was not in favor of joining NATO nor were most of the Swedes. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a majority of Swedes are now in favor of joining NATO.

Russian provocations directed towards Sweden continue. There was the 2013 Good Friday practice

bombing run on Stockholm and southern Sweden with four Russian bombers and two fighters; again, that same year three escort fighters and two bombers from Russia carried out simulated attack runs against Poland, the Baltics, and the southern tip of Sweden; and then, the 2014 suspicious underwater activity that occurred in the Stockholm archipelago. This past March, four Russian aircraft (two SU-27 and two SU-24 fighters) briefly flew over Swedish airspace east of the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea. The message: don't even think about joining NATO.

The Swedish government has provided the military with a slight budget increase the past three years. They have added additional Next Generation JAS Gripen fighters to their air force, giving them around 150 modern fighters. Two A26 submarines will be added to its very capable three Gotland-class submarines in service with the navy. Its navy has five stealth cor-

Ties To Russia

The Kremlin says Moscow will strive to protect the interests of Russians and Russian speakers wherever they may be. We look at the regions where the greatest concentrations of Russian citizens, ethnic Russians and native Russian speakers live, outside the borders of the Russian Federation.





Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson

vettes. Sweden's army has very mobile and accurate artillery, capable armored vehicles, Stridsvagn 122 main battle tanks, and the latest lethal anti-armor weapons. It has bought the Patriot Missile System from the United States. Sweden has resumed conscription of young people for its military. Its forces are capable and would fit well with other Baltic NATO member states but are not robust enough to singularly take on the massive Russian forces.

So, what is the probability that Russia would attack Sweden? In the past, it would be rated as low, but now the Baltic is a more dangerous place. Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, wants to turn back the hands of time and reassert Russia's power over neighboring states and feels he needs the military to do it. When Putin shifted money from social programs to rebuild and modernize his military forces, his popularity decreased. After he annexed Crimea, his domestic approval rating rose. Putin has used its oil exports to finance Russia's standard of living and military build-up. His all-out invasion of Ukraine and practice of genocide to reseed Ukraine with Russians and Russian-speaking people have given Sweden a reason to rethink their defense. Sweden has a similar bilateral agreement that Ukraine has in place – training and limited defense equipment provided, but no guarantees of ground, air, or naval forces support. Western financial sanctions over Ukraine coupled with embargo oil have hurt Russia, but not stopped the

war in Ukraine. This has caused political and economic instability and created a more desperate Putin.

Putin may decide that Russia needs Gotland, Sweden's largest island, because of its strategic location in the Baltic and an ideal location for a control station to support Russia's Nord Stream pipeline.

Gotland has an airport at Visby capable of supporting tactical aircraft and two roll-on/roll-off ports located at Visby and Slite. By occupying Gotland, Russia could effectively control the Baltic states, preempt other nations from using Gotland to assist those states, or use it as stepping-off point to invade Sweden. Trying to assess the probability of an attack is not measurable, it is an intent not a capability, however Putin has been clear on his intent in his strategy of the "Near Abroad."

With a more unpredictable, aggressive Russian leader with a massive war machine, NATO membership is an option for Sweden to consider so that it has an agreement in place. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced that as of January 13, Sweden [and Finland] meet many of

the standards of the North Atlantic Alliance, so these countries can quickly join the bloc if they so desire.

This would facilitate planning, preparation, and a more rapid response in an emergency. Sweden could also reshape and fund its forces more efficiently to be part of the NATO defense, a collective defense that would offer deterrence and greater defense if attacked. Sweden's military forces could then defend the country until NATO reinforcements arrived. If it had any concerns, it could turn to NATO for assistance. Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania asked and received help with air defense coverage. NATO's Preposition Program with Norway has staged equipment to rapidly reinforce northern Norway and can outfit up to 16,500 U.S. Marines with their ground and aviation assets. Sweden could ask NATO, for example, to equip air bases located throughout their country with fuel and ordnance for NATO aircraft.

While Sweden has a partnership with NATO, it is not a member of NATO and does not have the Article 5 protection that binds members to protect each other in solidarity. Its ability to go it alone against a Russian threat is a very high risk. Sweden's best option for national security is to join NATO. 🇺🇸



Visby-class corvette

Laws, policies, and accountability

By Robert Shea

As one crosses the Virginia state-line, VDOT signs remind the motoring public that in this state, if your windshield wipers are on, you must have your headlights on as well. It makes good sense, but has the law ever been enforced? Probably not. That begs the question: Why have a law or a policy that has no accountability for violations? Is it merely a reminder about suggested behavior or window-dressing to give a warm and fuzzy to the folks who debate and create laws?

Montebello's philosophy sometimes seems to be in sync with Virginia and its wipers/lights law. How many rules or policies do we have that sound great on paper but which have no accountability for violators? Probably more than we are willing to admit.

On campus, stop signs often seem to be only suggestions for some who elect to rarely touch the brake pedal. Speed limits certainly do not slow down FedEx trucks, plumbers, trash trucks, or residents who are late for a crucial appointment or who are just speeding because they like going fast. The center lines on long Mount Eagle Drive are used by many as a guide for the vehicle's left front wheel – you get half the roadway, but not the middle half. As an aside, the yellow snow plow markers did not make the roadway more narrow. Directional signals are seen by some as an unnecessary hint to others about which way they intend to go. We all like secrets.

We have non-emergency repairs and renovations being done during the hours and on days when such work is prohibited. This is certainly done with the owner/resident's approval, but a completion deadline and available craftsmen seem to be more important to some than peace and tranquility for one's neighbors.

We all get emails on pet control and poop clean up. Contractor vehicles are supposed to park at the rear of each building to avoid hauling hand trucks and heavy "stuff" through the marble-floored lobbies. Certain parking spaces are designated for compact cars. Have you ever seen a Dodge RAM compact pickup truck? The freight elevators are designed for pets, maids, pizza guys, moving, emergency responders, and delivering large items, leaving the persoal elevators for other uses, like people. What a concept! Handicapped parking spaces are for use by people with the proper tags, not those who are only handicapped in their own mind. The trash rooms on each floor are not places to dump junk rather than taking it to the B-3 level. The list goes on and on.



We have a new general manager and a new sheriff in town (aka, chief of security and access control). It is unfortunate that we will give them responsibilities without any power of enforcement. I have watched Montebello security vehicles abruptly stop as someone blows through a stop sign. The unfortunate officer just watches, for he/she has no power to enforce the rules. The board of directors and management carefully craft all kinds of rules and policies for the general good, but then they seem to turn a blind eye when it comes to accountability. What are their collective responsibilities beyond adopting some toothless rule or policy? A rule or policy without accountability is probably worse than having no rule at all. Can

you say "window dressing?"

Why not have a policy by which violators can be issued a warning or at least stopped to have a long and very slow chat about safety? That delay alone could be an incentive to slow down those who are always late for some critical appointment as evidenced by speeding and stop sign violations. After a couple of warnings, that driver or vehicle might even be banned from the campus for a specific time. How about banning certain contractor vehicles if their employees consistently disregard parking, speed limits, and other Montebello rules? That might get the attention of companies that have profitable business ties to Montebello – hit them in the pocketbook and bottom line. Give our hard-working security officers the ability to make Montebello a safer place with actual rules and consequences for uncivil behavior.

Are we a community of actual values, rules, and policies, or do we let the least rule-conscious among us set the standard for the rest of Montebello? We foster an atmosphere that suggests "if they never stop, why should I?" When is it too much? Are we an accountability-free zone?

I suggest the board have a discussion about the rules. If they are all just suggestions, why not eliminate or rescind them? Why should the chief of SAC and his officers be just powerless witnesses when the rules are broken? Is some penalty appropriate to prevent some future violation that may cause serious injury or property damage? How much above the posted speed limit is acceptable? 10-20-30 mph?

Let's put our thinking caps on and find a solution, if there is one. The majority who act within the rules have nothing to be concerned about. It's the small percentage of residents and contractors, the scofflaws, who should be concerned. What happened to good neighbors? 🏠





final glance



Found near fence line. Could be a fox. Appears to be laying on his back, the top of the skull is on the underside.

Photo by Don Savage