

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

PRIDE!

June 16, 2022



Alfred Paul Pavot, MD
October 15, 1933 – June 9, 2022



There are very few individuals and a handful of physicians who have had the background and experience of Dr. Pavot. Over the years, he has demonstrated his gentle kindness, fine temperament, and all the qualities one expects in a wonderful physician. This is a reflection of his being raised in Manchuria as the child of a French engineer employed by the Chinese government. He then had international

experience in his college, medical, and postgraduate education. He continued to have an interest in the advances of medicine and also was a keen observer of national and international events. I will miss our enjoyable talks and watching his walks with Candida and their dog. – *Erwin Jacobs, MD* 🐾

Photo by Dian McDonald

The Montebello Voice wants to hear from you: musings, travels, announcements, photos, book reviews, commentary, memoirs, essays, analysis, poems, suggestions, club news, recipes, and free ads
A publication for the residents, by the residents



Photo by MK

Cover photo of March for Our Lives by Jeanne Tiff

The MONTEBELLO Voice
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 Alexandria, Virginia

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Editor & Designer
 Mikhailina Karina

Contributors
 Erwin Jacobs, Dian McDonald, Bob Shea, Carolyn Strano, Chester Taylor, Jeanne Tiff, Bo Zen

Gate code

By *Mikhailina Karina*

We have all kinds of codes: ZIP codes, binary codes, emergency codes, penal codes, secret codes, Morse codes, and dress codes. The earliest recorded and much-feared legal code came from the Babylonian King Hammurabi in the late 1700s BCE, a collection of 282 rules codifying criminal, family, property, and commercial laws carved onto a massive basalt pillar. It may be the source of the “an eye for an eye” tradition that Mahatma Gandhi famously amended “and the whole world goes blind.” Skipping more than a few centuries forward, the Napoleonic Code of 1804 (the French Civil Code) – still in force with notable amendments – strengthened men’s authority over families and deprived women of individual rights. And of course, who hasn’t heard of the Da Vinci Code, Dan Brown’s blockbuster novel about a secret, murderous society at the Vatican.

Another code, less exciting but equally crucial, is the county code that spells out rules and regs about what we can and can’t do. One such code was invoked to explain the installation of imposing five new gates around the outdoor pool. Apparently, what we had for the past 42 was “grandfathered” and no longer up to code. Why are outdat-



ed rules called grandfathered? We have “the mother of all” something or other, and “everyone and their uncle,” but no quaint phrases referencing other members of the *mishpocha*.

Back to the new gates. The vertical bars and mesh on the door sections harken to something you’d see in a prison yard. Perhaps they’ll look classier and slimmer when they’re painted shiny black to match the chain link fence. What, exactly, was wrong with the chain link gates? Must be the grandfathers’ fault they could not keep out the riff-raff in our genteel community. I think a few gargoyles or pineapples would zhoozh up the non-descript banality.

Last week, when the first gates were installed on the ramp leading to the locker rooms, residents were bewildered by the size and severity of gates where none had existed. Habituated to baffling decisions around Montebello,

people shrugged their shoulders, shook their heads, and rolled their eyes at “management being management.”

However, on a quest to learn the unvarnished truth behind the new gates, I emailed General Manager Eric Finke several questions about the gates’ purpose and function. Below are my questions followed by GM Finke’s written response.

- ✓ Why do we have three gates on the ramp leading to the CC? What is their purpose, i.e., what sorts of activities and individuals are they meant to prevent? At what times are they going to be locked?
- ✓ What County Code and Fire Marshal requirements do they follow? Please provide a link to the official source, not paraphrasing.
- ✓ Is this a new code? Why didn’t we have gates or fencing on the ramp for the past 40 years and what necessitates their installation now?
- ✓ If the insurer is involved, I’d like an official statement to that effect.
- ✓ According to the June 1 email sent to the residents, similar gates will be installed for the pool’s main outside entrance and picnic hill. Why are the





current gates inadequate and need to be replaced?

- ✓ What company is the vendor for the project? Was there competitive bidding? What is the total cost? Is it part of the CC remodeling or another budget?
- ✓ Why was this particular model selected and who made the choice? Were other options considered?

GM Finke’s unabridged response: “The new gates are budgeted as part of the Community Center renovation project and their purpose is to provide egress away from the pool in case of emergency but also remain secured from the outside during pool operation. The County requires that all pool users have the opportunity to shower before using the pool which is why they want us to direct them through the locker rooms before entering the pool area per County code. The gates will be equipped with push bars that allow exit only and so they have to have the proper structure to accommodate the push bar mechanism. The gates will be painted black so the color matches the existing fence. The entire gate upgrade is a result of bringing the Community Center up to current code requirements, just like with the fire alarm system that resulted in closure of the fitness center until we receive our certificate of occupancy.”

I pointed out to GM Finke, the gates would be a cinch to climb using the convenient built-in footholds. Furthermore, the new gates on the ramp to the locker rooms are puzzling because we’ve never had any barriers in that space before. Ah, the ever-loving code must be obeyed!

In all fairness, GM Finke is new here and doesn’t know how summers at the outdoor pool really work. Based on my unscientific observations, a vast majority (if not all) pool guests don’t take a shower in the locker room – no one comes to the pool looking like they just stepped out of a shower and the guards have enough tact not to ask. Like-

wise, no one changes their footwear to non-street (whatever that means) shoes. Montebello employees regularly walk on the deck in the only shoes they put on their feet that morning.

Based on this reality that has nothing to do with county codes, the gate entrance does not need to be locked while the pool is open and staffed by lifeguards. Going through the locker rooms is an unnecessary schlep for those who shower in the comfort and privacy of their bathrooms and just want to sit on the deck and occasionally dip feet in the water. Another functional minus for locking pool gates is the lifeguards’ frequent inattentiveness when disabled guests (who presumably showered at home within the hour) are at the gate. Perhaps we need a charming little doorbell, which will undoubtedly irk sunbathers, to announce arrivals.

In search of code, I perused county documents that pertain to residential swimming pools. Below is a link to one

don’t fence me in

dealing with pools, spas, and hot tubs. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/land-development/pools-spas-and-hot-tubs>. Another is about fencing and barriers on page 33 at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/sites/health/files/assets/documents/pdf/water-recreation-facilities-ordinance.pdf>. Happy reading!

When there is so much wrong with world – wars, famines, droughts, floods, diseases – why do I care about something as inconsequential as squeaky metal gates around the pool? Because I feel powerless to do anything about The Big Problems. But maybe, just maybe, we can make our management listen to the residents and give us straight answers that make sense without making us feel dismissed with a generic, “It’s the code!” reply to every question. And maybe then we’ll learn the truth behind another Montebello design conspiracy: acres of metal shower safety bars along the stairs in the woodlands. 🍷



Chicago-style hot dog is the best!

By Chester Taylor

New York can boast of its large hand-tossed thin crust style, foldable Neapolitan-style pizza, but the best hot dog in the world comes from Chicago. It is made with an all-beef frankfurter on a poppy seed bun. Then topped with yellow mustard, chopped white onions, bright green sweet pickle relish, a dill pickle spear, tomato slices or wedges, pickled sport peppers, and dash of celery salt. The frankfurter can be steamed, charcoaled, or grilled. Catchup is unacceptable. Hebrew National all-beef franks are the best to use to make your Chicago dog. They are lower in fat, about 100 calories per frank, and taste great.

The first Chicago-style hot dog I ever tasted was from a street vendor on the beach in Ensenado, Mexico. It was fantastic. I was surprised by the tomatoes and no ketchup. Prior to this, my only experience buying hot dogs was in El Paso. I was doing my undergraduate study there at the University of Tex-

as at El Paso. Near the campus was a place called Der Wienerschnitzel. The hot dog stand was a tacky A-frame with a red roof and had a drive-through for window service. Many people in Texas were Germans, friends of Germans, had been to Germany during their military service or were Germans going to the Hawk missile school at Ft. Bliss. We all made fun of the name. We knew it should be Das Wienerschnitzel and denoted a Viennese breaded veal cutlet not a hot dog. Later, the name was changed to Wienerschnitzel – and still sold only hot dogs and not wiener schnitzel. Grammar aside, the price was right for for us poor college students. 🍔



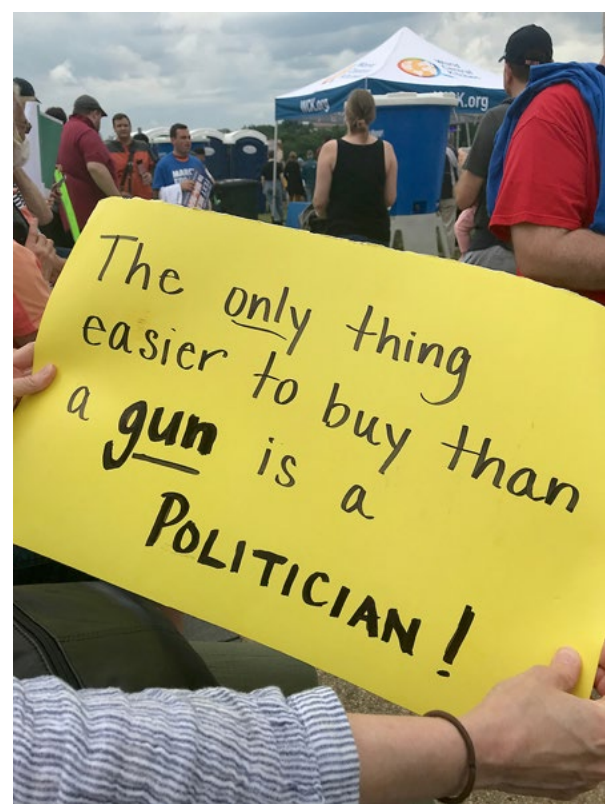
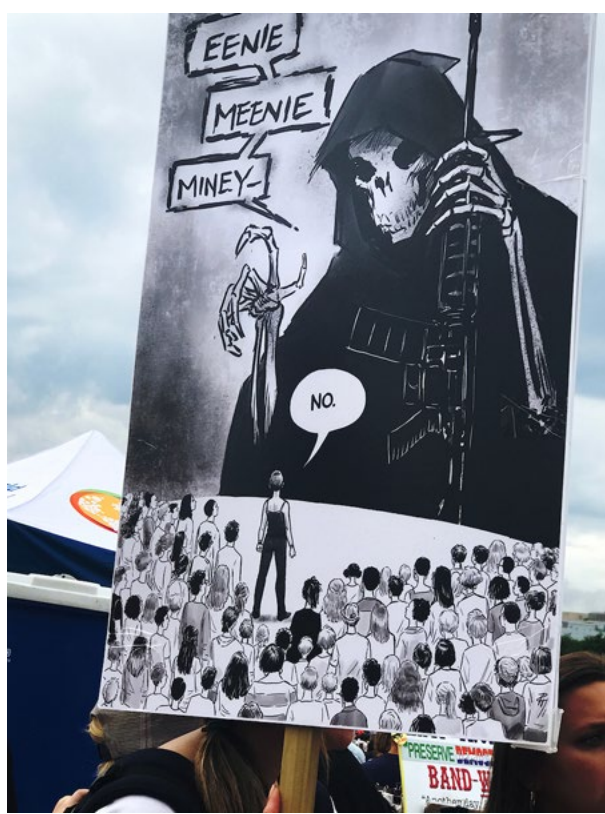
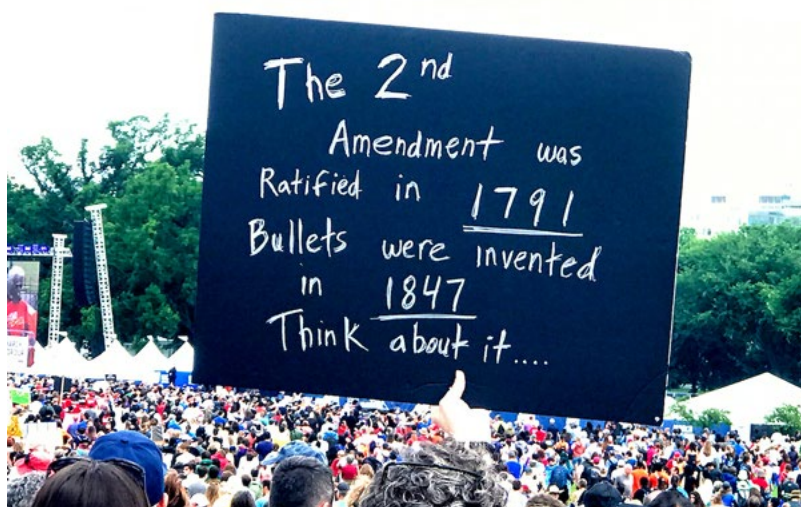
March for our lives

On June 11 I used my Metro Senior Card for the first time in a couple of years to go down to the Washington Monument and join the second March for our Lives. Neither the Metro nor the event itself were as thickly crowded as the first march four years ago, but there was still a crowd, peaceful, serious, nice to each other, most bearing signs. As I usually do, I concentrated on the handmade signs, thinking them more powerful than the mass printed ones. There were speeches broadcast on huge TV screens along Constitution Avenue. David Hogg, a Parkland survivor, was speaking as I arrived, and Emma Gonzalez, also from Parkland, was speaking as I left a couple of hours later. Thematic emphasis was on voting out legislators that have not acted on gun control, and voting in legislators who intend to do so. We were encouraged to keep at it since such major change does not happen quickly.

I noticed that the World Central Kitchen had provided drinking water for everyone, and that Gabby Giffords' organization had laid out a model cemetery of white cones, some filled with orange flowers, representing those who had died from gun violence. Orange seems to have become the significant color for gun control advocates; many in the crowd wore orange t-shirts.

The nicest thing was that several folks, noting my white hair and walking stick, thanked me for coming out with them. That was the kind of crowd it was. — *Jeanne Tiff* 🍷





When toxic was a way of life and how to survive

By Bob Shea

In October of 1964, as a very junior Army captain, I reported to the headquarters of a large logistics organization in Rodelheim, outside Frankfurt, Germany to be a maintenance staff officer. We had two missions: (1) rebuilding worn-out military cargo trucks, M-Series, to “new” condition (depot level work), and (2) supporting every commercial vehicle in Germany, from school buses to MP sedans to ambulances to light delivery vans (retail support).

We had 11 locations scattered from Kassel in the north to Bad Aibling in the south. There were a few military personnel at each site, for the workforce of approximately 3,800 was primarily German and third-country nationals from all over Europe. Civilians did the real work. Recall in the 1960s, Germany had a significant labor shortage.

I soon realized that the headquarters was at about 300% staffing, meaning that a new junior captain was not challenged or given many meaningful tasks. As I sat bored in the maintenance branch, I noticed that the only officer in the entire headquarters who did not have several commissioned assistants was the Personnel/Administrative Officer. He seemed to be genuinely busy. When the incumbent was reassigned to the States, I volunteered to be his replacement.

He managed the flow of headquarters paperwork, allocated civilian authorizations to the centers based on workload, funding, and the ability to hire, monitored German labor law compliance, managed the occupational safety program, looked after the management of our military personnel, and all other administrative tasks.

What I did, in Army terms, I later

realized, was called “stepping on my own poncho” or “shooting myself in the foot.”

Our commander, a full colonel, was a tyrant. He called himself Iron Mike. His last name is not important. Among his rather bizarre policies was one that said that the Army had not sent us to Germany to be tourists. Thus, unless you had a family emergency or your wife gave birth, you were not allowed to take leave. He loved to yell, scream,



and belittle his staff, especially in front of others. We worked five days a week, but he now and then would appear in his office on a Saturday morning and demanded that his entire staff be present if he was in his office. He refused to let anyone know what his weekend plans might be; consequently we were fully staffed each Saturday, even on days when he did not appear.

As the Personnel/Administrative Officer, my office was adjacent to his, meaning I was the first one he encountered when he threw a fit. I was his lightning rod.

When we had a headquarters-wide requirement to submit a position paper or a complex staff study to our higher headquarters on budget, annual work programs, or new missions, he would not get involved until literally minutes before it was due to be transmitted up the chain of command. He would then rant and rave, criticizing well-re-

searched details, and usually demand a complete rewrite. In addition to the massive amounts of staff work involved, we usually missed the critical deadline. He would be called on the carpet by his boss and would then blame his hard-working staff for making him look bad. Revenge was his modus operandi, and he was good at it.

As the admin officer, I soon found a way around this bottleneck. Once the entire staff had agreed that the study was accurate, well-presented, consistent with policy, I would have the transmittal cover letter prepared with a “really dumb” and obvious typographical error. Concurrently, another cover letter would be prepared without the obvious error.

When I took it to Iron Mike, he would find the error, bang on his desk, scream and yell, and usually fire me on the spot. I would go back to my office, wait a few minutes,

and return to his office with the alternate, and correct, cover letter, pointing out that the error had been corrected. He would yell and scream, and probably fire me again, but he would sign the transmittal letter, without the pre-planned typo, which would be rushed to our higher headquarters with usually minutes to spare before the deadline. That was the extent of his input into consequential papers and staff work that impacted much of US Army, Europe. He seemed to not want to invest time and energy into critical and impactful matters.

He fired or “relieved” me on 27 consecutive duty days. It became a joke within the headquarters with staff officers stopping by my office toward the end of each duty day to see if my record was intact. In most units, being relieved could be a career-ending event. With Iron Mike, it only meant that I was deep in his doghouse until he

forgot that he had fired me or he fired me again. I would be his temporary scapegoat, say, “Yes Sir,” and go back to work.

I was fired once for not having at my desk a railroad time table when he had to travel to Orleans, France to attend a conference. Another time, he fired me for not being able to tell him off the top of my head how many Spanish workers we employed in our Kaiserslautern Center. We tracked non-German nationals in our employ but not by their country of origin. Another time it was because I did not send one of my non-commissioned officers to the Post Exchange to do some shopping for the colonel’s wife. There were 24 other such strange events.

Each night Iron Mike left the office with two bulging briefcases of things he wanted to review at home. My first job each day was to retrieve from him paperwork to which he had attached notes. It might be as simple as “see me on this,” but it could also be profane with descriptions of staff officers’ intelligence and fitness to be working for Iron Mike. We called them blivets. In military-speak, a blivet is 10 pounds of \$#%#@ stuffed into a 5-pound bag.

His wife would periodically show up at the headquarters and bad mouth other military wives while she rifled through paperwork on our desks. I never once saw the woman when her speech was not slurred. Their teen-aged son ran away from home with his passport and

ended up back in the States living with relatives. With the Cold War waging, we had to concentrate on our own war of survival each day in the office. Iron Mike was at least as frightening to us as the Eastern-block soldiers along Germany’s eastern borders.

Today the phrase toxic work environment is a flashing red light that attracts whistleblowers and Inspectors General investigations. In 1964, that phrase had not been coined, but those of us within a scream of Iron Mike lived it. I lasted almost 15 months just outside his office. We had two very capable officers who volunteered for reassignment to Vietnam to get away from Iron Mike. Eventually he was reassigned back to the States and was replaced by another colonel who was an officer and a gentleman in the finest sense of the words. For a while, we almost did not know how to react to an involved boss who was not always in a rage, demeaning good people, and treating his staff like incompetent lackeys.

Today’s buzzwords about mentoring and subordinate development had no place in Iron Mike’s world. He was the epicenter of his own world. He commanded by fear, uncontrolled chaos, intimidation, and a strange sense of detachment from what our mission really was. Any success the organization achieved was despite him, not because of him. The success we enjoyed was akin to giving the plantation overseer with a whip in hand credit for a robust cotton harvest. We just kept our heads down and did the best we could.

Strangely enough, the staff bonded under Iron Mike, a band of staff brothers who got the job done on time and within budget despite temper tantrums, obscenities, and incompetent and often unhinged leadership. It became “us against him.” Unbeknownst to them, US Army Europe owed us a well deserved thank you. Go figure. 🙏



He swears to cross the mountains

By Chester Taylor

In the year 1640, John Taylor sailed from his home in Carlisle, England. John was born to the English gentry, but he was not a firstborn son. Because of the custom of primogeniture, where the firstborn son inherited the family estate, his only other choices were to go into the military or clergy or to emigrate to America. He chose to sail to America to seek his fortune. John received a land grant of 500 acres in the Northumberland and Lancaster Counties of Virginia, where he started a tobacco farm. He was the founder of the Taylor family in Virginia that would become part of the southern elite in America.

John was married to Elizabeth Bird, from Flintshire, Wales, and they had eight children. John and his family had landed in Norfolk, Virginia, then transferred to a local boat with a guide who brought them and their few possessions up the Chesapeake to get to their property. John and his large family worked hard that spring and built a two-level log cabin. They put their tools, horses, a milk cow, and wagon on the ground floor beneath and lived in the loft above. They used a ladder to get to the loft and would pull it up each evening and secure the trap door. Their fireplace was made with stacked flat stones from the river. It worked well for cooking and heating. A spring nearby gave them fresh water and served as cold storage for half the year. They put in a vegetable garden. Hunting and fishing were good there. They picked mulberries and blackberries in the summer and gathered black walnuts and hickory nuts in the fall. The following year, they cleared enough land to put in their first tobacco crop. Over the years the farm prospered. John died in 1651. His farm's appraised value in 1654 was 9,590 lbs. of tobacco.

One of John's and Elizabeth's sons,

James Taylor, founded the Hare Forest Farm located near Orange, Virginia. He and his wife, Francis Walker, were both born in Carlisle, England. They owned a large amount of acreage in Virginia. They had only one son, also named James Taylor. James, the son, was one of the first surveyors general of Virginia. He was hard-working and ambitious. His surveying work for Virginia earned him 16,000 lbs. of tobacco for his services. Being a surveyor gave him a chance to explore the rest of the state, and he was able to deed over 15,000 acres of land in Caroline, Spotsylvania, and Orange Counties to himself.

In 1716, the governor of Virginia organized a group to explore the western part of the state. The expedition consisted of 50 men, including some of the more prominent landowners of the state, a Huguenot journalist, 14 rangers, four Meherrin Indian scouts, and 74 horses. James joined the group. They started up the Rappahannock River and reached its head waters, crossed over the Blue Ridge Mountains at Swift Run Gap (2,365'), and then rode down into the Shenandoah Valley. There, they celebrated by firing off their weapons and toasting King George and the Governor with brandy and claret. They had a great celebration, and Governor Spotswood took one of the empty bottles, placed a paper in it, and claimed the valley in the name of George I. After the expedition, Governor Spotswood gave each officer a small stickpin made of gold and shaped like a horseshoe. Inscribed on it was "*Sic jurat transcendere montes,*" meaning "Thus he swears to cross the mountains." Its members became known as



With French help, the Americans defeat the British at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781. Painting by John Trumbull

the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe.

James married Martha Thompson on February 13, 1699, at St. Peter's Parish in King and Queen County. Martha had been born in Rapidan, Virginia, the daughter of Colonel James William Thompson of the British Army. James and Martha had nine children and were the great-grandparents of two presidents of the United States, James Madison, and Zachary Taylor. All the Taylor men of age at that time served on the American side in the Revolutionary War. Most were officers or sergeants in the militia (Minutemen) or the Continental Army, one was a commodore in the Navy (Richard Taylor), and one was a midshipman who was taken prisoner by the British and died on the old Jersey prison ship. Finally, on October 19, 1781, the Americans prevailed over the British at Yorktown, Virginia. It was a decisive victory by a combined force of American Continental Army troops led by George Washington and French Army troops led by the Comte de Rochambeau. The British Army and their leader, British Lord and Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis, were captured, forcing the British government to negotiate an end to the conflict. 🏰

The Speaker Series
Presents:

Fairfax County Sheriff Stacey Kincaid



Fairfax County's first elected female Sheriff Stacey Kincaid will discuss her office's work, and law enforcement issues it deals with such as scams affecting seniors and others.

The Q&A period will follow her remarks.

Day/Date: Wednesday, June 29th

Time: 7:30 in the evening

Residents will receive the
Zoom link in advance.

Sponsored by:

The Activities Committee



Photo by Bo Zen