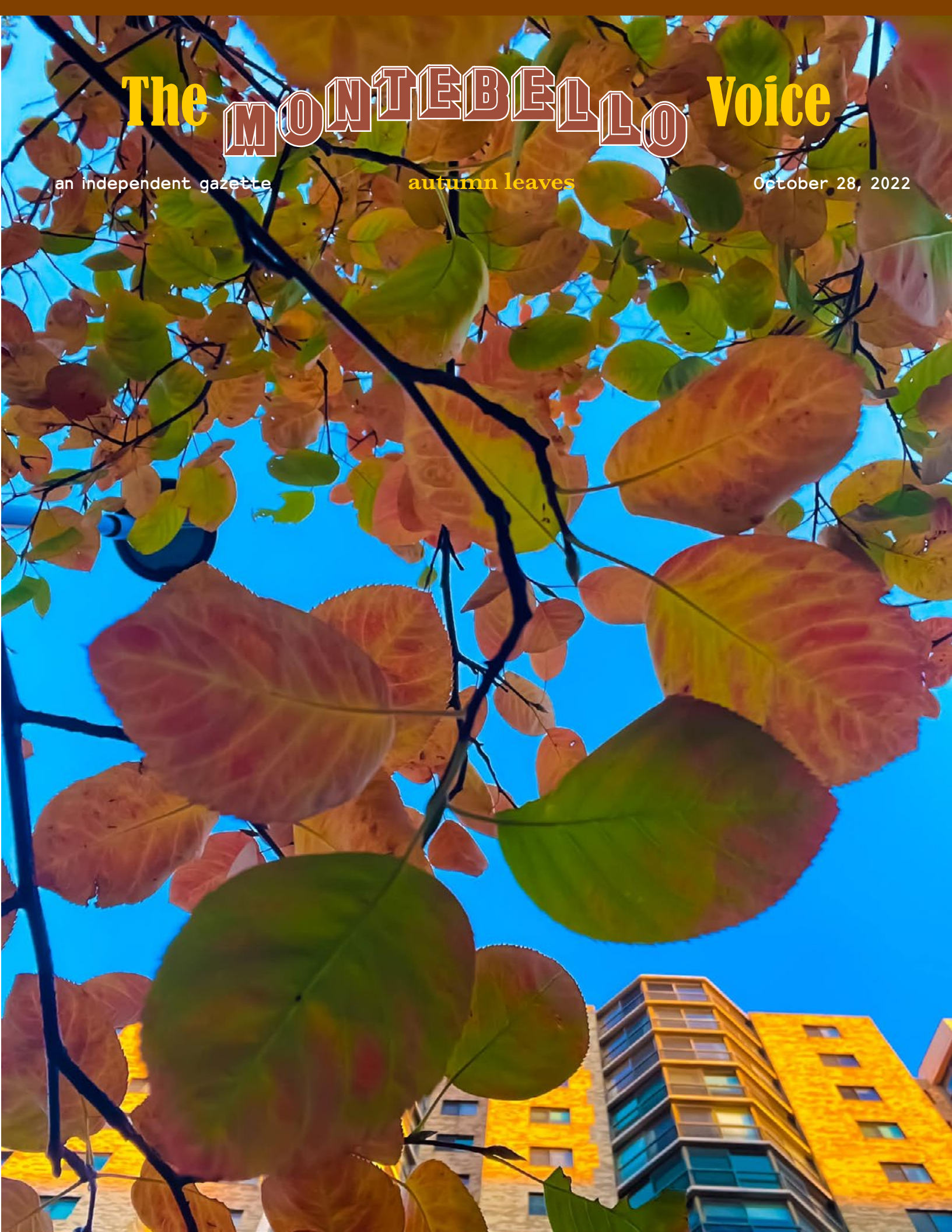


# The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

autumn leaves

October 28, 2022



**Making new keys**

Cintron was the locksmith Montebello recommended in the past. They moved from Route 1 to Wheeler Ave, and now, even though there is a Cintron web page, they do not exist any more.

The person answering the door at Wheeler Ave, gave me the name Cintron recommended.

Chesapeake Security (moving soon to the address below)

Tony Frederico  
6515 Hughesville Industrial Park Rd.  
Hughesville MD 20637  
301-843-0555

[www.chesapeakesecurity.com](http://www.chesapeakesecurity.com)

You have to remember under who is the Medeco keys record. In my case the record was under my husband's name (e-mail, actually) and he had to send an e-mail authorizing Chesapeake Security to allow me to have a key made.

Chesapeake Security has to check with Medeco ([www.medeco.com/en/](http://www.medeco.com/en/)) and once they receive the records they can make the key. The process took me approximately one month.

Is there another authorize Medeco locksmith in the area? Probably. Start thinking **now** if you need a key in the future because you will not be able to have it made in an emergency. – *Maria Rosa Schwartz* 📷



*Photo by Dian McDonald*

**Volvo and Starbucks team up on EV charging stations**

Charge your electric car and have a Starbucks cup of coffee while you wait. Volvo and Starbucks have teamed up to offer direct fast charging stations for EV vehicles being driven from Seattle to Denver. Along the 1,350-mile route, there will be 15 Starbucks with a charging station with 60 fast-charging units located about every 100 miles on the route. Customers will find charging locations via Google Maps. The fast-charging units will be made by Chargepoint and will take about 40 minutes to charge a Volvo C40 to 90 percent. This will be a pilot program to understand the usage and potential scalability of EV charging stations at the coffee chain's stores. – *Chester Taylor* 📷

**Petting your cat or dog is good for you and good for them**

Having a pet can reduce stress levels by lowering blood pressure and heart rate. The hormone oxytocin is released when we spend time with and pet our cat or dog. Oxytocin, known as the "love hormone," has the power to regulate our emotional responses and pro-social behaviors, including trust, empathy, gazing, positive memories, processing of bonding cues, and positive communication. According to Finnish researchers, this increases the ability for more interactions. Dog owners, especially tend to get out regularly and move more, leading to more social interaction. – *Chester Taylor* 📷

*Cover photo by Linda Brownlee*

**The** **MONTEBELLO** **Voice**  
 an independent gazette  
 Alexandria, Virginia

*This publication accepts no funding or oversight from advertisers, residents, or the Montebello Condominium Unit Owners Association. All opinions are encouraged and reflect the diversity of views in the community. All articles and photographs come from Montebello residents. To receive or contribute to this email-only gazette, contact [montebellovoice@cox.net](mailto:montebellovoice@cox.net) or visit on the web at [www.montebellovoice.com](http://www.montebellovoice.com).*

*Editor & Designer*  
 Mikhailina Karina

*Contributors*  
 Sue Allen, Joe de Angelis,  
 Linda Brownlee, Rebecca  
 Hayden, Patricia Jacubec,  
 Dian McDonald, Maria Rosa  
 Schwartz, Bob Shea, Chester  
 Taylor

## Sarah-Mai Simon

November 10, 1936 – October 17, 2022

**Sarah-Mai** was born in Manhattan, attended The Calhoun School, and met her husband at Brandeis University. Shortly thereafter Sammy began her life as the wife of a government career officer, alternating between the D.C. area and posts in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Her only regret was being far away from family when she was abroad.

An English major, she often worked as a librarian, and took pleasure in learning to cook the local food. Wherever her travels took her, Sammy made a powerful and positive impact on those she encountered, because she treated everyone with love and respect.

Sammy was curious and adventurous, and enjoyed plunging herself into every culture, including learning the local language and recipes.

Sammy was a devoted wife, mother and daughter, with a heart of gold, and readiness to deal with any situation with determination, integrity and humor.

Sammy enjoyed living at Montebello. She made friends easily, through her yoga instruction, community involvement and during her walks with her dog Olive. We wish Sarah-Mai's husband Alan, and sons Curtis and Daniel peace and many joyful blessings from their mother's memory. 🙏



Today our bright Michigan autumn turned white and cold with early snow that brought branches down and knocked out our power. It is the day I learned that Sammy Simon had passed away, a cold and sad truth.

I remember her so well as the person who held our little writer's group together keeping us in check with picky grammatical minutia. "That's a misplaced modifier," or "This calls for a comma," she'd note. Sammy didn't write much at that time, but when she broke her hip and was sent to recover in a nursing home, she started a journal. The less-than-ideal conditions there didn't quell her sense of humor. Sammy wrote about her rude roommates and bland meals with a sense of ironic comedy, making lemonade out of very sour lemons.

I interviewed Sammy and Alan about their dog, Olive, who was featured in an Our Neighbors columns in the *The Times of Montebello*. The story was a cinch to write because Sammy basically wrote it herself.

Among the many hats worn by Sammy was chair yoga leader. I attended several sessions and was impressed by Sammy's gentle and positive demeanor, encouraging those who could barely walk to do their best. She understood infirmity.

When I think of Sammy, I see an image of her walking Olive behind Building 4, a tiny woman who cast a very long shadow. I miss her. – Sue Allen 🙏



Photo (top) by Dian McDonald

## The magic of memory

By Rebecca Long Hayden

*“Time is like a river, it flows in bends.  
If we could only step back around the  
turns,  
we could travel in either direction.  
I’m sure it’s possible.”*

*Albert Einstein*

*I’ve been home to Texas City,* Texas, many times since I moved away, but only once have I been there unannounced and unknown to friends or relatives. And I’ve always believed there’s magic in being where you aren’t expected to be.

I had business in Houston, and I didn’t think there would be time to get to TC. However, I had several hours before my flight, so on impulse, I rented a car at Hobby Airport and drove down the freeway, to the town that was once a soft place for my 10-year-old heart to land. I was rootless before 1955, and TC was a gift of kindness and stability.

I drove up and down the main streets, and sought out what used to be my elementary, junior high, and high schools. I stopped in front of my old house on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I drove out on the dike, world’s longest fishing pier, as we all do when we visit. Paris has the Eiffel Tower, Egypt has the pyramids, but TC has the dike, and we love it, residents and alumni alike.

The town seemed bigger than I remembered, not smaller, as people sometimes view the landscape of the past. My schools, my house, TC itself – they used to be just big enough to shelter those who loved it there. Now

things seemed larger, curiously strange and familiar at the same time.

The profound experience, the magic of being where I wasn’t supposed to be, happened when I parked at the old high school. I walked over to the gym, and I felt a shift, a softening. I stood still, then I took a step around the bend in Einstein’s river. I let go of time. The air around me changed, the colors, too, and I was there, in 1963. In the reality of time and space, I had just turned 70 years old. In that moment I was 17 again. I felt the hair blowing around my neck, long like it used to be. I was light and free, like it is when you’re very young.

I remembered the brick walls, and the windows, and I wondered: did they re-

in 1963. This was where I stood when I learned President Kennedy was dead. I felt my boyfriend’s tender embrace, and felt my shoulders shake against his chest as I cried.

Then like dreams do, just when I thought I might stay there, in the kind days when we grew up at leisure, the river of time brought me back. I imagined the words of our senior yell: *Here we are, there ain’t no more . . .* And it was over. The gym was silent. The windows and walls were just windows and walls, inanimate and un-alive, not looking at me, not looking at anything.

It was Sunday again, and my rental car was alone in the lot. I had one last thought about our strange journey through time. In the sunny days of childhood, it took seven long years to get from 10 to 17. But the time it took to go from 17 to 70? Just a week. That’s how time works now. A week from 17 to 70; maybe only a day from 70 to what comes next.

I had a plane to catch, and another home to go to, but I’ll return to Texas City as often as I can, open to another moment of magic, knowing that no matter what, my hometown will make me welcome, always.

*Rebecca Long Hayden lives in Building 1 at Montebello, and is the author of two books, both available on Amazon.*

*Tuesday in Texas*

*The Second Life of Brencie Jessup* 📖



member me? Could the glass into Mrs. Morton’s classroom see me? Could the sidewalk remember the brush of my feet in the colored tennis shoes that were popular senior year?

The gym doors stood open, and I heard the belly thump of the band playing the fight song. A pep rally, so it was Friday. The parking lot bulged with ‘57 two-tone Chevys, black and white, turquoise and white. Girls in dresses floated by like butterflies, and boys, tucked up and clean cut, smiled at them, and at me. Then a cloud covered the bright blue memory, moved on to another day

## Some memories are chiseled in stone

By Bob Shea



*“Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you’ve got to start young.”*

*Attributed to Theodore Roosevelt*

**A**t a certain age we all get teased about forgetting where our glasses are, or for asking “why did I go to the kitchen,” or for wandering around looking for the television remote. It’s an age thing.

My theory is that as we grow older, certain things are forever in our brain, leaving less room for insignificant things, such as what we had for breakfast or “what’s his face’s” first name. First come, always there! Why some things are in the forever category could be the basis for a PhD thesis, but I’ll leave that to much smarter folks.

My three daughters would often ask,

as children, about the olden days, but never specify which era. Parents, and especially grandparents, often get these types of questions, and when we reply, the young questioner may roll his or her eyes and patiently endure the longer than expected answer about something special from the olden days. It goes with the territory for them and us. We all know the drill.

Certain things are engraved in my memory. Things I remember from childhood when there was plenty of room in my brain for the important things, such as a Roy Rogers’ horse’s name or some special girl’s telephone number to occupy space, leaving less room for the insignificant and random things that cascaded into my brain in later years like algebra, tax preparation, and zip codes.

I especially recall:

Being cautioned by my mother to avoid walking in the middle of an un-

paved road on the way to school to avoid staining my shoes and socks from the grease and oil left by passing cars on the median’s tall weeds.

Watching the rag man who went through our neighborhood once each summer in a green wagon pulled by a horse, buying rags, old pots and pans, and scrap metal. He rang a bell and shouted “rags today?” He stopped showing up when everyone began donating scrap metal and other things for the war effort.

The mind-blowing smell of the bakery in the Mohican Market on Manchester Street when donuts and crullers were being deep fried. It was a to-die-for-smell of crisp dough, hot oil, and sugar that made you want a grease-stained paper bag of fresh pastry to take home.

Watching B-17 bombers landing and taking off from Grenier Army Airfield on one leg of a long flight east to Great

Britain and WWII.

Enduring the household chore of squeezing a plastic bag of something (maybe high-quality lard?) after breaking a sealed pellet holding yellow coloring, thereby creating margarine. Butter was both rationed and very expensive. At that time, I knew it was not butter – despite what 2022 commercials tell us about today’s margarine.

Seeing the frozen cream on cold winter mornings on the top of milk bottles left on our doorstep by the neighborhood milkman. Usually the cardboard cap had been pushed upwards from the top of the bottle, creating a pillar of sweet frozen cream, and if you were lucky, you might get a spoonful.

Captured by fantasy when watching *The Song Of The South* in a local theater, a 1946 Walt Disney Technicolor combination of real people and animation. Only much later did I realize that Uncle Remus was a stereotype and probably a racist depiction. Still, Brer Bear, Brer Fox, and Brer Rabbit and Zip A Dee Doo Dah stay with me.

Savoring the unique taste of the soft drink Moxie, something only a northern New Englander

could relish. It is so powerful a memory that my Maine daughter sent me an eight-pack of Moxie for my last birthday. She understands Dad.

Taking note of small rectangular red, white, and blue pennants with gold fringe in neighbors’ windows. A blue star represented a family member who was serving in the military. A gold star represented a family member fallen in the war. I recall two homes with two gold stars proudly and sadly displayed.

Seeing my grandfather’s tears as he told my mother and me that Franklin Delano Roosevelt had died.

Having mixed emotions when school was shut down for five weeks during a

polio epidemic and seeing photos in newspapers of people in iron lungs as well as photos of kids being fitted with steel leg braces and miniature crutches. We made up the lost school time by going to school every Saturday for the entire spring.

In August 1945, being told forcefully by my mother to “knock off the noise” when a group of neighborhood kids began an impromptu parade to celebrate V-J Day. Our elderly next door neighbor was being “waked” at home, a solemn event inconsistent with a kids’ noisy parade of celebration.

Listening to a uniformed five or six member Salvation Army brass band on a cold downtown sidewalk as they



played carols for Christmas shoppers and collected money for the less fortunate. In those days the buzzword was “underprivileged.” It was a reenactment of the carol *Silver Bells*. It was Christmas-time in the city.

Squinting at the bones in my feet in a super high tech X-ray machine in a shoe store, making sure the new shoes fit properly.

Wearing corduroy knickers as a boy. They were called “whistle pants” for the sound they made as you walked.

Leaving the house to escape the horrible smell when my mother gave my little sister a “Toni home permanent;” hopefully it was at a time of the year

## those were the days

when the windows could be opened. I recall feeling sorry for my sister who had to sit quietly and endure the process. Beauty had a price!

Feeling patriotic as I gathered milkweed pods as a grammar school project. Allegedly the silky inner parts of the pod would be used to make kapok life vests used in WWII.

The first time I went to the barber shop by myself, money tucked in my pocket as I entered the real man’s world of talk about the Red Sox, Bruins, Celtics, and Braves (yes, the Boston Braves), the smell of hair tonic, the old magazines, and the sound of electric clippers.

Buying peanut butter in paper containers that were hand-filled by clerks at Kennedy’s store on Elm Street. They sold bulk peanut butter and cottage cheese, also brown and white eggs. They ground coffee beans and had huge blocks of butter and various cheeses that were cut for individually-sized orders. You bought as much as you needed or could afford. Ahhhh, the swirling different smells!

Why do these things stick in my brain? Avail-

able brain space? An impressionable boy? Sensory appeals that could not be denied? Maybe all of the above. Or maybe I am just strange.

Think about what you remember. I would guess that each one of us has a collection of sights, sounds, and smells from the olden days stashed in some forgotten corner of our brain, ready to be recalled if a young person asks the right question. What are yours? 🍷

## La Basilica di San Pietro

By Joe de Angelis

**T**he history of Saint Peter's Basilica begins in the year AD 64 with the crucifixion of the Apostle Peter. It is from Peter whom the Papacy's power and authority emanates and has buttressed the Catholic church's authority for over two millennia. The Basilica of Saint Peter, located in Città del Vaticano (Vatican City), is more than a grand architectural masterpiece. According to Catholic tradition, it contains the burial site of Saint Peter, who is considered the first Pope and Bishop of Rome.

When Christ said, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," he was speaking metaphorically, not literally. However, there is now a physical structure, La Basilica di San Pietro, which was built over what is believed to be the grave site of Saint Peter. Even though the Basilica of Saint Peter, as well as the residence of the Pope, are located within the limits of Vatican City, Saint Peter's Basilica is not the official basilica of the Bishop of Rome: The Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano, in the City of Rome is.

In AD 326 Emperor Constantine built the Constantine Basilica over the grave site of Saint Peter. No longer in existence, Constantine's Basilica (Old Saint Peter's Basilica) has been replaced by the grand structure that we know today. The Papacy, established in Rome, remained there until AD 1309 when it moved to Avignon, France and remained there for 68 years in what is known as the Babylonian Captivity. When the Papacy returned to Rome in AD 1377, the Basilica built by Emperor Constantine had fallen into dire disrepair.

The first pope to consider rebuilding the Basilica was Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455) who commissioned work on the old Basilica from Leone Battis-

ta Alberti and Bernardo Rossellino. At the same time he had Rossellino design a plan for an entirely new basilica. However, by the time of Pope Nicholas V's death, little had been achieved in the way of renovations, but the Pope had also ordered the demolition of the Colosseum and some 2,522 cartloads of stone had been transported to the site for use in the new basilica.

Over the centuries the burial site of Saint Peter gradually gained in importance, eventually becoming a major place of pilgrimage. With the Basilica practically in ruins, Pope Julius II (1503–1513) was planning his own tomb to be designed and adorned with a sculpture by Michelangelo and placed within the basilica. In 1505 he decided to completely demolish the ancient basilica and replace it with a new, monumental structure to house his enormous tomb. Construction of the present day basilica commenced on 18 April 1506 with the laying of the foundation stone by Pope Julius II. The basilica's design is that of a Latin cross with three isles and a dome at the crossing, directly above the high altar. Shortly thereafter, Pope Julius II hired Donato Bramante to construct a dome for the new basilica, however, both Bramante and the Pope died before any appreciable work had been done on the dome.

In 1546, Pope Paul III appointed Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni architect of Saint Peter's Basilica. Michelangelo worked on the basilica until his death in 1564, 17 years later. Over the course of 120 years, a total of seven architects worked on the basilica laboring under the watchful and guid-



ing eyes of 20 reigning Popes. Their combined efforts resulting in the present-day basilica, which was completed on 18 November 1626.

Today the Basilica of Saint Peter sits majestically on the left bank of the Tiber River in Vatican City with its magnificent dome rising above the cityscape. The Basilica of Saint Peter is approached via the Piazza de San Pietro, one of the largest and most beautiful squares in the world. The piazza was commissioned by Pope Alexander VII in 1656, and designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. It is an elliptical forecourt large enough to accommodate some 300,000 people and is enclosed by a massive colonnade with Doric columns, four deep. Two fountains were aligned with, and placed on either side of a 4,500 year old Egyptian Obelisk, at the center of the plaza. The colonnade ringing the piazza forms a keyhole effect, which alludes to Saint Peter as the keeper of the keys to heaven.

The latest addition to the Piazza San Pietro is a simple gray stone with the Coat of Arms of Pope Saint John Paul II and the date 13 May 1981 in Roman numerals. The stone marker commemorates the date and the place of the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II. The letter M on the coat of Arms is for the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom the Pope was totally devoted.

The Piazza San Pietro ends at the

## When in Rome

iconic facade of the Basilica designed by Carlo Maderno in 1612. The Latin inscription across the top of the façade, which greets all visitors, reads: In honor of the Prince of the Apostles: Paul V Borghese, Supreme Pontiff, in the year 1612, the seventh of his pontificate. The façade features eight Corinthian columns, 10 feet wide and 90 feet high. The attic is adorned with 13 statues across the top: Christ the Redeemer, St. John the Baptist, and 11 of the Apostles. Behind the façade there is a long portico or “narthex” stretching the entire width of the basilica. This lobby area gives way to the doors that provide entry to the Basilica, of which there are five.

Three of the five doors are noteworthy in that they are framed by huge, antique columns salvaged from the old Basilica of Saint Peter. At 27 feet in height, the doors provide an immediate sense of the enormity of the Basilica. Each door is remarkable in its own right, and each is a magnificent work of art.

Facing the doors, the door to the left is the *Porta dei morti* (Door of the dead) which is used as an exit door for funeral processions. It is made of bronze and was commissioned by Pope John XXIII in 1961. The door includes a portrait of Pope John XXIII kneeling before the crucified figure of Saint Peter.

To the right of the *Porta dei morti* is the *Porta del bene e del male* (Door of Good and Evil), with the left side of the door representing evil, while the right side represents goodness. In 1977 the sculptor Luciano Minguzzi, gave the door to Pope Paul VI for his 80th birthday.

The center door, known as *il Filarete* (The Lover of Virtue), was made in 1455 by order of Pope Eugenius IV. It

is the oldest of the five doors, having been salvaged from the old Basilica of St Peter for use for the new Basilica.

To the right of the *il Filarete* is the *Porta dei Sacramenti* (Door of the Sacraments) which was inaugurated by Pope Paul VI in 1966. It portrays the seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Eucharist, Matrimony, Holy Orders and Extreme Unction. The *Porta dei Sacramenti* is the door that is kept open for the public to enter the basilica.

The last door, on the far right is the *Porta Sancta* (Holy Door). In 1950 the old wood door was replaced by a new door. The *Porta Sancta* is sealed from the inside with bricks and mortar and is only opened during Jubilee years which commence on Christmas day of the preceding year when the Pope breaks open the door. The Jubilee year was initiated by Pope Boniface VIII in AD



1300. Everyone who passes through the Holy Door during a Jubilee Year is granted a Plenary Indulgence, that is, the entire remission of temporal punishment for sin. Jubilee years occur every twenty-five years and the next Jubilee year will be the year 2025.

Interestingly enough, as grandiose as St. Peter's is, it does not have a *campanile* (belltower). This is not intentional, as Maderno's original design called for two *campanili*, one at either end of the façade. Work on the bell towers, however, did not commence until 1638, almost 10 years after Maderno's death. Bernini redesigned the bell towers, adding three stories: Two rectangular

sections and the third in the shape of a pyramid. Almost immediately, and as the tower progressed, cracks appeared not only in the bell tower, but also in the facade itself. As these cracks spread under the watchful eye of Pope Innocent X, he became very concerned that the bell tower would somehow cause the entire Cathedral to collapse. The Pope blamed Bernini and his revised design for the pending disaster and ordered the bell tower to be immediately and completely dismantled. The Pope then banished Bernini from Rome. However, the controversy over the bell and the cause of the cracks persists to this day, and Saint Peter's is still without any bell towers. But that is not to say that the basilica does not have bells. The bells of the basilica are located at either end of the façade below the clocks. The bells are rung upon the death of each pontiff and as of 2005 upon the election of a new Pope.

Saint Peter's Basilica was built in the traditional Renaissance style and covers an external area of over 227,064 square feet, with an interior area of 163,181 square feet. This enormous basilica can accommodate as many as 20,000 people seated or 60,000

people standing. The inside of Saint Peter's Basilica is nothing less than awe inspiring. The grandeur and enormity of the building is beyond comprehension: It is something you have to see to believe. The interior is a vast space filled with numerous sculptures, all of which are masterpieces. Many of the world's finest artists are represented in the works of art which reside in the Basilica: These include Michelangelo's *Pietà*, Bernini's *Baldachino* and his statue of Saint Longinus and Arnolfo di Cambio's ancient statue of Saint Peter, to name a few.

Michelangelo's magnificent sculpture, the *Pietà*, is the first masterpiece



## When in Rome

that visitors encounter upon entering the Basilica. It resides in the first chapel to the right of the entrance. The Pietà was carved from a single block of white Carrara marble. Michelangelo's contemporaries were so impressed by his sculpture that Giorgio Vasari, the author of "Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects," stated it was "a miracle that a formless block of stone could ever have been reduced to a perfection that nature is scarcely able to create in the flesh." The Pietà is the only work ever signed by Michelangelo; however, he not only carved his name, but he also wrote that he sculpted the Pietà. His inscription, which is plainly visible on the sash running across Mary's bosom, reads MICHAELANGELVS BONAROTVS FLOREN FACIEBA[T] (Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine, made this). Vasari also wrote that Michelangelo later regretted his passionate outburst of pride and swore never again to sign another of his works.

Also of interest is the *Rota Porfilitica* (Purple Disk), next to the main entrance, on the center line of the church. The disc dates back 1700 years to Old Saint Peter's Basilica where it was originally laid. On Christmas night in the year AD 800 Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Empire by Pope

Leo III. An additional 21 Emperors also knelt down on this very stone to be crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Until 1452, the *Rota Porfilitica* was the exact spot where emperors knelt to kiss the Cross and recite the Apostle's Creed before receiving their crown from the pope.

There are other significant floor markings as well, such as the brass marking set in the marble floor that compare the length of Christendom's largest churches to that of Saint Peter's Basilica. These markers measure from the Altar of the Chair of St. Peter to the end of the nave. There are 30 markers for Cathedrals from around the world. The markers consist of brass letters and stars indicating the names and lengths of the other churches, such as the Basilica S Pavli via Ostiens-127.36 meters (Basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls.) The markers provide visitors an appreciation of the size of St Peter's Basilica compared to other basilicas.

Further along, standing in one of the niches at the crossing of the Basilica is Bernini's 13-foot high statue of Saint Longinus, the Roman centurion who pierced Christ's side with a lance during his Crucifixion: the last of the "Five Holy Wounds of Christ." The statue also marks the site of one of the most precious relics in Christendom: The lance which pierced Christ's side is preserved beneath the dome of Saint Peter's Basilica. There are believed to

be four such relics, however, the Catholic Church makes no official claim as to any of their authenticity.

There are some 32,800 square feet of mosaic art that adorn the interior of the Basilica of Saint Peter. Mosaics beautify the walls and the dome to the

extent that all of the paintings and alter pieces have been recreated as mosaics. What appear to be paintings hanging on the walls are, in fact intricately constructed mosaics consisting of millions of pieces of colored stones, glass and gold. The most famous of these mosaics is the reproduction of Raphael's Transfiguration, which is located at the end of the left aisle, on the outside of the Pier of St. Andrew near the high Altar.

As early as the 17th century, the Vatican was looking for a way to illuminate, preserve and even replicate the many masterpieces that hung in the Basilica. The details of oil or tempura paintings were lost in the shadows of the great nave, and mosaics with their countless tiny edges of stone, glass, gold, and silver were thought to be an ideal medium to illuminate said details. In the early 1700s, Alessio Mattioli, a glass kiln owner and chemist developed a method called *smalti filati*, which literally means "enamels yarns," but is interpreted as "fused glass pulled by hand." *Smalti* is a brilliant, opaque fused glass made with crystalline and colored material that provides thousands of glass colors from just a few dozen hues of glass pastes. This process revolutionized the art of mosaics and the Vatican protected and supported Mattioli's breakthrough technique.

Although the Vatican had always had a mosaic shop, it was not until 1717 that Pope Benedict XIII formally established the Studio del Mosaico Vaticano (Vatican Mosaic Studio). By the end of the century the artists of the Vatican Mosaic Studio, had copied all but seven of the Basilica's altarpieces. The original masterpieces were put into storage to prevent deterioration. Today the studio is responsible for all new mosaics, as well as the maintenance and restoration of all the existing mosaics in Saint Peter's. The practice of giving mosaics made in the Vatican Mosaic Studio as papal gifts began in 1826 when Pope Leo XII gave a mosaic to King Charles X of France. Such gifts are still quite common today.



Saint Peter's Basilica also houses the Chair of Saint Peter, which is located in the apse. A wooden throne, that was believed to have belonged to the Apostle Peter, was a gift from the Holy Roman Emperor Charles II of France to Pope John VIII in AD 875. The oak chair was repaired and decorated by Bernini in 1666 and ensconced in a spectacular display of bronze statues of saints and angels beneath a depiction of the Holy Spirit portrayed as a dove in the Gloria window. Often mistaken for a stained-glass window, the Gloria window, is in fact made of thinly cut pieces of alabaster: There are no stained glass windows in the basilica. The Chair, however, has been studied many times over the years, the latest being from 1968 to 1974. That study concluded that no part of the chair dated earlier than the sixth century and could not have been used by St. Peter, however, it still retains its place of honor in the Basilica.

The largest and most visible work of art in the Basilica is the Baldacchino di San Pietro (Saint Peter's Baldachin). It was commissioned by Pope Urban VIII, and designed by Bernini. He started it in 1623 and completed it 11 years later in 1634. This gigantic bronze Baroque edifice serves as a canopy for the Basilica's High Altar. It is located directly beneath the dome, and directly above Saint Peter's tomb at the center of the crossing of the Basilica.

From an aesthetic point of view the Baldacchino di San Pietro fills the vertical space under Michelangelo's great dome giving perspective to the enormous scale of the Basilica and the people within. A combination of sculpture and architecture, the canopy rests upon four helical (spiral) columns each of which stands on a high marble plinth (heavy base). The spiral columns, 66 feet in high, are made of 927 tons of

dark bronze, which was taken from the roof of the Pantheon, are accented with gold vine leaves. A radiant sun depicted on the underside of the canopy represents the Holy Spirit. The four columns support a cornice, above the High Altar, which is embellished with four, twice life size angels, which are situated at the top of each column, bringing its height to 90 feet. Aside from the High Altar beneath the dome, there are 24 other altars, nine chapels, and 40 life size statues all within the walls of the Basilica.

Beneath Saint Peter's Basilica lies the Vatican Grottoes, located on the ground level of the Old St. Peter's Basilica. There are over 100 tombs throughout the Basilica, many of which are located in the Vatican Grottoes. The most recent interment being that



of Pope John Paul II, who was interred on 8 April 2005.

Beneath the Vatican Grottoes is the ancient Roman burial site known as the Vatican Necropolis. The Necropolis was originally a burial ground built on the southern slope of the Vatican Hill. Roman law forbade burials within the city walls; consequently, burial sites sprang up along the roads outside of the city. At depths ranging from 16 to 39 feet, and among several huge columns from the original fourth century Basilica, the Necropolis includes the

burial site of Saint Peter.

The entrance to the Vatican Grottoes is via a staircase adjacent to the statue of Saint Longinus. Access to the Vatican Necropolis is from a separate entrance outside of the Basilica: the Necropolis cannot be entered from the Grottoes and visa a versa.

The Clementine Chapel, which is an enclosed chapel located within the underground necropolitian grottoes is believed to be the actual site where Saint Peter was crucified. This belief has ostensibly been reinforced by archaeological investigations conducted by the papacy. Said investigation indicates that the present-day site of the Clementine Chapel is, in fact, the actual site where Saint Peter was crucified. However, papal archaeological investigations notwithstanding, this does not seem plausible since Saint Peter was crucified on the spina of the circus Nero, which was several feet above ground, and the grotto is well beneath ground level.

The dome of Saint Peter's Basilica can be fully accredited to the brilliance of Michelangelo, without whom the great dome would never have become a reality. The Cupola of Saint Peter's Basilica rises to a total height of 448 feet above the ground. The dome itself, which is 265 feet high with a diameter of 190 feet, is the tallest, free-standing dome in the world. It ascends above the altar of Saint Peter and is extravagantly embellished with mosaics and ornaments. It is supported by four main structural piers that are 394 feet high with a perimeter of 234 feet.

On the inside, along the base of the dome, there is a Latin inscription written in letters six and a half feet high which gives one a feeling for the enormity of the dome. The inscription reads: "*Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram*

*aedificabo ecclesiam mean et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum*” (You are Rock and on this rock I will build my Church, to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.) With these words Jesus invested Peter with supreme authority over what would become the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

The dome has several elements across six concentric circles, including 16 large windows, busts, frescos, and 96 figurines. There are six ascending levels to the interior of the dome above the 16 windows, each of which portray various religious figures. In ascending order there are the busts of the 16 Popes buried in the basilica, figures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist and various Apostles, and angels bearing the instruments of Jesus’ Passion, the faces of Cherubim

and Seraphim, the angelic custodians of Saint Peter’s tomb, and finally the faces of winged angels.

There is also a staircase of 231 steps inside the Basilica that takes one from ground level to the base of the dome where there is another staircase of 320 steps within the dome itself. The second staircase leads to the top of the Cupola, from which one is afforded an unrestricted view of the Vatican and the city of Rome.

The one constant pertaining to the Basilica of Saint Peter is the burial site of Saint Peter. The Catholic Church, throughout its history has gone to great lengths to maintain the site and its credibility. On 26 June 1968 Pope Paul VI declared that the bones of Saint Peter have been found. But it was not until November 2013 that Pope Francis pub-

## when in Rome

licly displayed what were believed to be the bones of Saint Peter found beneath the main altar of the basilica.

The issue of the authenticity of St. Peter’s bones, however, does not take away from the grandeur and splendor of the Basilica itself. From its grand size and architecture, which in itself is a masterpiece of High Renaissance architecture, to the unparalleled works of art contained therein, and the grandiose piazza extended before its grand entrance the Basilica of Saint Peter is truly one of the wonders of the world to be appreciated by all.

In 1984 the Stato della Città del Vaticano, to include the Basilica of Saint Peter, was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. 🏛️



*Theresa Kritcher*  
 &  
*Rebecca McNeely*

October 16 – November 26  
 Community Center Gallery



## Gobble! Gobble!

Polymer Clay Make It! Bake It! Take It!  
**Tuesday Nov 8, 2-5pm**  
and of course : eat cookies and chocolate!

Where: **The Underground CC**



The holiday season is practically upon us! Come make a Turkey, or pilgrim, or a cornucopia or whatever your fancy comes up with!

Polymer clay can be further enhanced with mica powders, and silkscreens! Learn these techniques to make shimmering creations with intricate designs.

Do come - no registration needed! just bring yourself - we have clay, tools and ovens - so you can complete your project and take it with you.

Of course — we will all enjoy chocolate and cookies! An absolute must while we are clayng.

### What is Polymer Clay?

Polymer Clay is a non-toxic synthetic clay that can be baked to strong hardness in a toaster oven. With lots of colors and a myriad of techniques, it can be used to make pretty much any type of art - whether it is wall art, jewelry, or home decor , or utility items.



## See You In November!

AiM Polymer Clay Group



Montebello Music Club

Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, November 19, 2022

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Are you interested in renting a table this year?

Tables are available at \$20 on a first-come, first-served basis. Items to be offered can be jewelry, art work, handicrafts, household items, knickknacks.

(No clothes except handmade baby clothes or accessories.)

White House Ornaments will be available

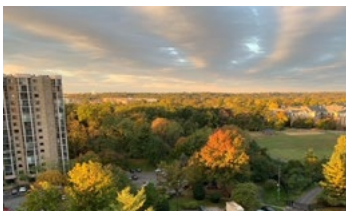
For more information or to reserve a table,  
contact [carolcoyle@cox.net](mailto:carolcoyle@cox.net)

## The Montebello Grounds Committee Presents:

### 2022 Nature Photo Contest

#### Contest Rules:

- Eligible subject matter: Natural flora and fauna, observed on Montebello property since Nov 1, 2021
- Photographers may submit up to 5 photos
- Photographer agrees that submitted photos may be used by the Grounds Committee for promotional purposes
- See [MontebelloGrounds.com](http://MontebelloGrounds.com) for more info



Show your Creativity!

#### ENTER NOW

Attach up to 5 .jpg or .png files to email to [GroundsCommittee@Montebello.org](mailto:GroundsCommittee@Montebello.org)  
Give your name, building/unit, phone number, and where each photo was taken

Entry deadline:  
**NOV 1, 2022**



*The last flush of roses in the Village Green for this year*

*Photo by Patricia Jacobec*