

# The **MONTABELLO** Voice

an independent gazette

happy 2023!

December 21, 2022



# Open communication at Montebello

By Paul Bundick

As a longtime owner at Montebello, I can remember the days when our elected Board of Directors would hold open town hall meetings for residents and welcome lively discussion on important issues facing our community. Town Halls seemed to be a good way to involve more civic participation and I for one believe this open communication process was one of the main reasons why Montebello has won so many awards for management excellence in the past.

Sadly, I think this welcoming attitude for open community dialogue has become severely constrained either intentionally or not. Sure, COVID has obliged us to replace public events with Zoom calls. That is understandable for now, though in-person meetings are again becoming more frequent. However, I do sense that there is more reluctance today on the part of the Board to openly discuss proposed projects and other concerns with the larger community than was previously the case. Owner participation in Board Meetings is now restricted to merely asking written questions in a chat box and receiving verbal responses by Board members at the meeting's end; a process more akin to a one-way transfer of information than a true conversation among stakeholders. Sure, transparent and open dialogue takes more time and effort than merely answering questions but it also builds an atmosphere of trust and confidence in the governing process, something which, I am sure, we all hope to realize.

Therefore, I would like to make an appeal to our elected Board to please reconsider the current process for community input in working sessions and devise a new way to build-in genuine

dialogue with residents on important matters affecting us all – dialogue, I might add which should occur early in any planning process when input is most useful.

I don't know the best way to proceed. But the Board might set up a resident *ad hoc* committee to explore this idea

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further and make recommendations to the Board and the community as a whole. A new section might also be added to our Building Link portal to supplement this dialogue process. Currently it is not used for such purposes. Who knows what creative solutions may arise if we dare to ask and be open.

In closing, I would also like to remind us all that Virginia state condo law requires Montebello to set up such a method for open communication and information sharing. Here is the relevant text from the state condo law (bold added).

**§ 55.1-1950. Distribution of information by members.**

A. The executive board shall establish a reasonable, effective, and free method, appropriate to the size and nature of the condominium, **for unit owners to communicate among themselves and with the executive board regarding any matter concerning the unit owners' association.**

I would say currently we do not have such a method in place. But we can and should build one. Authentic dialogue between Board and Owners/Residents on important issues will only strengthen our system of governance and contribute to the general happiness and well-being of our condo community. 🏡



Cover photo by Susan Dexter, first-place winner of the Montebello Nature Photography Contest

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Editor & Designer  
 Mikhailina Karina

Contributors  
 Paul Bundick, Linda Brownlee, Scott Compton, Mari Cote, Susan Dexter, Patricia Jacubec, Joan Ledebur, Bob Shea, Chester Taylor, Richard Titus

# A Montebello Christmas Visit – The Ghost of Christmas Past

By Bob Shea

(with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore)

**‘Twas** the night before Christmas, and on top of the Mount,  
 Not a creature was stirring, not one you could count,  
 The bright lights were hung in windows with care,  
 In hopes that no Grinch would intrude on our lair,  
 The residents were down, asleep in their beds,  
 While visions of condo fees danced in their heads,  
 Mama was asleep, as I was too,  
 No Covid this year, it all was anew,  
 When out on Mount Eagle, there arose such a clatter,  
 I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter,  
 On to the balcony, I flew like a flash,  
 Tore open the blinds, out of breath from my dash,  
 The moon on the asphalt and parked cars below,  
 Gave a luster of light, a holiday glow,  
 And there before my eyes, I’ll tell you, my laddies,  
 A speeding golf cart with eight miniature caddies,  
 An elderly driver, with jowls and so plump,  
 I knew in a moment, yes, it was Donald Trump,  
 He waved, and he waved, so proud of his fame,  
 He whistled and shouted, and called some by name,

“Now Hershel, now Lindsey, and Mehmet the Doc,

On Kari, on Kevin, with me you’ll not balk,”

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

A stranger group, the eyes have not seen,

As swarms in the sky, from a cave like bats,

They all threw in the air, bright red hats,



Down to the front door, a political zoo,

A clown car of crazies, and MAGA man too,

And then in a twinkling, I heard in the hall,

The voice of chaos, of untruth, battering us all,

I left the balcony, and was turning about,

In the door came The Donald, his face in a pout,

Orange complexion, his stare made you freeze,

Blue suit, white shirt, and red tie to his knees,

A folder of pardons he held tight in one hand,

He looked like a guy, rewarding his band,

His eyes how they squinted, his stare so intense,

This was the guy who had brow beat Mike Pence,

He puffed up his chest, and looked here and there,

On top of his head, his strange yellow hair,

A copy of the Constitution, he held in his hand,

Ignored by him, not the law of the land,

He was pudgy, dumpy, a real estate king,

Addicted to sycophants and all tasteless bling,

A squint of his eye, and a nod of his head,

Convinced me again, we had so much to dread,

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

He hired three lawyers, his face stayed a mask,

“You know the drill, guys, delay, and fill suits,

The ones on false ballots, now they were real beauts,”

He left in a shuffle, his team gathered around,

Out the gate, the golf cart left without sound,

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

“Witch hunt, victimhood, poor me, now that is my plight.” 📖

# Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

By Chester Taylor

This past December 7 was Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. It was reported by the evening news with clips of memorial services held across the nation from the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. to the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Flags were lowered to half-mast, military units and marching bands paid tribute to those who died by the surprise military strike of the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service against the United States in Hawaii 1941. The United States declared war on the Axis power consisting of the Empire of Japan, Nazi Germany, and the Kingdom of Italy. For most Americans, this was when the war started. They had been through WWI between 1914-1918 with 116,708 Americans killed, the Spanish Flu Epidemic in 1918 with 675,000 Americans dying, and the Great Depression between 1929-1939 with 15 million Americans unemployed. While U.S. newspapers did report on Adolph Hitler's rise to power in Germany and Japan's aggressive expansion of its territory throughout the Pacific, most Americans were focused on their own problems and were leery of getting involved in another conflict in Europe like WWI. President Franklin Roosevelt and most Americans wanted to be neutral. Immigration was restricted, and even legitimate asylum seekers were denied entry, like the 900 Jewish passengers aboard the SS St. Louis who had fled Nazi Germany. Later this was resolved when Great Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands each admitted a percentage of the passengers upon their return to Europe in June 1939. Many of those passengers

were subsequently able to obtain immigration visas and leave for the United States before the German invasion of western Europe in May 1940. Despite these efforts, 254 passengers were killed in the Holocaust. When France fell to the Germans, in June 1940, the American public was shocked and isolationist sentiment began to decline. The Lend-Lease Act was passed on March



11, 1941, which enabled the country to provide war time aid and support to the Allied nations while the United States remained a neutral country.

Then on December 7, 1941, Americans heard on the radio that the Japanese had attacked Hawaii. Some of the facts were misreported because of the chaos, but it was clear that many Americans had died, significant number of U.S. war ships were sunk or damaged, and Wake Island had been seized by the Japanese. The next day the *Los Angeles Examiner* headline read "Japs Attack U.S.!" The line above it which stated, "2 Jap Air-Carries Reported Sunk," was incorrect. In fact, the U.S. Pacific Fleet lost eight of its battleships

and 350 planes during the attack. The number of Americans killed during the Pearl Harbor attack was 2,403.

My father had a friend working in Honolulu at the time. The friend wrote my father:

"Such is the way of life, one day of peaceful contentment, the next day filled with death, terror, and grief caused by a ruthless bunch of savages, known as Japanese. It was a shock to us out here because it wasn't expected in the least. Japanese Ambassadors were pleading for peace while their warships were steaming ahead, with one thought in mind, the destruction of life and property of ours. They will not only regret that peaceful Sunday morning... but will pay with interest for what the thought was for the good of their nation and the world."

On December 8, 1941, President Roosevelt, wearing a black armband, signed the Declaration of War on Japan passed by Congress the day before. Then, four days later, on December 11, 1941, strangely enough, Adolf Hitler declared war on the United States even though the United States was still

officially neutral. Hitler's act ended any meaningful domestic isolation opposition to the United States entering the war in Europe. In response to Hitler's declaration, President Roosevelt signed the declaration of war against Germany the same day. So, with the British just having evacuated 338,000 of its forces the year before from Dunkirk, France, and Japan having seized China, parts of Asia, and many key islands of the Pacific, the United States entered WWII with resolve and determination. In the end the United States and its allies prevailed against the Axis. The cost in life for the Americans was 405,399 killed. 🇺🇸



# Tillie's celebration of life



Photos by Joan Ledebur  
The Montebello Voice

# Tillie's celebration of life



*During our walk today, Tom and I saw Mr. & Mrs. White Tail near the pocket forest. A lot of people have wondered about whether there is a male deer, thinking our group is all females. The photo shows a deer with a rack of horns. He's probably 2 going on 3 years old. I could only count 2 points on the antlers. Mrs. WT didn't want to be photographed. Both are healthy and well fed compared to the others I've seen on the property. – Mari Cote*



**woodlands, etc.**



### **Is this trip necessary?**

This slogan was part of a WWII government campaign to get civilians to use less gas. It came to mind during exposure to the latest publicity for another Moon landing.

When JFK announced the original lunar landing program, I was a grad student at MIT. Much of the new moonshot dollars wound up in Massachusetts, and then at MIT. I had friends and acquaintances who were working on the program. The consensus view was that the human involvement aspects of the program would be very costly, while yielding little of scientific

value. That it was human-interest PR, designed to get more support from the public and more dollars from Congress, e.g., mommies and kiddies gathered around a TV watching daddy hit golf balls on the Moon, or do some dangerous exterior repair.

Now we're at it again. Lunar excursions, Space Station, Mars, etc. Very costly and of very little scientific promise. We Americans think of ourselves as very wealthy, but in fact we are by far the world's most indebted nation. Even if we could afford this sort of excess, we shouldn't be doing it. But we can't, and we are. – Richard Titus 🍷

*The dog run is well on its way to becoming Montebello's newest gathering place for residents with and without canine friends.*

*The new bridge in the woodlands is nearly ready for foot traffic.*

*The Montebello  
Voice  
uncut, uncensored,  
unofficial*





*Photos by Patricia Jacobec and Linda Brownlee*

