

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

when you smile

January 17, 2023



LGBT+ @ MONTEBELLO

Residents interested in joining a casual, unofficial LGBT+ social/networking group at Montebello are cordially invited to send expressions of interest to lgbtatmb@gmail.com



LGBT+ at Montebello

Our informal (and not officially registered with management, or at least not yet) group started with a chance meeting of a few gay residents at the opening of the remodeled Community Center. Since such encounters are a bit rare here on the hill, we talked and got to know where we were from, what we did for a living, etc., etc. We knew there had to be more LGBT+ residents than any of us knew, and that some sort of group was needed which would make meeting other sexual/relational minority people not a matter of chance and create opportunities for social contact and support. So we put up notices on the B3 bulletin boards and on Neighbor Net, and off we went.

Thus far, have around 20 members all told. We have done Zoom calls, Friday happy hours at the Grille, and a holiday open house at the unit of two of the members. Our usual mode of operation is to foster social interaction and networking, but our primary is objective is to provide a sense of community, support, and comradery among LGBT+ residents. Several members have expressed a sense of loneliness, isolation, and insecurity about being accepted by other residents. (This insecurity is not entirely misplaced since the notices on the B3 boards were usually taken down with days of being posted, despite conforming to the regulations for such posting, while all other notices remained untouched.) In a nutshell, the group aims to provide a space that is safe, supportive, and friendly for LGBT+ residents, to make Montebello feel more like home. – *James Francis* 🏠

Sally Browning celebrating her new personal high score in the league as well as the new high score for all women in the Monday Bowling League. We have one female opening on Wednesday nights and need subs for both nights. Please contact Montebello Bowling League president Mark Woods at 703-498-0143 for information.



Pet Club is sponsoring the February Cup of Joe

All Pet Club members are encouraged to support the event by donating breakfast finger foods between 8-8:30 a.m. on February 4 in the Community Center. Email MontebelloPetClub@gmail.com to share what you are bringing.

ESL volunteers needed to teach English on Zoom

Want to make a big difference in someone's life? Join St. John Lutheran Church volunteers teaching English online to our immigrant neighbors. Volunteers must commit to teaching one online class per week, February 14 – May 4. Classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10-11:30 a.m., or 7:30-9 p.m. (Students attend both days, but volunteers teach once a week.) All classes are on Zoom.

Our adult students are eager to learn and extremely appreciative. Training and books are provided. No experience is necessary – just a smile and a desire to help people from other countries!

For more information, go to www.sjlc.com/serve/esl-volunteers Or contact ESL Coordinator Dori McCormick at esl@sjlc.com. – *Karen Barnes* 🏠

voices on the 37

Got a love story?

For the February edition of the *Voice*, I'd like to feature some Montebello couples – married, divorced, unmarried, widowed – to share their love stories with our neighbors. Please include one or two photos. No limit on length or subject matter. Email them to montebellovoice@cox.net. – *MK* 🏠

Cover photos by *Dian McDonald*

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A witness to history

“I was in the Rose Garden when the bill was signed into law”



A bill to establish the holiday successfully passed through both houses of Congress in 1983, and President Reagan signed it into law on November 20 of that year. The first Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was celebrated in 1986.

By Col. Frank Francois III USA (Ret.)

Most of us know that the third Monday in January is the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. I was there in the White House Rose Garden when the bill was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1983. I was invited by a friend of our family, Steven Rhodes (second from right), who was an aide to the President. It was a very interesting afternoon because we had to arrive early to be cleared to get into the White House and then we had to hurry up and wait for the activities to begin. There were a lot of civil rights activists, visitors, and others in attendance. I got a chance to talk to several of them, including, Jesse Jackson, Congressman John Conyers (D-Mich.), several members of the Black Caucus, and DC Delegate Walter Fauntroy.

During the next several years I participated in getting the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a Fairfax County school holiday. There were a lot of discussions about not having another holiday, es-

pecially one named after a Black man, by parents, visitors, and board members. As one of the two At-Large board members and the only African American on the school board, I was hopeful that we would get a positive vote, but it seemed like it wasn't going to happen. I then asked the chairman of the board to speak and I stood up and gave a resounding layout of my background and how I had progressed to become a full Colonel in the U.S. Army with two combat tours in Vietnam, the owner of a thriving company, a member of the Fairfax County school board, and the president of the Retired Military Officers Association.

I also discussed being present at the White House when President Ronald Reagan signed the MLK bill into law making the Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday for all 50 states. This is a very important holiday in that the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is the only holiday in the United States named after an American individual.

The school board fights that I had to get the MLK holiday recognized in the

Fairfax County school system was one of many that I had, but it was the most important one and in my view it still is.

Many years later, the fraternity that I belong to, Alpha Phi Alpha, was charged with raising funds to build a monument in honor of Dr. King. Millions of dollars were raised and I was instrumental in providing the funds to have it become a reality. Dr. King is a member of the fraternity and he participated in several of the events during his lifetime. I did not get to meet him because I was overseas most of my career in the Army. When he was killed, I was immediately transferred to the Pentagon, where I spent most of the remainders of my tour in the military. 🙏



Liar, liar, pants on fire

By Chester Taylor

As children, we often have shouted “liar, liar, pants on fire” when accusing another of deception. Lying is much more than an embellishment or an exaggeration. When you lie with the intent to deceive others by falsely claiming or being credited with accomplishments or qualities for financial or personal gain, it is criminal deception. This seems to be the case for now Congressman George Anthony Devolder Santos, U.S. House of Representatives from New York’s 3rd district which covers part of northern Long Island and northeast Queens. Whether Santos lived in that district at the time of the election is questionable, since he and his husband bought a house outside the district in Huntington, NY in August 2022. Six weeks after his election, it came to light that Santos lied about his ancestry, property ownership, education, charity work, and employment. Most of Santos’ adult life seems to be covered in fraud from being associated in Ponzi schemes to illegally using campaign funds. He even lied about his mothers’ death saying she was killed in the 9/11 attack. Once confronted, Santos has admitted to his lying and now he’s being investigated by federal, state, and county authorities. He seems to have no shame stating he will continue to fill his seat in Congress.

Santos is fully aligned with Donald Trump and attended the January 6, 2021 Stop the Steal rally at the Ellipse saying that Trump gave a “great speech.” Then later denied that he was there calling it a “sad and dark day.” He believes police brutality is a “made-up concept.” He walks arm-in-arm with Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene a Republican far-right conspiracy theorist. She says that Santos should be given a chance. He has spoken at functions attended by far-right

commentator and conspiracy theorist Jack Posobiec, white supremacy activist Peter Brimelow, and members of the Freedom Party of Austria and Alternative for Germany (two right-wing, authoritarian European parties).

Of the many lies, George Santos has told let’s start with his heritage. Santos claimed that his maternal grandparents were Ukrainian Jews who fled to Belgium and then to Brazil to escape the Holocaust during World War II. Not true, his ancestors had lived in Brazil for at least three generations and that there is nothing to indicate they have any connection to Ukraine, have any Jewish heritage, or were Holocaust survivors. In 2022 campaign papers and appearances, he described himself on multiple occasions as “an ‘American Jew.’” Again, not true and when confronted with these facts he admitted he was Catholic.

George Santos may have obtained a high school equivalency diploma, but there is no record to his claims that he attended the Horace Mann School, an elite preparatory school, nor did he graduate from Baruch College with a degree in finance and economics or New York University with a Master of Business Administration. In December 2022, Santos finally admitted “I didn’t graduate from any institution of higher learning. I’m embarrassed and sorry for having embellished my résumé... We do stupid things in life.”

During the 2022 congressional campaign, Santos claimed that he and his family owned 13 rental properties in New York. He later admitted that the claim was false. He also claimed he founded a tax-exempt charity for rescue animals called Friends of Pets United in 2013 and ran it until 2018. The Internal Revenue Service says it was not registered as a tax-exempt charity. Suspicious was that in 2017 Friends of Pets United held a fundraiser event for a New Jersey animal rescue group, but the organizer of the rescue group said

that Santos never gave it any of the proceeds. Then in November 2022, Santos lied about losing four employees in the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida. None of the 49 murdered victims worked for him. Once this was revealed, he changed his story to say that four of them were going to be coming to work for him.

During the 2022 campaign when inflation and national debt were major issues, you see Santos crafting his campaign website not only to falsely claim he was educated in finance and economics but was a “seasoned Wall Street financier and investor.” He claimed he had worked for Citigroup and Goldman Sachs, but when checked neither company had any record of him. Another lie.

Then there is the questionable business of the Devolder Organization, a “capital introduction consulting” firm, that suddenly had a large infusion of cash. Where did it come from? Santos was the sole owner and manager of the firm receiving a salary of \$750,000 and dividends valued from \$1 million to \$5 million (the same range of the company’s worth) and at the same time loaned his campaign \$700,000. His campaign donors, contributions, and expenses were suspicious. Barbara Streisand tweeted, “This pathological liar George Santos should not be seated in the next Congress. There should also be an investigation to the source of his sudden wealth.”

The whole world is watching. America’s credibility is on the line. The Republican Party’s credibility is on the line. How can this person be trusted in the Congress? What congressional committees will he sit on? How can he have a security clearance? The public trust of Congress already below 33 percent will continue to plummet. If we have a government without integrity, what do we have? 🤖

Viking Island

By Chester Taylor

South of Stockholm in the Baltic lies the Swedish Viking Island of Gotland. The majority of all the silver Viking treasures in the world have been found here and all over the island there are ancient monuments. Thousands of archaeological finds tell us that the island of Gotland was once the most important trading center of the Viking era 793 to 1066 AD. On the western side of Gotland was a lake, called Paviken, connected to the Baltic Sea by a narrow strait. This is where the Vikings brought their loot plundered or traded from all over Europe and as far east as China. Here they could trade for furs, spices, silver coins, tempered steel swords, and jewelry. Popular with the women were the milky white rock crystal necklaces or maybe crescent-shaped pendants with raised rope outline and inlaid with small deep blue lapis stones. You can buy replicas of Viking jewelry at shops and museums in Visby, the island's main city.

Visby also is one of the best-preserved



the wildflowers in the fields and bought strawberries, vegetables, and berry pies from the farmers selling them in kiosks along the road.

If you needed wine, you filled out a request at the local grocery and the next day

ing the medieval town walls are small homes adorned with roses that flourish in the natural alkaline limestone soil. Limestone monoliths, called “rauks,” formed by natural erosion during the last Ice Age, can be found all over the island and along its coast.

My wife, Anita, and I have vacationed in Gotland. It is a beautiful getaway place, where you can bicycle on country roads, sunbathe on the beach, or eat outside in the evening. We stayed

it would be delivered by bus from the government-run alcohol store located in a nearby town, Hemse, with 1,700 inhabitants. We usually began dinner with herring, then had boiled potatoes with dill, salmon, salad with raspberries, and wine. The bread was always fresh from the local bakery. The countryside of Gotland was just pure sun and relaxation. So, here's to Viking Island—*Skål!* 🍷



medieval cities in Scandinavia. The city flourished at the end of the 12th century and during the 13th when it became the seat of power and trade for the German Hanseatic merchants. Surround-

at Anita's mother's summer house in the southern part of the island near Burgsvik. We loved

Coping or not coping with age

By Bob Shea

“Old age ain’t no place for sissies.” – Bette Davis (1908-1989)

It happens to all of us. At some point we realize that we have many more years behind us than ahead of us. It can be like being hit between the eyes with a ball peen hammer, and for some it is a moment of despair, or conversely, for others a moment of redirection.

As with so many things in life, we do not have a vote. It is a fact whether we like it or not. That being said, what are our options? What do we do? The days of “shoulda, coulda, and woulda” may be behind us.

Our bucket list, hopefully, is very short as we worked on it when we could both physically and financially make dreams a reality. Far too many people always put off until next year the event that they have always dreamed about, or to do something that is a lifetime fantasy. At some point in our lives, that can become our personal impossible dream. Does that mean we hit life’s “delete” button and give up? No way! Simply, it is a time for introspection and reality. It is certainly not a time to curl up in a ball and wait for the inevitable. Yes, we still have choices. Find yourself amid the confusion and debris of past years and discover what is still possible.

“Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken.” – Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)

Four phrases come to mind that should be on a PostIt note on our bathroom mirror so that we see it each morning. They are (1) Always adapt, (2) Be realistic, (3) Have a sense of humor, and lastly (4) Be thankful.

Always adapt

Just as when playing poker, play with the hand that you are dealt. Or, said another way, if you end up with lemons,

make lemonade. If you can no longer run in 5Ks, walk around the campus. If you get sleepy in the afternoon, take a short nap. If 18 holes are too strenuous, play 9 holes or spend some time on the putting green. If a long drive to see family is too taxing, book an airline ticket. I stopped climbing ladders after years as a community theater set builder, and became a production judge for the Washington Area Theater Community Honors (WATCH) program. Adapting is not turning the switch to “off;” it is just finding alternative ways to live and do what we enjoy, to have fun, and to remain positive. Life has very few true dead ends. Make alternative plans and move on.

Be realistic

This is tied closely with adapting. Accept what is and find new ways to express yourself. Each new day is not an unsolvable problem, but rather a challenge to use our creativity and imagination to explore, to learn, and to make new friends. Each day is an opportunity to grow and find new things that energize ourselves. Look around and see examples all around us in our daily lives. How many clubs does Montebello have that might be just what you are looking for? If they can do it, why can’t we? New hobbies, new friends, and new challenges await us. What latent talents do you have that have been waiting years to be discovered? If it is not fun, why do it!

Have a sense of humor

Laughing at oneself and one’s frailties is healthy. Being a senior citizen is a mark of accomplishment. We each have years of lessons in our memory bank and miles of history on our individual speedometers. Some of it is positive, and other parts are things we just as soon forget, but it is all part of us and who we are. A secret chuckle about some past foible is good for the soul as well as laughing out loud when we re-

call and talk about something positive that we have done. In the military, we call them “war or sea” stories. Smiles are easier than frowns. Laughter is a prescription that does not come in a pharmacy bottle.

Be thankful

Who we are and what we have accomplished could fill books. Think about who you have mentored or who has mentored you. How many lives have we touched? Your family is your contribution to tomorrow’s world. Did you help populate our Earth with achievers, dreamers, and innovators? There is so much to be thankful for, not the least of which is waking up every morning and facing that day’s challenges.

We too often get wrapped up in the here and now and forget to take a step back and evaluate how far we have come and what we have accomplished. As one who is beyond the four score and five milestone, I try to heed my own words, but unfortunately sometimes do not. All we can collectively do is try to live by these phrases and to recognize that when life’s events put us in a blue funk, we do have choices. Take charge and move out!

Try to be the type of person that when your feet hit the floor each morning, the devil says “OMG, watch out. He/she is at it again!” You can still have an impact.

Since I drafted this article, I decided to disregard my own advice. Why not? My wife and I have booked another small ship cruise (14 days, 89 passengers) in May 2023. This one is from the French channel coast to Scandinavia. So much for putting such adventures behind us. Bon voyage! Maybe add another phrase? Break your own rules!

Think about Bette Davis’s words. Surely we are not sissies, or are we? Be wild. Make a reservation. Make a resolution. 2023 is here! 🍷

The Pope's tomb and the Chapel ceiling

By Joe de Angelis

“Until you have seen the Sistine Chapel, you can have no adequate conception of what man is capable of accomplishing. One hears and reads of so many great and worthy people, but here, above one's head and before one's eyes, is the living evidence of what one man has done.” – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: Italian Journey, 1816.

By the year 1505 Saint Peter's Basilica was in complete ruin and Pope Julius II decided to demolish the ancient basilica and replace it with a new, monumental structure. The Pope appointed Donato Bramante to be the chief architect of the basilica and also commissioned him to construct the basilica's dome. Construction commenced on 18 April 1506 with the laying of the foundation cornerstone by the Pope. Pope Julius also wanted his proposed tomb to be the centerpiece of the new basilica. It was to be a colossal tomb, one that would outshine all other imperial tombs: a freestanding, three-level structure, consisting of some 40 statues, to be erected in the heart of the new basilica.

Giuliano da Sangallo, a sculptor, architect and military engineer, was the favored architect of his patron, Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence. Additionally, da Sangallo was also commissioned by Pope Julius II to build several structures in Rome and it was he who persuaded Julius to engage Michelangelo for his tomb. Michelangelo had already established himself as a master sculptor. His two sculptures, the Pieta (1498-1499) and David (1501-1504) had brought him much fame and notoriety. But Michelangelo was a man of strong will and coarse manners, which he never tried to improve on. Instead he focused on his strongest attributes, which were

hard work and his artistic skill. Pope Julius had been impressed by Michelangelo's work, and did not care about his behavior and, with the often-times heated artistic jealousies within the papal court, the Pope gave the commission to Michelangelo for his tomb in



1505.

Michelangelo was well satisfied with the commission for the tomb and immediately set off for Carrara in the spring of 1505 to obtain the necessary marble. After eight months in Carrara, and lacking funds to continue, he had the marble he had selected sent on to Rome, paying for the transport out of his own pocket and departed for Rome himself. When the marble was delivered in Rome, Michelangelo approached the papacy for reimbursement of all costs. Uncharacteristically, he was rudely turned away and told that the Pope was too busy to receive him. After several attempts to see the Pope, one of the grooms finally told him that he had orders from the Pope not to admit him. Quick-tempered, an angry Michelangelo, immediately decided to quit working for the Pope and on 17 April 1506 he quickly made arrangements to sell all of his possessions and departed for Florence that very evening. Pope or no Pope, Michelangelo would not be treated in such a way.

Upon learning of Michelangelo's departure, Pope Julius II, who was also known for his quick temper, ordered

him to return to Rome under threat of severe punishment and sent five couriers to effect his return. A defiant Michelangelo, who was under the protection of Florence's Gonfaloniere, Piero Soderini, refused to return and said that he would never return and that "His

Holiness should look for someone else to serve him." The Florentine government, however, eventually convinced Michelangelo, for the good of all concerned, to present himself to the Pope who at the time was in Bologna.

Julius II had entered Bologna triumphantly on 10 November 1506

and did not leave the city until late February 1507, arriving back in Rome a month later. Michelangelo acquiesced and traveled to Bologna to present himself to the Pope. Upon seeing Michelangelo, Julius immediately admonished him saying, "Instead of coming to me as I ordered you to do, you've made me come to you." As a form of punishment, Julius then ordered him to create a huge bronze sculpture of himself to commemorate his military victory. This new project would take approximately two years, forcing Michelangelo to postpone his work on Julius' tomb. When Michelangelo asked if he should put a book in the statue's hand, "A book!" replied Julius, "Put a sword there, I know nothing of books." Julius then departed Bologna leaving Michelangelo to work on the statue.

Upon Michelangelo's return to Rome in 1508, his rival Donato Bramante, having taken advantage of Michelangelo's absence, plotted against him while he was in Florence. As Pope Julius' principal planner and architect for the rebuilding the city and St. Peter's Basilica, Bramante had the Pope's ear. Apparently he and the painter Ra-

genius at work

aphael were jealous of Michelangelo's commission for the tomb fearing that he would outshine them artistically. Because Donato Bramante was a distant relative of Raphael (Raffaello Santi) and they were from the same town, Bramante was instrumental in securing the commission for Raphael to paint the rooms (Stanze) of Pope Julius II's living quarters, which he started in 1508.

Bramante was able to convince Pope Julius that it would be bad luck for a Pope to build his own tomb while he was still alive. In addition, he argued that it was time that the headstrong, ill-mannered sculptor from Florence receive his due. He further reasoned, and explained to the Pope, that Michelangelo's time would be better spent painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, which was named after Julius's uncle, Pope Sixtus IV. Bramante had an ulterior motive though, which was to disgrace Michelangelo. Since Michelangelo was a sculptor and not a painter, and had no experience in painting, let alone painting frescoes, his work would therefore, most likely be extremely inferior to that of Raphael. Bramante also believed that his attempt at painting such a large fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel would result in Michelangelo's total failure: such a failure would humiliate him to the extent that he would leave Rome in disgrace, never to return.

Michelangelo's next audience with the Pope was most disheartening for the sculptor. The Pope abruptly and without explanation immediately dismissed Michelangelo and withdrew the commission for his tomb. In its stead the Pope ordered Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in fresco. The Pope demanded that the ceiling project take precedence over his tomb, which angered Michelangelo who prided himself on being a sculptor and never considered himself to be a painter. Although Pope Julius II basically forced Michelangelo to accept the commission for the Sistine Chapel,

he also promised Michelangelo that he could return to the tomb after completing the ceiling. In addition to not being a painter, Michelangelo initially refused the Pope's commission because he disagreed with Julius's vision of what the ceiling painting should look like. Julius wanted the 12 apostles painted on the angular pendentives that support the vault. But Michelangelo demanded that he have a free hand, not only in the pictorial content, but also of the overall scheme. The Pope finally agreed to Michelangelo's demands. Michelangelo got what he wanted.

With the agreement made, the Pope then ordered Bramante to construct the necessary scaffolding for painting the ceiling. Bramante immediately saw another opportunity to thwart Michelangelo when designing the scaffolding. The scaffolding was to be supported by ropes that would be anchored in the vaulting of the ceiling, thereby creating an impossible task to remove them without damaging the fresco, and not being able to paint over them. This, of course, would leave an unfinished and scarred ceiling fresco. Upon reviewing Bramante's design, Michelangelo asked how he was to fill the holes left in the vaulting after completing the ceiling fresco. Bramante replied, "I will think of that afterwards, it can not be done otherwise." Whereupon Michelangelo complained to the Pope that the scaffolding was inadequate. Surprisingly and without question, the Pope ordered that construction on Bramante's scaffolding be stopped, and what had been erected thus far be torn down and ordered that the scaffolding should be built in accordance with Michelangelo's design.

In order to reach the chapel's ceiling, some 68 feet above the floor, Michel-

angelo created a unique scaffolding system. Rather than build the structure from the floor up, Michelangelo's design called for brackets to be installed in the walls of the chapel, rather than in the ceiling. The design would also allow for the support of wooden platform without the use of ropes. The scaffolding would not touch the walls or ceiling, thus eliminating the need to repair the vaulting upon completion of the ceiling. The scaffolding was constructed so as to accommodate Michelangelo and his assistants painting and working on the ceiling while standing in an upright position. Because the painting of the ceiling was to be completed in phases, the scaffold was designed to be moved across the chapel as each phase was finished. Michelangelo gave all of the unnecessary ropes from Bramante's scaffold to the carpenter who built the scaffolding, who in turn sold them and was able to provide a dowry for his daughter. The scaffolding designed

by Michelangelo is believed to be an early version of Platform Ganttries that are in use worldwide today.

But the problem of Michelangelo not being a painter still persisted. Consequently, he had to first learn how to paint, and then how to paint fresco. Fresco is Italian for fresh and refers to mural paintings executed upon freshly laid plaster (*intonaco*). Alkaline-resistant paint pigments are applied directly onto a freshly laid, thin layer of damp lime plaster and, once applied, these pigments become permanently bonded to the lime plaster upon drying. As the plaster sets and dries, the painting then becomes an integral part of the wall or ceiling.

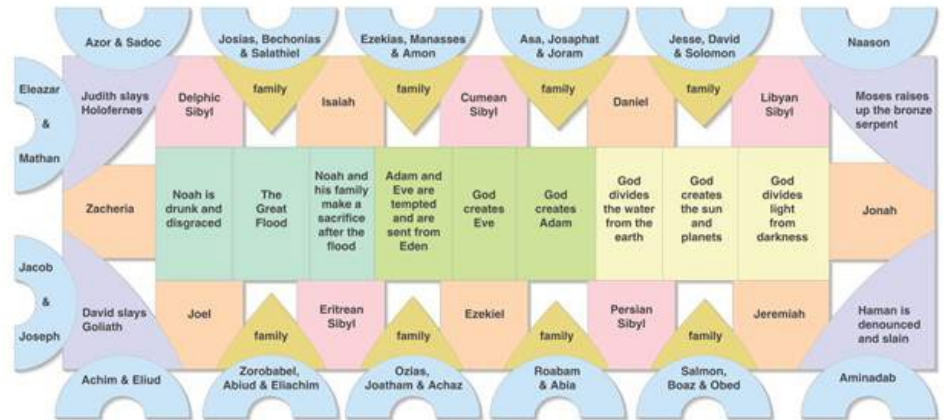
With a ceiling covering some 12,000 square feet, one has to wonder how one goes about painting a fresco of such



size. The answer lies in the use of what is known as a cartoon, which is accomplished section by section. A cartoon is a preparatory drawing on a sturdy piece of heavy paper. (The word is derived from the Italian *cartone*, meaning strong, heavy paper.) After an artist conceptualizes the painting in both size and scope on his sketch pad, his drawings are transferred onto sturdy paper as two-dimensional, full-size, drawing, in outline form. In this case, Michelangelo made numerous cartoons, section by section, which consisted of hundreds of large sheets of paper. These cartoons are then pinpricked along the outlines to facilitate the transfer of the drawing onto the plaster of the ceiling, again, section by section. The transfer is accomplished by holding the cartoon against the applicable section and then patting bags of soot over the pricked outline leaving a black, dotted outline on the plaster. Once this was accomplished, Michelangelo would then apply the colored paint pigments. Since the plaster dried within several hours, the use of cartoons allowed him to accurately link the component parts of his composition, one section at a time over several days.

Completely inexperienced in the art of fresco, Michelangelo asked some of his friends in Florence, who were experienced fresco painters, to come

to Rome and assist him in painting the chapel ceiling. Thus, Michelangelo hoped to learn from them as well. However, the workmanship exhibited by his colleges did not meet his standards or expectations and he dismissed all of them and sent them back to Florence. Michelangelo then resolved to complete the entire ceiling himself and to work in the utmost solitude, never letting himself be seen painting. It is not known, but Michelangelo may have



read Leon Battista Alberti's thesis "On Painting" (1453) in an effort to develop his painting skill.

The painting of the chapel ceiling was a major undertaking that took four years. No single person could have accomplished such a feat on his own and Michelangelo was no exception. He had a team of very specialized and skilled artists and tradesman assisting him, but none of them, however, were painters and Michelangelo did, in fact, accomplish all of the painting on his own. So, contrary to legend, when Michelangelo painted the Sistine Chapel ceiling, he was not an old man, he was 33 years old, he did not work alone, he did paint lying on his back, and he did not have arthritis of any kind. He and his hand-picked assistants stood on his specially built scaffold working on and painting the ceiling.

Aside from everything else, Michelangelo was angry because the Pope forced him to put his career as a sculptor on hold so that he could paint the ceiling fresco. The relationship between Pope Julius II and Michelangelo, to say the

least, was antagonistic. But having accepted the commission from the Pope, Michelangelo began work developing his design and sketches in April 1508 and his preparatory work on the ceiling was completed in late July of the same year. When Julius asked Michelangelo to show him his sketches for the ceiling, he refused, whereupon the pope beat

him with his staff and then fired him. Fortunately, the pope was quick to reinstate Michelangelo.

Forced to undertake a project expressly designed to expose his weaknesses which could result in failure, Michelangelo vowed to himself to do his utmost best to succeed and make his enemies and detractors regret their devious ploy. By February 1510, Michelangelo had decorated the upper arches of the ceiling with pictures and gold trim; however, he did not finish the main design until August of that year. Ever since Michelangelo started painting the ceiling Julius visited him almost daily, as he was an impatient man. The Pope continually urged Michelangelo to work faster and faster and to complete the fresco as soon as possible; delays were unacceptable. The relationship between the two was never easy and Michelangelo, not wanting to paint the fresco in the first place, had to control his temper when in the presence of the Pope.

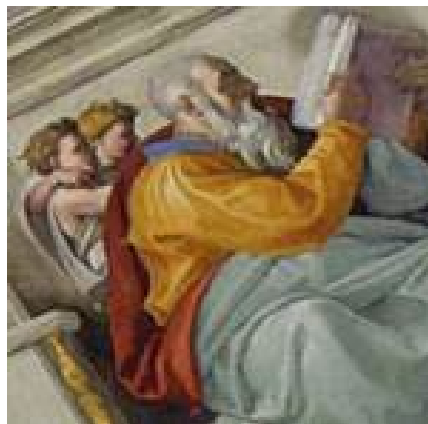
In August 1510, Pope Julius II departed Rome on another campaign to reconquer Bologna. Not having been



paid for the work he had already completed, Michelangelo refused to work on the ceiling from September 1510 until mid-1511. Despite two visits by Michelangelo to the Pope in Bologna, the issue of payment was not resolved until June 1511, after the Pope's return to Rome. At that point, the ceiling was half finished, and the impatient Julius, against Michelangelo's wishes, wanted the chapel opened. Of course, the Pope got his way, and on 14 August 1511, Julius held a papal mass in the chapel. Among those in attendance and among the first to gaze upon the ceiling were Bramante and Raphael. Seeing Michelangelo's wondrous work, both were amazed. However, in an effort to show that he was as good as, or better than, Michelangelo, Raphael immediately set about imitating the portraits of the Prophets and Sibyls in the church of Santa Maria della Pace. At the same time Bramante tried to convince the Pope to have Raphael paint the other half of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, but fortunately, the Pope was not swayed by Bramante, and Michelangelo remained on the job completing the ceiling.

Michelangelo's scheme for the ceiling included a series of three overarching scenes, each consisting of three individual paintings depicting God's Creation of the World, God's Relationship with Mankind, and Mankind's Fall from God's Grace. On the large pendentives, Michelangelo painted 12 biblical and classical men and women who prophesied that God would send Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind. Around the arched tops of the windows, known as the lunettes, he painted the Ancestors of Christ. In total there are nine scenes from the book of Genesis, seven portraits of prophets, five Sibyls, four biblical stories, and 20 Ignudi (athletic nude males; possibly representing angels). There are 343 individual figures or portraits on the ceiling of the chapel.

Because the Pope visited him on many occasions and, in spite of their antagonistic relationship, Julius and Michelangelo developed somewhat of a friendship which did not sit well with



Michelangelo's rival and detractors and created much envy among all. Although the Pope was very pleased with Michelangelo's work, he was always pushing him to work faster. Michelangelo, for his part, was still smarting from being forced to paint the chapel ceiling, and he still wanted to return to working on the Pope's tomb. The following is the first paragraph of a poem that Michelangelo wrote to his friend Giovanni da Pistoia in 1509 expounding upon his frustrations.

"I've already grown a goiter from this torture,
hunched up here like a cat in Lombardy
(or anywhere else where the stagnant water's poison).
My stomach's squashed under my chin, my beard's
pointing at heaven, my brain's crushed in a casket,
my breast twists like a harpy's. My brush,
above me all the time, dribbles paint so my face makes a fine floor for droppings!"

The Pope was always asking Michel-

angelo when the ceiling would be finished, and on one occasion Michelangelo replied, "It will be finished when I shall have satisfied myself in the matter of art," whereupon the Pope replied, "But it is your pleasure that you should satisfy us in your desire to have it done quickly." Then the Pope quickly added, "If Michelangelo does not finish the work quickly, I will have him thrown from the scaffolding." Michelangelo, fearing the anger of the Pope, finished the ceiling without any further delay, finishing the remainder of the ceiling in 14 months. The finished ceiling was revealed to the public on 31 October 1512 with a formal papal mass the following day, the feast of All Saints.

The Sistine Chapel ceiling is a major work of art and is among the greatest artistic achievements of Western painting. Without exception, it epitomizes the embodiment of Italian High Renaissance art. However, the ravages of time having detracted from the excellence of the chapel ceiling, and a badly needed restoration effort was undertaken between 1980 and 1989. Conducted under the expert leadership of Gianluigi Colalucci, the chief conservator of the Vatican Museum, the restoration project successfully removed several centuries of accumulated dirt, smoke, and varnish. Colalucci and his specialists meticulously dissolved layers of grime, soot, and deposits, substantially brightening the colors of the centuries-old paintings. The restoration also undid the work of Pope Pius IV, who in a Papal Bull issued in 1557 mandated the use of concealing fig leaves on all nude figures, both in paintings and sculptures, promulgating the Catholic Church's attack on nudity in art. Michelangelo's masterpiece was no exception.

Michelangelo's relationship with Pope Julius II oftentimes bordered on abuse and Michelangelo never quite got over being forced to give up working on the Pope's tomb to paint the chapel ceiling. How to get even with the

genius at work

Pope, that was the question. Michelangelo decided that he could camouflage his revenge in his painting. If one looks closely at the painting of the prophet Zechariah, one sees a strong resemblance to Pope Julius. This resemblance was intentional on Michelangelo's part as were the two young boys behind the prophet. Looking closely at the boys one will notice that one boy's thumb is inserted between his forefinger and middle finger. The placement of the thumb constitutes an Italian gesture known as the fig, not to be confused with fig leaves mentioned above. The fig hand gesture is the equivalent to giving someone the middle finger today. In effect, Michelangelo portrayed an obscene gesture directed at Pope Julius II. This may have been Michelangelo's retort to all the abuse he suffered under Pope Julius.

Having completed his work on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, Michelangelo eagerly resumed work on Pope Julius' tomb. Between 1512 and 1513 he completed three sculptures: the Dying and the Rebellious Slave and the incomparable statue of Moses. Unfortunately, Pope Julius II died in February 1513 and his family had him interred in St. Peter's Basilica, next to his uncle, Pope Sixtus IV.

A new contract was then drawn up by Julius' family which specified a wall tomb, rather than a free-standing monument. Though no longer a free standing monument, it was an even more ambitious project in terms of size and conceptualization. Julius' family demanded the completion of the project by Michelangelo, and in 1516 he finally agreed to the new contract. But it was not until the 1520s that he carved the Genius of Victory and four unfinished Slaves. Then in 1532 he signed a second contract, which involved a wall-tomb, but it was not until 1541, after negotiating the final details with Julius's grandson, that Michelangelo actually began work on the wall tomb.

The tomb of Pope Julius II, origi-

nally commissioned in 1505, was not completed until 1545, and on a much reduced scale. Michelangelo's final contract specified a simple wall tomb with fewer than one-third of the figures originally planned. It includes

The statue of Moses, just under eight feet in height, is one of the most famous sculptures associated with the funerary monument. Michelangelo completed the sculpture during one of his sporadic resumptions of the work in



Michelangelo's Moses, along with the statues of Leah and Rachel on the lower level. The upper level, however, exhibits several other sculptures, none of which were done by Michelangelo. Rather than constructing the tomb in St. Peter's Basilica, the structure was instead placed in the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli (Chains). The church of San Pietro in Vincoli, is located on the Oppian Hill near the Cavour metro station, a short distance from the Colosseum. This church, which has been a titular church and minor basilica since 20 November 2010, was patronized by the Della Rovere family, and Julius had been titular cardinal there. Since Pope Julius II is not buried there, the final structure is not actually a tomb.

1513. The statue of Moses is seated in an ornamental niche holding the commandments under his arm. His strong, muscular body, with veins that appear to be pulsing, exhibits a sense of tension and anger. His body is erect, and poised for movement while he intensely gazes out into the distance. There is a mark on the statue's right knee thought to be made by Michelangelo who felt that life was the only thing left inside the marble statue, which he considered his most lifelike creation. Upon its completion, he struck its right knee of the statue commanding the sculpture: "Now speak!" 🗿

Pumpkin Pierce July 24, 2007 – December 29, 2022

By Lauren Pierce

As I celebrate the life and the time that I spent with my sweet dog Pumpkin, I'd like to interweave some lessons learned that might help other pet owners here at our beloved Montebello community.

Pumpkin visited Montebello in the Fall of 2011 for me to dog sit for a week or so as my relative went on vacation. I dog sat for Pumpkin times before at my single-family home in Maryland, so we were well acquainted. I taught him how to go outside independently and navigate untangling himself and his leash from the trees that he would wind around. So walking the Montebello pet area was a breeze. What wasn't a breeze was navigating the entrance and exit of the service elevator hallway. The hallway, as well as entering and exiting the elevator on my floor, had two serious altercations in one morning. The offending dog wasn't registered and wasn't loosely held on his leash (research was done to identify the dog). Two unsuspecting dogs, Pumpkin being one of them, were injured.

Lesson learned – register all pets at the Montebello office! Make certain your dog is on a leash and tightly to your side as you move toward the elevator hallway and as you enter and exit the elevator. It is a tight space and having one dog loosely held could cause injury to another dog or person. No aggressive dogs should be without a muzzle when outside of their unit.

After that incident, I decided to keep Pumpkin until he was healed of his 11 stitches, and I even trained him on some basic multi-family dwelling manners: sit, stay, lay down, shake hands, give a high-five, let me rub your



belly and gently take treats from the hand.

When I called to set up delivery of the now well-trained and healed Pumpkin, my relative determined that his lifestyle no longer supported having

a pet, so Pumpkin was signed over to me permanently.

Lesson learned – training a dog requires consistent repetition with immediate positive reinforcements, such as rubs, treats, and words of affirmation. It is very helpful for dogs to be trained and socialized when living in a multi-family environment such as Montebello.

It seemed to me that Pumpkin remembered his unfortunate altercation and became a self-appointed advocate of dog conflict resolution. When dogs would bark at each other a bit too much, Pumpkin would give a bark or two with a certain tone and it seemed to halt the commotion. Also, when his Montebello pup “sister” Lily would go to the public dog park and a dog would chase her when she was running to retrieve her ball, Pumpkin would sense her anxiety and swiftly walk to wherever she was and get in between Lily and the other dog so she could get her ball. So he earned the name Mayor of Montebello at the dog park by the dog community.

Pumpkin was mild mannered, although he had a couple of dogs, people, and things that he chose not to associate with. He showed his displeasure by the sound of his bark and thus I knew to hold him tightly and say words of calm or go the opposite direction.

Lesson learned – there are different ways to analyze the temperament of a dog towards another dog, person, or thing.

Look for the stiffness of the tail and the intensity of the bark. Both of those can be clear warning signs, so please avoid contact. When in doubt, simply go in another direction to avoid possible conflict.

Everything ages, some with grace

and some without. Pumpkin was blessed to age with grace. So when he started showing signs of illness, I took an active and aggressive approach to address his medical needs. As a part of this, we visited the Virginia Pet Emergency Hospital, during the height of the dog influenza season. Pumpkin was diagnosed with pneumonia. He was administered medications and isolated from direct contact with other dogs.

Lesson learned – it is a good idea to train your dog for inside and outside bathroom procedures in the case where isolation/quarantine may be necessary. Also, picking up your dog's solid waste immediately from all areas of the Montebello property promotes good health care and community hygiene for pets and people so germs sharing will be minimized.

After an emergency visit with his primary care veterinarian and then recommendation to seek emergency pet hospitalization, I traveled to DC (all Virginia hospitals were full of flu and pneumonia patients. Besides it was for my one & only)! There Pumpkin was re-diagnosed and this time the result was not pneumonia at all, but masses in his lungs and a bulging tumor behind one eye, all inoperable. To make all matters worse, his ability to eat, drink

and stand on his own volition was unsuccessful.

Lesson learned – Sometimes money cannot cure all things and the quality of my pet's life matters.

While experiencing a rapid succession of overwhelming pain, anguish, disbelief, numbness and then gulping down my own tears, I had to look upon him and realize his pain. I picked up and hugged my sweetest Pumpkin, the Mayor, my Road Dog, literally woman's best friend, my sidekick, my blessing, and my sweet housemate. With loving serenades and constant tearful kisses, I bid farewell to my tired companion Pumpkin, with my friend Terry at my side, on December 29 at approximately 2:35 a.m. in Georgetown, DC.

Lesson learned – each day with Pumpkin was a day of responsibility for both of us. But everyday I loved him like crazy and gave him dedicated time and attention to help him live his best life while under my care. It is important to assess if you have time and the will to be a pet parent, so the experience will be mutually pleasant and rewarding.

Within two-weeks' time Pumpkin's remains were delivered to me at my home with a nose print, since I already had a paw print. The emergency hos-

adieu, my friend

pital and his primary care veterinarian sent sympathy cards as well.

Lesson learned – there are options for burial and cremation for our beloved pets. Be sure to think about the options in advance of your separation as it aids with the smooth real-time process. Also, having pet insurance can help to reduce out of pocket expenses throughout your pet's lifetime events.

Here is a chuckle, prior to the Board of Directors voting on the dog run, Pumpkin and I walked that section of the woodlands several times claiming it as the dog park. Although sweet Pumpkin won't get to play on the new platform with his friends, he has fun with purpose pre-foundation!

Thank you to the Montebello community for your outpouring of acceptance, cards, care, gifts, love, support and treats for Pumpkin and Pumpkin's mom during his life and transition.

Lauren Pierce

Montebello Pet Club Chairperson

Montebello Dog Park Advisory Group Lead

Have a pet, join the club – send an email to MontebelloPetClub@gmail.com 🐾



Photos by Dian McDonald



Meeting people during a cruise through Colombia, Costa Rica, and Mexico last December

Photos by Dian McDonald





Before and after

On February 8, 2020, the nearly completed SouthAlex complex – more than 400 apartments and 44,000 sq. ft. of retail – space caught fire. The inferno could be seen and smelled at Montebello.

Photo on the left by Joel Miller