

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

hakuna matata

March 21, 2023



Montebello makes history by establishing its first military-veterans group

By Group Chair Peter Blackledge, Co-Chair Rolf Dietrich, and Vice Chair Laura Foy

Establishment of the Montebello Military Members, Veterans, Families, & Supporters (MMMVFS) Group was unanimously approved by the Montebello Activities Committee on February 6, 2023, and unanimously endorsed by the Montebello Board of Directors on February 13. This marks the first Military-Veterans group in Montebello's 40-plus-year history, and it is proudly established by Montebello Military Veterans for active & reserve component military members of all services, veterans of all services, their family members (particularly widows & widowers), and supporters of the military (including civilians and contractors from military-related and intelligence-related agencies, and other friends and guests).

Current activities include development of a MMMVFS Group Matrix for members who wish to share their information to facilitate enhanced communication and friendship. Near-term activities commence March 29 with Montebello's historic first celebration of National Vietnam War Veterans Day, with participants meeting at the Robert Feickert Veterans Bench behind Building 3 at 2:30 p.m., followed by an Honor Parade from 3 to 3:30 p.m.

Full MMMVFS Group roll-out will be on April 29, to include a MMMVFS Group photograph, a meet and greet, a walk & talk, and a gazebo gathering with military music and special guests.

Military Spouse Appreciation Day will be celebrated 12-13 May. A monthly Military Affairs Distinguished Speakers Series will commence in May. Montebello's first Military Ball is planned for June 2023.

All MMMVFS Group activities and purchases, including giveaway ball caps and a battle flag/banner that bear the MMMVFSG insignia, are completely self-funded by the five MMMVFS group founders; there will never be any

cost to MMMVFS group members. Fifty-four Montebello residents have already expressed interest in participating in MMMVFS Group activities.

Detailed MMMVFS Group planning is available 24/7 on the public MMMVFS Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/638523764704170/?ref=share&mibextid=S66gvF>

To provide comments, obtain further information, or RSVP for MMMVFS Group events, please email MMMVFS Chair Peter Blackledge at LongTallTexan@icloud.com.

Need fosters and donations

Calling all cat and pet lovers! If you're looking to add a feline friend to your home, I can help get you set up with meet and greets for kittens and cats though Animal Allies, a local shelter I volunteer with. Animal Allies has been rescuing, rehabilitating, and re-homing companion animals (now primarily cats) in Alexandria, Woodbridge, and the surrounding area since 1984. Last year we were able to get 123 cats and kittens adopted, and we hope to continue growing our services and supporting our community!

Animal Allies always needs more foster homes to help get more cats and kittens off the street until they find their forever families. So if you have friends or family in the area who might be interested in fostering or adopting, please let me know.

Some of you may already know me from the requests for animal shelter donations that I've posted on Building Link and in our Montebello Facebook group, but if you've missed those, I would love to help collect animal shelter supplies that you may have around your home.

You are welcome to drop donations all year outside my door in Building 1 Unit 917, or you can contact me at 703-485-6301 or lisa.s.lowe@gmail.com to arrange pickup.

Our local rescues have an ongoing

need for the items below:

- * Spare pet food and treats
- * Gently used toys
- * Gently used towels and blankets (no sheets/comforters)
- * Empty cardboard toilet paper rolls (used for toys)
- * Cardboard canned wet food boxes (used for kitten litter boxes)
- * Shoe boxes (used for birds and small animals)
- * Plastic pill bottles (washed and personal information removed)
- * Animal control supplies such as band-aids, zip ties, and hand sanitizer

You can find a full list of suggested donations at the AWLA Arlington and AWLA Alexandria websites: <https://www.awla.org/donate/other-ways-to-give/gifts-in-kind>. – Lisa Lowe

Cover: Chuck Amorosino with friends in West Africa during a trip from Senegal to Gambia. Photo by Philippe Ndiaye.

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Take only what is most important

By Chester Taylor

Montebello Writer's Group proposed we sponsor a poetry reading. "Why?" I asked. I had my doubts. Nevertheless, I decided I would support the group. I remember saying that the best writing sparked an emotional response, like the stories written by Steinbeck and Faulkner, ones that dealt with people's feelings. I felt at times that poetry put too much interest on the mechanical arrangement of its sound and rhythm, and short on meaning. I wondered if I had to read some poetry, what would I read? The lyrics to "Sounds of Silence" written by 21-year-old Paul Simon came to mind. It was about the inability of people to communicate with each

other emotionally. I thought, well it's a song, I am not sure that anyone would accept it as real poetry.

Then on the one-year anniversary of Ukraine being invaded by Russia, scanning the news on the web I happened to hear Dame Helen Mirren reciting an English version of a Ukrainian poem about the conflict, "Take Only What Is Most Important," by Serhiy Zhadan. It is a poem that depicts the experience of a person having to leave behind everything and everyone they've ever known to escape a war. The poem, even in English, was so powerful and made such an emotional connection, I don't believe I can read it aloud to an audience and restrain my emotions. Even Helen Mirren, a professional British actress, had

tears and at times her voiced cracked as she recited it. As she finished reading the poem, Mirren added her own words, "Peace for Ukraine, democracy for Ukraine and freedom for Ukraine."

The writers' group will hold an informal poetry reading in the Community Lounge on April 22 from 4 to 5 p.m. Some of its members will be reading poems and all Montebello residents are invited to participate to read poems they love or poems they have written, or just to have a glass of wine and listen to the poetry shared by others.

For more information, contact Kris Amundson (kjamundson@gmail.com), Rebecca Long Hayden (viarebecca@aol.com), or Donna Fowler (donnaflower09@comcast.net). 📖

Take only what is most important

By Serhiy Zhadan, translated into English

Take only what is most important.
Take the letters.
Take only what you can carry.
Take the icons and the embroidery,
take the silver,
Take the wooden crucifix and the
golden replicas.

Take some bread, the vegetables
from the garden, then leave.
We will never return again.
We will never see our city again.
Take the letters, all of them, every
last piece of bad news.

We will never see our corner
store again.
We will never drink from that dry
well again.
We will never see familiar faces
again.
We are refugees. We'll run all
night.

We will run past fields of sunflowers.
We will run from dogs, rest with
cows.
We'll scoop up water with our bare
hands,
sit waiting in camps, annoying the
dragons of war.

You will not return and friends will
never come back.
There will be no smoky kitchens,
no usual jobs,
There will be no dreamy lights in
sleepy towns,
no green valleys, no suburban
wastelands.
The sun will be a smudge on the
window of a cheap train,
rushing past cholera pits covered
with lime.
There will be blood on women's
heels,

tired guards on borderlands covered
with snow,
a postman with empty bags shot
down,
a priest with a hapless smile hung
by his ribs,
the quiet of a cemetery, the noise
of a command post,

and unedited lists of the dead,
so long that there won't be
enough time
to check them for your own
name.

Let me supersize that

By Bob Shea

A letter found in a House of Representatives in-box:

Dear Kevin,

As I sit here in my new office, I can look out the window and see our magnificent capital city. What a view!

I am so proud that one of my ancestors, on my father's side, laid out the original city plan. The family is thrilled that Pierre Charles L'Enfant crossed the Atlantic and made this lasting contribution in city planning to his adopted country.

I am sorry that I missed your meeting on Tuesday, but I had to attend the annual conference of the former editors of the Harvard Law Review. We gather each year to craft legal briefs and discuss Constitutional issues. It is weighty stuff, but we feel an obligation to the Founding Fathers to correctly interpret their intentions. The rule of law is crucial to my very being.

I do want to thank you for my initial committee assignment on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. It is appropriate for me for two reasons. As you know, I won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in middle school based on work I did with a chemistry set given to me one Christmas by my favorite uncle, Henry Kissinger. I almost did not finish the chemistry work as I was involved at the time in defining the parameters for the Hubble Telescope with my good friends at NASA. Fortunately I was able to do both. Multi-tasking is one of my strengths even at such a young age. You know me, I cannot resist a challenge.

I had a conflict of interest last week

as I had to say "no" to Bill Gates who had asked me to be the Chairman of his Gates Foundation. I felt it might run afoul of my work here on Capitol Hill. One has to be attuned to distracting issues as we tackle the country's problems. When in doubt, be honest!

For the same reasons, I have stepped down from the boards at both the American Red Cross and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. One cannot be too careful despite how committed I am to philanthropy. As you well know, truth and transparency are very important to me.

check kept me busy designing offensive plays for the team.

I feel so welcome in your "family-like" caucus especially since my family is scattered having lost so many members on the Titanic. I often wonder what contributions we, as a family, might have made to America if they had all survived that terrible night in April 1914. Family roots are so important to me. For the world it is especially tragic since my cousin, Heinz, working as a special envoy from King George V of England, was actively working on reducing tensions in Europe. Had he not been on the Titanic, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria probably would not have been assassinated just two months later in June of that year, leading to World War I.

You may notice that I have replaced the bronze plaque outside my office door. Instead I now have a white board and a Sharpie on a string so that I can correctly list my name of the day. It is efficient and certainly saves the taxpayers' money replacing it each day or two.

I am looking forward to working with my new friends – Jim,

Majorie Taylor, and Matt – as we collectively assume the mantle of governing our great nation. As you know I am always available for advice and counsel should you need it. I think we make a great team.

Your new best buddy,

George 🍷



Speaking of the country's problems, I will have some thoughts to share with you about the debt limit crisis. During my time as a special advisor to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK, we solved some similar issues. I will always be thankful that my great aunt, Margaret Thatcher, asked me to step in during a couple of very real financial challenges.

As a new Congressman, I am delighted that we have the House gym to help us stay fit. Since my time as back-up quarterback to Tom Brady on the Patriots, I have not had a chance to stay in top physical condition. I spent so many years waiting to take his place on Sunday afternoons. Fortunately Bill Beli-

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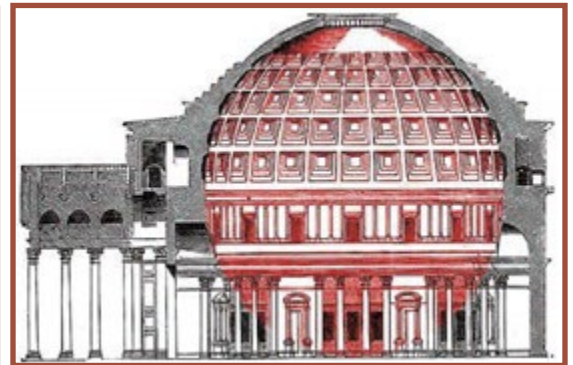
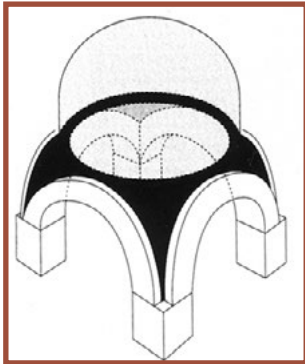
Italy's three incomparable domes

By Joe de Angelis



Throughout recorded history, architecture has served as the window for man's political, civic and religious aspirations and achievements. Monumental among which is the dome and Italy is the home to three of the world's most famous and iconic domes: the Pantheon in Rome, the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiori in Florence, and the Basilica of Saint Peter in Vatican City. A comparative analysis of these three domes will highlight the differences in their structure, method of construction, and the genius required for their accomplishment.

The construction of a dome presents a very unique set of challenges;



therefore it is essential to understand the relationship between the shape of a dome and the forces of nature that bear upon it. Although I am not an architect nor an engineer, the following is my understanding of these relationships. Basically, a dome is a self-supporting curved or spherical structure that relies on essential forces for support. I do not claim to understand these phenomena, but gravity, compression, tension, thrust and normal force, all impact the stability of a dome. Although domes

are spherical in nature, not all domes are perfect spheres, and the construction of each individual dome presents its own unique set of problems most of which stem from the effect gravity has on its shape. Gravity affects different shaped domes in different ways.

In order to understand the complexities involved in building a dome, we must further familiarize ourselves with at least one architectural term, the "pendentive." In architecture, a pendentive is a constructional device that permits the placing of a circular dome over a square room, or an elliptical dome over a rectangular room. Pendentives are triangular segments of a sphere that provide a transition between a dome and the base on which the dome is set. These triangular segments are wide at the top and become narrower as they descend to the piers, the supporting columns. The upright

supports on which they rest create the continuous circular or elliptical base needed to support a dome. The pendentives thus receive the outward force from the dome's weight and concentrate it at the four corners where it is directed down through the piers to the foundations beneath. Because pendentive domes direct the force from the weight of the dome away from the walls, construction of much larger and higher domes is possible.

First built in 27 BC, the Pantheon was destroyed by fire in AD 80 and again in 110. The Pantheon that exists today is widely believed to have been built by Emperor Hadrian, who was passionate about architecture, in AD 120. Hadrian enlisted the aid of Apollodorus of Damascus, a renowned Greek architect, to aid in designing the Pantheon. The dome, which is 142 feet wide, took 10 years to complete.

The Romans were the first to experiment with pendentives, but they had not yet been fully developed, therefore the supporting structure for the Pantheon's dome had to be round in order to support its dome. Archaeological evidence supports the notion that the original building consisted of the distinctive design of the current building; to wit, a portico with tall columns, and a pediment with a rotunda or circular hall beyond. The dimensions of which

were very similar to those of the current building.

When viewing a cross section of the Pantheon it is evident that the dome is actually the upper half of a perfect sphere, the bottom of which rests on the floor of the building. The ancient Romans did not invent concrete; however, they were the first to make widespread use of it and were experts at mixing different grades of the material. This is abundantly evident by the fact that the construction of the Pantheon is 90 percent concrete of varying grades. The typical mixture of Roman concrete consisted of volcanic ash, lime,

super domes



and seawater. By adjusting the makeup of the aggregate, it was possible to make each ascending level of the dome lighter. Heavy basalt and travertine stone at the bottom gives way to lighter tufa, whilst the aggregate at the summit is made up of pumice, an extremely lightweight volcanic rock. What is more, the dome's walls are much thicker at the bottom than at the top, efficiently spreading the massive load onto the sturdy drum beneath.

The beautiful pattern of coffers (recessed panels in a ceiling) on the dome's interior were designed to further reduce the weight of the dome. There are 140 coffers that make up the dome and as they rise and approach the oculus, row upon row, they become smaller and lighter. This, in effect, lessens the load on the rotunda on which the dome rests. It is estimated that this reduction in weight approximates 550,000 pounds.

The coffers were not made individually and then set into place. Rather, they

were made by pouring concrete into negatively constructed molds that were built into a huge hemispherical wooden frame the size and shape of the dome itself. It is not known if this wooden frame was constructed one layer at a time, or if the entire dome was completely outlined in total. In either case, the concrete was then poured into the molds and left to dry, after which the wooden frame was removed. Credit must also be given to the carpenters as success hinged on their ability to construct the molds and supporting structure to the exact specifications of the engineers.

In AD 609 Emperor Phocas gave the Pantheon to Pope Boniface IV for conversion to a Christian Church. The Pantheon was officially converted to Christianity and christened Saint Maria ad Martyres (Saint Mary and the Martyrs) thus becoming the first of Rome's ancient pagan temples to be converted to a Christian Church and it has remained so ever since.

Some 1200 years after the Pantheon was built, the city of Florence decided to build a church with a dome that would be higher, wider, and grander than any previously built dome. In 1296 the initial concept for the new cathedral was presented by Arnolfo di Cambio to the Opera del Duomo, the city's organization in charge of building works. Cambio's design for the cathedral, which was to be built over the city's existing Cathedral of Santa Reparata, called for an octagonal dome, supported by buttresses in

the traditional Gothic style.

In 1367 however, the Opera del Duomo rejected the traditional and selected a new design, one that also called for a massive dome that would be open at the top and partly supported by a second inner dome. Neri di Fioravante designed a dome that did not need external buttressing for support and would stand on, and be supported by an unbuttressed, octagonal drum, similar to that of the Pantheon.

The rejection of supporting buttresses was a major architectural paradigm shift that presented a unique set of problems in its construction, given that the technology needed to build such structures did not yet exist. Exacerbating the problem was an extremely wide and skewed octagon base of 144 feet. This resulted from the eight sides of the base being of unequal lengths causing it to have no precise center. Construction of the cathedral began in 1292 and completed in 1420, except for the dome.

On 19 August 1418, some 50 years after the completion of the new cathedral, which still did not have a dome, the town fathers, hoping to solve the problem of the dome, announced another competition. Legend has it that Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) won the competition to build a dome for Florence's cathedral. Brunelleschi would not reveal how he was going to do it, rather he simply produced an egg and challenged his competitors to



make the egg stand upright on the table. He stipulated that if they could, he would reveal his plans for the dome. Everyone tried, but all failed. Brunelleschi then took the egg, broke it in half and put one half-shell on top of the other, thus allowing the egg to stand upright. Everyone immediately protested complaining that they could have done the same, but Brunelleschi retorted, "Sure, you could have built the dome, too, had you seen my model." Impressed with his demonstration, the judges awarded Brunelleschi the commission to construct the cathedral's dome.

Building the dome was much more complicated than placing one half of an egg shell on the other. The building of the dome was a major undertaking that consumed his life for the next 16 years. From day one, Brunelleschi took it upon

himself to supervise and oversee every aspect of the building of the dome, even to the extent that he invented several machines to insure its successful completion. Brunelleschi definitely had a plan, but he would not share it with anyone.

The effect of gravity on a dome is such that it tends to expand the lower portion of the dome, thereby threatening the dome's structural integrity. In what is regarded as a remarkable and unprecedented engineering achievement, Brunelleschi used hoops to counter the



utilized the design of a flower embedded in the cathedral's floor to create an ingenious rope system to facilitate the laying of the bricks. Ropes emanating from the flower design were used to guide and insure that the bricks, which were laid in a herringbone pattern, created a series of inverted arches, one over the other. This unprecedented use of a herringbone pattern, combined with the flower design used as a guide, was the secret to the successful building of the dome.

The herringbone pattern, which can be arranged at either a 45 or 90 degree angle, creates an energetic bond through a repeated course of stretches; that is, the laying a series of bricks on their long narrow face, which are separated

natural outward spreading force caused by gravity. By inserting a series of internal, horizontal stone and iron chains, which serve as barrel hoops, Brunelleschi was able to counter the outward pressure on the dome. The placing of four horizontal stone and chain hoops, and one wooden chain around the inner dome virtually eliminated the need for any external buttressing.

Brunelleschi also thickened the outer dome on the inside of its corners at nine different elevations, in effect creating additional nine masonry rings. He also connected the inner and outer shells of the dome with solid, vertical brick arches, thereby reducing the stress even further.

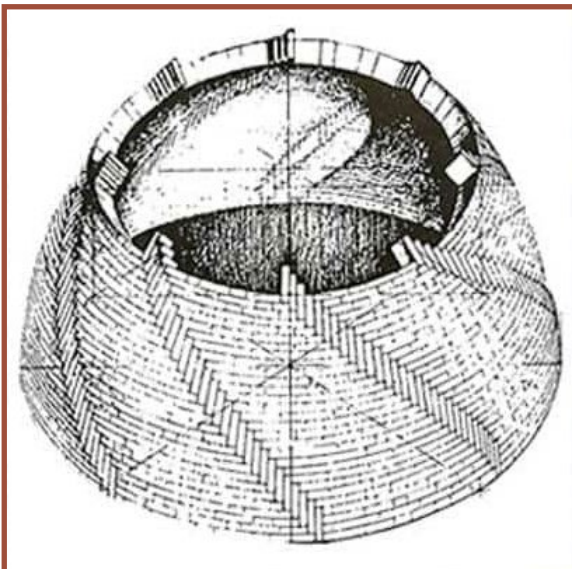
Since the dome was octagon in shape and not spherical, Brunelleschi included vertical "ribs" made of brick and set on the corners of the octagon, which in effect, created separate sections that facilitated the laying of bricks as the dome curved upward and inward.

Because there was no exact center to the octagon due to its unequal sides, Brunelleschi

by a row of vertical of bricks. The use of this technique allowed for the transfer of weight of freshly laid bricks to the nearest vertical rib of the non-circular dome. This technique facilitates self-reinforcement preventing the bricks from slipping as the incline of the dome increases.

A horizontal stone chain used to retain the herringbone brick pattern reduces the stress on the dome, thus allowing the weight to be evenly distributed. Instead of gravity pulling the heavy bricks down, causing them to cave in from the top, the herringbone pattern and the inverted arches use gravity to reinforce and strengthen the structure.

The walls of the dome consist of 24 vertical arched ribs, 16 of which are not visible. These ribs are critical since they connect the inner and outer domes and reinforce the walls of the dome. It is estimated that some 37,000 tons of material, including over four million bricks, had to be lifted to the top of the cathedral in order to construct the dome. Brunelleschi, out of necessity, also invented hoisting machines and lewissons (lifting devices for hoisting large stones).



For example, he invented an ox-driven, reversible hoist capable of raising the heavy stones to increased heights as construction progressed.

Construction of the Lantern, which crowns the dome, was not started until 1446 and completed until 1461. The finishing touch to the dome was the crowning of the Lantern with a gilt copper ball, which contained holy relics, and a cross. These additions brought the total height of the cathedral to 374 feet.

Brunelleschi's dome, which was the first octagonal dome built without a temporary supporting frame is the largest eight-sided masonry dome in the world. It is 144 feet across at its base and 171 feet above the floor of the cathedral.

The façade is wide and has a row of huge columns rising from the basement to support the cornice. The ribbed, ovoid dome is surmounted by a lantern topped with ball and cross. Its drum is framed by two very much smaller domes.

Some 70 years after the completion of Florence's dome, construction was started on St. Peter's Basilica which lasted for over 120 years. Today, St. Peter's Basilica, with its gigantic dome, dominates Rome's skyline. Many of the great architects of the Roman Renaissance and Baroque era participated in its design. Donato Bramante was the initial architect of the Basilica, but it was Michelangelo alone who designed and built the basilica's magnificent dome. The architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1484-1546) a rival of Michelangelo, directly preceded him as Papal Architect. Sangallo worked on St. Peter's from 1513 until he was appointed papal architect in 1536. As such, he commenced to alter Bramante's original design, changes that would have required the destruction of the Sistine Chapel

and the Pauline Chapel which was the private chapel of Pope Paul III and contained frescoes painted by Michelangelo. Sangallo's plan, however, never came to full fruition.

With the sudden death of Sangallo,



all work on the basilica came to a halt. Pope Paul III then approached Michelangelo and offered him the position of Papal Architect. Michelangelo did not readily agree, but eventually and reluctantly, he agreed to accept the position and the commission to construct the dome. At the age of 71, Michelangelo became the new architect of St. Peter's Basilica. Michelangelo would not accept any payment, however, viewing his work on the basilica as being spiritually redeeming.

Although Michelangelo had no formal architectural training, he took on

the job of completing St. Peter's Basilica with gusto, but retaining Bramante's basic form and concepts. He also studied the dome of the Pantheon and the dome of Florence's Cathedral while pondering how to construct a dome for St. Peter's Basilica. His first order of business, however, was to correct the deficiencies in Bramante's original design. This, unfortunately, entailed the undoing of 20 years of Sangallo's work which, of course, did not sit well with the workers. Almost all of them were loyal to Sangallo and resisted Michelangelo at every step. Michelangelo quickly became unpopular. However, he justified his actions by saying, "Bramante's designs were not full of confusion, but clear, pure, and full of light, so that it did not in any way damage the palace ... whoever departs from this order of Bramante's, as Sangallo had done, departs from the truth." Michelangelo was a hard worker and eventually earned the respect of the workers and construction continued unabated.

The piers that Bramante built to support the dome were, in Michelangelo's opinion, insufficient to support the weight of the dome, or the thrust that would be generated upon them by gravity. Bramante had greatly underestimated the structural requirements. Michelangelo increased the size and strength of the load-bearing structure without destroying the central unity of Bramante's original design. Michelangelo also enlarged the four piers in order to adequately support the weight of the dome. The dome rests on four enlarged pendentives and massive piers, each 60 feet thick. The dome ascends above the main altar of the basilica and is supported by four main structural piers with a height of 394 feet and a perimeter of 233 feet.

Drawing on his experience at the

Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo also designed enclosed helical or spiral-shaped ramps on the piers so donkeys and mules could carry building materials and water up to those working on the dome.

At the time of Michelangelo's death in 1564, a large part of the drum that the cupola rests on was complete. Pope Paul III issued a decree stating that Michelangelo's designs were still to be adhered to. The dome was finished in 1590 by his student, Giacomo della Porta, who retained Michelangelo's original concept.

Made almost entirely of heavy masonry, the massive dome of St. Peter's rises to a height of 448 feet above the floor of the basilica to the top of the external cross. The dome is divided by 16 vertical ribs and six ascending, concentric levels above rectangular windows.

There is a massive cupola high above the Baldacchino that contains a smaller dome called the lantern. In Renaissance and Baroque architecture, the term lantern came to mean the small cupola-like structure, usually with decorative arcades, mounted on top of a dome. Although its function is to admit light to the interior, it is essentially a proportional element in the external visual design.

In order to maintain the structural integrity of such a large dome, three iron rings were placed within its masonry wall. However, the three iron rings were not enough to counter the outward thrust of tension created by gravity. Consequently, several cracks began to develop around the dome's base in the early 18th century. The cracks were significant enough to threaten the integrity of the dome and in 1743 engineers frantically added several more iron rings to counter the effects of gravity. Fortunately, the addition of the three rings was successful and no additional modifications have been required since.

Each of Italy's three incomparable domes are unique in their own right and each is a marvel of its time, as well as of today. When comparing the features of these domes there are some very notable features as well as differences and similarities. For example, in addition to being the oldest dome in the world, the dome of the Pantheon is also the largest, unreinforced concrete dome in the world. The



dome of the Basilica of Saint Peter is the tallest dome in the world, while the dome of Florence's Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral is the largest eight-sided masonry dome in the world.

From a general view point, the location of Florence's Domo is a very visible structure that dominates the skyline of the city, as does St. Peter's, but to a lesser extent. The Pantheon, on the other hand, is not a visible part of the city's skyline as it is completely surrounded by buildings of approximately the same height.

Considering the shapes of the domes, the Pantheon's dome is half of a perfect sphere, while the dome of Santa

Maria del Fiore is an elongated, octagonal sphere, and the dome of St. Peter's, although spherical, is not a perfect sphere as it contains ribs. Additionally, the inside of the Pantheon dome is unembellished concrete, while the other two domes are adorned with beautiful frescoes.

All three domes terminate with an oculus at the top, that is a circular opening. The oculus of the Pantheon dome is uncovered and open thereby letting in sunlight as well as the weather. The domes of St. Peter's and Santa Maria del Fiore also have openings at their apex, however they are surmounted with a Lantern and Cupola that keep out the sunlight and the weather.

This brings us to a major difference between the domes, and that is, it is possible for one to climb inside both the dome of Florence's Cathedral and the dome of St. Peter's Basilica from the base of the dome to the Lantern above, and experience a breathtaking view of the surrounding city.

Despite the similarities and differences, it is the dome of Florence's Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral that is the most fascinating. Filippo Brunelleschi, a

master goldsmith and sculptor with no formal training in architecture, nonetheless successfully built the dome and won universal recognition as an architect and engineer. More than 500 years after it was built, Brunelleschi's dome remains the largest masonry dome ever built. Leaving no plans or sketches behind, some of the secrets of its construction that Brunelleschi pioneered are still an enigma today. Brunelleschi's dome is considered a masterpiece of design and engineering. His dome is the most fascinating, the most studied, and the least understood, and to this day tantalizes engineers, art historians and the general public. 🏰

Every once in a while

By Chester Taylor

I arrived early for the Maryland Golf Association (MGA) two-man shamble tournament at National Golf Course in Ft. Washington, Md., just across the river from Montebello. It was last summer on a nice day for the 30th of July, slight breeze and a little overcast. I unloaded my clubs out of my Hyundai Tucson and walked over to where the carts were lined up. Playing were so many young guys that played in college and a few older, more experienced players.

As I approached my cart, I found my partner, Brennan, who was in his early 30s. He was a last-minute add on to the field and had a single digit handicap index. Mine was a little higher. I saw the disappointment in his eyes as he stared at me, “God, this older guy, short, with silver hair, I’m screwed.” Little did he know, I had played in four Pro-Am events at Pebble Beach and Firestone and a few international events, including in Wales with Ian Woosnam, former Captain of the European Ryder Cup Team. It had been a while and a few injuries along the way, but I wasn’t going to let him down.

There were eight teams playing in the net division. Net meant our scores would be adjusted by our handicaps. In a shamble, you get to pick the best drive to hit from, then it was the best players score that counted after that. Our team’s name was Good Times. We were the last group out. When it was our turn to approach the first tee box, the starter reminded me that under MGA rule of 85, age plus handicap

that was 85 or higher, I could play the forward red tees. That was a huge advantage for me because I always played back on the yellow or white tee boxes. I asked Brennan if I could hit first and if it was a good shot, then that would open him up to try to bomb one down the fairway.

Brennan seemed nervous. After I blasted my first shot right down the middle of the fairway, he became calm and even smiled. We started off with a net birdie on the first hole. Then a net par. And so it went, net birdies and pars through the front nine. As we played, Brennan entered our score on his iPhone app and all the team scores popped up on the leader board on the Club’s big screen TV. The team playing with us, the Sultans of Swing, had about the same score as we did after the first nine holes.

As we made the turn, Brennan and I started playing textbook golf. Brennan was pounding his drives making it possible for me to use my pitching and putting skills that seemed to improve on each hole. The other team that we were playing with started to crumble from the pressure. As we approached hole 17, Brennan surprised me when he told me that we were just two shots off the lead. I was very pleased when I hit a long putt in for a net birdie on that hole. Then immediately after, Brennan chipped his ball in the hole for a net eagle. Brennan and I just looked at each other. Without saying a word, we both knew we were tied for the lead. He entered our score electronically and everyone saw it on the leader board.

As we came up to the final 18th hole, we could see about 30 or so guys



perched like vultures up on the hill behind, drinking beer, and shouting “PLAYOFF.” This hole was a par 3, rated the hardest hole on the course which meant Brennan and I both had a stroke on this hole. The way the tee boxes were laid out, Brennan went first and landed his shot in the woods. Next up, I used a 3 wood that hit just short of the large green. Because it was a shamble, Brennan hit his next shot from my ball and chunked it. Then without a pause, he chunked his next shot. He two-putted and knew he was out of it. I hit my pitch shot to about 6 feet from the hole, certainly no gimme putt left not even for a pro. Chances of making it for them is 70.98%. It suddenly became very quiet. I knew if I holed this putt that we would win. If I two-putted, a tie. I looked it over and saw a little right to left break, lined my putter up carefully, and knowing I was pumped up on adrenaline took a deep breath, exhaled, and gave the ball a soft hit. It dropped dead center in the cup. It was what golfers call an “every once in a while” putt. Brennan entered our score in the app and it was over.

In the club house, I told everyone we won because of Brennan’s great play, long drives, and his eagle chip-in on hole 17. He was elated. I had a warm, satisfied feeling. The Maryland Golf Association posted, “Thank you to all the teams that came out yesterday for the 2022 version of our MGA Shamble and showed the true camaraderie of what the MGA is all about...In the net division, with some stellar play, Chester Taylor & Brennan Knaresboro let the good times roll and shot 58 to take the well-deserved win.” 🏆





Delegate Mark Sickles and State Senator Scott Surovell present the highlights of the 2023 Virginia General Assembly session.

Photo by Joan Ledebur

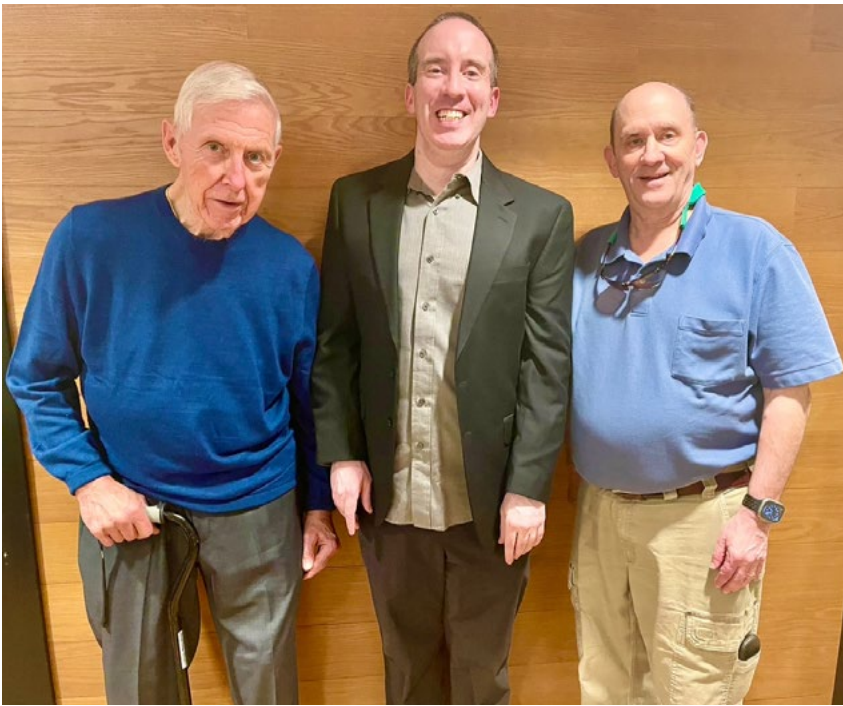
Creating with polymer clay.

Photo by Dian McDonald



The Day and Evening Bridge groups met for appetizers and bridge in Party Room 4. Sarah and Rick Williams and Barbara Bieger were the hosts. After the social hour there were five tables of party bridge.

Photos by Joan Ledebur



Board of Directors election winners: Rob Maruca, Steve Clark, and Nick Nickerson

Elections Committee members: Bob Shea, Elaine Miller (chair), and Carol Coyle-Shea

Harriet Duval and Yo Frommer work the polls in the lobby



*Annual meeting
Photos Dian McDonald*

St. Patrick's Day celebration



Photos by Joan Ledebur and Dian McDonald



*First day of spring, first violet sighting of the season
Photos by Patricia Jacobec*



The Montebello Grounds Committee Presents:

Montebello Spring Wildflower Walk

Walk our woodland trail with **Laura Beaty**, Horticulture Chair of the Virginia Native Plant Society. Learn to name some of our wildflowers; see interrelationships among our native plants; enjoy a walk around our grounds.



Sat., April 8, 9am AND 11am

Offered twice: come at 9 if you can

Meet at B-3 entrance to Building 1 (under green awning)

