

# The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

in bloom

May 12, 2023





## voices on the 37

*Building 1 musicians Susan Dexter (clarinet), Leonard Mausner (French horn) and Randy Small (clarinet) all play in the National Concert Band of America. The summer concerts are outdoors and the music is much lighter – Disney classics, marches, and patriotic music. The concerts at Fort Hunt Park, Mason District, and the July 4th concert at Mount Vernon are free. The June 30 and July 1 concerts at Mount Vernon are with a fireworks display over the Potomac River and require tickets purchased in advance. – Susan Dexter 📷*



National Concert Band of America Summer 2023 Schedule		
7:00	Fort Hunt Park	June 4
7:30	Mason District Park	June 23
7:30	Mount Vernon	June 30
7:30	Mount Vernon	July 1
12:00	Mount Vernon	July 4

*BIG THANKS to Montebello residents who supported Ziya and her Girl Scout troop. Ziya lives with her grandmother in Montebello and they are grateful to their neighbors who bought cookies and made donations. Ziya sold over 250 boxes and is heading to Girl Scout summer camp.*



*The Girl Scouts braved the cold weather and as a newly formed troop sold 732 boxes of cookies. – Delphia Ridley 📷*

*Cover: After the rain by Miriam Rosenthal*

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an independent gazette  
Alexandria, Virginia

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Editor & Designer

Mikhailina Karina

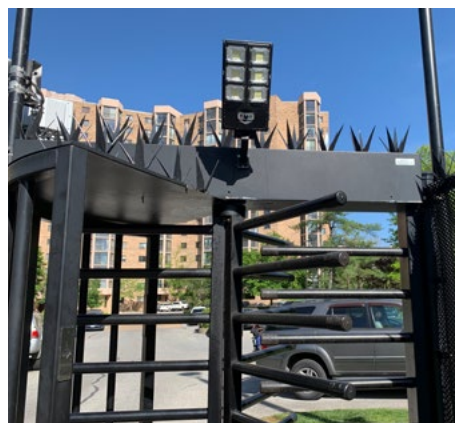
Contributors

Susan Dexter, Joan Ledebur, Dian McDonald, Delphia Ridley, Miriam Rosenthal, Don Savage, Bob Shea, Chester Taylor, Richard Titus, Christine Winter



### Price comparison

I did a trip today. Out by Uber for \$29, back by Alexandria taxi for \$19, plus tip in both cases. No difference in traffic conditions between the two trips. Over a great many trips perhaps the results would be different. I am a new Uber user and cannot comment on that. – Richard Titus 📷



*Intruders beware a spiky welcome atop the back gate*

## Three wishes

By Bob Shea

On Friday, March 17, the main lounge at the Community Center was filled with happy revelers, enjoying a traditional Irish meal as only our international partners, Ugur and Jose, can prepare. The spirits flowed, and it was a time to celebrate even that minuscule bit of Irish blood in all of us. The true spirit of the Emerald Isle was on display. The party goers gladly opened their wallets and purses to pay for the food and drink. As it should be.

The celebration finale was the lively and carefully choreographed Irish dances performed by the lad (one smart young boy) and lasses of the Boyle School of Irish Dance. Their energy and spirit capped an evening of community togetherness.

However, were the dancers performing pro bono? Not at all. They were paid to perform by the Montebello Music Club (MMC) to include an extra charge for bringing their own hard panels on which to dance, saving the new floor from being dented by their steel-tipped shoes. This was one of many performances: classical music, piano duets, vocal ensembles, and folk singers, all sponsored by and paid for by the Montebello Music Club without Montebello funding. Except for refreshments during lobby Christmas sing-alongs paid for by the Activities Committee, the MMC hosts and pays for all musical events our residents have come to love and support by attending. This also includes the refreshments served after each performance when we can meet and chat with the talented artists.

How does the Montebello Music Club manage to do this? Funds are generated by selling tables at the annu-

al Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale, by selling the iconic White House Christmas ornaments at a discount, and by accepting donations from appreciative residents. Without such “at event” donations, the financial well of the Music Club will run dry. Donations after the Saint Patrick’s Day event totaled



\$12, which was just about 3% of what MMC paid the Boyle School of Irish Dance to come to Montebello and perform. If this were a business model, it would not be sustainable.

### The first wish

To continue the varied and well-received concert events featuring talented and international artists, the MMC needs your continued financial support. After a concert, find the donation basket and, again, open your wallets. Tell the Music Club that you appreciate

what they bring to Montebello and that you want these special events to continue. The Music Club is ready to schedule and to continue to host premier concerts, but your support is needed.

### The second wish

As the Music Club refines and defines its role at Montebello, we need active participants and singers – residents who love to have fun, who want to sing outside the shower, and who enjoy camaraderie. Enthusiasm is more important than reading music, although that is certainly helpful. New ideas on what kind of music we want to sing and what type of artists we should book for concerts are all part of the Music Club membership. New voices and ideas are crucial to making sure that our music reflects Montebello and that music remains a part of the Montebello experience. As an aside, I cannot sing a note even if my life depended on it, but I serve as the publicist and as treasurer of the MMC. I love the experience, but I also still sing solo in the shower.

### The third wish

We need an accompanist. Traditionally on the piano, but it could be a guitar player. At rehearsals and live concerts, this person is a key part of our repertoire. Recall your mom telling you to “practice, practice, practice.” Make mom proud and join us.

The Music Club meets in the Community Center at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday nights of each month. Won’t you join us both physically and financially? 🎸

*Tim Coyle in concert on May 7  
Photo by Dian McDonald*



# The cost of gunshot wounds

By Chester Taylor

**M**ore than one million Americans have been shot in the past 10 years, and those numbers are escalating at an alarming rate. From time of evacuation until recovery, it diverts already overburdened doctors and nurses from so many others in need of urgent healthcare. Surgeons complain that they are treating too many young people being shot. They say that there are too many guns out there, 120 guns for every 100 Americans. Gunshot wounds are now the leading cause of death of our children in the United States. In New York City, for example, there is on average 10 gunshots victims in emergency rooms each night.

To stop a gunshot wound from becoming a fatality, first responders have about 10 minutes (the platinum 10 minutes) to address the life-threatening complications such as airway obstruction, collapsed lung and bleeding. Once at the hospital, a team of doctors and nurses usually must perform surgery to remove the bullet and fix damaged internal organs. They must administer an IV for antibiotics, fluids, and other medications. Blood transfusions are normally needed. Anesthesiologists and certified anesthesiologist assistants are needed to administer anesthesia and painkillers. Besides trauma surgeons and ER nurses, treating gunshot victims often requires pediatric surgeons, neurosurgeons, orthopedic surgeons, and cardiologists.

Abdomen wounds are particularly messy and require multiple specialists. Trauma nurse Rhonda Browning, who worked in the resuscitation bay of the emergency department at Penn Presbyterian Hospital in Philadelphia, reported that in an average shift she sees at least one gunshot patient. She states,

“Lately it seems to be a lot of abdominal injuries. So, they’re shooting in the abdomen and the back. Bullets can traverse a patient’s stomach, liver, spleen, and bladder. They’re hitting [patients’] spines, and now they’re paraplegics. It’s actually rare for us anymore to get one gunshot wound – to have a patient come in shot once. I had a patient last



week who was shot 15 times. Fifteen holes. The patient was a 15-year-old boy.”

Outcomes for gunshot victims are particularly grim. If they do live, there can be nerve injury, wound infection, amputation, blood poison, brain damage, gangrene, and severe disability. Many will suffer Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a mental health condition triggered by witnessing a horrific event. The person experiencing it or witnessing it can have flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety. Gunshot vic-

tims may not be able to work for a while or permanently. Damage to the brain or spinal cord can cause paraplegia or quadriplegia. Many victims will require a lifetime of care and assistance.

Recent mass shootings of school children in Uvalde, Memphis, and Nashville were horrifying to most of us watching the news. There have been 14 school shootings this year that resulted in injuries or deaths. Last year there were 51 school shootings with injuries or deaths. In 2022, there were over 20,000 deaths as result of firearms.

The cost of gunshot wounds is staggering in terms of life and medical care, not including the cost of criminal investigations, prosecutions, and incarcerations. Changing laws to make guns less available to young people has met with a lot of resistance by gun owners, associations, and manufacturers. To persuade them to make changes

because it is the right thing to do isn’t working. I propose a different approach. Use the civil courts to show that gun manufacturers, dealers, and advocate association like the National Rifle Association are culpable and partially liable in any shooting particularly when assault rifles and semi-automatic pistols are used. As a blueprint for this, five families of those whose children

were killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School brought a wrongful-death lawsuit against Remington. They won a \$73 million settlement in civil court. Remington, the manufacturer of the Bushmaster AR-15-style rifle used in the massacre that left 20 children and six adults dead, is now bankrupt. Money and the cost of insurance premiums are things these gun folks understand. When they start losing multi-million-dollar lawsuits, you will see change. 🙏

## Neighbors enjoy an afternoon of poetry

By Chester Taylor

To celebrate April as National Poetry Month, the newly formed Montebello Writers Group held the first poetry reading at the community center. The event was a resounding success. Thirty-seven residents attended and many



**Organizers Rebecca Long Hayden, Donna Fowler, Kris Amundson, and Chester Taylor**

read poems of their choosing: Donna Fowler, Kris Amundson, Mary Combemale, Chester Taylor, Caryl Curry, Rebecca Long Hayden, Rodney Fisher, Jeanne Tift, Alan Abramson, Erwin Jacobs, Christine Winter, Don Hinman and John Hitchcock.

An attentive audience filled every seat in the lounge. Montebello has a pool of talented people with diverse experiences who appreciate the arts, many of whom read their original poems.

The poetry included works from American classics like Robert Frost and Joyce Kilmer, to more recent poetry from poet and activist Muriel Rukeyser. There was international poetry from Chilean Pablo Neruda and Saint Lucian Derek Walcott, both Nobel Prize winners for literature.

Caryl Curry read a poem written by the composer, conductor, educator, pianist, and humanitarian Leonard Bernstein, entitled "Beauty and Truth Revisited." Bernstein says we need to learn how to live out that all-embrac-

ing, brave four-letter word, called Love. The letters four are these: L for Learning; O for Oneness on this fruitful sphere; And then a V for Verity (Keats, be near!); Then E – but not for Ends that scoff at means,

Nor the military-industrial complex our Dwight D. Warned us not to call Economy – Not but a highly more courageous E That sings Equality – all, now, and here. These four spell (Oh say it, what the hell!) Love. Love, the synthesis of Keats' Great syllogism, where truth with beauty meets....

Jeanne Tift, read a beautiful sonnet, "The Water Lily," by an Australian poet Henry Lawson that begins:

A lonely young wife  
in her dreaming discerns  
a lily-decked pool  
with a border of ferns,  
and a beautiful child,  
with butterfly wings...

Jeanne also read a sonnet she had

written entitled, "To My Son at 40." Others read poems about love, peace, and the human cost of war.

Rebecca Long Hayden read two from a poetry chapbook called "A Fine Dusting of Brightness," by Dorothy Howe Brooks. The poems were "War" and "On Touring the Battlefield at Little Round Top, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania."

A poem read by Rodney Fisher, a member of MWG, added a little levity to the affair. It was called "Permanently" by Kenneth Koch and started:

One day the Nouns were clustered in the street.  
An Adjective walked by, with her dark beauty.  
The Nouns were struck, moved, changed.  
The next day a Verb drove up, and created the Sentence.

The main organizers for the event were Kris Amundson, Rebecca Long Hayden, and Donna Fowler from the MWG. The group welcomes published and unpublished writers, aspiring writers, and anyone with a love of the written word. Words do matter and truth matters. We plan to host another poetry reading next April.

We thank Joan Ledebur for taking the photos and George Vargas from the Activities Committee for his help in setting up the space and audio support. 📷





# Robo-poet composes three odes to Cinco de Mayo

By Joan Ledebur

Tonight my sweet tech friend came by to visit. She is taking an Artificial Intelligence class and she signed me up for ChatGPT, an AI site. We experimented with prompts. I asked it to write a poem about Cinco de Mayo. This stuff is really amazing. I can imagine spending lots of time fiddling with it. Here is the result:

On Cinco de Mayo, let's celebrate,  
The triumphs of a nation so great,  
Mexico's brave soldiers took a stand,  
Against invaders from a foreign land.

With swords drawn and hearts so bold,  
They fought fiercely, never to be controlled,  
The Battle of Puebla, a victory won,  
A symbol of freedom, for everyone.

So let's raise a glass to Mexico,  
For their courage and strength, we all know,  
Their rich culture and heritage so grand,  
Makes us proud to stand hand in hand.

On Cinco de Mayo, let's dance and sing,  
With joy and laughter, let our spirits ring,  
For a nation so beautiful and true,  
Mexico, we honor and salute you.

Then I asked it to make the poem funny. Here is the result:

On Cinco de Mayo, let's all say "ole",  
For Mexico's victory over Frenchies so drole,  
Their fancy mustaches and croisants,  
Were no match for sombreros and enchiladas, *enchante!*

The Battle of Puebla, a historic scene,  
Where tacos and tequila fueled the Marine,  
Mexican soldiers with their fiery sass,  
Sent those Frenchies back to their wine and their crass.



Let's raise a margarita glass to Mexico,  
For their courage and bravery, don't you know,  
Their love for life and their zest for fun,  
Makes us want to shout "viva la pun!"  
So on Cinco de Mayo, let's dance and shout,  
With our colorful sombreros and outfits devout,  
For Mexico, we'll always have a soft spot,  
Because without them, we'd have no tequila shot!

Finally I asked it to write the poem in Shakespearean style:

Hark, on Cinco de Mayo, we celebrate,  
The triumphs of a nation so great,  
Mexico, the land of proud and free,  
Whose valor and strength all men can see.

With swords drawn and shields upraised,  
Their brave soldiers fought, and were not fazed,  
The Battle of Puebla, a victory grand,  
A symbol of freedom throughout the land.

Let us raise our goblets in honor of

Mexico,  
Whose people and culture fill our hearts with glow,  
Their rich heritage, a treasure so rare,  
Makes us all bow in deep admiration and care.

On this day, let us dance and sing,  
And let our voices and praises ring,  
For Mexico, whose spirit shines so bright,  
And whose soul fills us all with pure delight.

Thus, on Cinco de Mayo, let us all unite,  
And celebrate with pure and true delight,  
For a nation so grand and a people so fine,  
Mexico, may thy glory forever shine!



Photos by Dian McDonald

## The minefields of language

By Bob Shea

Most of us have struggled at some point in our lives to learn a foreign language. Usually it was to meet some academic requirement in high school or college.

We questioned why every French noun had a gender, whether a mailbox, a tree, or fire hydrant. And then to compound our lives even further, the adjective was different if the noun was male or female. In German, two dots over a letter (an umlaut) completely changed the pronunciation of that letter. Some words defied pronunciation for English speakers. The word for a cigarette lighter was *feuerzeug*, which was never pronounced correctly by a single student in my conversational German course. In Chinese, a simple inflection of the same word can give it countless meanings.

We often wonder why Americans are at best linguistically challenged. Why not stick with good old-fashioned English?

Take a step back, and consider our own language in which words spelled exactly the same have different meanings or words that sound the same have different spellings. We grow up learning the nuances, but consider a person for whom English is a second language be-



coming comfortable with these linguistic minefields. Some examples:

*Laid* is pronounced like paid but not like *said*.

*Said* is pronounced like *bread*, which looks like *bead*, and *bead* is not pronounced like *lead*.

Did you see the *bass* painted on the *pale pail* next to the *bass* drum?

*Minute* and *minute* should not be spelled the same since they have different pronunciations.

Have you ever not been *content* with the *content* of a book?

Have you ever *objected* to an *object*?

*Excuse* me but there is no *excuse* for that.

The *ball* was called a strike, making the batter *bawl*.

The *man* ran after the *swan* with a huge sword.

The nomad *deserted* his *dessert* in the *desert*.

*There they* were with all *their* worldly belongings.

*Though* looks like *enough* but sounds different, and *enough* sounds like stuff that is spelled very differently from *rough*, but sounds the same.

We should all take pity on those among us who are trying to learn our language. The umlauts and genders of other languages are a challenge, but I would suggest that English is even more difficult. Enough of this stuff. 🙄



*Celebration to honor the winners of the year-long Bridge Marathon:*

*First Place*

*Ron Conte*

*Second Place*

*Barbara & Herman Bluestone*

*Third Place*

*John & Judy Hagaman*

*Fourth Place*

*Sandy McDougall & Josette Ahlering*

*Ron Conte (seated), from left: Josette Ahlering, Sandy McDougall, Judy Hagaman, Barbara Bluestone, John Hagaman, Herman Bluestone*

*Photo by Joan Ledebur*



# Cinco de Mayo



Photos by Joan Ledebur and Dian McDonald  
The Montebello Voice



# wags & whiskers







*Gabriella (in red) hosted a birthday party for her dog, Roxie, on Picnic Hill this afternoon.*

*Photo by Christine Winter*



*Photos by Dian McDonald*



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*May 5 Flower Moon over National Harbor*

*Photo by Don Savage*

*Montebello photographers Don Savage, Linda Brownlee, and Rachael Bright at Jones Point to capture the rare beauty of Flower Moon*

