

# The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent community gazette

the truth is out there

October 16, 2023



There's a new club in town!



Last week, the Activities Committee approved two new clubs: the Billiards Club and Teachers of Montebello. Teachers of Montebello had been meeting informally since the pandemic where teachers from West Potomac High School would go to the three circle planters, responsibly distance, and

talk about the positives and negatives of online teaching. As more teachers from West Potomac moved here, our group expanded. We would comment each time that wouldn't it be nice if other teachers could join us and give us their perspective from a different school, so the idea to make the club official was born. All teachers past and present are invited and welcome. We look forward to hearing how the school year is going, any great lessons we can share, letting off some steam, and to brainstorm and problem solve. We are also interested in hearing from retired educators who've been there and done that! If you have ever been a teacher, anywhere, we invite you to join us. For more information, please email me at [jpfvt@aol.com](mailto:jpfvt@aol.com)— Jackie Fleming 📧



A bench with a view

Cover photo by Don Savage

The **MONTEBELLO** Voice

an independent gazette  
Alexandria, Virginia

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## Urgent actions are required following the recent theft of a Montebello resident's vehicle

By Peter Blackledge

In support of our Montebello community, I am sharing some important history from my 40-year residency here at Montebello in order to provide actionable recommendations to decrease Montebello's security risks following the alarming 24 September theft of a Montebello resident's vehicle from our property.

Early in the tenure of my 40-year Montebello residency, our front gate security was significantly enhanced by installation of a gating system that specifically allowed entry of only one vehicle per authorization (at that time, authorization was via a resident's insertion of a key card into a reader). Unfortunately, that system was subsequently replaced by the current system that allows multiple vehicles to enter per authorization – by an unauthorized person simply and easily tailgating behind an authorized Montebello resident, as management reported occurred in the 24 September vehicle theft. Such violations of our front gate security unfortu-

nately are certainly not uncommon or new. I have often personally observed unauthorized persons waiting in their vehicles near the front gate entry for such an opportunity to gain a tailgate entry to our Montebello campus behind an authorized Montebello resident. And while theft of a Montebello resident's vehicle is very troubling, I am aware of at least two much more deeply disturbing incidents (one of which personally happened to me) in which the physical safety and potentially the lives of Montebello residents were put at risk by an unauthorized person who had tailgated their way onto our Montebello campus, as this car thief did, and who physically threatened Montebello residents.

Also early in my 40-year tenure, there were discussions about installing a pedestrian turnstile at our front gate, as has more recently been installed and successfully implemented at our back gate. Unfortunately, that earlier planning for our front gate was not completed. This front gate turnstile is critically necessary due to the fact that our Montebello SAC simply do not have the manpower or

time or resources to identity-check every person walking through our front gate pedestrian entry. Any unauthorized person's entry onto our Montebello campus from the high-crime Route 1 corridor would be a serious security risk.

In my view, security is the most important service supplied to Montebello residents. Cost and inconvenience and similar lesser issues should certainly not dissuade us from taking all reasonable actions which could reduce the risk not only to the property, but also to the lives of Montebello residents. We simply cannot wait to implement these two critical safety features until after a Montebello resident is murdered – as tragically happened in 2016 next door in CitySide when a resident confronted a car thief in the CitySide parking lot, and was resultantly *shot* by that thief.

We were lucky that this time a Montebello car thief only took a Montebello resident's vehicle, and not a Montebello resident's life. This is our home and our community. It is imperative that we take immediate action to protect Montebello residents' property and lives. 🏠

## Upcoming Music Club events

### Holiday Bazaar

On Saturday, November 18, the Music Club will host its Annual Holiday Bazaar in the Community Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Local craft vendors will have unique holiday gift items for sale. In past years the Center has been filled with eager sellers and buyers, taking advantage of this special event to find that one-of-a-kind gift.

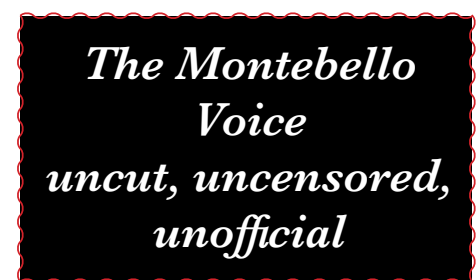
Potential vendors should contact Carol Coyle-Shea at [Carolcoyle@cox.net](mailto:Carolcoyle@cox.net) to reserve a table. The cost is \$25 per table with all proceeds belonging to the vendor. Early reservations are encouraged, as in past years the demand for tables exceeded the available space. Checks should be made out to the Montebello Music Club.

### White House Ornaments

Again this year the Music Club has bulk purchased the iconic White House Christmas ornaments. Buying in bulk from the White House Historical Society allows the Music Club to sell them at a price lower than elsewhere in the DMV. The names of individual building representatives will soon be published. They will have stocks of the ornaments available for immediate sale. Ornaments will be priced at \$25 with checks made out to the Montebello Music Club. These are collectors' items and usually the demand again far exceeds available supply. Any unsold ornaments will be available at the Bazaar. Smart collectors should not wait for the Bazaar, as all too often none are available by mid-November.

### Christmas Caroling

At a date to be determined, the Music Club will host its annual community holiday caroling with refreshments provided by the Activities Committee. Watch for the details. – *Bob Shea* 🏠



## Houston, we've got a problem

By Chester Taylor

**T**his past June, a Cessna Citation jet crashed in rugged mountains near Montebello, Virginia, about 180 miles southeast of Alexandria. All four people aboard were killed. Fighter pilots, who scrambled to intercept the plane because it flew over Washington, D.C., reported the pilot was not responding to radio calls and spotted him slumped over in the cockpit. The aircraft was cruising at about 34,000 feet. If you lose cabin pressure at high altitude, you will quickly become unconscious unless you don an oxygen mask connected to a working oxygen system. While this event is still being investigated, all on board may have become incapacitated because of hypoxia. Tragic for them. The disappearance of Malaysian Flight 370 with 239 members aboard may also have been a hypoxia event.

This incident triggered personal memories of a similar situation I was involved in. It was 1973. It was supposed to be just another high-altitude training mission in a TF-9J Cougar. I was flying that day with a Navy lieutenant who was the pilot, I was the navigator. We attended the weather briefing to get the winds aloft and then preflighted the jet. I followed the lieutenant around double checking everything on the check list. I remembered him checking the oxygen bottle and I checked it, too. It was full. As we walked around doing our checks, the lieutenant told me this aircraft was old. If anything happens, we are ejecting. Martin-Baker rocket assist ejection seats, new at the time, had just been installed. They worked, but if you lived, there was danger of your back being screwed up for ever.

We hopped in and taxied out to the runway there at Sherman Field Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. We received our departure instructions from the tower, moved out to the runway, and then off. I was in the back handling

communications, logging take off time, and watching to ensure we didn't bust our heading or altitude restrictions. We headed west towards Pascagoula, Mississippi, climbing to 32,000 feet. I was checking the heading, location, and gauges. All was A-OK, including the oxygen cylinder pressure gauge.

When we passed over the Pascagoula VORTAC navigation station, we headed northwest and changed our altitude to 34,000 feet. I looked out the cockpit and saw the Pascagoula River Swamp. As I looked back in the cockpit, I saw the arrow on the oxygen cylinder pressure gauge indicator move to zero. I



thumbed it a couple of times, still zero. On the intercom, I told the pilot my oxygen gauge was zero, what did his gauge read?

The lieutenant's response, "Mine is zero, also. We checked the bottle on preflight, right?"

"We both did, it was full."

The pilot seemed jittery the whole flight. I wasn't sure what he was thinking, but at that altitude the last thing I wanted to do was eject. At 34,000 feet the outside temperature runs about minus 67 degrees Fahrenheit. You could freeze or die of hypoxia from lack of oxygen, or both. Not to mention that canopy openings at high altitude are much more violent, increasing the risk of injury upon chute deployment. Besides, I really didn't care for landing in the middle of an alligator and water moccasin infested swamp.

I said, "Let's call Houston Center with a pan-pan call and request an emergency descent to an altitude below 10,000 feet." Houston Center in this case was the short name for Houston Air Route Traffic Control Center not to be confused with the NASA Mission Control Center in Houston. Maybe I could have just called in a routine request, but I thought this was urgent enough for a pan-pan call. A mayday call would have been for more serious life-treating emergencies such as a fire onboard or loss of flight controls.


The lieutenant agreed, "Make the call."

I made the call, "PAN, PAN, PAN, November Whiskey 5-1-7, we have an oxygen cylinder failure. Request an emergency descent to an altitude below 10,000 feet at this time."

Immediately Houston responded, "5-1-7 you're cleared to 7,000 feet."


"Roger, Houston, we are descending to 7,000 feet at this time."

Actually, we were already descending, both of us looking for any aircraft that might be in the area. We hit 7,000 feet. I called Sherman Field tower who vectored us back to base. We played it safe. Hypoxia is nothing to take a chance on.

When you fly commercially, pilots, to fly faster and save fuel, try to find a high-altitude sweet spot based on the aircraft, its weight, and atmosphere conditions, usually between 30,000 to 40,000 feet. On commercial airlines loss of cabin pressure happens from time to time. As recent as August 10 this year, American Airlines Flight 5916 was flying from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Gainesville, Florida, lost cabin pressure, and quickly descended 15,000 feet in three minutes. Again, this past September 13, United Airlines Flight out of Newark on its way to Rome, had to return and descend more than 28,000 feet in 10 minutes due to an "issue" with cabin pressure. In both cases, the crew and passengers donned oxygen masks and landed safely. 

## Jeanealogy

By *Mikhailina Karina*

fter decades of resistance, I finally became a mom jeans mom. It happened accidentally and without any profound contemplation. I just tried on a pair of jeans with the right number of rips and fabric that would render cat hair invisible (the latter is a top consideration for any new garment). They draped and camouflaged all my real and imagined imperfections and passed the leg lifts and squat tests. Best of all, they were a mere \$19, down from \$89 at the Lucky Brand outlet store.

As I approached the register with my denims, I saw their style: Mom Jeans. My heart sank. My High-Rise Drew Mom jeans were described as “slim through the hips and taper to a cropped leg, featuring authentic distressing with a touch of stretch.” The suggested pairing was “with an easy graphic tee or crop top for a laid-back look,” garments not currently – or in years past – circulating in my wardrobe. Also, exactly who is Drew?

Coincidentally, I was wearing my other pair of Lucky Brand jeans I’d purchased from the same store three years ago. The model was Boyfriend Jeans with loose legs and frayed hem. The irony of transitioning from free-wheeling Boyfriend to humdrum Mom was not lost on me and got me thinking about how a utilitarian, ubiquitous garment worn all over the world gets labeled, thereby labeling the wearer. The more I thought about it, the more I found the term offensive in a not-so-subtle misogynist way that denigrated women’s unpaid and stressful role as mothers. Telling us that we’ve put on a few pounds and our clothes are basically shapeless sacks only added to the low social standing. The distressing bit felt distressing on a whole new level.

What, exactly, are mom jeans? Basically, they are high-waisted, loose through the leg jeans that became popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a comfortable everyday staple with a tucked non-descript tee or shirt or sweater. Wearing them was not about looking attractive or stylish – they were sturdy work horses for thoughtlessly throwing on for a long day of mom tasks. Once considered a pejorative term to describe a shapeless pair of dungarees worn by women who’d stopped caring, the style returned in the past two decades (exactly when I became a mom) as a retro fit to swing away from the uncomfortable and impractical butt-crack-baring low skinny jeans. Since everything in the fashion world is about marketing, mom jeans are suddenly hip again for the younger generation that wears them with midriff-baring crop tops.

To be fair, there are also saggy Dad Jeans worn with chunky Dad Sneakers, but someone else can muse about that.

In a 2003 [Saturday Night Live skit](#), when I was a mom to a 3- and 1- year-olds, the brilliant Tina Fey captured it perfectly in her tagline for a pair of Mom Jeans: “For this Mother’s Day, don’t give mom that bottle of perfume. Give her something that says, ‘I’m not a woman anymore. I am a mom.’”

I may be waaaay overthinking the sociological significance of blue jeans styles. However, I believe that words matter and how certain terms have entered our language is worth examining. For example, several years ago I visited my alma mater, the University of Missouri-Columbia. Walking around the enormous swag shop in search of something inexpensive (ha!) with a logo, I asked a sales associate, a young woman, whether they had any tank tops. “Oh, you’re looking for a wife-beater?” she interpreted my request into modern English. Flushed with feminist

rage, I sternly dressed her down about the highly inappropriate casual use of such vile term. She sweetly smiled and batted her long lashes with naïve bewilderment at the middle-aged mom going on about a dumb ol’ shirt.

Walking through a clothing store with a jeans department, you see a wall of cubbies with neatly folded stacks of jeans in various hues of blue and black. In addition to a variety of confusing sizing that ranges from letters to numbers, labels to describe the style make one wonder about the subtle nuances between regular vs. classic or loose vs. baggy. Parsing the incredible array of styles is a linguistic gymnastics: regular, relaxed, loose, boyfriend, skinny, boot cut, wide-leg, baggy, jeggings, tapered, stovepipe, cigarette, brancusi, classic, stretch, cargo, trouser, easy, straight, distressed, flared, mom, puddle, girlfriend, kick flare, bell bottom, capri, gaucho, retro, sand-blasted, dirty washed, colored, slub, whisker washed, ripped, frayed, corded, cuffed, cropped. In addition, rises (the waists’ relation to the navel) can be high, original, regular, medium, low, or ultra low (Brazilian).

Blue jeans are the product of dry goods peddler Levi Strauss’s business acumen and Jacob Davis’s tailoring skills that grew into Levi Strauss & Co. in 1872 and changed the world. Last year, the global denim jeans market was worth nearly \$80 billion; it is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 5.8 percent in the next seven years. Unlike my deep clearance jeans, prices for designer pairs can reach into the equivalent of one month’s rent.

Jeans are more than sensible cotton pants (thank you, Lycra!) to suit any occasion, budget, taste, style, season, and body shape. Jeans are life. Mothers give life. Therefore, mom jeans rule! 🍷

## Strategic communications

By Bob Shea

A message on the U.S. Army's answering machine.

"Thanks for calling the United States Army. We are sorry, but all our units are out at the moment or otherwise engaged.

"Please listen carefully as our menu options have changed.

"Please leave a message with the name of your country, your organization, the geographic region of concern, the specific crisis, and a number at which you can be reached.

"As soon as we have sorted out our recruiting shortfall, being Tubervillized, figuring out what the names of our forts are now (Is Fort Liberty now what used to be Fort Bragg or is it Fort Hood?), assisting with natural disasters, planning for a government shutdown, getting fitted for new high-fashion physical training uniforms, and attending compulsory Consideration for Others training, we will return your call.

"Please speak in English after the tone, or, if you require other assistance, consider one of the following numbers:

"If your crisis is small and close to an ocean, and if you like colorful uniforms and a great marching band, press 1 for the United States Marine Corps. Please do not ask for stealth fighter assistance as such USMC fighters are so stealthy that even the Marines cannot always find them.

"If your crisis is distant with a temperate climate, has at least 4-star hotels, and can be solved by a couple of high-altitude precision bombings, please press 2 for the United States Air Force. Please note that this service is not available after 1630 hours or on weekends. Crew rest demands mandate precise scheduling.

"If your inquiry can be resolved by

some gray smokestacks spewing diesel fumes, guys in funny white hats looking like Dixie cups and wearing lace-up white leggings, upper and lower case ranks, and over 200 years of history unfettered by progress, please write in advance to the United States Navy (4 copies required).

"If your problem is over 100 miles



above the Earth, and you like Star Trek-type uniforms, and know what a Guardian is, please slowly dial 4.....3.....2.....1 to contact the U.S. Space Force. Use the special offer code 'May the force be with you' for more rapid consideration.

"If you are really in big trouble,

press 5 and your call will be routed to the Special Operations Command. A myriad of options are available featuring things that go *bang* in the middle of the night, black helicopters, and camo face-painting lessons. A compulsory credit check will be required to ensure that you can afford the temporary duty costs. Your account can be billed by the SOC at any time, and they are not required to explain the billing to you. It will be classified. If they tell you, they will have to kill you.

"If you are interested in joining the U.S. Army and wish to be shouted at, paid very little, house your family in substandard housing far from civilization, work your butt off, risk your life and limbs in all kinds of weather while watching a U.S. Congress with no military experience erode your benefits package, please stay on the line.

"Your call will be routed to a disgruntled, passed-over Army recruiter in an office in an old strip mall on the other side of town next to a Dollar General.

"Have a pleasant day. Again thank you for calling the U.S. Army crisis line.

"Be all you can be." 📞



Fall dance  
Photo by Joan Ledebur

## Theo joins Montebello's furry friends

By Barbara Lauterbach

In the early 1970s, I lived in Old Town in Chicago. One of my neighbors had a male show Beddie named Sutton. Sutton took himself for a walk around the block every morning at 6:30. The dog was amazing.

My former husband and I spent some time in Arizona, where acquaintances showed Bedlingtons. As young married folk, we had to have one. It took nearly a year to find a trustworthy breeder and another year for Molly to be born and reluctantly sold to us. In 1973, I wrote the largest check I had ever written to the breeder – \$1,250 – and so began my love affair with this rare breed. Molly trained with me for the Chicago marathon and although she could not race, she ran circles round me in training.

I became involved in BTCA, a Bedlington rescue group in 2014 shortly after my best boy Perry died suddenly. Since then, I have rescued two, Martini, who lived at Montebello and died last early August. Theo is my second



rescue. I drove to Kisseemee, Florida to rehome this adorable 3-year-old boy. His mom was sick and had to find homes for her three Beddies.

Theo, who had a large fenced yard, doggy door, and two siblings, moved hundreds of miles north to Montebello. Theo has been here six weeks and has mastered elevators, doggy day care, my cat Tallulah, and is now taking me to dog lessons every Saturday morning. He loves people and enjoys his doggy and people neighbors talking to him and petting him.

In my experience, these are most lov-



ing, intelligent dogs that look like little lambs. But they are fierce hunters, particularly of rats and other rodents. It is my understanding that they were used to clear the Welsh mines of rats. 🐭



### Cup of Joe

Chuck Amorosino and Brian Hayden salute to the Pocket Forest

Photos by Joan Ledebur



final glance



*Ginormous, volleyball-sized fungi sprung up in the woodlands behind building 1*

*Photos by Don Savage*