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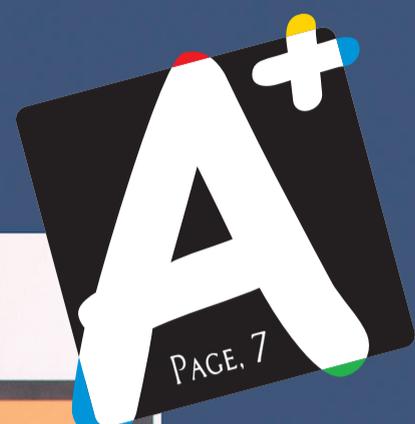


PHOTO BY DEBORAH STEVENS/THE ALMANAC ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 6 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

Historian Karen Gray discusses "Women's History on the C&O Canal" — the role of women who worked on the C&O Canal — during a free program Saturday, March 16, at Great Falls Tavern.



## Women's History And the C&O Canal

Potomac Teen Uses Tech To Promote Animal Rights  
NEWS, PAGE 3

Explaining Death to Children  
A+, PAGE 7

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# NEWS

## Protecting Against Scams

Thursday, March 21, 7-9 pm  
Potomac Comm Ctr, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac

## Health and Wellness Fair

“Talking with your Doctor – Making the Most of Your Healthcare Appointment”  
+ prescription take-back, yoga, falls prevention, free raffle tickets, more.

Monday, April 1, 7-9 pm  
Potomac Comm Ctr, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac

240-221-1370 to RSVP, to learn more  
[www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org](http://www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org)



IMAGES FROM CABIN JOHN PARK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT FACEBOOK  
**The Billy Goat trail at Great Falls Park.**



## Injury on Billy Goat Trail

Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire Department dispatched swift water crews Sunday, March 17 for an injured person on Billy Goat Trail C at Carderock Climbing and Recreational area. The individual fell from rocks near water's edge.

Past issues of

**THE CONNECTION**  
NEWSPAPERS

back to 2008  
are available at

<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

## Learn To Be Healthier

### Potomac Community Village to host free Health and Wellness Fair.

Potomac Community Village (PCV), whose mission is to make the community stronger and healthier by enabling Potomac-area seniors to safely live in their own homes as they grow older, is hosting a free and open-to-all Health and Wellness Fair on Monday, April 1, from 7 – 9 p.m. at the Potomac Community Center.

The fair features a presentation on “Talking with Your Doctor – Making the Most of Your Healthcare Appointment,” with Steve Lorberbaum, of Assisting Hands of Potomac.

Also planned: A prescription drug take-back collection; blood pressure screening by Suburban Hospital; exercises for better balance taught by Potomac-based personal trainer Rose Campbell; chair yoga instruction with Cathy Lorberbaum of Potomac;

staffed information booths for Oasis and JSSA; materials on healthy eating, aging and sex, memory issues, eye care, skin care, Alzheimer’s Disease, dealing with pain, and the Go4Life program from the National Institute on Aging; free healthy refreshments; and free raffle tickets offering the chance to win gift cards from CVS, Harris Teeter, Totally Polished, more.

RSVPs are suggested but not required, to 240-221-1370 or [info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org](mailto:info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org). The Potomac Community Center is at 11315 Falls Road, Potomac.

PCV is a network of neighbors and friends, an all-volunteer nonprofit group which welcomes volunteers of all ages, from middle school to adults. To find out more about membership or volunteering, please call 240-221-1370, or email [info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org](mailto:info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org), or see [www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org](http://www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org).

PCV’s Health and Wellness Fair is part of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services’ celebration of National Public Health Week.

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## Potomac Teen Uses Tech To Promote Animal Rights

### Petition drives nationwide effort.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN  
THE ALMANAC

**W**hen Sidney Helfand wanted to push Congress to pass the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act, she did what any modern teen would do: head to her computer.

There she started an online petition to get the word out and gather support for the bill.

"I just wanted to help animals and do something to help make a change in the world," Sidney, 16, a sophomore at Bullis School, said.

She said she was in touch with U.S. Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL), who mentored the bill and decided she would create a petition for it.

So far, the petition, posted in January on Change.org, has about 305,000 signatures according to Wayne Pacelle, the original creator of the bill and former head of the Humane Society of the United States.

"I've been so impressed with Sidney," Pacelle said. "She came up with [the online petition]. This is the thing you hope for, it's been a big shot in the arm."

Pacelle said PACT passed the Senate during each of the last two sessions but stalled in the House. Even with almost 300 co-sponsors, the bill was blocked by the committee chairman.

"I think with the new Democratic majority in the House it will pass in the next two months," he said. "Sidney's effort has given it a great lift. The value is not so much her contacting the lawmakers but getting the interest and asking [others] to contact their lawmakers."

Young people speak with a purity of intention that speaks to lawmakers, he said.

Sidney's interest in making a difference in the world began at an early age, "When I was about four,

I had an idea called a Charity Club," she said.

"She was really more like six or seven," her father, David Helfand said. "She wanted to have a charity."

"I'm a dad, I play a supporting role," he said. "She wanted to have a charity."

He said she was a "wonderful nuisance" so he finally agreed.

Sidney now has a 501C3 charity: United Forces for Good.

"It's to have a network to unite people," Sidney said.

When asked who she would like to emulate, Sidney said she would like to be like her sister Alyssa, a freshman at the University of Michigan.

"She has so many passions and she is so focused," Sidney said.

David Helfand's pride in his daughters was obvious.

"I've been blessed with these two amazing kids," he said. "Sidney has been a wonderful handful, wanting to change the world, eventually I stopped getting in the way."

Though the petition to gain support for PACT is Sydney's first petition to influence national legislation, it is not her first attempt to make a difference.

She started an environmental club in her middle school, La Jolla Country Day in California, David Helfand said. There she led a group of students that signed a petition asking the school to stop selling water bottles.

"The head of school took it one step further and agreed to not only do that but to stop selling all single use plastic bottles on campus, David Helfand said.

She also started a Facebook page #TheAnimalWelfareCenter, with the purpose of helping others who want to help animals find a way to do so that is meaningful to them. And she has a new petition site, [www.easypetition.org](http://www.easypetition.org) expected to come on line soon.

On the new petition site, she will be advocating for the following several causes, all regarding animal safety.

**"I just wanted to help animals and do something to help make a change in the world."**

— Sidney Helfand



PHOTO BY PEGGY MCEWAN/THE ALMANAC

**Bullis student Sidney Helfand, with her Maltese Luna, started an online petition encouraging Congress to pass the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act.**

### Music from The 19th Century

**The Mountain Dulcimers — (from left) Linda Hubbard, Lewis Cabe, Noel Schroeder, Kathy Wilson, Marcia Price, Karen Buglass, Jim Weed, Maddie MacNeil, and Carol Whitmer — perform music from the 19th century at Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center, on Saturday, March 16.**



PHOTO BY DEBORAH STEVENS/THE ALMANAC

## Responding to Proposed Budget

Montgomery County Board of Education President Shebra Evans and Montgomery County Public Schools Superintendent Jack Smith released the following statement in response to County Executive Marc Elrich's recommended Fiscal Year 2020 Operating Budget:

**W**e thank County Executive Elrich for his investment in our schools, including funding above Maintenance of Effort. Even as our County faces revenue challenges, Mr. Elrich recognizes that we must invest in our students now, to build the economy of tomorrow. As revenue in our County continues to fall below projections, MCPS is committed to being a fiscally responsible partner.

School district leaders have worked collaboratively with the County Executive's office as they developed this budget. While this budget did not meet the amount identified in the Board's request, we believe we will still be able to implement our priority initiatives, including the expansion of prekindergarten. However, it will require us to reduce some planned efforts and delay others. Over the next two months, we will work with our partners on the County Council to determine if there

are opportunities to restore some of the funding outlined in our initial operating budget request and to minimize the impact of any reductions on students and schools.

As we look ahead to the Operating Budget for school year 2020-2021, we anticipate submitting a significantly larger funding request to our County leaders to align with the pending Kirwan legislation and to ensure that MCPS remains competitive in our continuous effort to hire and retain the most qualified workforce to serve our students.

In February, the Board of Education voted unanimously to adopt a \$2.66 billion Operating Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. This includes participation in a county savings plan that will result in MCPS saving \$25 million in the current school year to fund school year 2019-2020.

The budget includes funding for key bodies of work that will strengthen the district's efforts to improve programs; increase access to strong academic and career opportunities; extend learning; provide language opportunities; focus on physical, social and psychological well-being; hire and retain an effective and diverse workforce; and strengthen operational excellence. This includes funding for:

- ❖ Reducing class size guidelines;
- ❖ Expanding prekindergarten programs;
- ❖ Providing alternative pathways for graduation;
- ❖ Adding leadership positions in schools;
- ❖ Providing differentiated and program support to special education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students;
- ❖ Implementing extended year programming at two elementary schools;
- ❖ Adding programs and support staff for student physical, social and psychological well-being;
- ❖ Expanding dual-enrollment opportunities for students at Montgomery College;
- ❖ Expanding the Summer RISE career exploration program for students;
- ❖ Strengthening school safety and student security initiatives;
- ❖ Expanding career pathways and professional opportunities for employees;
- ❖ Adding technology improvements to support expansion of professional development platforms and support for schools.

The Board's adopted operating budget reflects input from an array of stakeholders, including staff, parents, students and community members.

### COMMENTARY

### BULLETIN BOARD

#### THURSDAY/MARCH 28

**Medicare Demystified.** 7-9 p.m. at Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Questions about Medicare? This program will clarify Medicare, Medigap/Supplements, and prescription drug coverage. Learn how to get the best benefits, coordinate Medicare with other health care programs and understand the Medicare alphabet – A,B,C, D. Presented by Leta Blank, Medicare consultant. Free. Visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/branches/potomac.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/branches/potomac.html) for more.

#### SATURDAY/MARCH 30

**Call for Entries: 2019 Girl Power Contest.** The Montgomery County Commission for Women is inviting residents between the ages of 5 and 105 to participate in its third annual Girl Power Contest. Submissions should address the question, "If you had a superpower, how would you use that power to help girls and women?" Winning entries will be selected from four categories: elementary, middle, high school and adult. Entries are limited to one per person, should be no more than 500 words and include full name, age, grade and school (if applicable), phone number, and email address. Call 240-777-8300 or visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw).

#### TUESDAY/APRIL 2

**Nomination Deadline.** The Montgomery County Commission on Children and Youth is seeking nominations for the 33rd annual Nancy Dworkin Awards for Outstanding Service to Youth. The awards recognize individuals and organizations that have made a difference in the lives of children and youth in Montgomery County. Nominations should be emailed to [erin.stillwell@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:erin.stillwell@montgomerycountymd.gov). For nomination guidelines, visit [bit.ly/2u9j2cG](http://bit.ly/2u9j2cG). Call Erin Stillwell at 240-777-1716 or email [erin.stillwell@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:erin.stillwell@montgomerycountymd.gov).

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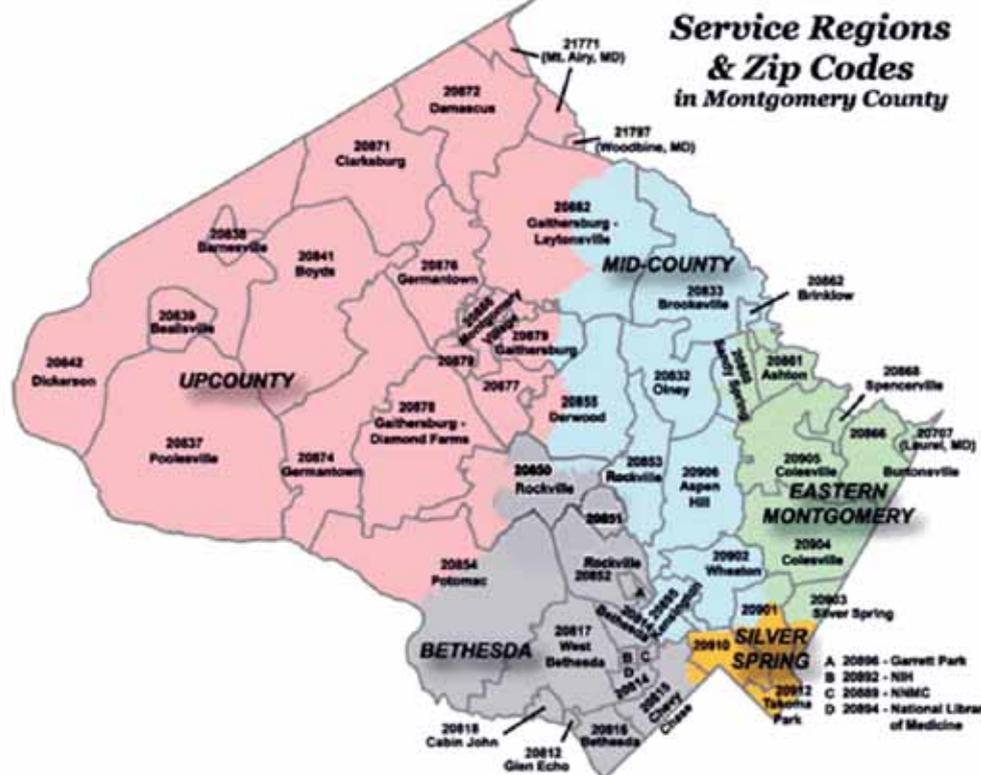
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## PEOPLE

### Briscoe Named ACT K-12 Champion

Raymond Briscoe, assistant head of The Woods Academy, received the ACT K-12 Champion Award for his oversight and efforts to enhance of The Woods Academy's curriculum, which focuses on entrepreneurship, leadership, and innovation.



**Briscoe**

The ACT College and Career Readiness Champions are high school seniors, K-12 professionals, postsecondary professionals and workforce professionals who are making a positive impact on their communities through their efforts to advance college and career readiness for all. The ACT College and Career Readiness Champions are individuals across the country who support ACT's mission of education and workplace success.

ACT State Councils — comprised of edu-

cation and workforce professionals from all 50 states — serve as the selection committee and select one Champion per category for each participating state.

"To be college and career ready, children need the skills and expertise to thrive — not just survive — in a world driven by technology," said Briscoe.

"At The Woods, students learn to use complex technology to express themselves, solve problems, and create opportunities as innovators, leaders, and entrepreneurs.

Students participate in authentic projects and gain applicable skills that include collaboration, critical thinking, communication, character, and creativity, growing in the context of the world they will one day lead."

### County Offers 'Kids Ride Free'

The Kids Ride Free program provides free rides on County Ride On buses and certain Metrobus routes within Montgomery County to those ages 18 and under (older if still in high school) who are Montgomery County residents. The free rides are available weekdays between 2 and 8 p.m. The program, which is for students, operates year-round. Students should show their Youth Cruiser SmarTrip Card when boarding buses. School photo identification

cards (IDs) have been used in the past and will continue to be accepted until a cutoff date is set. All student riders are requested to have a Youth Cruiser SmarTrip Card for use as soon as possible. Some schools, all Montgomery County libraries, the Silver Spring TRiPS Store, The Mobile Commuter Store and the Montgomery County Treasury Office sell the cards for \$2. See the list of schools at: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-transit/kidsridefree/schools.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-transit/kidsridefree/schools.html).

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1. To qualify for this offer, you must have a new or existing Platinum Savings account and enroll the account in this offer between 01/21/2019 and 03/22/2019. This offer is subject to change at any time, without notice. This offer is available only to Platinum Savings customers in the following states: CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NJ, NY, SC and VA. In order to earn the Special Interest Rate of 2.08% (Special Rate), you must deposit \$25,000 in new money (from sources outside of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., or its affiliates) to the enrolled savings account and maintain a minimum daily account balance of \$25,000 throughout the term of this offer. The corresponding Annual Percentage Yield (APY) for this offer is 2.10%. The Special Rate will be applied to the enrolled savings account for a period of 12 months, starting on the date the account is enrolled in the offer. However, for any day during that 12 month period that the daily account balance is less than the \$25,000 minimum, the Special Rate will not apply and the interest rate will revert to the standard interest rate applicable to your Platinum Savings account. As of 12/10/2018, the standard interest rate and APY for a Platinum Savings account in CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NJ, NY, SC and VA with an account balance of \$0.01 to \$99,999.99 is 0.03% (0.03% APY) and with an account balance of \$100,000 and above is 0.05% (0.05% APY). Each tier shown reflects the current minimum daily collected balance required to obtain the applicable APY. Interest is compounded daily and paid monthly. The amount of interest earned is based on the daily collected balances in the account. Upon the expiration of the 12 month promotional period, standard interest rates apply. Minimum to open a Platinum Savings account is \$25. A monthly service fee of \$12 applies in any month the account falls below a \$3,500 minimum daily balance. Fees may reduce earnings. Interest rates are variable and subject to change without notice. Wells Fargo may limit the amount you deposit to a Platinum Savings account to an aggregate of \$1 million. Offer not available to Private Banking, Wealth, Business Banking or Wholesale customers. 2. Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is effective for accounts opened between 01/21/2019 and 03/22/2019. The 11-month New Dollar CD special requires a minimum of \$25,000 brought to Wells Fargo from sources outside of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., or its affiliates to earn the advertised APY. Public Funds and Wholesale accounts are not eligible for this offer. APY assumes interest remains on deposit until maturity. Interest is compounded daily. Payment of interest on CDs is based on term: For terms less than 12 months (365 days), interest may be paid monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or at maturity (the end of the term). For terms of 12 months or more, interest may be paid monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. A fee for early withdrawal will be imposed and could reduce earnings on this account. Special Rates are applicable to the initial term of the CD only. At maturity, the Special Rate CD will automatically renew for a term of 6 months, at the interest rate and APY in effect for CDs on renewal date not subject to a Special Rate, unless the Bank has notified you otherwise. Due to the new money requirement, accounts may only be opened at your local branch. Wells Fargo reserves the right to modify or discontinue the offer at any time without notice. Offer cannot be combined with any other consumer deposit offer. Minimum new money deposit requirement of at least \$25,000 is for this offer only and cannot be transferred to another account to qualify for any other consumer deposit offer. If you wish to take advantage of another consumer deposit offer requiring a minimum new money deposit, you will be required to do so with another new money deposit as stated in the offer requirements and qualifications. Offer cannot be reproduced, purchased, sold, transferred, or traded. 3. The Portfolio by Wells Fargo program has a \$30 monthly service fee, which can be avoided when you have one of the following qualifying balances: \$25,000 or more in qualifying linked bank deposit accounts (checking, savings, CDs, FDIC-insured IRAs) or \$50,000 or more in any combination of qualifying linked banking, brokerage (available through Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC) and credit balances (including 10% of mortgage balances, certain mortgages not eligible). If the Portfolio by Wells Fargo relationship is terminated, the bonus interest rate on all eligible savings accounts, and discounts or fee waivers on other products and services, will discontinue and revert to the Bank's then-current applicable rate or fee. For bonus interest rates on time accounts, this change will occur upon renewal. If the Portfolio by Wells Fargo relationship is terminated, the remaining unlinked Wells Fargo Portfolio Checking or Wells Fargo Prime Checking account will be converted to another checking product or closed.

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## Eight Daze and Seven Sleepless Nights



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

On Monday, I take one of our "Buff Boys" (beige-colored cats), "Chino," to the vet for his bi-weekly glucose-monitoring day. This is his new routine as "Chino" was recently diagnosed with diabetes.

In addition, since his diagnosis, I've been injecting him with insulin twice a day, subcutaneously ("sub-q") going on six weeks now. Though he's eating well, he's lost weight; apparently, it's related.

Without getting too sad, too soon, he looks frail and the stares and meows he gives me seem to be pleas for help which, other than providing food, water and touch, I am clueless as to what else I can do. I'm not anticipating the worst yet, but when I pick him up at the vet later in the day, I'm not expecting the best either.

On Wednesday, I go for my first CT scan in eight weeks. More significantly, it will be my first "CT" since I began immunotherapy. I don't quite know what to expect; although I know what I hope.

The fact is I/we neglected to ask my oncologist what his expectations were: specifically relating to a time frame about the immunotherapy's effectiveness; and as we've moved on, we have a few other questions: Will the infusion have any effect after just eight weeks, generally? Is there a protocol/length of treatment which a patient is supposed to have before success or failure is determined? Are there any indications other than scan results which might contribute to an assessment of the drug's impact on my tumors? Is it possible that the tumors in my lungs might have a different reaction (shrink, stable, grow) than my "Adam's apple" tumor? If so, then what? Are there any side effects from my bi-weekly infusions which could cause my treatment to stop?

Beyond these types of questions, my oncologist prefers not to discuss scenarios. The short summary is: we're looking for some kind of clarity and/or guarantee. Unfortunately, for cancer patients, clarity and guarantees ended on the date of your diagnosis.

On Friday, I have my next scheduled infusion (with pre-infusion lab work on Wednesday). Door to door, depending on how busy the Infusion Center is, and depending how long it takes the pharmacy to mix/prepare my drug, it will be approximately three hours until I'm back home. The experience is not tedious nor is it torture.

Compared to the eight-hour days I had to endure in the early, heavy-duty days of chemotherapy, this time commitment is a breeze. And when one considers the relatively minor side effects – so far, the routine is quite bearable. (I just need the immunotherapy to be effective.)

On the following Monday, we see my oncologist. Typically, we don't see him until later in the week on Friday. In the 10-day interim, my oncologist will email results of the scan – with his assessment – and attach the radiologist's report so that when we see him, we're aware and prepared.

However, in this week's particular instance he had availability on Monday, five days post-scan, and not on Friday. As such, we are seeing him so soon after the scan occurs that he might not have any results to email us before our appointment.

This means that we'll be going into the appointment cold, so to speak. Which means we'll be extremely anxious as we sit in the examining room waiting for his knock asking if it's OKAY for him to come in. And then staring at his face as he enters looking for any kind of hopeful sign that the treatment has worked.

And that's what this week-plus-one-day will be: a struggle; about me, for my wife, about our life together and about one of our cats.

Each of the four days/four events itself would be stressful and thought-provoking enough. Having them occur one right after the other, simultaneously almost, is like adding insult to injury. It's bad enough to begin with and it's potentially even worse how it might end with – really bad news.

Through it all, somehow we must remain positive. There's no future in being negative.

To invoke the late Yogi Berra, who said in 1973 while managing the last-place New York Mets: "It ain't over 'till it's over." (And of course they went on to win the National League pennant.)

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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## ENTERTAINMENT



**Byron Stripling will perform Armstrong's greatest hits, including his signature version of When the Saints Go Marchin' In with The National Philharmonic.**

### National Philharmonic Celebrates American Jazz

Witness the unforgettable jazz musician Byron Stripling's performance in "Sounds of New Orleans: A Tribute to Louis Armstrong" with the National Philharmonic, led by Maestro Piotr Gajewski. Stripling got his start as the lead trumpeter in the Count Basie Orchestra and will perform Armstrong's greatest hits, including his signature version of When the Saints Go Marchin' In. Stripling will perform other Armstrong hits, including Saint Louis Blues, Statchmo Scattin' & Swingin', and What a Wonderful World. Stripling has performed as lead trumpeter and soloist with symphonies around the country, as well as at Carnegie Hall. Saturday, March 30, 8 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore's Concert Hall, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. Ticket prices are \$10-\$72. Visit [www.nationalphilharmonic.org](http://www.nationalphilharmonic.org) or call 301-581-5100.

### CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday.

Gray (Baltimore D & D), Leon Scott ("Get Up DC") and Katie McKelvie (Charm City Comedy Festival). \$15 early bird; \$20 general admission. Recommended for 16 and older. Get tickets at [www.improbablecomedy.com](http://www.improbablecomedy.com).

### ONGOING

**Art Exhibit by Morton Fine Art.** Through March 30, gallery hours at Gallery B, 7700 Wisconsin Ave., Suite E, Bethesda. Gallery B's March exhibition is a group show by Morton Fine Art. The exhibit, curated by Amy Morton, will feature new works by several Morton Fine Art's artists including Victor Ekpuk, Katherine Hattam, Andrei Petrov and Vonn Sumner. Visit [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org).

**Photography Exhibit: "Visions, Reflections."** Through April 14, Saturdays, 1-4 p.m.; Sundays, 1-8 p.m. at Photoworks, at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd, Glen Echo. Photoworks presents "Visions, Reflections" by Roberto Fernandez Ibanez. Three of the four selected series do without the camera as an instrument to create images. They convey the artist's concern for the coexistence of humans with nature, the knowledge derived from observing it, and the use of the photographic medium as a material that not only changes when it is exposed to light, but can be transformed, tuned, and textured by techniques and laboratory processes. Visit [www.glenechophotoworks.org](http://www.glenechophotoworks.org) for more.

**Teen Writers' Club.** Tuesdays through May 28, 6:30-8 p.m. at Potomac Library, 10101 Glenolden Drive, Potomac. Teens (13-18) with a passion for writing are invited to join the Teen Writers' Club. Learn and practice new writing techniques, share your work, and learn how to critique other works with author Neal Gillen. Free. Email [acsagillen@aol.com](mailto:acsagillen@aol.com) for more.

### SUNDAY/MARCH 24

**JGSGW Monthly Meeting.** 1:30 p.m. at Beth El Hebrew Congregation, 3830 Seminary Road, Alexandria, Va. The Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Washington (JGSGW) will present Evaluating Conflicting Evidence to Find "the Truth" and Beginner & Intermediate Jewish Genealogy Workshops. The Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Washington (JGSGW), an independent non-profit educational organization, based in Rockville, Md. The Society is open to all those interested in Jewish genealogy. Prior to the presentation, JGSGW members may register for one of two members only workshops to be held from 10 a.m.-noon. Advance registration required. Visit [www.jsggw.org/membership](http://www.jsggw.org/membership) to join.

### SATURDAY/MARCH 30

**Stand-up Comedy.** 7:30 p.m. at Cissel-Saxon American Legion Post 41, 8110 Fenton St. (blue awning off Fenton Street parking lot). Stand-Up Silver Spring presents Robert Mac (Last Comic Standing, Comedy Central) along with Violet

### MONDAY/APRIL 1

**Health and Wellness Fair.** 7-9 p.m. at Potomac Community Center, 11315 Falls Road, Potomac. Potomac Community Village (PCV) is hosting a free and open-to-all Health and Wellness Fair, featuring a presentation on "Talking with Your Doctor – Making the Most of Your Healthcare Appointment," with Steve Lorberbaum, of Assisting Hands of Potomac, a home healthcare company. Also on tap: a prescription drug take-back collection; an opportunity to try some exercises for better balance and falls prevention; yoga instruction; and information on healthy eating, aging and sex, memory issues, eye care, skin care, mental health, much more. Refreshments and free raffle tickets are also included. RSVPs are suggested but not required, to 240-221-1370 or [info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org](mailto:info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org).

**Tannahill Weavers.** 7:30 p.m. at Saint Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Road, Rockville. The Institute of Musical Traditions (IMT) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization which preserves and promotes American and international folk music traditions, and nurtures new styles evolving from these cultural roots by presenting concerts, workshops, and educational programs. Tickets: \$22 advance, \$27 door. Students: \$17 advance, \$22 door. Visit [www.imtfolk.org](http://www.imtfolk.org) or call 301-960-3655.

### FRIDAY-SATURDAY/APRIL 5-6

**Bethesda Film Fest.** Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday, 6 and 8 p.m. at Imagination Stage, 4908 Auburn Ave., Bethesda. The 7th annual Bethesda Film Fest will feature five short documentaries made by local filmmakers. The evening will include a discussion with the filmmakers after the screenings. Tickets are available at [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org) for \$10. Remaining tickets will be sold at the door. Visit [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org) or call 301-215-6660.

### SUNDAY/APRIL 7

**Waltz Dance.** 3:30-6 p.m. at the Spanish Ballroom at Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo. Introductory Waltz Workshop from 2:45-3:30 p.m. Featuring the band Gyration, playing a lively mix of folk waltzes with a few other couple dances, including Hambo, Schottische, Swing, Tango, and Polka. Admission is \$13, \$5 for full-time students with student ID. No partner required. Call Joan Koury at 202-238-0230 or Glen Echo Park at 301-634-2222, go to [www.WaltzTimeDances.org](http://www.WaltzTimeDances.org) or e-mail [info@WaltzTimeDances.org](mailto:info@WaltzTimeDances.org).

# Explaining Death to Children

Breaking down a difficult topic and helping children grieve.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**R**osalie Ward, recalls a hot and sticky summer evening in 1975. She was watching reruns of the television show “Bewitched” with her twin sister in the living room while her mother cooked dinner in the kitchen. Ward remembers hearing the ring of the family’s rotary telephone. The next sound she heard was a shriek and then violent sobs from her mother.

“My mom had gotten a call that her brother, my uncle, had been killed in a car crash,” remembers Ward. “I was six at the time, but most of my memories of that evening are of my mother crying uncontrollably for the hour or so until my dad came home from work. The two of them disappeared behind closed doors. I just remember being terrified and feeling alone.”

Whether prolonged or sudden, unforeseen or expected, experiencing the death of a loved one is never easy. While grief can weigh heavy on adults, it can overwhelm and confuse young children. And although death is an inevitable part of life, finding the words to discuss or explain it to young children can challenge many parents.

“Whether you’re talking about a family pet or a grandparent, it’s important that parents or caregivers understand that children grieve too and that death has to be discussed,” said Ward, who is a family therapist in Reston.

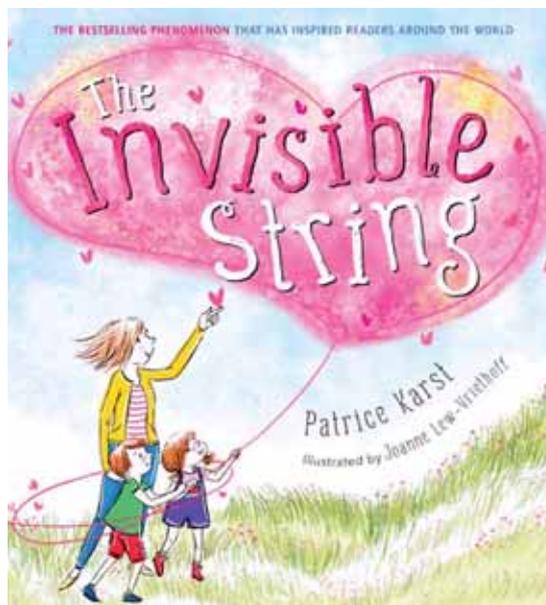
One of the most significant mistakes a parent or caregiver can make is not being honest with a child about death, said Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College. “My biggest worry is when people hide the fact that a loved one died by saying that they went on a trip, and then the child sees the adult crying or being sad,” she said. “That doesn’t give the child a chance to process it, but by including them in a developmentally appropriate way, we are teaching that we can feel big feelings, and with the support of friends and family, we can still thrive.”

Helping a child to understand they didn’t cause the death could be an important part of the conversation, suggests Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C, a therapist in Bethesda. “Children often see the world as revolving around them,” she said. “Reassure them that their loved one dying was not their fault and that the death didn’t happen because they had a mean thought, misbehaved, or didn’t visit enough.”

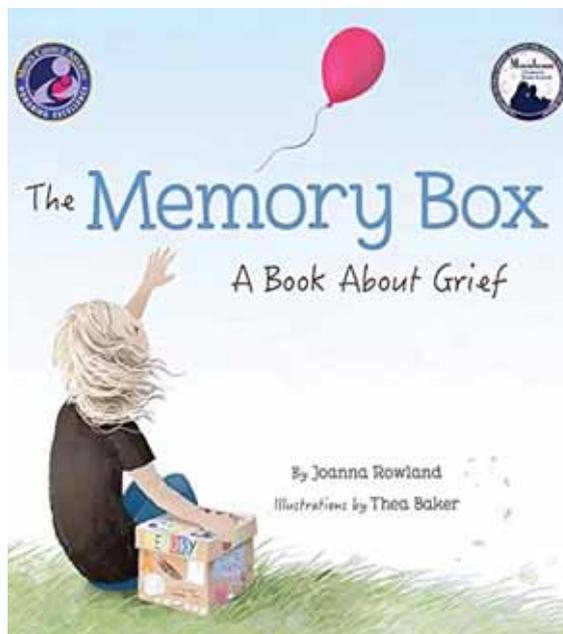
“Death often brings anxiety in children and they wonder if they will die too,” added Barnaby. “Explaining that although the loved one has just died, death is not contagious and that the child will likely live a very long life.”

Clear, concise word usage is also important because young children might not have the language skills to discuss their feelings and emotions, adds Lorente. “Let the child engage in talking about fond memories of the deceased using pictures, making favorite recipes, or visiting a favorite place,” she said.

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“The Invisible String” by Patrice Karst is a book that could help parents explain death to their children.



Bethesda-based therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C suggests “The Memory Box” by Joanna Rowland as a tool to help children understand the concept of dying.

Use concrete and authentic terms when discussing it, continued Barnaby. “Avoid euphemisms like ‘Grandma is resting’ or ‘has gone away,’” she said.

“These sayings confuse children and may cause them anxiety over [the notion] that they could die if they fall asleep; or that other loved ones may not come back.” Use clear language like ‘Grandma has died.’”

Young children often believe death is reversible, advises Jerome Short, Ph.D., professor of psychology at George Mason University. “You could describe how a body stops working and the person who died isn’t coming back.”

Be open to having an honest conversation about it, continued Short.

“Encourage children to ask questions and tell them you will help them handle any bad feelings or problems that happen,” he said.

**“Death often brings anxiety in children and they wonder if they will die too.”**

— Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C

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