Spring Blooms And Beginning Of School

Nurturing Mother-Daughter Relationships

Starting Just in Time For Spring Break?

Photo by Mary Kimm

Hellebores, also called Lenten Rose, bloom early, attracting bees.
Potomac
REAL ESTATE

January, 2021 Sales,
$1,700,000~$1,250,000

In January, 2021, 45 Potomac homes sold between $4,250,000-$386,000.

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10705 Stapleford Hall Drive — $1,700,000

11735 Devilwood Drive — $1,512,000

10300 Gary Road — $1,325,000

11621 Swains Lock Terrace — $1,325,000

8711 Brickyard Road — $1,250,000

10912 Lamplighter Lane — $1,250,000

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Spring Break? Please Take a Break

Back to school just in time — for Spring Break?

By Ken Moore
Potomac Almanac

The school system opened just in time — for students to take Spring Break. “I think it created more consternation in the community than almost anything other than just reopen the schools in general,” said Potomac’s school board member Patricia O’Neill, at last week’s Board of Education meeting, Thursday, March 11.

“We have many lucky parents who are taking their children to Florida, to Utah for skiing, a staff member wrote about going to visit her elderly mother in Massachusetts,” she said. “From the emails we received, there are a lot of people who are moving about the country in general.”

MCPS Spring Break is scheduled for March 29 - April 5. Students have been returning to hybrid and in-person learning in phases starting March 1.

The Board of Education also received “a huge influx of emails” from families and from staff, O’Neill said, “very alarmed” that many families will be travelling. Some families even suggested that the school system close the two weeks after, said O’Neill.

“You are on an honor system and we encourage you to educate your children about being honorable, good citizens. So, if you do travel, use common sense, and if you do, you should follow the guidance to have the testing and the quarantining when you come back,” said Vice President Karla Silvestre asked everyone to be cautious, to avoid high risk areas, and keep doing the right thing with masking and social distancing, “no matter where you plan to spend it, hopefully at home,” even if you’re staying here in Maryland or Montgomery County.

Phases of Student Return

March 1 Return

Special Education

• Autism K-12 Program
• Extensions Program
• School Community-based programs
• Special Schools

Career and Technical Education

• Automotive
• Construction
• Cosmetology
• Healthcare Professions
• Restaurant Management

March 15 Return

Phase I

Group 1.1 (March 15)

• Specific Special Education Programs
• Specific Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs
• Grades K-3
• Alternative Education Programs
• CREA
• METS

Group 1.2 (by April 6)

• Specific Special Education Programs
• Grades 4-5
• Prekindergarten
• Grades 6
• Grade 12

Phase II

Group 2.1 (by April 19)

• Grade 8
• Grade 9
• Grade 11

Group 2.2 (by April 26)

• Grade 7
• Grade 10

Positive Covid Test at Bells Mill

Parents of Bells Mill Elementary School students received a letter from Dr. Stacy L. Smith, Principal, that between March 8 and March 9, 2021, someone who was present in the school tested positive for Covid-19. “Following Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) guidelines, we notified individuals who were known to have direct contact with this individual and have advised them to quarantine for 14 days,” said the letter of notification.

Per current DHHS guidance and the contact tracing process, unless parents are notified directly, their student does not need to be tested or quarantined because they were not in direct contact with the person who tested positive. Direct contact is defined as being within approximately 6 feet of an individual with Covid-19 for a prolonged period of time (e.g., being in the same office or classroom as a positive and symptomatic individual), or having had direct contact with the infectious secretions from an individual with Covid-19 (e.g., being coughed on).

Parents are asked to monitor their children for symptoms of Covid-19, such as fever, cough and shortness of breath. “If your child develops any of these symptoms, do not send them to school. You should contact your health care provider immediately for advice. Please contact the school if your child develops Covid-19-like symptoms. Students who develop symptoms, or have a test positive for Covid-19, will not be able to return to the building until they are medically cleared.”

Council Comments on the Montgomery County Budget

The Montgomery County Council issued the following statement after County Executive Marc Elrich transmitted his recommendations for the County’s $6 billion Fiscal Year 2022 Recommended Operating Budget to the Council:

“This past year has been unlike any other and the County Executive’s recommended operating budget provides a strong starting point for the Council’s work on the final County budget for fiscal year 2022. The Council appreciates the hard work by the County Executive and his staff for putting together a budget of this scale and complexity during an unprecedented time.

Now, the Council begins its process of carefully evaluating the County services that are vital to relief efforts for our residents and investing in essential services that will spur economic recovery while maintaining reserves and holding the line on taxes. Some of the shared priorities in the recommended operating budget include: fully funding the budgets for Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College, making significant investments in affordable housing and early care and education, reinvesting in public safety by enhancing mental health services and crisis response, supporting safety net services and ramping up funding for the Earned Income Tax Credit that will put more money in the pockets of our residents. We recognize what a difficult year this has been for business owners, public health professionals and all of our residents. We will be taking all of this into consideration these next two months, as we finalize a budget that will make the investments necessary to restore our public health and put our County on the road to financial recovery.

This budget funds many of the needs in our community, thanks in part to the more than $203.7 million coming to Montgomery County Government through the American Rescue Plan, with another $100 million going to Montgomery County municipalities. The Council is incredibly grateful to our federal delegation for working so closely with us this
Bullis Students Helping the Community

Bullis 9th Graders Nathan Chen, Cyrus Ratsael, and Laverna Chen used their own money to buy more than 550 N95 masks and donated them to Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Interfaith Women’s Center, and Shepherd’s Table.

More Students Head Back to School in Person

From County Councilmember Will Jawando:

“Normally the top news of the day would be a new budget, but this morning it’s our girls, as they join thousands of other [Montgomery County Public School] students for the first day back to school after a year at home. We miss them already. Wishing them & all school staff a safe, fun and exciting day.”

FREE FINANCIAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SEMINARS

The Montgomery County Commission for Women and Montgomery County Public Libraries will offer free financial seminars to help women strengthen their financial knowledge and understanding. The sessions are geared to assist women with financial planning but are open to everyone.

These free events will be presented on Zoom and are from 7 – 8:30 p.m. Although the seminars are free, registration is necessary. The link will be forwarded after registration.

March 23: Divorce and Money

Divorce is a strain on your finances as well as your nerves. Will you be financially okay when it is over? What is your role in making sure that happens?

Jamie Lapin, CFP CDFR, AIR and Thago Gleker, AIF CEBC, of Risk Management Group, LLC., will lead the workshops.

LIBRARIES PRESENT WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH EVENTS

Montgomery County Public Libraries will celebrate Women’s History Month throughout the month of March. The month-long celebration, “Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to Be Silenced,” offers programs suitable for adults and residents of all ages, featuring lectures, discussions, and story times. All events are virtual and free.

Events include:
- Wednesday, March 24; 2 – 3 p.m.
  A Tale of Two Counties: The Status of Women in Montgomery County
  Dr. Patricia Maclay, Commissioner with the Montgomery County Commission for Women in Montgomery County will present an overview of the Commission’s work in the community.
- Thursday, March 25; 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
  Women against Slavery: Then and Now - Book Talk: “Speak a Word for Freedom: Women against Slavery”

SEEKING APPLICANTS FOR PLANNING BOARD

The Montgomery County Council is seeking applicants to fill a vacancy on the Montgomery County Planning Board. The first term of Tina Patterson (Unaffiliated) will expire on June 14, 2021. Ms. Patterson has indicated that she plans to apply for reappointment. Applications must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23. Members serve four-year terms and are limited to two full terms. No more than three members of the Planning Board may be from the same political party, and each member must be a resident and registered voter of Montgomery County when appointed. This position must be filled by a Republican, a voter who is unaffiliated with a party, or a voter who is a member of another party officially recognized.
Deer don’t decimate the Hellebores. These snow drops did first emerge when there was still some snow on the ground.

Daffodils seen this week in Potomac.

Potomac Community Village
This month we’re sharing the art, crafts and memories of the past year under Covid. Next month, we have a program on Making Your Home Safer for Older Adults. Learn more at www.PotomacCommunityVillage.org

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Creating Healthy Mother-Daughter Relationships

Local authors and therapists offer thoughts and guidance.

By Marilyn Campbell
The Almanac

As a middle school student, Sofie Jacobs was at times mocked by other girls for her fastidious study habits and the good grades she received as a result. She joined an after-school cheerleading and dance class, but was tantalized by her lack of talent. At the time she didn’t want to discuss the pain she felt from the rejection by peers, who she now labels as “mean girls.” Initially, Sofie rebuffed her mother Meredith’s efforts to console her. There was one place, however, where she felt comfortable expressing her feelings without the shame or humiliation: her journals.

“I remember so clearly the night she came home, ran to her room, and slammed the door,” said her mother, Meredith. “I could hear her crying, but she didn’t want to open the door or talk to me.” Finally, she opened the door and handed the journal where she had poured everything onto the page. After I read it, we were able to talk about it.”

“Writing in my journal took away any worries about my mom’s immediate reactions,” said Sofie, now 24. “It also let me work out my thoughts and have space for myself. I’ve always thought the most important thing in writing is the eraser. You rarely risk saying something you wish you hadn’t said when you’re writing.”

Journaling became part of the foundation of Meredith’s relationship with Sofie.

To help others, they created an interactive journal called, “Just Between Us: Mother & Daughter Journal” that is designed to inspire conversations and healthy communication. It will be released next month and is an updated version of their first book, which they published ten years ago.

MOTHER-DAUGHTER relationships can be among the most difficult to navigate and maintain, say mental health professionals. Patterns range from an unhealthy closeness to a distant connection that is devoid of emotional intimacy, affecting mental and emotional health.

Enmeshed, is the way that Springfield psychotherapist Joyce Marter describes relationships that lack boundaries. “This is when the mother and daughter have a symbiotic relationship that doesn’t allow for healthy separation and independence,” she said.

“They simply are too close. This can make it difficult for the daughter to develop a healthy sense of self as her own individual person or to separate and individuate into an independent adult.”

At the opposite end of the relationship spectrum is a relationship that is characterized by control and disconnection. “The mother and daughter are not emotionally close,” said Marter. “This can happen when they haven’t had a proper bonding experience, haven’t spent enough time together, or don’t relate or connect on a deeper emotional level. It can also happen when a mother is too authoritarian and controlling and there isn’t a sense of respect or trust for the daughter as a capable person.”

An ideal relationship has a healthy balance of attachment and healthy separation, advises Marter. “The daughter feels loved, understood, respected, valued and supported by the mother and also feels free to be her own person with her own life and interests,” she said.

It is possible to repair what is broken, cultivate what doesn’t exist and maintain what is working, says Tori Stone, PhD, Assistant Professor, Counseling at George Mason University. Stone said there are many ways to develop healthy mother-daughter relationships, particularly at an early age.

“Try to be emotionally present when you are with your daughter and listen when she is ready to talk,” she said. “Resist the impulse to provide advice or solutions. You can ask, ‘Is there anything I can do to help?’”

During teen and preteen years, mother-daughter relationships can be difficult to navigate. “Give choices whenever possible. Set expectations and reasonable limits that have reasonable end dates,” said Stone. “Let your daughter know the consequence in advance. For example, cell phones are a privilege, if you do not follow through on responsibilities, you will lose your phone privilege.”

Securing and harmonious relationships require parental guidance, but also space to flourish, says Stone. “Detaching with love does not mean we don’t care about our loved ones,” she said. “Rather, it means having a healthy separation in relationships where you do not try and control. We must separate enough to allow them to make their own mistakes so they can learn. We need to be free to be our authentic selves instead of living as we hope or expect them to be.”

Infusing an element of light-heartedness into a mother-daughter relationship is an important element that the Jacobs express in their books.

“We thought we could help other mothers and daughters have the kind of conversations we had through our journal, but insert the humor that Sofie and I share to make it light-heartedness into a healthy relationship,” she said. “Let your daughter know the consequences that have reasonable end dates,” Stone said. “Bleed Set expectations (and) reasonable limits for yourself.”

In a special website created by the commission, the tribute honors the veterans leading up to National Vietnam War Veterans Day, which is observed every year on March 29. The special day recognizes U.S. Armed Forces and Uniformed Services personnel with active duty service between Nov. 1, 1955 and May 15, 1975, regardless of location of service. The Montgomery Commission on Veterans Affairs website includes photos, military histories and later personal updates of Vietnam veterans who are either originally from the County or who lived in Montgomery after their service. The site can be viewed at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/vet

Anyone who would like to share their story or the story of a friend or family member for the website can e-mail Carly.Clem@gmcr.com or provide the following information: Servicemember or veteran’s name. Your name (if submitting on behalf of a servicemember or veteran) and your relationship to the individual. Branch of service and rank. Years of service. Brief narrative of their service. Live in or once lived in Montgomery County. If you attended high school here, name school from where you graduated. Photo(s) (preferably one during service time and one present day).

SUMMER CAMPS REGISTRATION BEGINS

Montgomery County Recreation (MCR) and Montgomery Parks are hosting fun, fast-paced and exciting camps that promote children’s active and healthy lifestyles this summer. Camp registration begins on Monday, March 15 via ActiveMONTGOMERY, the registration and facility reservation system shared by Montgomery Parks, Montgomery County Recreation and Community Use of Public Facilities.
Save Travel Means No Travel

Dr. Monifa McKnight currently serves as Deputy Superintendent in MCPS. Prior to this role, she served as the Chief School Management and Instructional Leadership Officer for Howard County Public Schools.

"I thank you for your five years of service to Montgomery County. We will really miss you," said O’Neill to Smith. "This has been an unbelievable year, unlike any other I’ve known in my 22 years on the Board, or my 12 years as a MCPS parent."

"Dr. McKnight, I know that you are an incredibly able, capable woman and I know I have been involved in every aspect of MCPS," she said.

"She brings people along with her who want to work with her and want to do the right kinds of things," said Judith Docca (District One).

The appointment of Dr. McKnight as acting interim superintendent is through June 30, 2022, which will provide time for the Board of Education to conduct a national search for the next superintendent.

The Board expects to issue a Request for Proposal in the spring to identify an executive search firm by early summer 2021. Once the firm is identified, it will work with the board to develop a timeline for the superintendent search process.

The BOARD NAMED McKnight as the Interim and Acting School Superintendent when Dr. Jack Smith retires on June 1, 2021.

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Council Comments on the Montgomery County Budget

past year, listening to our needs and working hard to pass the American Rescue Plan. Now it’s our job to make sure this new budget allows us to thrive in the coming year and sets our County up for long-term success. The Council will work collaboratively with Executive staff and community members throughout review this outline. We also look forward to hearing from our residents during the budget process.”

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