

Montgomery County Public Schools **Retirees Association, Inc.**



P.O. Box 4367 Rockville, MD 20849-4367

www.mcpsra.org

Volume 2023-24, Issue #3

February, 2024



PRESIDENT'S

MESSAGE

Dr. Debra Munk
President - MCPSRA

The new year is well underway, and the MCPSRA Board hopes that 2024 will be a great one for you. Our Board of over twenty

volunteers continues to meet on the first Thursday of every month in hybrid meetings. We are especially excited that luncheons resumed last year, and look forward to the first luncheon of 2024. Join in the fun and bring a friend to the luncheon on February 29, 2024 (yes, Leap Day!). Or organize a group and we'll reserve a table for you. The luncheon will again be held at the Montgomery Country Club. The registration form is attached to this newsletter (page 11).

Chris Sutter and Sandra Filippi actively keep our social media and website up to date. Our Facebook page for general information [Maryland MCPS Retirees Association Facebook page] and an MCPSRA Private Group for members to share what they are doing—pictures of trips and grandchildren are especially welcome. Check out the pictures from my Fall trip to Mexico. Where have you traveled recently? Please share.

This is the link for our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100088256853359>

This is the link for our Facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/672901020970305>

Retiree benefits continue to be a major focus of the Board of Education. We participated in the development of the MCPS Cigna Survey, to be sent to all active employees and retirees to get feedback on the transition from CareFirst to Cigna and on whether Cigna is providing the same level of coverage as CareFirst. Additionally, Marti Gray (Membership Chair) and I presented to the Board of Education on October 5, about our desire for parity between active and retiree coverage. Since then, additional issues related to our health benefits have surfaced, and Steve Raucher (Treasurer) and I will be meeting later this month with Board members to discuss and hopefully resolve these issues. Stay tuned. This is REALLY important!

Which leads me to the importance of continuing to build our membership. Our ability to fight to preserve your pension and health benefits is dependent on our numbers. If you know retirees who are not MCPSRA members, please encourage them to join. MCPSRA Board members have resumed attending **MCPS Retiree Informational Sessions** to give new retirees information about MCPSRA and MRSPA. We want all new retirees to understand how joining for just \$60 gives them many benefits and is an inexpensive way to support continuation and improvement of our benefits.

Did you know that Montgomery County Recreation provides many wonderful opportunities for seniors, and it's your tax dollars that support these programs? So why not take advantage? They offer a wide variety of classes (mostly free), trips, meals and health programs.

(Continued on page 7.)

MCPSRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD)

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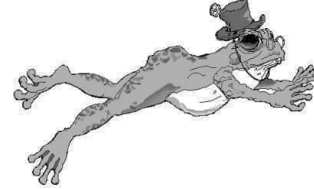
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Community Service	Judy Mills judy.mills549@gmail.com	240-223-7271
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---Louise S. Walker	Margaret Brown margdell@gmail.com	301-910-2305
Trips	Bernadette Rager bg.rager@verizon.net	301-774-0345

BUSINESS MEETING/LUNCHEON

Business meetings/luncheons are held four times a year at Montgomery Country Club, 20908 Golf View Dr., Laytonsville, MD 20882.

Leap to the February 29 Luncheon



It's not every February 29 that you can attend an MCPSRA luncheon. The next time Leap Day is on a Thursday (our luncheon day) is not until 2052, and that may not even be the correct Thursday. So, LEAP to the luncheon this year!

Not only is this Leap Day special for our luncheon, it is also special because MCPSRA is beginning an exciting new community service project benefitting The Children's Inn at NIH. We are requesting book donations for the Children's Thoughtful Treasures boxes at the Inn.

Please bring a child's book, (or two) of any age/reading level, measuring no more than 8"x8" to the February luncheon. Books should not have any reference to illness or getting well. If you would like to include a handwritten inscription in the book, please make it generic with no reference to religion or getting better.

If for some reason you cannot attend the February 29 luncheon and still want to donate, you may drop off or mail your donation to Judy Mills, MCPSRA Community Service Chair at 11205 Maine Cove Drive, North Potomac, MD 20878.

Leap into 2024 and join your fellow retirees. Meet new friends and enjoy seeing some familiar faces. Learn what MCPSRA is doing to protect and increase your retirement benefits.

Mark your calendars for the remaining two luncheons:

April 25, 2024

June 13, 2024

Hope to see you on February 29. And remember to bring a book for donation to The Children's Inn at NIH.

Sincerely,
LeeAnn Kaye

A TRIP TO FANTASY LAND



When you see the word *fantasy* what comes to your mind? Is it Harry Potter and the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry? How about Alice and her trip down the rabbit hole to her adventures in Wonderland? Or maybe you were a fan of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. Ask children today what trip to Fantasy Land they would like to take. Many would immediately say it would be to the Magic Kingdom at Disney World or to Universal Studios in Orlando. What does *fantasy* mean anyway? According to one dictionary definition *fantasy* is a



visionary idea, an ingenious or fanciful thought, design, or invention, unnatural events or characters – something that is *fantastic*, meaning imaginary, not based on reality, or highly unrealistic or impractical. With this in mind let's revisit some fantasies in our past. Who remembers Flash Gordon and his exploits into space? Fact or fantasy now? There were times in the past that the thoughts of being able to fly above the clouds or across the ocean would have been sheer fantasy; so would the thoughts of women being smart enough to vote or that all children are entitled equally to a free public education. Martin Luther King, Jr. didn't believe that his dream was a fantasy even though many people during his time thought his visionary ideas were highly unrealistic and impractical. He had a *fantastic* dream, an aspiration, a goal, an aim to achieve that motivated him to do great things. What was once fantasy is now fact. Communities everywhere benefit every day from his visionary ideas that are now realities.

When the term *community* is used, the notion that typically comes to mind is a place in which people know and care for one another – the kind of place where people do not merely ask, "How are you?" as a formality, but they truly care about the answer. If we lived our lives with this constantly in mind, I think our world would be very different. Hunger and



poverty would not define so many people's lives. Is it a *fantasy* or a *fantastic* dream to wish for a time when all children and their families in our county would go to bed every night with full stomachs and with the basic necessities in life? Maybe it's time for all of us to take a trip to Fantasy Land and help make this wish a reality.



For the last nineteen years MCPSRA members have been working to do their part to assist the neediest of our county's school children through our **Toolkits Project**. It started as a vision. Many of

those who initiated this project now look at how it has evolved and can say that their fantasy—their dream—has come true. Nearly 35,000 toolkits of school supplies have been distributed to children in poverty so far. Our mission is never truly completed though. Each year we must continue our efforts to raise the funds necessary to provide Montgomery County's economically disadvantaged youth with the supplies they need at home to support their learning at school. Won't you please help to keep this project alive? We are making a difference in the lives of so many children. Remember, when you ask them, "How are you?" care about their answers. Your donations are tax-deductible. Make a child's *fantasy* become a reality. Thank you for being a visionary.

Joan Donovan

-----detach here-----

MCPSRA TOOLKITS SPONSORSHIP FORM

Please provide (print clearly) the following information and mail it along with a check (payable to: **MCPS Educational Foundation**, with "**Toolkits Project**" on the memo line) to Mrs. Joan Donovan, 13 Hilton Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20882-3521

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

I would like to sponsor # _____ toolkits at \$10 per kit. Donation enclosed: \$ _____

Optional: In memory of _____ In honor of _____

Send acknowledgement to _____

Select one: _____ e-mail me a receipt at _____

_____ mail me a receipt _____ no receipt is necessary

_____ Do **NOT** include my name on the toolkits labels

Welcome New Members

Joined in November 2023

Mary D.P. Wagner
Melissa Young

3825 Park Lake Dr., Rockville, MD 20853
529 Whitingham Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20904

240-605-3553
301-580-0883

Joined in December 2023

Phillip L Mendelson

4425 Viridian Terrace, Monrovia, MD 21770-6040

301-661-3742

MCPSRA Consumer Education by Deb Berner February - March 2024

***Welcome to a new year!** May it be happy and healthy!

The new year is a great opportunity to improve or maintain your lifestyle for the better. I am not sure about you, but I was always someone who made a “New Year’s resolution” to eat better, exercise more, or to work on whatever goal I was struggling with. But since I have retired, I have attempted to make this a regular habit, and try not to wait until January 1st to get my act together. However, because the new year always begins in the winter when days are short, cold and dark, it is hard to think about setting new goals and may even be harder to be upbeat and positive. We still experience stress and other issues, whether due to the weather outside, health reasons, or family concerns, and need to find ways to manage it.



I found these tips—from keeping fit and healthy to making the mental adjustment of being retired—that might be helpful for new retirees as well as those well into their retirement years. Be patient with yourself, and do not expect perfection! (Source: British Heart Foundation, <https://www.bhf.org.uk>)

1. Prepare for occasional ups/downs by making a backup plan.
2. Develop a routine for your day.
3. Exercise your mind by challenging yourself to paper/pencil tasks or learning something new.
4. Keep physically active by aiming for a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intense physical activity per week.
5. Mental health is just as important as physical health—be kind to yourself and stay connected to your friends and family.
6. Make lists—a list of specific, measurable goals or a daily/weekly To Do list, for example.
7. Seek social support by joining a group or club or by reconnecting with an old friend.
8. Keep your doctor appointments up to date.



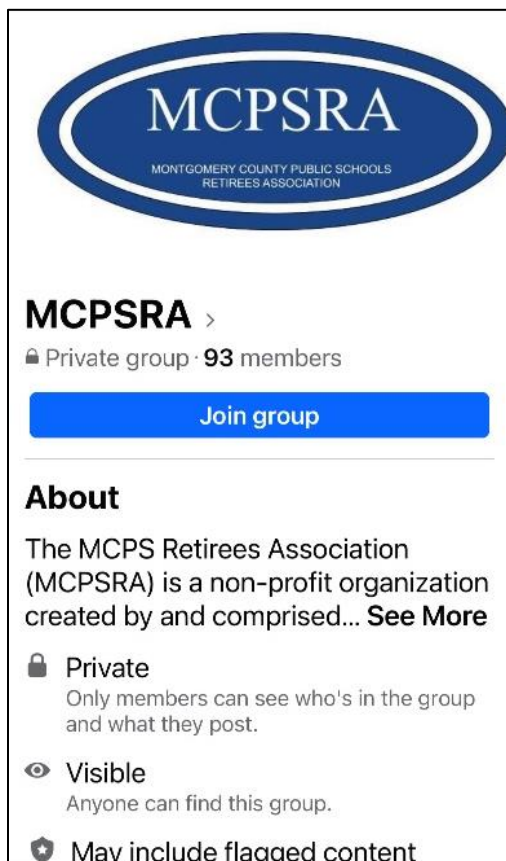
**British Heart
Foundation**

9. Pamper yourself by making some “me time” or by making a well-deserved treat or purchase.
10. Practice yoga or mindfulness to relieve stress and anxiety.
11. Give back to the community by volunteering.
12. Travel more by taking a long trip or even a mini break for the day.
13. Be one with nature by getting fresh air and discovering new parks to hike or walk.
14. Take up a new project by doing something new or something you never had time to do while working.
15. Push your boundaries by doing something different—trying a new recipe, new daily routine, etc.

Don't forget that February is **African-American History month and March is **Women's History** month. This is a time for us all to join in paying tribute to the generations of African Americans who struggled with adversity to achieve full citizenship in American society. It is also a time to celebrate the contributions of women to events in history and society.

*Please check out recent **Consumer Connection** newsletters on the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association site at <https://mrspa.org> for more updates and information.

ARE YOU ON FACEBOOK? by Christina Sutter



MCPSRA >
 Private group · 93 members
 Join group

About
 The MCPS Retirees Association (MCPSRA) is a non-profit organization created by and comprised... [See More](#)

Private
 Only members can see who's in the group and what they post.

Visible
 Anyone can find this group.

May include flagged content

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. I still can't believe how fast last year passed! One of my goals for the new year is to increase my connections to other MCPS retirees. One way to do that is by joining the MCPSRA Facebook group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/672901020970305>

This private group is a great way to connect with others and share what you are up to in retirement. The group is open to all members of MCPSRA.

We also have a Facebook page that shares information important to MCPS retirees. The Facebook page can be reached at:

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Maryland-MCPS-Retirees-Association/100088256853359/>

Just follow the page and updates will automatically pop up in your feed.

You can help spread the word by liking the posts and commenting.

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For information on membership, visit osher.jhu.edu or call 301-294-7058.

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5 Fun Facts About Leap Years

1. Leap days are needed to keep our calendar in alignment with the Earth's revolutions around the sun. It takes the Earth approximately 365.24189 days—or 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 45 seconds—to circle once around the sun. This is called a tropical year. Without an extra day on February 29 nearly every four years, we would lose almost six hours every year. After only 100 years, our calendar would be off by approximately 25 days. Eventually, the months we call February and March would feel like summer in the Northern Hemisphere.
2. People born on February 29 are called *leaplings* or *leapers*.
3. The odds of being born on a leap day are 1 in 1500.
4. The frog is a symbol associated with February 29. The Australian rocket frog can leap over two meters.
5. Leap years in history: During leap years, George Armstrong Custer fought the Battle of the Little Bighorn (1876), the Titanic sank (1912), Benjamin Franklin proved that lightning is electricity (1752) and gold was discovered in California (1848).

In Memoriam

The following MCPSRA members passed away in 2023:

JANUARY

Thomas C. Day
Jean U. Francis
Alan S. Krichbaum
Maeola F. Laverge
Eunice W. Moe

FEBRUARY

Paul K. Carr
Janet E. Heins
Mary A. Lakner
Susan B. Larsen
Anna M. Mayberry
Anita S. Mostow
Ruth M. Sentella

MARCH

Regina E. Brown
Gloria J. Dunne
Bernard H. Michels
Elmer G. Muth
Sandra J. Sedam
Frederick C. Snyder

APRIL

Brenda D. Adcock
Norma C. Day
Ronald M. Feffer
Laura G. Perez
Nancy R. Swope

MAY

Sheila M. Dobbins
Margaret F. Hanson
William F. Hauptman
Thomas P. Marshall
Lee Etta Powell
Harry A. Swope, Jr.

JUNE

Elizabeth R. Baker
Julia M. Harris
Pat Anthony Iannone
Barbara L. Kornrich
Barbara E. Titland
William P. Wilhoite

JULY

Jean S. Gosbee
Fred J. Greene
Lawrence K. Kelly
Barbara M. Letzing
Eileen R. Renwick

AUGUST

Joan P. Carney
John David Eberly
Irving L. Fisk
Sandra K. Gray
Maria McDonald
Jessica P. Servis
Eileen L. Starkey

SEPTEMBER

Thelma M. Best
Mary Boehm Riedlin
Elizabeth A. Dadpay
Lois W. Frick
Ruth M. Leffler
Barbara A. Liston
Gladys Remy
James P. Rouleau
Warfield Wilson

OCTOBER

Marie B. Anderson
Charles P. Dusterhoff
George L. Fichter
Jack D. Hill
Rita E. Saunders
Henry T. Shetterly

NOVEMBER

Norman E. Brautigam
Betty J. Diggs
Deborah G. Leibowitz
Arlene D. Luhn
Emma T. Mullaney
Gilda B. Spear

DECEMBER

Susan M. Bradley
Cynthia A. Gaughan
Gerald F. May
Patricia M. Nesley

Presidents Message continued from page 1.

The Spring Program Guide comes out in February. Check out this website for more information:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/activitiesandprograms/seniors/>

This year MCPSRA will continue to provide scholarships to MCPS employees pursuing advanced degrees and professional development. We provide scholarship awards of up to \$1500 each. Last year 111 staff members applied and we awarded 9 scholarships. The deadline will be announced in the next newsletter.

On behalf of the MCPSRA Board, I hope this message finds you well. Enough of winter! Let's hope the groundhog doesn't see his shadow. Bring on Spring!

Warm regards,
Debra Munk

Community Service by Judy Mills

Anytime is a good time to Volunteer, but January is traditionally the time we all reset and reflect. For most of us, the new year begins with New Year's Resolutions and goal setting. As a Nation we also honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on (or near) his January 15 birthday with a National Day of Service - "[A Day On, Not a Day Off](#)". This day is also a perfect time to reflect and jumpstart a year of service by giving back to our communities.

NEW for 2024: MCPSRA Service Project benefiting [The Children's Inn at NIH](#). We are requesting books for the Children's [Thoughtful Treasures](#) boxes at the Inn. This will be an on-going project by collecting at least 50 items to deliver to the Inn. Please bring a child's book (any age/reading level) measuring no more than 8"x8" to our upcoming February luncheon. Please, no reference to illness or "get well". If you can't attend the luncheon, you may drop off or ship a book to Judy Mills, MCPSRA Community Service Chair, 11205 Maine Cove Drive, North Potomac, MD 20878. Donations will be acknowledged at the upcoming MCPSRA luncheon and delivered to the Children's Inn, Bethesda, MD.

January's resets can be the building blocks of an active 2024 and just about any resolution can be fulfilled with daily and continuous improvement towards the goal. 11 months remain in 2024, think about volunteering! Explore an organization and give it a try. There's an opportunity out there waiting for you! Once established, you may begin to yearn for an activity outside of your regular routine. MCPSRA encourages members to participate in community service projects and ensures appropriate recognition for your community service work. May all of you have a fulfilling and productive 2024!

Locally:

[Montgomery County, MD](#): Discover opportunities to serve in MoCo. Out of County opportunities appear on this site, too. (<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/volunteercenter/>)

[Montgomery County Public Schools](#): Volunteering isn't just for parents and caregivers of MCPS students. Your experience will be appreciated. (<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/student-leadership/volunteer/>)

[Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission MNCPPC](#): Help out at local parks across the DMV. (<https://www.mncppc.org/197/Volunteer-Opportunities>)

Nationwide:

[Just Serve](#): Volunteer with organizations across the US. (<https://www.justserve.org/>)

[The Smithsonian Institution](#): Discover *countless volunteer opportunities in nearly every one of the Smithsonian's museums, gardens, research centers, and the National Zoo*. <https://www.si.edu/volunteer>
[Digital opportunities](#) are also available. <https://transcription.si.edu/>

[National Park Service](#) and [DC Area National Parks](#): Discover the great outdoors in a new way by volunteering while taking in the beauty of our Nation's National Parks! <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/volunteer/index.htm>

\$\$ SWITCH AND SAVE \$\$



*Thank you for being a member of MCPSRA and MRSPA!
There is truly strength in our numbers!*

Change your method of membership dues payment to one annual deduction from your state retirement/pension check. It is safe and easy.

You will not receive a bill to pay your dues. Currently 9,000 members pay by deduction.

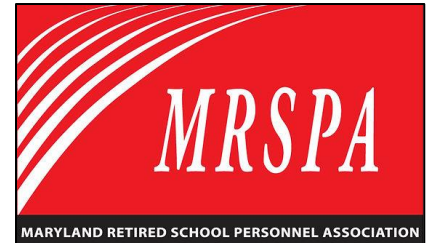
As a bonus, when you switch to dues deduction prior to renewing your current year membership, you will save by receiving a one-time \$10 reduction in MRSPA dues for the membership year. That's \$50 (\$35 to MRSPA and \$15 to MCPSRA) rather than \$60 (\$45 to MRSPA and \$15 to MCPSRA) for the entire year!

You can also get this bonus, if you already renewed. It will then go into effect for the next membership year.

If you would like to Switch and Save, click [Switch and Save form](#) (or go to <https://www.mrspa.org> and click on \$Click and Save\$ in the lower center of the homepage) to print, complete, and mail to the MRSPA Office. *You will need to put your entire social security number on the form, not just the last four digits.*

If you would prefer not to mail your social security number, you may call the MRSPA Office at 410-551-1517 or toll-free at 877-625-6782 to relay your number. *You will still need to print and mail the authorization form with your signature.*

If you have questions, please contact the MRSPA Office by email at mrspa@mrspa.org.



Dues deduction saves you time and money. No bills in the mail, no more writing and mailing checks hoping the mail goes through, and then having the satisfaction that your dues are paid on time. The state pension system will send you a notice that the money was taken out of your pension check and paid for your records.

Signing up for dues deduction can help MRSPA stretch your valuable dues dollars by saving the huge paper, printing, and postage costs of mailings each year, while saving many trees in the process. Dues deduction makes sense. Membership renewal is automatic.

It's a win-win!

A Bit of Humor to Cheer You Up...

A sweet grandmother telephoned St. Joseph's Hospital. She timidly asked, "Is it possible to speak to someone who can tell me how a patient is doing?"

The operator said, "I'll be glad to help, dear. What's the name and room number of the patient?"

The grandmother in her weak, tremulous voice said, "Norma Findlay, Room 302." The operator replied, "Let me put you on hold while I check with the nurse's station for that room."

After a few minutes, the operator returned to the phone and said, "I have good news. Her nurse just told me that Norma is doing well. Her blood pressure is fine; her blood work just came back normal, and Dr. Cohen has scheduled her to be discharged tomorrow."

The grandmother said, "Thank you. That's wonderful. I was so worried. God bless you for the good News."

The operator replied, "You're more than welcome. Is Norma your daughter?"

The grandmother said, "No, I'm Norma Findlay in Room 302. No one tells me anything."



A young man was walking through a supermarket to pick up a few things when he noticed an old lady following him around. Thinking nothing of it, he ignored her and continued on.

Finally, he went to the checkout line, but she got in front of him. "Pardon me," she said, "I'm sorry if my staring at you has made you feel uncomfortable. It's just that you look just like my son, who died recently."

"I'm very sorry," replied the young man, "is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes," she said, "as I'm leaving, can you say 'Goodbye, Mom'." It would make me feel so much better."

"Sure," answered the young man.

As the woman was leaving, he called out, "Goodbye, Mom!"

As the young man stepped up to the checkout counter, he saw that his total was \$127.50. "How can that be?" He demanded, "I only bought a few things!" "Your mother said you would be paying for her," said the clerk.



MCPSRA Luncheon and Business Meeting

Thursday, February 29, 2024
Montgomery Country Club
20908 Golf View Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20882
240-912-9515

If MCPS is closed, luncheon is cancelled. Delayed opening, luncheon is held.

Gathering: 11:00 AM; Business Meeting: 11:30 AM; Luncheon: 12:00 Noon; Program

Buffet Menu

Chicken Piccata, Lemon-Caper Butter Sauce

Buttered Linguini

Green Beans

Caesar Salad

Rolls/Butter

Dessert

Iced Tea, Coffee, Lemonade

\$35.00

Cut Here _____

Thursday, February 29, 2024

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email address: _____ Total amount enclosed: _____.

Reservation form and check must be received by Friday, February 23, 2024.

Make checks payable to MCPSRA. Mail to:

LeeAnn Kaye

3210 N. Leisure World Blvd. #306

Silver Spring, MD 20906

For information: LeeAnn Kaye 301-598-5480 or Trish Bendler 301-540-5160

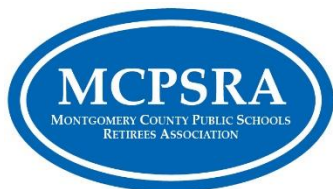
geolakaye@gmail.com or patriciabendler0@gmail.com

ANY FOOD ALLERGIES? SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS? PLEASE LET ME KNOW.

Montgomery County Public Schools
MCPS Retirees Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 4367
Rockville, MD 20849

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DATED MATERIAL



**MCPSRA Luncheon/Business Meeting
MONTGOMERY COUNTRY CLUB**

**Gathering: 11:00 a.m.; Business Meeting: 11:30 am.
Luncheon: 12:00 Noon; Program 1:00 pm.**

Next Luncheon Date February 29, 2024

**The MCPSRA Newsletter is published in October, December, February, April, and June.
This is the February 2024 issue.**