

November 2004

monthviews



Tele Chubbies???

text by Cat Morris photo illustration by Cyrus H. McCrimmon

First, let's get your attention: A study of preschoolers in 2001 found that the more girls watched television, the lower their hipbone density. Since the strength and amount of bone mass is related to physical activity, these findings—though startling—make sense. Now, guess what is the number one leisure-time activity of school-age children in the United States? You guessed it. By the time the average American child graduates from high school, she will have spent 12,000 hours in school compared with 15,000 to 18,000 hours in front of a screen. In addition to fretting about the media messages our nation's children are receiving, we now face the alarming news that television viewing is linked to a national epidemic of childhood obesity and a greatly increased risk of heart disease and diabetes.

If you're like many parents with a television and computer in the home, every time you allow your children to sit in front of a screen, you alternate feelings of gratitude ("I can cook dinner without someone clinging to my legs!") with guilt. So what's a frazzled parent to do? Is your child's brain softening into passive gray mush? Are his arteries clogging already? Just how dense are little Mary's hipbones supposed to be, anyway?

(article continues on page 3)

TV-Turnoff Week 2005:
April 25-May 1.
See www.tvturnoff.org
for details.

MONTVIEWS

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We welcome your comments, photos and submissions. E-mail preferred. Send text to Katiekm@comcast.net; digital photos (please identify all children in photos) to Grindgrafx@earthlink.net
Subject: Montview News

Or, you may put text and photos in the green newsletter submission folder or find the newsletter correspondent in your child's class. See list of committee members below.

Deadlines:

(All on Wednesdays at 3 p.m.)

November 10
January 19
March 2
April 6
May 4

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www.montviewpreschool.org

Right:

Meghan MacLaren from the morning class

photography by Kathy Bruce

from our director

It seems that the almost universal response to the current political season is one of disgust. Most of us are tired of the divisive rhetoric and long for November to arrive. We wonder if our votes make any difference at all. Are politicians so wrapped up in politics that they have lost sight of the importance of doing the most good for the most number of people? I can't answer that question, but I know that this may be the most important election in our history. As parents, we must take the time to be informed about candidates and their positions on issues that can affect our children for years to come.

The quality of our public education is critical to the future of all of us. Witness the impact of No Child Left Behind and the push to test, test and retest our children. It appears that politicians have more clout when it comes to policies than educators.

Ask hard questions about the use of our monetary resources. Is there adequate health care for the young and the old and for those families who are struggling? How large is the national debt we leave to our children and grandchildren?

Care about the environment. Will future generations be able to enjoy the beauty of our beloved Colorado? Will our water be safe to drink? Will there be enough water?

I have been eligible to vote for 39 years and in that time I don't think I have ever failed to exercise my right to be a part of the decision making process. I've voted for everything from school board members to the president of the United States. I even got to vote for myself when I ran for school board and lost. Many, many times I've been saddened by the outcome, but I continue to have faith in the process.

There are so many questions and seemingly few reasoned answers, yet I urge you to study the issues and make an informed decision on November 2nd. You owe it to your children to do your best to assure a safe and healthy future.

An aside: Colorado's unique and questionable practice of amending the constitution by petition and vote offers some complex challenges for all of us. I especially urge you to take a stance for the health of our children and cast your "yes" vote on Amendment 35, the tobacco tax.

AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY

A very generous benefactor has stepped up and offered us a \$10,000 challenge grant. Watch your mail for a letter telling you how you can support our school!

Abby



Research reveals that moderation is key to healthy minds and bodies when it comes to media habits:

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advises no screen time for children younger than two years and a limit of one or two hours per day for older children. Time limits are important toward encouraging children into a more physically active lifestyle.

- ☛ Turn on the TV to watch a specific program and turn it off when the program is over. Set a timer if you need a reminder to turn it off. Some families keep their television in an out-of-the-way place to make turning it on a more deliberate action versus a reflex.
- ☛ Offer active alternatives: Encourage your child to build forts, play with friends, ride bikes, play outside.
- ☛ Set a good example. Limiting your own TV viewing and choosing programs carefully will help your child do the same.
- ☛ Help your child resist junk food promoted in commercials. When he asks for products advertised on TV, explain that the purpose of ads is to make people want things.

The AAP advises parents to not only limit media exposure as a way to encourage healthy habits, but to help children find the obvious and hidden messages in all media. Start by telling your child that people create media messages: people decide what pictures to use and what to leave out. Also, each media form uses its own language. For example, newspapers make headlines large to attract readers to certain stories. Media with sound may use music to make people feel a range of emotions. Above all, children must know that media messages have their own values and points of view. Children can learn that they have a choice in whether to accept the values that are being promoted in any media message.

Try This

- ☛ Play "Spot the Commercials." This can be an especially eye-opening experience during children's shows when you discover that your child can't distinguish between the program and the ads.
- ☛ Do a taste test to compare a heavily advertised brand with a generic or other unadvertised brand. Have your child identify why she is attracted to one brand versus another.
- ☛ Look at the headlines, photos and placements of articles in a newspaper. Where do your eyes go first on the page?
- ☛ While watching a program, talk about whether what happens on screen would happen in the real world. For example, would a person really be able to leap effortlessly from skyscraper to skyscraper while dodging a pursuer?

Consider that every hour your child spends in front of a screen is an hour that he or she is engaged in a passive, sedentary behavior and not involved in real-life activities that enable him to do the work of childhood. By taking an active role in your child's viewing habits, you can help make screen time a healthier and more worthwhile experience.



Cowgirls Kate Gartshorn, Emma Herman, and Margaret Kerr pause for a photo.

Decisions Decisions Decisions

It's the time of year when parents are thinking about where to send their future kindergarteners. If you are wondering how to make this choice, consider these top tips for picking a school, courtesy of Montview teachers Carolyn Hill and Mary Hunter.

Most children will do well in several schools.

Your decision doesn't last forever. Look at the early grades and see if they feel right.

You are the best expert on what's right for your child.

Don't talk to your children about the choices; don't take your child on school visits.

When you visit, listen outside the classroom before stepping in.

Pick the type of school that fits your child. Can your child sit still at a traditional school or does expeditionary learning suit your student?

Don't pick a school if you can't afford it or it's too far away. Make a decision that works for your family.

What is the student/teacher ratio?
How many children are in each class?

If the school offers art, music or language classes, ask how often your child will get these enrichment classes.

Ask if parents are welcome in the classroom.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Even if you have a slam dunk school, always have a back up plan.

If the school requires testing, make sure your child is well rested and healthy. If the only time available is a terrible time of day for your child, reschedule the appointment.

Double check the application deadline.

Take a deep breath and relax.

Overheard in the Classroom

Jack McCord's Recipe for Grape Pie

Grind the grapes.
Add some dough.
Pour some apple juice.
Cook it.

Kathy Bruce's class

Right:

Carson Crosby, Elan Bouchet, and Kevin Zapanta

enjoy our September tea (pm class).

photo by Kathy Bruce



Ari Woods at the writing table (morning class)

photo by Kathy Bruce

Money Smarts

By Kim McGrigg

Start Teaching Financial Skills To Children As Early As Possible

In today's economic environment, it is critical to understand how money works and, more important, how to make it work for you. It's unfortunate that young adults are now entering a world where they don't have time to learn financial skills gradually. Often they become victims of poor credit and debt practices before they realize how it even happened. Even when your children are very young, remember that the sooner you start teaching these skills, the better off your children will be when they need them.

One of the most difficult issues parents have to face is Step One. This first and most important step is to examine your own attitudes about money. This is extremely important because your children learn more from what they see you do than from what you tell them. You can preach to your kids every day that "A penny saved is a penny earned," or that "A fool and his money are soon parted," but it won't do any good if they see that you waste your own money consistently.

It is very important to communicate openly with young kids about money, in simple terms that they can comprehend. Too often, young adults have to learn about credit and debt the hard way: by fending for themselves. It is better that they learn about personal finances under your guidance. Following are some tips that will help your younger children get off on the right foot financially.

Involving them in financial planning. While a young child won't understand investing at the complex level of an adult, a savings account in his or her name will help them understand the basic benefits of saving money and watching it grow.

Give your child a chance to be in control. If you give your child an allowance, let him or her be in charge of spending it. This is a great way to teach the relationship between their actions and the positive or negative consequences that follow.

Provide extra income opportunities. Help them learn that money is something you earn, not something you are entitled to. This is also a great way to get the child involved in extra family chores.

Take your child shopping with you. Explain to them why you make the decisions you make while shopping. By showing them the details you take into consideration, you'll be teaching them how to be a wise consumer.

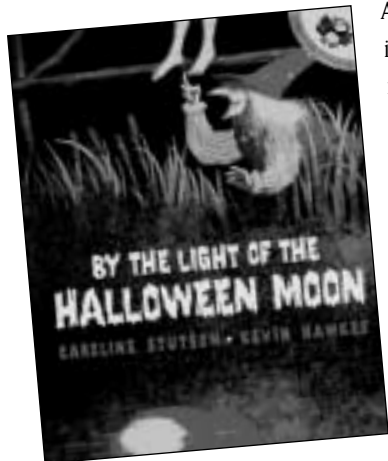
In addition to being a Montview mom, Kim McGrigg is a financial advice columnist and writer. In the past two years, she has answered more than 20,000 individual consumer inquiries on topics ranging from repossession to refinancing. As a public relations representative for Money Management International/CCCS, she has conducted more than 500 media interviews with outlets such as Reuters, the Arizona Republic and Newsweek.

My Favorite Halloween Books

By Kathy Bruce

By The Light of the Halloween Moon

by Caroline Stutson



A wonderful, climax-building story with fabulous illustrations of all kinds of spooky creatures, and a very smart little girl who isn't about to let them get the best of her. Lyrical repeating and rhyming text that pulls the listener along.

The Soup Bone

by Tony Johnston

The story of a little old lady and a skeleton. Both love Halloween. Both are lonely and in need of a friend. Both love to scare people, but they don't like to be scared. Through listening to each other, and valuing their friendship, they learn to have fun together without being too scary.

A Woggle of Witches

by Adrienne Adams

My all time favorite Halloween book, it celebrates witches and bats and the spirit of Halloween in a wonderfully spooky way without being scary. Adrienne Adams has a wonderful way of knowing and honoring the uniqueness and wonder of childhood without being cutesy.

A Halloween Happening

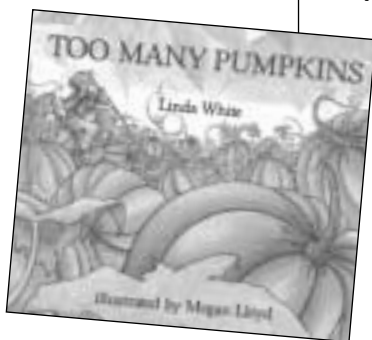
by Adrienne Adams

This is a sequel to the above book. Same group of witches. Same group of children. Same wonderful honoring of the magic of children and Halloween. Best Halloween party ever.

Too Many Pumpkins

by Linda White

The story of a woman who hates pumpkins! She ends up with pumpkins all over her yard anyway and has to come up with some creative ideas about what to do with them all.



The Biggest Pumpkin Ever

by Steven Kroll

The story of two little mice, from two different families, who carefully nurture pumpkins that promise to be of record size. Neither realizes that they are nurturing the same pumpkin!

The Teeny Tiny Ghost

by Kay Winters

Good for younger readers. It is the story of a ghost who is afraid of Halloween. Through the support of teacher and friends, he learns to "boo" like the best of them.

The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything

Great for building to a climax. There is just enough suspense to keep kids at the edge of their seats, with an ending that delights.

The Five Little Pumpkins

by Iris Van Rynbach

There are many illustrated versions of this familiar rhyme. I love Iris Van Rynbach's the best.

Scary, Scary Halloween

by Eve Bunting

This is another good one for younger readers. There is nothing too scary about this story, but there is a sweet surprise at the end.



Ghost's Hour, Spook's Hour

by Eve Bunting

A wonderful spooky book that is not about Halloween in particular. I recommend it for older readers (5 and above), although read it first yourself to see if it's appropriate for your child. It is about a young child waking up at night, and being scared by the normal noises and shadows that seem so un-normal when it's dark.

The Ghost-Eye Tree

by Bill Martin

This is another book for older readers. Bill Martin's lyric prose and Ted Rand's marvelous watercolor illustrations are a feast for ear and eye. Like the book above, it's the realism that makes it scary, so read it first to determine if it's for your child.

A Dark, Dark Tale

by Ruth Brown

There are many version of this classic Halloween tale. I like this one for preschoolers because it combines the slowly building creep through the dark house to a climax that is funny and sweet.

Picnic at Mudsock Meadow

by Patricia Polacco

Classic Patricia Polacco, an old-fashioned Halloween tale from her childhood memories. The length of the book makes it best for older children, or younger ones with a longer attention span.

One Halloween Night

by Mark Teague

For Mark Teague fans, this is a great read-aloud for elementary aged kids. They'll get the humor, and they have the experience to identify with Wendell, Floyd, and Mona as they traipse about town trick or treating, while trying to avoid that stuck-up Leona Fleebish and her cronies. Includes a satisfying conclusion.

Yummy Apple Pecan Goodie

4 cups apples, chopped
1/2 cup sugar
2 tbsp flour
1/4 tsp salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tbsp. pecan chips
1 cup oatmeal
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup flour
1/4 tsp baking soda
1/3 tsp baking powder
2/3 cup butter

Peel and chop about 5 apples to make 4 cups. Add sugar, flour, salt, and pecan chips to apples and mix to cover apples well. Pour into a greased casserole dish or baking pan. Mix remaining ingredients until crumbly. Drop crumb mixture over the top of the apples evenly. Do not pat down.

Bake at 350 degrees until apples are tender and a brown crust has formed. Serve hot with vanilla ice cream.

Book Fair

Mark your calendars! Montview's Holiday Book Fair is scheduled for December 6th – December 12th, with a special Family Night on December 9th. Fair sponsor, Scholastics, offers a huge variety of books, games, and the like to enchant every age group. Keep posted for further details, but remember, now you have a reason to wait until the last minute to do your holiday shopping!



Beth LeMieux sings a silly song during the Music and Motion part of class. PHOTO BY CYRUS MCCRIMMON

Get Out There

Family Adventures by Cheryl Zens

Take a walk with your kids, listen to the birds, or watch animals without the long mountain drive. If this sounds like the ideal family outing, pack up the family and drive to Bluff Lake Nature Center. The center, often called "the natural oasis in the city" of Denver, is a wildlife refuge located on the eastern edge of the new Stapleton neighborhood. This 123-acre natural area of native plants, wetlands, water, prairie and forest is home to a variety of wildlife including deer, fox, coyote, beaver, owls, waterfowl, hawks and migratory songbirds. Walking down the bluff and into the refuge is an educational experience in the spring, summer, winter or fall. Young children will enjoy the outdoors and be thrilled when a deer or fox runs across the trail! Since its inception, Bluff Lake has focused on helping all children, including the underserved, to learn and love natural science. Support the uniqueness of this urban wildlife refuge by visiting the Bluff Lake Nature Center any time of the year for a great outdoor adventure close to home!

The Details:

Bluff Lake Nature Center
7350 E. 29th Avenue
Denver, CO 80238
303-468-3240
www.blufflakenaturecenter.org

Hours:

Daily sunrise to sunset.
Admission is free.

Directions:

Take I -70 East and exit on Havana Street. Turn left (south) on Havana Street. Continue on Havana for about one mile; Bluff Lake Nature Center is on the east, or right hand side.

NO-COST FUNDRAISING REMINDERS

Purchase grocery coupons either through a standing order filled on the 1st or 15th of the month. Fill out order form or e-mail jjoram@qwest.net with amount and continuing date or walk-in to the Montview office. Grocery coupons are available for King Soopers (Safeway accepts these) or Wild Oats.

Pick-up an Albertson's card in the office. This card allows you to pay for your groceries any way you want. Just swipe the card after you purchase your groceries and Montview will receive a percentage of the sale.

Register with www.eScrip.com, designate Montview Preschool and Kindergarten as the group you wish to support and then use the card when buying from participating merchants. Merchant lists are available on-line. WILD OATS & SAFEWAY accept eScrip!

Register with Schoolpop.com, designate Montview Preschool and Kindergarten as the group you wish to support and then use the card when buying from participating merchants from this portal. You can also purchase gift cards from this site from many stores (JC Penney, Kmart, Kohl's, Target, Mervyn's (via Target), Nordstrom, Walmart and Sam's Club (via Walmart). Gift cards can be used like cash in participating stores or on the Schoolpop website.

Register your family or friends on eScrip or Schoolpop. They can designate Montview as the group they are supporting.