

Dan Melnick

I am Dan Melnick, a member of the Montgomery County Library Board. This statement reflects my own views but I am sure it reflects the opinions of other Board members.

Over the last year, I have watched our library's leadership respond to the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. I have been grateful and proud to see them surmount the pandemic and maintain libraries' enduring promise—that these books in our care shall be available to everyone, absolutely everyone. The MCPL made sure that while their doors may be shut, the books, the art,

the music, the movies, and the enriching programs are still available through the internet or contact free pickups.

Our libraires sustain us all as we confront the isolation and loneliness the pandemic has brought down on upon us. Thanks to what our libraries have done, we can persevere through to recovery.

But, as several members of the Council have pointed out, as important as our libraries have been during the pandemic, they will be even more important as our people work their way through the demands of recovery. People will want real books and in-

person programs, particularly for children. It is important, then, that we keep our libraries strong and ready to respond. They also will need the continued enhanced access to electronic books and other web resources that the pandemic occasioned.

Given the need to do this, I wholeheartedly support the Council's March 2 decision to turn down proposals to cut the libraries collections budget. I also strongly support the budget presented by the County Executive and want to urge you to enact it. The submitted budget provides strong support for the

county's libraries and is vitally important for its citizens.

We thank you for this and we thank you for all your support. Thanks to you, our libraries will be ready for us all when the doors reopen.