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DECEMBER 2021

THE FALCONS ARE STATE CHAMPS



Two of Severna Park High School's most prolific athletic programs captured state championships again this season. With a 2-0 win over Winston Churchill on November 13, the field hockey team captured the program's 25th championship. The boys cross country team won the 4A state championship on November 13, advancing to nationals in Alabama, where they placed 18th. The boys cross country team included (l-r) James Glebocki, Liam Hagerty, Scott Engleman, Eddie Sullivan, Ronan Byrne, Tyler Canaday and Mason Siebenhaar. **To read more about the field hockey squad, flip to page 29.**

Chamber Kicks Off Holiday Season With Tree Lighting

By Haley Weisgerber

An impressive crowd gathered at the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce (GSPACC) office on December 3 to kick off the holiday season with the annual



tree lighting.

"I was overjoyed to see so many people gathered around the tree, and when the lights went on, everyone clapped and seemed so excited," said GSPACC CEO Liz League. "I think it really put people in the holiday spirit."

The warm weather and festive spirit drew an impressive crowd to the GSPACC office on Holly Avenue.

"Many remarked that it was the largest turnout we have ever had and larger than other tree lightings in the area," said League. "It had a really great 'vibe.' People were happy, having fun, the kids were excited and dancing to the music."

Sam Dougherty, who recently moved to the area and attended the lighting

>> Continued on page 10

Reflecting On 2021 Around The Park

In "A Tale of Two Cities," Charles Dickens penned the classic line, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." The year 2021 felt like two halves representing the best and the worst as the year began during a pandemic and is now ending with the return of many activities, and with those, a sense of normalcy. Despite COVID-19 keeping people indoors at times, plenty of news was made in the last calendar year.

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Margueritte Mills Volunteer Of The Month

By Haley Weisgerber

One of the most magical parts of the holiday for many children is encountering Santa Claus around town, sharing their Christmas lists and taking photos. Behind these magical moments are volunteers like Freeman Bagnall, who plays Santa Claus for the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce (GSPACC) tree lighting and many other events.

During Santa's offseason, Bagnall is a permanent substitute at Chesapeake High School in Pasadena.

"It gives me a lot of flexibility and I enjoy the kids," said Bagnall. "I really truly have got to say they're fun and I'll stop doing it when it stops being fun."

Bagnall began dressing as Santa in the late 1970s and 1980s at a Christmas party for children with special needs. At the time, Bagnall wore a fake beard. It wasn't until he was dressing as Santa for a few years that he began to look the part.

"I turned gray and then white very, very young," said Bagnall. "By the time I was in my early 40s, my hair was white."

At this point, playing Santa became an important part of Bagnall's holiday season, so he took it to the next level.

"I signed up with a couple of talent agencies," said Bagnall. "In other words, I'm doing some commercial gigs and some non-paid. It's a mix."

Bagnall played Santa at the cham-

Volunteer Spreads Holiday Cheer As Santa Claus



Freeman Bagnall reprised his role as Santa Claus during the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce tree lighting on held on December 3.

ber's tree lighting again this year on December 3 at the chamber office. He said his favorite part about the chamber event is interacting with families.

"It entails meeting and greeting a lot of people and getting your picture taken quite a bit," said Bagnall. "Also, answering kids' questions and sometimes adults' questions. It's a lot of fun."

If you haven't encountered Bagnall at an event around the holidays, you may recognize him from another community favorite. He has also walked in the GSPACC's Fourth of July parade as Uncle Sam for years.

"I have a 22-year-old Mustang convertible," said Bagnall. "They roped

me into using the convertible and being Uncle Sam."

Bagnall is a longtime member of the Severna Park chapter of Toastmasters International, a nonprofit organization that teaches public speaking and leadership. As a part of the Toastmasters float, Bagnall was asked to play Uncle Sam. Now, he is a staple in the parade. As a longtime Anne Arundel County resident, he enjoys seeing his neighbors and friends as he walks the parade route.

"The community comes out and supports it," said Bagnall. "The sidewalks and the lawns were lined with people the whole parade route, waving to Uncle Sam."

Bagnall also volunteers at St. Mary's High School in Annapolis to teach English as a second language to Spanish-speaking adults. He said that he encourages the Hispanic community to visit him at the GSPACC tree lighting or Fourth of July parade.

"I'd love to see a nice turnout from the Hispanic community to greet Uncle Sam or to greet Santa Claus," said Bagnall.

Bagnall said he intends to spread joy through these characters as long as he can, as long as it continues to be fun. Bagnall, who described himself as "young at heart," said interacting with children has kept him that way.

"Let me put it this way: I don't tend to grow up," explained Bagnall. "I don't want an old state of mind."

Colchester Donates Food, Supplies To SPAN



On the weekend of November 20, Colchester on the Severn residents, big and small, filled a truck full of food and supplies and donated the items to SPAN.

Send Photos Of Your Holiday Lights

The Severna Park Voice wants your help choosing the best lights display in the area. The winner, chosen by our readers and followers online, will receive a \$100 gift card to Cafe Mezzanotte.

How will it work? The contest will take place over two rounds. During the first round, we encourage anyone to send us one or more photos of their holiday lights display and home address. We will share the photos online and the top five vote-getters will advance to round two. Following another round of votes, the winner will be announced on our website and social media pages.

Each entry must be for a home in Severna Park, Arnold or Millersville. The deadline for entries is December 12. Send photos to spvnews@severnaparkvoice.com.

Happy holidays. We can't wait to see photos of your favorite lights around town.

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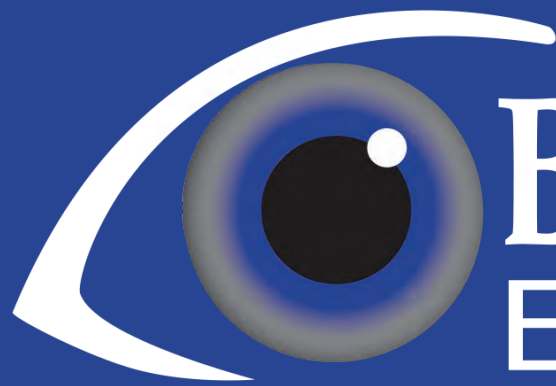
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Elves For Elders Delivers Holiday Magic To Seniors

By Haley Weisgerber

The holiday season can be a lonely and difficult season for many seniors. With that in mind, Partners In Care, an organization that is committed to preserving senior citizens' independence, created Elves for Elders to deliver stockings filled with goodies to seniors in need.

Susan Origlio, the Elves for Elders coordinator, began volunteering with Partners In Care in 2014 with her mother.

In 2015, after her father died, Origlio saw a flyer for stocking donations and got in touch with the main office. From there, Origlio worked with the office to create Elves for Elders in memory of her late father. In its first year, Elves for Elders collected 80 stockings and a few monetary donations.

"I realized I was onto something," said Susan Origlio. "Each year, more people participated, and stocking and monetary donations steadily increased."

In 2020, Origlio lost her mother. She considered canceling the event but knew that seniors were more isolated than ever and needed the pick-me-up.

This year, the event is back in full swing. On December 4, volunteers gathered at Frisco's Taphouse in Gambrills to celebrate the stockings stuffed by generous donors and Partners In Care supporters.

"The world has been crazy, filled with so much negativity," said Origlio. "This event is a constant reminder to me of how kind and giving people can be. I am filled with gratitude and



overwhelmed with people's generosity every year."

Origlio sends out a call for donations beginning in September and collects monetary and physical donations until the day of the Elves for Elders event.

"During the month of November, my husband, who is also a volunteer, and I are busy picking up stockings and coordinating drop-offs," said Origlio.

The stockings are stuffed with toiletries, hand sanitizer, scarves, gloves, socks, games, flashlights, reading materials, stationary, greeting cards,

treats, gift cards and lottery tickets. Origlio encouraged people to have fun putting their donations together. The sky was the limit.

After the stockings are stuffed, they are turned over to volunteers, like Sher Atkinson, who deliver them to the seniors.

"Christmas gets so over-commercialized and you just kind of get lost in it and this just kind of takes you back," said Atkinson. "It's really fun. I really love doing it."

Atkinson has been delivering stock-

ings with Elves for Elders for two or three years. She said that it reminds her of the real reason for the holiday season.

"They're just so excited," said Atkinson. "I don't know how to describe the look on their faces. It's kind of like when you go back and you think about Christmas for little kids where everything's just exciting and fun."

The Partners In Care team carefully selects the stocking recipients, as they can't deliver to everyone. When the stockings are all delivered, Origlio said she knows all of the hard work is worth it when she hears how the stockings have impacted the seniors' lives.

"The stories I hear about how meaningful these stockings are to people are so heartwarming," said Origlio. "For some, it's the only sign of Christmas they may have."

Volunteers filled 320 stockings for the 2021 event, more than expected. Origlio also got a nice surprise. She received an email the night before the event in Gambrills; someone wanted to stuff stockings in memory of a loved one. Family members Doug Eufemia, Elisabeth Eufemia and Tonia Wilson stuffed 30 stockings as a tribute to Mary Eufemia, a Severna Park resident who died in July 2020.

Elves for Elders is just one example of the great things that Partners In Care does. Origlio said she is proud to play a role in an organization that makes such an impact in the lives of local seniors.

"I believe in this organization; I have seen firsthand what they do for people," said Origlio. "Partners In Care is truly a nonprofit and the people who work for this organization are so compassionate and dedicated."

Volunteer Earns Boots On The Ground Award

Severna Park resident Janice Keating was recognized with the Community Foundation of Anne Arundel County's (CFAAC) Boots on the Ground Award during a virtual awards ceremony in November.



Janice Keating

The award is presented to an individual who has gone above and beyond to meet the community's needs, serving the most vulnerable and underserved. "Janice Keating has the uncanny ability to be everywhere she needs to be, for everyone who needs her," said Mary Spencer, president and CEO of CFAAC. "This inexhaustible volunteer has worked with the Girl Scouts, Mission of Peace, Catholic Charities, Downtown Hope Annapolis, the Food Bridge in Anne Arundel County, and Anne Arundel County Public Schools. Janice's reach extends beyond our county to the streets of Baltimore and Appalachia."

Keating was nominated by CFAAC board member Martha Van Woerkom,

who said Keating is humble and never asks for accolades.

"I wanted Janice to be recognized because she's a behind-the-scenes person," Van Woerkom said. "She does so much, and she's made it a lifelong commitment to do all these things for people in our community."

Five years ago, Keating began volunteering with Downtown Hope Church, a ministry in Annapolis that closely aligned with her values and philosophy of giving back to the Annapolis community. When Love Annapolis, an outreach organization was formed, she became its director and developed positive relationships with the children and families living in public housing communities like Newtowne 20, Woodside Gardens, and Robinwood. She worked closely with community leaders to establish credibility and make impactful change, offering homework help, and organizing community dinners, holiday celebrations and summer camps.

Todd Smith, an elder at Downtown Hope in Annapolis, recalled, "When demolition of Newtowne 20 began and residents had to move out of their homes, Janice was there for them. She helped connect residents with advocates to make sure they understood

their options and to assist with finding alternative housing."

Through Love Annapolis, Keating became involved with the Benevolence Team, a coalition of local nonprofits that work closely with Title 1 schools in Anne Arundel County, to identify and help families in need by offering a temporary helping hand with utilities, rent, medical expenses, etc.

"I think the thing that I enjoy about volunteering most is just being with people," Keating said. "So, whenever I am with people who are in need, it just makes me happy to be able to lead them to a place that will help their situation."

When COVID-19 hit, Keating assisted the local Hispanic community by partnering with Center of Help and Our Lady of Guadalupe Ministries to organize weekly deliveries of clothing, food and baby essentials to 300 to 400 families in Allen Apartments. The operation was subsequently moved to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and named West Annapolis Pantry, where it continues to serve 200 to 260 families every two weeks. Keating's reach extends beyond Anne Arundel County.

"She weaves herself into the fabric of many communities," said Smith, who described Keating as selfless.

Selfless. Compassionate. Humble. These are all adjectives used to describe Keating.

"Janice serves because Janice loves," Van Woerkom said. "She has that rare quality of making people feel seen and valued."

"Janice doesn't just come in for a weekend or volunteer a couple hours," Van Woerkom added. "Janice stays and she works with the organization for years. She gets to know them. She truly wants to make change."

Keating has made a direct, tangible impact on her neighbors. In addition to the aforementioned organizations, Keating has worked with the Girl Scouts; Giving Back, Linda's Legacy; Benevolent Baskets of Catholic Charities; Patty Lee's "Angels of Addiction" and the Franciscan Center. As if that list isn't extensive enough, for the last 12 years she has worked as a home hospital teacher for Anne Arundel County Public Schools, teaching high schoolers who are unable to go to school because of surgery, cancer, addiction and other reasons.

"This is our community, and these people are struggling, and this is making a difference for the people who live just a couple miles away from us," Keating said.

Officer Swartz Gets Sendoff From Severna Park



Following Alex Swartz's retirement as a school resource officer at Severna Park High School, parents and former students gathered at the Severna Park Community Center on November 20 to pay tribute to Swartz. Councilwoman Amanda Fieldler presented a citation on behalf of the Anne Arundel County Council and Amy Leahy gave Swartz a citation from the Greater Severna Park Council.

Several people spoke, including Alex's wife, Elizabeth; the voice of the Falcons, Larry Sells; and former student Nick Carparelli III.

AACPL Creates Time Capsule

By Haley Weisgerber

The Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) is commemorating its 100th anniversary with a time capsule to capture the history and the joy that the library has brought people from all over the county for a century. The time capsule was sealed on December 7 and will be reopened in 2046.

"We look forward to people coming together to celebrate the closing and opening of the capsule and sharing stories about how the library has served them personally and how much they love the library," marketing and communications specialist Kelley Jackson said days before the capsule was sealed. "The time capsule is a small representation of our real legacy, the impact we have in our community."

The items inside of the time capsule were chosen to capture the library's growth over 100 years but also to show the future library-goers how things will change in the next 25 years.

"In 25 years, who knows what else we will be able to offer and how our services will change," said Jackson.

Staff from the library's branches have submitted staff and event photos, newspaper and newsletter clippings, pandemic-related materials and a photo of the outside of each branch to a system-wide scrapbook that captures the past 100 years and current happenings at AACPL.

The time capsule also featured a list of time capsule keepers, a group of library

supporters and their families who are interested in being a part of history. The library looked for time capsule keepers who could commit to staying in touch and attending the closing event and opening event in 2046 if they are able.

"I'm picturing kids that are coming to our story times now coming back with their own little ones to open the capsule and celebrate the library," said Jackson.

The goal is to bring people together to celebrate the library and its involvement in their lives.

"We would love to have some great stories come out of the capsule keepers' involvement describing how the library served them through the years," said Jackson.

While most time capsules are buried, AACPL is taking a different approach. Each of the library's branches will have a chance to display the time capsule with a tabletop banner and photos of some of the items that are sealed inside of the capsule.

Library staff members are excited to see how things will change in 25 years following the reopening of the time capsule and to celebrate 125 years of AACPL with families.

"One-hundred years of service is just the beginning," said AACPL CEO Skip Auld. "It's inspiring to imagine what the future will hold for our system, and we look forward to today's customers joining us in 2046, hopefully with their kids, grandkids and other loved ones to continue to share their joy and love of the library."

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A Day In The Life Of A Kinder Farm Park Ranger

By Conor Doherty

Visitors see them regularly, tending to animals and taking care of county parks. But what exactly is a typical day in the life of a park ranger?

As she starts her shift, park ranger Helen Overman, a senior ranger at Kinder Farm Park, knows that she has a long day ahead of her. Among her first items of the day is to open the gates, both the main gate in the park and the gate along East-West Boulevard for foot traffic. From there, Overman and her fellow rangers open the barns. Perhaps surprisingly, park rangers aren't there to only care for the outside. Their duties include taking care of all of the facilities visitors can use, including cleaning the park's bathrooms and vacuuming the visitor center.

From there, Overman's daily activities begin. "Rangers' jobs are a triangle of safety, enforcement and education," Overman said. "For me, especially in the winter seasons, I start out by looking for any safety issues, maybe injured animals, talking to farm volunteers, seeing how their day is going."

Safety and maintenance of the park go together, from clearing brush to fixing a broken board on a fence. During the winter, Overman said that rangers will drive around the walking trail looking for any icy patches to treat with salt.

The enforcement aspect involves ensuring park and county rules are always followed. Park rangers rely upon volunteer compliance to make sure that visitors know about and then follow those rules. Overman said that dogs off leashes is one of the most common rules broken at the park.

"If your cute, adorable little dog, who is off their leash, goes up to a dog that isn't friendly but is on their leash and your dog gets attacked, then you



Photos by Conor Doherty

Helen Overman is a senior ranger at Kinder Farm Park in Millersville.



“

We want you to have a good experience here, but we also want you to be advocates for the parks.”

— HELEN OVERMAN

will be held liable for that," Overman explained. "So educating people about those rules, which is the final corner of our duties.

"We don't want to tell you, 'No, you can't do that thing,'" Overman said. "We want you to have a good experience here, but we also want you to be advocates for the parks, so let me educate you so you can tell the next person not to do something."

Educating the public ranges from telling and teaching people what the rules of the park are to teaching kids about nature. "We offer educational programs like Nature Escape, teaching kids about tracking, wilderness 101," Overman said. "There are a bunch of programs to teach people and their kids about nature."

Park rangers see the forest for the trees, Overman said, so they know many things must be tended to and fixed, but they need to find the time to do all of those tasks.

As her day winds down and the gates are ready to be closed, Overman and other rangers remind people that the park is about to close, often driving around in one of the park's trucks to find visitors. Overall, Overman wants the public to know that she and the rest of the park's staff aren't there for the money.

"We're here because we love nature and we're here to get other people enthusiastic about nature," she said. "Our job is to protect this land in the present and for the future."

Lauren's Law: Christmas Eve Puddle Jumping

Lauren Burke Meyer



began. When there was nowhere to go, and we desperately needed to get out of our house during a rainy day.

However, on Christmas Eve last year, puddle jumping was *not* on the itinerary. And, we certainly didn't have our usual umbrellas, raincoats and rain boots.

Let me rewind for a minute to December 23, 2020. Also known by many (or at least me) as "Christmas Eve Eve." We had arranged to have two trees cut down outside the front of our house. Our toddler watched from our front

My title sounds fun, huh? Under non-holiday circumstances, my 3-year-old daughter, Charlotte, and I have a blast jumping in puddles. It started as a fun activity when the pandemic

window, mesmerized by the process. Who are we kidding? My husband and I even struggled to get work done, regularly peering out the window too. Little did we know, this would not be the only form of entertainment provided by the cutting down of our trees.

The next day, it poured. Our front yard looked like a monster truck rally had occurred. After dressing Charlotte and her newborn sister, Riley, in their new matching blue dresses, white tights and pink sparkly shoes, we headed out the door to my sister-in-law's house for Christmas Eve dinner with the entire family of my husband, Scott.

Scott was putting Riley in her car seat, while I carried presents and food. Charlotte began to walk into our muddy front yard. Slowly at first. Despite yells to get out of the yard and in her car seat, she ran, jumped high and landed on her butt. It happened so fast, yet it sort of felt like slow motion. I had an out-of-body experience with the immediate thought, "Did that just happen?"

Needless to say, the white tights,



Charlotte Meyer is pictured before the puddle-jumping incident on Christmas Eve last year.

new dress and shoes were covered in mud and were no longer an outfit option. Deep in the throes of the pandemic, this was a rare outing. With zero plans and rare shopping excursions, there weren't dressy outfit backup options. The best I could do was a long-sleeve striped cotton dress.

Charlotte looked ready for a Fourth of July barbecue.

Charlotte had behaved so well all year, yet she decided in the final hours before Santa came that she would throw in the towel for the "nice list." Thankfully, Santa took pity on her and us all, realizing she didn't understand the need for the appropriate wardrobe when jumping in muddy puddles.

A moral of the story? Get your craziest kid in her car seat first and take her out last. That's the least opportunity for trouble.

The greatest lesson of all? It doesn't matter what we're wearing, or what we're doing for the holidays. It's about togetherness. This year, I'm hosting my entire extended family. If we're all blessed with health and able to gather, that's really all that matters. The rest is just gravy on my Christmas turkey.

Lauren Burke Meyer is a Severna Park native who was inspired to write *Lauren's Law* as a humorous play on the well-known Murphy's Law adage: "anything that can go wrong, will go wrong."

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Round Bay Sailing Season Finale



Mary Marta
Round Bay Sailing
Association

Round Bay Sailing Association (RBSA) had a rousing race season this year; weather played an important role and the club found itself canceling four races for thunderstorms and possible tornadoes, more than had been done in years. Also notable were the number of boats that sailed in each race (on some Wednesday evenings, 20) and the new scoring system, the ORR-Ez.

The high-spirited club culminated the 2021 season with an awards ceremony at the beach at Arden on the Severn. The main event at each annual awards ceremony is High Point for the season. High Point is based on an

algorithm that considers overall participation in the season, the number of boats and results per race. This year's winner of the coveted prize was Hye, a Johnson 18, skippered by Chris Drury, who often single-handed. When Chris wasn't sailing solo, his new fiancé, Meredith Hillyer, crewed and provided tactics.

The club awarded other prizes as well. Kevin Lister of Winsome Ride, a Bavaria 46, took the Corinthian Award, given to the sailor who best exemplifies the Corinthian spirit. Kevin was instrumental in developing our new rating system. The single-handed CRASH race prize went to Don Snelgrove, skipper of Himmel, a Dehler 39. The Commodore's Trophy for highest standing in three annual charity races went to Quintet, a Cal 25 skippered by Mike Miller. The Red Lantern award, given to the boat that can appreciate that other forms of enjoyment can be combined with sailing, went to Blew by You. The Schock

Harbor 25, skippered by Les Trachtman, received the award for last in high point scoring - usually the best prize since it's a bottle of Bermuda rum, not a pickle dish. Finally, Jambo, a Cal 27 skippered by Jim Hyatt, received the Most Improved award, for having made the greatest leap in high point standings in the past year.

While boats are being hauled out now, skippers and crew are contemplating the April 2022 season opener on April 20, 2022. Check us out: www.roundbaysailing.com. Feel free to join the excitement!

Skipper Chris Drury and tactician Meredith Hillyer won the RBSA 2021 High Point Cup.



Chamber Kicks Off Holiday Season

» Continued from page 1

for the first time, was impressed with the event.

"We had no idea what to expect and we saw a huge crowd, mostly families and kids," said Dougherty. "This is the perfect small-town event that we were looking for when we moved here."

Severna Park Elementary School teacher Lori Repko said it was great to attend the event and feel normal after two difficult years.

"It's nice to be able to talk to people safely," said Repko. "It's nice to see people that we know and give hugs to all your friends that you don't get to see all the time."

The event featured performances from the Dance Center of Severna Park, Creative Force Dance Center and the Severna Park Elementary School chorus. Treats were provided by the Toast of Severna Park Toastmasters Club and The Big Bean.

"The Big Bean was serving cider and hot chocolate and had brought seven containers and wound up going through 17 containers," said League.

This year, the Severna Park Model Railroad Club was back in action for children to enjoy. The Grinch and Santa Claus also made an appearance for photos.

"It's very festive," said Rachel Benney, who has attended the event since she moved to the area three years ago. "You get to meet different vendors from the neighborhood and just kind of enjoy the company of the community."

The event has become a community favorite. League is excited to be a part of it.

"We are so lucky to have a supportive community with families who enjoy local events and participate," said League. "It's fun to organize these events because I know the community will attend."



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YEAR IN REVIEW



WINTER



Severna Park lost an icon on January 24 when Lillian "Lil" Shelton died at age 90 after having a stroke. The head coach of Severna Park field hockey from 1975 to 2011, Shelton led the Falcons to 31 county titles, 29 regional titles and 20 state championships.

Shelton's daughter Lorie Hankins played for her mom on Severna Park's softball team. "She brought out the best in every player," Hankins said. "She made them

work hard but they had fun. She had a great record, yes but her legacy is the values she taught ... [the girls] knew she cared about them as people, not as players."

When the Polar Bear Plunge was restricted to a virtual event, Garry's Grill owner Eddie Conway planned his own plunge on January 30 to support Special Olympics Maryland. With the help of other businesses, he raised \$35,086. On the same day, the Ben Oaks community plunged, collecting roughly \$2,300.

Good Neighbors Group (GNG) also made a big charitable impact in the community. The nonprofit's fourth annual 2021 S(o)uper Bowl saw record-breaking success from February 4-7, distributing over 20,500 items to local food pantries.

Erika Robuck released her seventh novel, "An Invisible Woman," in February. The historical fiction novel is about a real Baltimore woman who was a spy in Nazi-occupied France during World War II.

The wait for public school students and their families was finally over as kids started returning to school on March 1. One student, eighth-grader Lily McCallister from Severna Park Middle School, was recognized in a big way. As part of the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, she was named Top Youth Volunteer at the middle level for her work with oyster restoration in the Magotho River and Chesapeake Bay.

Accomplishments weren't limited to young members of the community. Dr. William Collins, a psychologist for over 40 years, created 120 paintings from the beginning of the pandemic through March 2021. At the age of 83, he took a hiatus from seeing patients and instead pursued his true passion, art.



SPRING

"Fall" sports returned in the spring, with Severna Park's football, field hockey and soccer teams going a combined 9-0-1 to kick off the season. Juanita Williams also had plenty to celebrate. On March 27, she turned 100 and had a ceremony at her daughter's home in Whitehurst. Visitors included family, over 60 neighbors and friends, and Anne Arundel County fire and police vehicles.

To raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS), Severn School sophomores Lilly Hughes and Sage Christensen led a campaign nicknamed "Admirals in Action." They raised \$68,000 for LLS.

While in-person school and sports returned, so did area theater programs. Stage & Screen Studios filmed "The Point," a 10-episode thriller inspired by the Netflix series "Outer Banks."

April 12 brought the end of Maryland's 90-day legislative session. Most notably, lawmakers tackled issues of pandemic relief; police, education and unemployment reform; and new avenues of tax collection through sports betting and a digital ad tax.

Speaking of digital content, the Netflix series "Tiger King" was a subject on the March 12 TOTs podcast of Severna Park resident Ben Gardner, who interviewed Carole Baskin.



"It's like they say, don't meet your heroes because it'll ruin that," said Gardner. "Well, never meet your villains because meeting Carole Baskin was insane."

The Severna Park High School graduating class of 2021 was met with a surprise when they learned that parents were throwing them a prom at Kurtz's Beach since the official prom was canceled. In other school news, the Severna Park High School drama program's performance of "Bad Auditions...On Camera" won big at the virtual Maryland Thespian Festival in April, getting both Outstanding Vocal Work and Outstanding Ensemble. Students also broke the Severna Park High School fundraising record by collecting \$27,000 for Make-A-Wish Mid-Atlantic.

After moving from place to place during his youth, Alex Bouffard came to Severna Park, not far from his former home in Shipley's Choice, to start Saints Church.

At St. Martin's-in-the-Field, the head of school, Jamey Hein, announced he was leaving after seven years of loving service and steady leadership. Charlie Sachs was later chosen as the interim head of school.

Near the end of the school year, Jake Gelfand was named the 2020-2021 Gatorade Maryland Cross Country Player of the Year, joining other athletes who have been ranked as the state's best in their respective sports.

"It's been four years of just grinding with my teammates and having the support system to help me through these last four years," he said. "It just shows that if I can surround myself with the right people and if I put in the work, the sustained grind can take me to places that I never thought I could go to."

The Severna Park boys had a strong showing at the Maryland state track and field championships, tying for second place with Howard at the event, held June 18-19 at Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex in Landover.

Severna Park's baseball team made it to the state finals, suffering a heartbreaking 5-4 loss to Sherwood on June 18. One day later, the Broadneck girls lacrosse team won the 4A state title, 12-11, over Arundel at Loyola University's Ridley Athletic Complex.

That same field was the site of the 4A boys lacrosse state championship later that evening. The Severna Park boys seized their fifth straight title with an 11-3 win over Catonsville. It was all Severna Park as Charlie Evans scored a Class 4A state championship record seven goals, Colin Shadowens won 14 of 15 faceoffs,

and the defense kept Catonsville off the board for nearly three quarters.

"It speaks to everyone buying in," Evans said after the win. "The coaches kept preparing us; the younger guys kept stepping up."



YEAR IN REVIEW



SUMMER

Severna Park High School shortstop Jackson Merrill was drafted with the 27th overall pick in the 2021 Major League Baseball draft by the San Diego Padres on July 11. With that selection, Merrill became the highest drafted player from Maryland since the Oakland Athletics took former Arundel High School and University of Maryland infielder John McCurdy 26th overall in 2002.

“They told us a long time ago, 2 percent of the people ever make it this far,” said Jackson’s mom, Jennie. “Now, we’re here. He’s climbed to the top of the first mountain, but there are more mountains to climb.”

Another Severna Park resident made statewide news in July: Elaine Rice Bachmann was named the Maryland state archivist.

On July 18, the community learned of the death of Dick Ladd, a former councilman in District 5. He was 80 years old.

“He cared deeply for our community and worked tirelessly to take care of Anne Arundel County citizens,” Elizabeth Rosborg said. “He will be missed by all of us whose lives he touched with his positive energy and enthusiasm.”

Runner Matthew Centrowitz and windsurfer Farrah Hall, Broadneck graduates, both represented the United States during the Olympic Games in Tokyo. A former gold medalist, Centrowitz came in ninth place during the second semifinal and did not qualify for this year’s gold medal race. Hall finished 15th overall in her sport.

Before the fall sports season began, Severna Park High School welcomed a new athletic director, Dave Kauffman. September also marked a big milestone for Severna Park native Aaron Yealdhall, also known as the singer-songwriter Skribe. On September 4, he scored one of his biggest gigs ever: opening for Darius Rucker at the Wolf Trap music venue in Virginia.

The *Severna Park Voice* celebrated its 40th anniversary in September. Closing out the summer, the *Voice* staff helped organize a new festival, Art in the Park, at Café Mezzanotte on September 19.

FALL

A new school year saw many students return to buildings, but one familiar face was not at Severna Park High School. Beloved school resource officer Alex Swartz retired because of lingering injuries suffered from two previous incidents of being struck by drunk drivers.

“It would be selfish of me to be in a career where I am tasked with helping people,” he said. “I have always looked at the job as having 2,000 kids, teachers and staff members. I always told myself if I couldn’t step into every situation and handle it, I would step away.”

Severna Park resident Ken Brady celebrated his 100th birthday on October 9. While he marked 100 years of age, a new restaurant, JB’s, marked its official opening in the Park Plaza shopping center.

The Severna Park and Broadneck football rivalry took on a new meaning October 15 because the game was voted to be a Ravens RISE High School Football Showdown. Professional quarterback Trace McSorley and Ravens cheerleaders attended the game, adding to an electric atmosphere during a 48-14 Bruins win.

The Republican State Central Committee of Anne Arundel County voted on October 25 to nominate Rachel Muñoz to fill a House of Delegates vacancy in District 33.



“At the end of the day, we all want the same things in life,” she said when asked about working with Republicans and Democrats. “We want a safe, happy place to raise our families. We want great education for our children. We all want the same things; we just have different ways of going about it, and I look forward to having those conversations and working to find common ground and win-wins for everyone.”

Advocates of later school start and dismissal times won big when the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County approved a shift to take place when the 2022-2023 school year begins next fall.

The year ended on a high note for several sports teams. Although the Broadneck girls soccer team lost a state finals match to the Walt Whitman Vikings, 2-1, on November 20, they still had a great season. The Severna Park boys captured a state title in cross country and the field hockey team continued their reign of success by winning a championship, 2-0 over Winston Churchill, on November 13.

“This team, for this year, I think we had the best defense that I’ve ever had,” said coach Shannon Garden. “Our defense definitely got us to this point, and I’m sure, won us this game. It’s a stellar backfield and a stellar goalkeeper.”

Those are just some highlights from 2021. Thank you for sharing your stories with us over the past year. We can’t wait to see what 2022 has in store.

Favorite Posts On Social Media

While we had our favorite stories of the year, so did our followers online. Here are some of the stories that got “liked” the most and that generated the most discussion.

FACEBOOK

Jackson Merrill Drafted By Padres

1,000 likes, 49 shares, 71 comments

Offer Swartz Retires

358 likes, 52 shares, 94 comments

Brightview Residents Take “Shots”

191 likes, 13 shares

Kiley Curran Sells Coco Bombs To Help UM BWMC

107 likes, 18 shares, 8 comments

Cicadas Around Severna Park

16 likes, 60 comments

INSTAGRAM

SPHS Field Hockey Champs

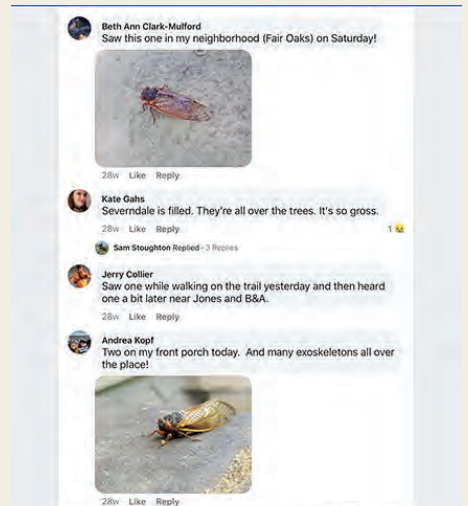
270 likes, 11 comments

Saying Goodbye To “Lil” Shelton

112 likes

JB’s Provides Lunch To Veterans

51 likes



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Anne Arundel Team Places Third In Fish 4 A Cure



Fish 4 A Cure raised more than \$380,000 in 2021 for cancer care services at Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center. The Liff, Walsh & Simmons/Eagle Title team, Reel Counsel, was honored to fish alongside the 62 registered boats, finishing third in the Paul C. Dettor Captain's Challenge, raising \$46,476.

The Reed Counsel team was comprised of Anne Arundel County residents, many of whom live in Severna Park or Arnold. Team members included (l-r) Eagle Title president James Walsh; Nick Clark; Joel Wotell; Mike DuVall; Liff, Walsh & Simmons paralegal Susan Hannon; Eagle Title chief operating officer John Miller; Eagle Title director of marketing Erin McNaboe; Jeff Kelly; Eagle Title vice president Brad Walsh; Brad Benjamin; and Ryan Blades. Not pictured are Chris Sheppard and Jon McGowan, associates at Liff, Walsh & Simmons.

The first-place boat in the Paul C. Dettor Captain's Challenge, LaxFish, raised \$108,225, breaking a fundraising record.

MaidHealthy Donates To SPAN



MaidHealthy owner Robert Wade presented a \$1,000 check to SPAN's director of development, Michele Sabeau, on November 22. "I am pleased to be able to support such an important local Severna Park nonprofit organization that serves so many people in need in our community and local surrounding areas," Wade said. "MaidHealthy is very happy to do our part to help!"

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Holiday Events Unite The Community

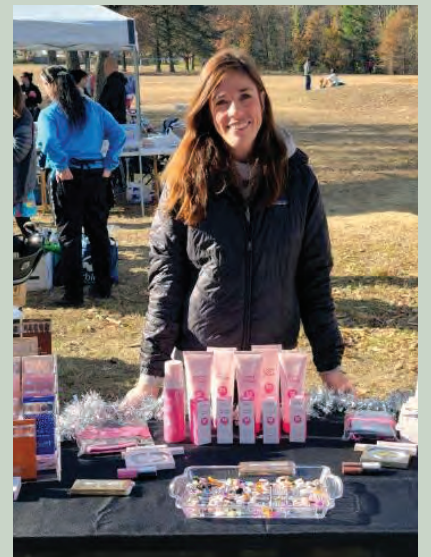
Fence & Deck Connection Hosts Clothing Drive



Families were treated to cocoa, sweet snacks, pictures with Santa, pony rides, a bonfire and more when Fence & Deck Connection held its 15th annual holiday clothing drive on December 4. The event benefited the Blue Ribbon Project, which serves abused and neglected children.



Mago Vista Enjoys Shop Local Event



Holiday in the Park, an event at Mago Vista Park on December 4, gave area businesses and neighbors a chance to gather. **Top Left:** Cari Wheatley, the owner of Soaking Treasures, showed off her homemade soaps alongside her husband Steve, the owner of 50 East Remodeling. **Top Right:** Morgan Lucas, the owner of Red Aspen, helped organize the holiday themed shop local event to reach more people with her small business. **Below:** Also showing off their wares were John and Susan Buechling, owners of Susie's Shabby Chic Creations.



Here At SPAN, Every Act Of Generosity Counts

Michele Sabean
Director of
Development
SPAN Inc.



I sat down to write this Thanksgiving weekend, very thankful for time with family and the food we shared together. In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, it was very clear to me that the holiday was

approaching, and this year, it was not because of stacks of cranberry sauce and marshmallows greeting me at the grocery store or Christmas decorations at every other store, but because of the increased activity level at SPAN.

With SPAN's Holiday Caring program, our community provided over 150 Thanksgiving food baskets for local families in need. Throughout the week, as those meals were being picked up, many community groups such as the Colchester neighborhood, Woods Child Development Center, Chartwell 9 Hole Golf Group, Cub Scout packs 855 and 955, and Caropreso Real Estate Team were dropping off food they had collected. As these donations were being dropped off, we also had an increase of clients and lots of appreciation for the food and turkeys being shared!

We at SPAN have a lot to be thankful for – especially for our community! Thank you for all you do for SPAN. Every act of generosity counts and everybody has something to give.

We are thankful for the many who donate food and toiletries through their school, church, business, community or civic group and also for all of those who stop by to drop off a bag or two – it all adds up!

We are thankful for all of those who donate financially including businesses such as Maid Healthy and civic groups that pool their resources to give like Chartwell Garden Club and SUN Networking Group and also for individual donors, who are currently our largest source of funding.

We are thankful for the many who give of their time – our volunteers log many hours interviewing clients and stocking our pantry.

We are thankful for our partnerships with local businesses and community groups – such as Diehl's Produce, Severna Park Lanes and Greenway Bowl in Odenton, Landmark Roofing and the Severna Park High School drama department.

As we take time to reflect on the last year plus, we celebrate how much we have helped each other and our neighbors. We thank you for all you have done to keep SPAN open and serving people throughout the pandemic and especially in this transition from the pandemic. For many of our clients, this time of transition, as some of the supports are being lifted, is more difficult. For local families who are not able to get enough food to eat, pay their utilities, or pay their rent or prescription costs, SPAN is here to help. Please call 410-647-0889 between 10:00am and 12:45pm Monday through

Thursday to see if you are eligible for food or financial assistance.

Together we feed. Together we give. Together we help. Every act of generosity counts, and everybody has something to give.

SPAN (Serving People Across Neighborhoods) is an independent nonprofit food pantry and emergency services provider that has been helping local families with eviction prevention, utility turnoffs, medical/prescription bills, and food since 1990. SPAN

serves 14 zip codes in Anne Arundel County. SPAN is located behind Our Shepherd Lutheran Church at 400 Benfield Road in Severna Park. Hours are Monday through Thursday from 10:00am-12:45pm. For more information, call 410-647-0889, email spanhelps@yahoo.com or visit www.spanhelps.org. Financial donations may be made through the website. Food donations may be dropped off anytime using the storage bin behind SPAN's building. Please "like" SPAN on Facebook!

ACAN Makes Thanksgiving Possible For Families

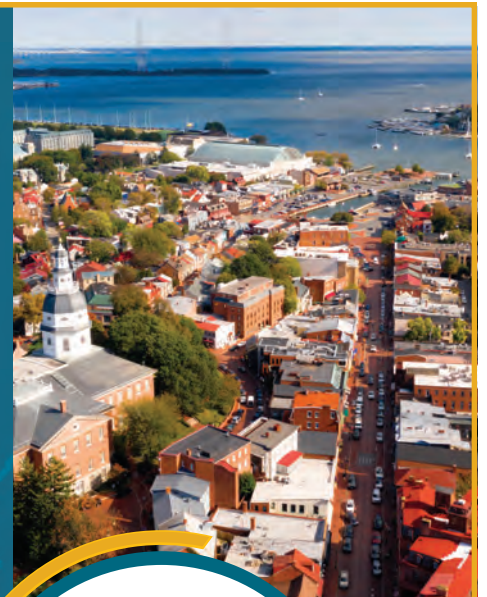
Asbury Church Assistance Network (ACAN) held its annual Thanksgiving dinner giveaway on November 17. With help from the Maryland Food Bank and Anne Arundel County Fire Department, ACAN provided 329 families with turkey, chicken, the fixin's, water and more. Included in that number of families served were seniors and disabled community members who had their food delivered by ACAN.




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Fair Oaks Turkey Bowl Is A Beloved Community Tradition

Story and photos by Zach Sparks
zach@severnaparkvoice.com

With the exception of 2020, every Thanksgiving in Fair Oaks over the last decade has started the same way: with stretching, the national anthem roaring through a speaker, and a game of competitive seven-on-seven flag football between neighborhood dads at Folger McKinsey Elementary School.

This year's Turkey Bowl was a shootout with the even-month-birth dads (Evens) edging the odd-month-birth dads (Odds) 45-40 after two 25-minute halves of action.

Bryan Wasserman intercepted a pass in the end zone with two seconds remaining to seal the victory for the Evens. Tim Merritt led the Evens with three receiving touchdowns, while Odds quarterback Chris Jones connected with Kyle Harrison for two scores to keep the game close.

While the Evens claimed bragging rights, the real incentive for playing each year comes from the opportunity to meet new neighbors.

"It's great how it brings neighbors together and then tears them back apart," Ben Meredith joked. "It's [also] a great way to burn calories before eating all day. I moved into the neighborhood in 2014. I grew up in Fair Oaks, and I didn't expect to have the adult friendships that I do. We hang out all summer at the pool, we hang out in the winter and do stuff like this."

A handful of Fair Oaks kids participate by holding flag sticks and down markers while cheering for their dads. Along with the Fair Oaks softball game on Memorial Day, the Turkey Bowl is an anticipated activity.

"These two sporting events keep the year interesting, strengthening our bond and friendships," Merritt said.

This year, the players suffered "only three minor injuries," according to Merritt. Those were a dislocated finger and two strained hamstrings.

All neighborhood dads are invited to play, although more than half were high school or college athletes. Merritt, for example, played college basketball. Jones was a college quarterback, and Harrison played professional lacrosse.

Adam Williams has lived in Fair Oaks since the second grade, not counting his time in college.

"We definitely take on the mantra, 'It takes a village,'" Williams said when asked what makes Fair Oaks special. "It's very family oriented and everyone helps each other."



Clockwise from top left: Bryan Wasserman rolled to his right before attempting a pass. Tim Merritt caught three touchdowns including this grab in the first half. Sixth-grader Matty Curtin held the down marker. Kyle Harrison stiff-armed a defender.



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The Benefits Of “Mortgage Local”



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I'm a proponent of buying local. Not only does it make me feel good, but the quality of the product also tends to be a bit sturdier. The term “buying local” itself conjures up emotional ties to your community, and at a deeper level, the actual families who are connected to these businesses.

But what does it mean when buying local doesn't involve commodities? What does it mean to buy local on a service? A financial service for that matter? What does it mean to “mortgage local?”

There are direct benefits and indirect benefits of “mortgage local.” Let's take a dive into one from each. **Direct benefit: local market knowledge.** Special down payment assistance programs are usually hyper localized. The Maryland Mortgage Program is a state-run program to help make the initial investment into homeownership more affordable by providing down payment assistance. There are many tiers of the program, but the design is to help people with down payment funds. The direct benefit to the borrower would be the funds obtained from these programs and can be the difference between becoming a homeowner or not. A local lender would have the knowledge of these programs, over a nationwide lender.

Indirect benefit: peace of mind. Generally speaking (and this can be subjective by interpretation, but I'm speaking for myself), your local mortgage

professional will care more deeply for their clients as they live in the community they serve. We have a responsibility to help one another, to look out for our neighbors, and it's more apparent when your clients can literally become your neighbors. Our kids play on the same teams, we shop in the same shopping centers, we share the same values. With peace of mind comes the assurance that you'll be advised in your best interests, you'll be communicated with, and you'll be able to get answers to your questions quickly. Merely answering the phone on an evening or weekend can go a long way to establish trust and peace of mind for someone dealing with quite possibly their largest financial transaction of their lives. It's something that's inherently unquantifiable but incredibly important, nonetheless.

Let's face it, home mortgages aren't exactly the most exciting thing in the world. Most people perform a home transaction every seven to 10 years, so the terminology isn't something that you are entirely familiar with. Some take it as an overwhelming experience. One that they just want to get over with because the end game is a new home. They suck it up and do whatever is needed to finalize it just to get to the closing table. For me, that's an awful take on it. You would think that with something so significant, you'd want to remember it in a positive light. It's the experience for me. That's what I've always wanted to bring to the table, and at its core, that's the essence of what it means to mortgage local.

For a one-on-one mortgage consultation for your next purchase or refinance, contact Tony Leighty at tleighty@firsthome.com or 443-623-3882.

Do I Have An Estate?

Nicole T. Livingston, Esq.
Council Baradel, Attorneys at Law

As we enter into the new year, now is a great time to prioritize creating or updating your estate plan. A question I often get asked is, “Do I have an estate?”

People sometimes think they do not have an estate, or their estate is too small to require estate planning. Everyone who owns an asset has an estate. The first conversation when meeting with a prospective client is to review the assets they own.

What assets are included in your estate?

Real estate usually comes to mind first. The title of the real estate is determined by looking at the deed, not the deed of trust. The deed of trust is the mortgage and does not always reflect who owns the real property. The deed describes the grantee or the buyer of the property.

If you are married, the property may be held as tenants by the entirety, which is a unique ownership for spouses only. If you own property with another person who is not your spouse, then the real estate will be titled either as joint tenants with right of survivorship or tenants in common. This is important to determine because tenants in common ownership passes according to your last will and testament, or through the intestacy statute if you did not write a will. Joint tenancy automatically passes to the other person named in the deed. We also need to value the contents of the property as part of your estate.

Cash accounts such as checking, savings, certificates of deposit, and money market accounts are included in your estate. Again, we need to look at the title of the asset, whether you own the account in your name alone or jointly with another person. Other investment assets such as brokerage accounts, stocks, bonds and mutual funds are like cash assets, and we need to determine how these assets are titled, as well. Also included in your estate are retirement accounts, such as IRAs, 401(k), 403(b), TSP and annuities.

Other assets include the value of your life insurance policy, vehicles and boats, and business ownership.

Everyone has an estate whether it is large with multiple accounts or a person who owns a single checking account in their name.

Planning as to who should receive the assets, when they receive the assets, and how they receive the assets is important to all clients. Whether you have a modest estate or a large estate, you need to have an estate plan.

Nicole T. Livingston is an estates and trusts attorney in Annapolis with extensive experience helping individuals and families plan for their future. Reach Livingston at 410-268-6600 or livingston@councilbaradel.com.

Pets And Divorce: Who Will Have Custody Of Rover?

By David V. Diggs, Esq., Lisa Bogan-Reohr, Esq. and Rachel B. Fabrizi

When a couple makes the heart-wrenching decision to separate, there are countless issues to address. Not too far down that daunting list, they may ask, “Who will provide a home for the family pet?” If the parties cannot come to an agreement on various issues, including pets, the court may have to make the final decision.

While perhaps antiquated, Maryland law predominantly treats pets as personal property: If divorcing couples cannot agree on who keeps the pet, the initial question is one of ownership. If the family pet is owned by one party, the inquiry ends there. The owner keeps his or her property. If the pet is jointly owned, as many are, the issues become more complicated. Ultimately, if the parties are unable to agree on the jointly titled pet, it will be sold, and the proceeds are split.

In 2010, a Calvert County judge ruled that the divorcing parties were to split custody of the family dog. His decision ordered that each party have the dog for six months at a time. The judge acknowledged that both parties loved the dog equally and that “the

only fair thing to do was give each one equal chance to share in the love of the dog.” It is noteworthy that the Prince Frederick couple consented to having the trial judge decide the “custody” of their dog. Absent such agreement, there is no mechanism under Maryland law permitting such an award.

In a 2013 New York case, the trial judge held that “a strict property analysis is neither desirable nor appropriate” for pets in a divorce case and that “the standard to be applied will be what is best for all concerned.” The judge allotted the parties a full day to “prove” not only which individual would benefit from having the dog in his or her life but also why the dog had a better chance of living, prospering, loving and being loved in the care of one spouse over the other.

As the result of a change several years ago to Maryland's domestic violence statute, a judge may order “temporary possession of any pet” in granting a protective order against an abuser. Issues related to pet custody may also be mediated by divorcing parties.

Pet custody law is similar to that related to child custody, but not as fully developed. Several factors may be considered: who bore the major responsibility of caring for the pet's need's

(feeding, walking, grooming, taking the animal for veterinary care) when the parties were together? Who spent more time interacting with the pet on a regular basis? Who paid the veterinarian bills?

When divorcing, parties may enter into a separation agreement. As part of this agreement, they may agree on who has possession and custody of a pet. They may agree to share custody. They may set up a visitation schedule, requirements for transportation, the division of costs, etc. The parties may agree upon a veterinarian and decide who will be responsible for the scheduling, transportation and payment. They should also consider laying out a process for an end-of-life decision.

If you are contemplating separation or divorce, with or without pets, you will have many questions. You should consult with an attorney who is familiar with this area of the law and who will assist you in making informed decisions. David Diggs is experienced in all facets of family law. If you need further information regarding this subject, contact us, The Law Office of David V. Diggs LLC, located at 8684 Veterans Highway, Suite 204, in Millersville. Call 410-244-1171 or email david@diggslaw.com.

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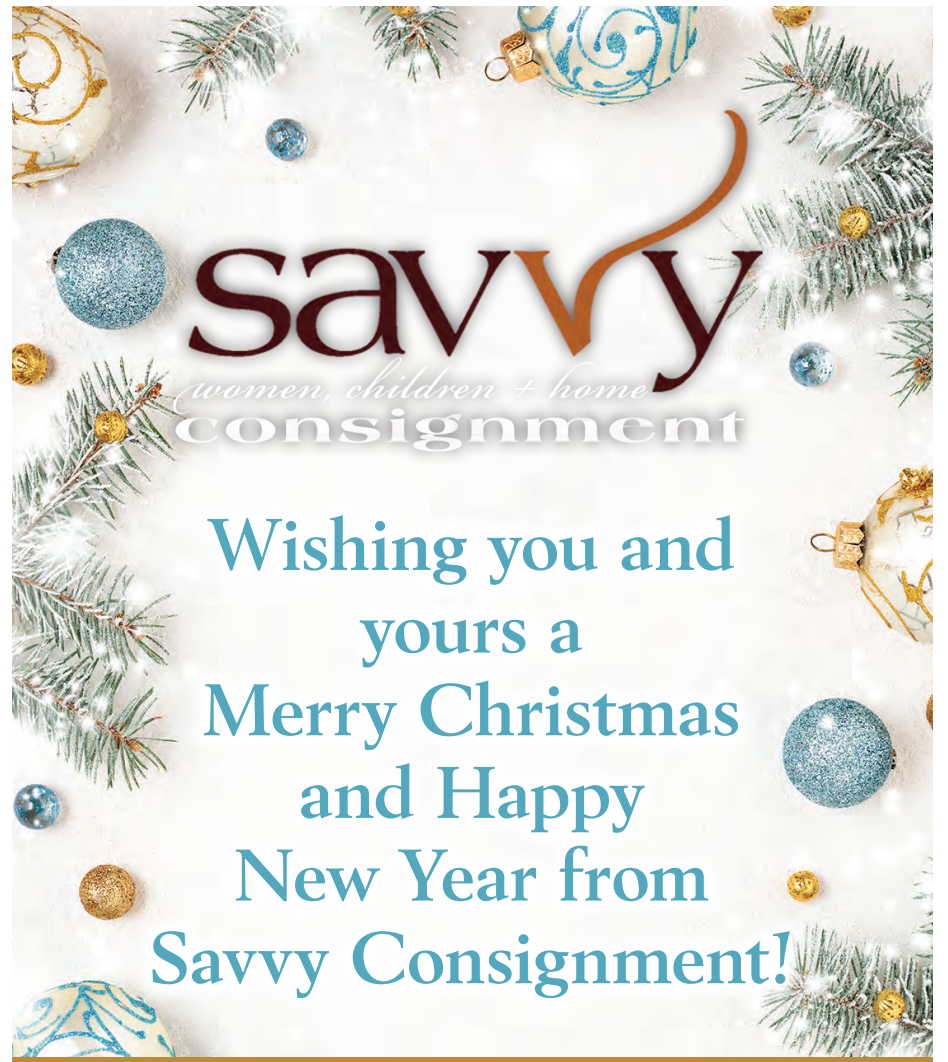
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Is Your Home Ready For An EV Charger?

Lauren Langer
Marketing
Manager
Chesapeake
Electric



Electric vehicle (EV) sales are on the rise, and more and more people are considering installing an EV charger in their home. But before you make the investment in the charger, it is important to assess if your home is ready for an EV charger to be installed.

EV chargers are classified into three categories: Level 1, Level 2 and direct current (DC) fast charging. One distinction between these three levels is the input voltage; Level 1 uses $110\frac{1}{20}$ volts, Level 2 uses $208\frac{3}{40}$ volts, and DC fast chargers use between 200 and 600 volts. Level 1 and 2 chargers are meant for residential use while DC fast chargers are typically available at commercial sites and along highways.

THINGS YOU NEED TO CONSIDER TO ENSURE YOUR HOME IS EV READY

Do you have sufficient electrical capacity?

All Level 2 electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) models on the market require substantial power, usually several times the requirements of an electric range, a central air conditioning or heat pump system. To be more precise, power is how fast energy is used or transmitted, and in the case of a Level 2 charging unit, this is a lot of power. It is especially a lot of power if you consider that the EVSE will probably be operating at the same time the range, heating, or cooling system might be operating, so you'll need to make sure that you have sufficient electrical capacity to handle the EVSE along with these other electric appliances.

Generally, charging electric vehicles can easily double or triple the overall power load of a house. And, even if the dwelling has sufficient power coming into it, it might still be necessary to upgrade the electrical distribution panel or other equipment at your home. Installing a Level 2 charging station for your electric motor might not cost anything if you already have a 14-50 outlet or could cost between \$500 to \$2,500, depending on if it will require an electrical power upgrade in order to generate enough power.

Are you plugged into your home standards?

EV chargers are available in both hardwired and plug-in versions. Some of the plug versions use the same standard plug as a cooking range (NEMA 14-50), which is not the standard plug for a dryer, which is NEMA 14-30,

and the chances are high that you probably do not have a NEMA 14-50 outlet already installed at your desired charging location, so expect to hire a licensed electrician to install a plug for your Level 2 EVSE unit, even if you have adequate power.

If you're a multiple-car family, you might want to look to the future when you install your EVSE. If you do have the available capacity, it may be a good idea to install a higher amperage circuit than what the EVSE can deliver, or what your current EV can accept. That way, in the future when you have two EVs, you won't have to upgrade the circuit or possibly add a second one.

What does your municipality require?

It's important to note that some municipalities do not permit the installation of a plug version of the Level 2 EVSE even if the charging unit is UL listed, so you should contact your municipality to find out if it allows a plug version or requires a hardwired version. There is usually an electrical inspection department, which can answer questions about specific requirements. However, some electricians will take care of all those issues for you. Ideally you should look to work with an electrician who will get the permit and the inspections set up and ensure you pass all inspections, as that is a hassle that you likely don't have the time for.

Does your panel have the load available to just add to the EV charger?

An EV charger typically uses as much if not more power than a HVAC or dryer, which can be a large strain on a panel that is already nearing its capacity limitations. To ensure you have enough power, you will likely need to have a load calculation done, which is something that is best done by a licensed and insured electrician with experience in doing this. But if you are a do-it-yourself person, you can, and there are online sources to help you do this; just keep in mind that there are serious implications if you calculate incorrectly.

Do you have a suitable location to install the charger?

If you can, install your home charger close to your electrical panel. Your electrician may need to run conduit from your panel to where you will charge, and a lot of conduits can get expensive. Installing your charger close to your garage door may make it easier to charge multiple cars, and a weatherproof charger rated for outdoor use gives you the flexibility to install indoors or outdoors depending on where you want to park. So, it is a matter of what makes most sense for you and your home.

Shop Maryland And Save For The Holidays

Peter Franchot
Maryland
Comptroller



As comptroller, I always support initiatives that strengthen our local businesses and help hard-working taxpayers keep extra cash in their pockets. More than ever due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am urging everyone to **shop Maryland and save for the holidays**. In fact, I am personally challenging everyone to commit to purchasing at least 50 percent of their holiday gifts from locally owned businesses. I personally plan to buy 100 percent locally.

Coupled with the ongoing issues with America's supply chain, there has never been a better time to grab that gift from the shelves of your local retailer while you can. And if you use your Maryland-based credit card to purchase the gift, you'll save and be rewarded even more!

Are you worried if you purchase your holiday gifts online, they may not

arrive on time? Well, shopping locally solves that dilemma. Plus, you get the bonus of personalized attention from your friends, family and neighbors who work there! When you spend your money locally, a larger percentage of that money stays right here in Maryland, building back our economy and communities.

With the holiday season upon us, there is no better time to take advantage of the abundance of great deals. I am thrilled to once again partner with Maryland credit unions that are offering fabulous incentives to shop at local businesses and save this holiday season. Each credit union is offering different rewards for its members, so check with your financial institution to see how you can save on interest rates or rack up extra reward points.

Planning your holiday feasts? Purchase your ingredients at local independent grocers like Geresbeck's, Angel's Food Market or Graul's Market. Need something special for a significant other? Splurge on something shiny and sparkling at Marc Todd Jewelers, a day of relaxation at Face It! Spa and Wellness or a gift to suit all tastes

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Celebrating Adoptions

Scott Poyer
Clerk of the
Circuit Court,
Anne Arundel
County



National Adoption Day is one of my favorite days in the courthouse. We do adoptions throughout the year, but many people may not be aware that the week before Thanksgiving each year, we designate a day to celebrate all adoptions. This year's celebration on November 18 was a private ceremony via Zoom instead of our usual public in-person celebration. But it was a celebration nonetheless, of all the children who were adopted into new, loving homes and the generosity of the parents who adopted them.

Adoption touches almost all of us in some way. In the United States, there are approximately 150,000 adoptions each year. And throughout the country, over 2 million Americans are adopted. Almost everyone knows someone who was adopted, whether it is a member of their own family, a friend, or an acquaintance. The list of notable people who have been adopted is long and includes such familiar names as Jack Nicholson, Willie Nelson, Steve McQueen,

Marilyn Monroe, John Lennon, Steve Jobs, Babe Ruth, Simone Biles, and the list goes on and on. But whether they are famous or not, the millions of adoptees in America are an important part of the fabric of our nation.

The first National Adoption Day was held in 2000, and involved a coalition of partners from nonprofit organizations, state and local agencies, and the courts. Today it is celebrated in over 400 cities and towns across the United States. To date, nearly 75,000 children in the foster system have been united with their forever families on this special day.

As many adoptions as there have been, though, the need is still there. More than 125,000 children are waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States. If you are interested in adoption, the Maryland Court System has information on the web at www.courts.state.md.us/legalhelp/family/adoption. And there is information on the People's Law Library at www.peoples-law.org/adoption. Information is also available from the Maryland State Department of Human Services at www.dhs.maryland.gov/adoption. And locally, information is available from the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services at www.annearundelfostercare.com.

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Muñoz Pledges To Bring "Dialogue Of Cooperation" To House Of Delegates

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

A law clerk, a mother of four, and now a Maryland delegate representing District 33 — Rachel Muñoz has reached every goal she has imagined so far.

Her latest aspiration became a reality in October when the Republican State Central Committee of Anne Arundel County chose her as its nominee to replace Michael Malone, who was appointed to the Anne Arundel County Circuit Court.

As she prepared to start holding office hours on November 17, Muñoz shared her priorities: "repealing tax increases that drive businesses out of Maryland, helping small businesses that create so many local jobs, improving our environment," and several others.

"Most importantly, I want to bring a new dialogue of cooperation to the issues confronting our state," she said in a statement. "It is time to stop the name-calling and the political gamesmanship so we can get things done."

Muñoz shared her background and plans during an interview with the *Voice*.

Q: You graduated from Severna Park High School and are now raising your family here. In your opinion, what makes this such a great community to live and work in?

A: I think it's really the people. We have phenomenal people here. Everyone here is so welcoming, so kind, so willing to help out their neighbors. We have a lot of extended families here, and I think you really see that in our communities, in our schools, even in our businesses. We really look out for each other and support each other, and I think that's what makes this the best place to raise a family.

Q: What does it mean to you to serve District 33?

A: Honestly, it is the honor of a lifetime to serve in my community and give back to this community that has given me and my family so much. I'm truly humbled by this opportunity and I am hustling; I have gotten to work immediately, and we're excited to try and help make a difference and make an impact here because this community, again, has given me and my family so much. And so the ability to serve and give back is such an honor.

Q: You probably had an idea of your priorities, whether it was reducing taxes or protecting



Rachel Muñoz

the environment, but did you learn anything new while knocking on doors?

A: Honestly, it has been an interesting process because I started on this path about two and a half years ago. Like you said, my priorities were taxes, supporting small businesses, public safety and education, and now that we have kind of come through the pandemic, those are still the priorities that people have at the top of their minds when I'm knocking on doors.

People are concerned about keeping our streets safe; they're concerned about inflation and taxes; and they're concerned, I think, more than ever, about the education of our children. So, I'm hearing the same things over and over again. It's been an interesting experience.

Q: With a Republican governor and a Democrat-majority General Assembly, we've seen that there can be compromise to help all Marylanders. How can you gain the needed support for your priorities?

A: I think it's actually been an inspiring process for everyone. I have supporters of my campaign and the work that I do from all across the political spectrum. My background before studying law was actually in counseling, and so communication and working with people is one of the things I love to do, and so I look forward to the challenge.

But I think at the end of the day, we all want the same things in life. We want a safe, happy place to raise our families. We want great education for our children. We all want the same things; we just have different ways of going about it, and I look forward to having those conversations and working to find common ground and win-wins for everyone.

» **Continued on page 24**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I am so pleased that Rachel Muñoz has been selected as our new delegate in District 33, replacing Michael Malone, who was recently appointed to the circuit court by Governor Hogan. She will bring new ideas and new energy to the General Assembly.

I had a chance to watch her interview. I was very impressed with her knowledge and commitment. As a mother of four, and a recent graduate of University of Maryland Law School, she understands what is at stake and how we need to preserve our freedoms and improve public safety. She has been campaigning for the House of Delegates for almost two years, so she is dedicated to serving the people of our area. We can trust her to be our voice.

Please join me in congratulating our newest delegate — Rachel Muñoz.

Amy Leahy — Severna Park

Inclusive Schools Week

December 6-10 marks the 21st anniversary of Inclusive Schools Week. During this week, school districts across the country are working to educate their staff, students, and parents about what it means to be inclusive. Inclusive is not about being politically correct. It is about making sure that our country's educational system works for all students, including students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students of low socioeconomic status, and students with disabilities.

Research has consistently demonstrated that inclusive teaching practices



es are not about teaching to the lowest common denominator but rather ensuring that the classroom offers opportunities for all children to succeed.

Inclusive teaching

means presenting information in ways that are relevant and meaningful to every student. Discussion, hands-on learning experiences, and inquiry-based projects are all

examples of inclusive teaching practices that have, again and again, been shown to improve academic achievement for all students. Education Team Allies encourages each school in the central Chesapeake region of Maryland and across the nation and globe to join us in celebrating Inclusive Schools Week and recognizing those teachers who are already making their curriculum relevant for every child. To celebrate, please visit www.inclusive-schools.org.

Beth Nolan
Co-Founder/Principal,
Education Team Allies
Information provided by
Inclusive Schools Network

Muñoz Pledges To Bring “Dialogue Of Cooperation” To House

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Q: You said you are hitting the ground running, so what do the next few weeks look like for you?

A: We have been working hard to set up our offices. We have been getting orientations on the technology the General Assembly uses. I got to sit in on my first legislation Zoom meeting for the Anne Arundel County delegation meeting. So that was livestreamed to the public and we got to hear a lot about the bond bills that are coming our way to support different nonprofits this legislative session. And so, we're excited.

We've been hearing from people in the community. We've gotten hundreds of emails from people having issues with children in schooling. I've gotten some messages from veterans, and I got some scholarship requests already, so we're definitely excited to get to work.

Q: You mentioned some of the

ways to make an impact outside of sponsoring legislation: grants for nonprofits and also scholarships. But is there anything you look forward to trying to pass this session or is the mindset more focused toward getting your feet wet and seeing how it goes?

A: There are a number of things I am excited to work on. There are some initiatives with the Anne Arundel County Farm Bureau that I am going to work on with other delegates and senators. There is actually a cool project at the Crownsville Patient Cemetery.

When I worked at the Anne Arundel County crisis response team, I worked in those old buildings, so I have seen the conditions that the patients lived in. I found out that a lot of the patients in the graves there are actually numbers; they're not given names. And so, this small group has spent 14 years finding

out the names of every patient and they're hoping to put up a memorial with everyone's names on it. That's a project I really look forward to helping with. These people deserve to have their names on their graves.

Q: You also mentioned your office hours — Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Is that during State House hours?

A: We will be there when the State House is open, but we also realize people might be working 9-to-5 jobs, and so we're going to be flexible. The way the House of Delegates building is working, you have to have an appointment to come in right now, because of COVID. So we have our email, our website, our phone number — everything is up online — so we're encouraging people to call, shoot us an email, schedule an appointment for a day and time that works best for you, and we will be there.

Q: Is there anything else you would like people to know about you or anything that might surprise people?

A: I guess the thing that is unique about me is a lot of times when I first started out, people thought, 'Well, you have so many young children. How can you do something like this?' And a lot of people know I have a law degree from the University of Maryland School of Law, but they don't realize this was a second career for me, and I actually started school with three small children. Our fourth child was born my second year of law school and ... I graduated on time, having my husband's support and the support of my children. We're all in this together.

Q: It probably takes a lot of support and patience from those around you to do such a selfless job serving the community, with all the hours and effort that it takes?

A: Yeah, but they are right there with me. We did the Severna Park Fourth of July parade this year and we went to Cape St. Claire Strawberry Festival and my kids are like, 'I want to put the candy in this bag and then we'll switch.' They're out there handing out candy; they absolutely love being in the community.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to share?

A: I'm just really excited to get to work. When I first thought about contributing in this way a couple years ago, I liked legislation and laws and being able to practically help people in our community. The campaigning part was my least favorite part of it, so I'm excited to get to work and be out in the community.

I was able to go with Senator Ed Reilly and present citations to four inspiring young men who were promoted to the rank of Eagle Scout. These types of opportunities to support the community and support the amazing work that is being done here is what I am most excited about. So, if anyone wants to reach out to the office or email, let me know what we can do, and we'll be there.

Rachel Muñoz and her husband, Andrew, are raising their four children in Severna Park. She has been active in her children's school, on her community homeowners association board, and as a board member of the Severna Park Republican Women's Club.

Contact her office at 410-841-3510 or rachel.munoz@house.state.md.us.

Celebrating Adoptions

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Here in the Anne Arundel County Circuit Court Clerk's Office, we have a small but dedicated trust and adoption department that handles adoption cases. I am proud of the work they do throughout the year helping children and families. Their behind-the-scenes work makes all the adoptions in Anne Arundel County possible. And once each year, they volunteer extra time and energy to put on a National Adoption Day celebration. One of our local traditions for National Adoption Day is putting together gift baskets for the children being adopted, and the baskets have items donated from

the staff. We don't do it because we have to; we do it to make the day a little more special for the kids and families.

If you know someone who adopted a child or helped make the adoption possible, please take some time to thank them for giving one of the most profound gifts anyone can give. And to all the adoptees and their parents out there — happy belated National Adoption Day!

Scott Poyer is the clerk of the Anne Arundel County Circuit Court. The opinions in this article are the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of the Maryland judiciary.

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I could go on and on, but my point is no matter what or who you're shopping for, you can purchase it at a local retailer or organization that supports local jobs and invests in the local economy and has the items in stock now.

So as you cross off items on those gift lists — and check it twice — make sure to **shop Maryland and save for the holidays!** I personally want to hear about how you shop Maryland and save, so email your stories and photos to me at pfranchot@marylandtaxes.gov.

Parents Rally Against AACPS BOE Restrictions

By John Singleton

On November 15, Kerry Gillespie spoke about "parental choice" at the Anne Arundel County Board of Education public session. Other than eye-rolls, she said she has received no feedback from the board members in attendance.

"The public pleas, phone calls and emails from school parents to Superintendent George Arlotto and the Board of Education have been ridiculed, belittled and admonished for months," said Gillespie, a mother of four, including a daughter at Magoth River Middle School.

Dana Schallheim, who represents District 5, disagreed with that assessment.

"I take constituent services very seriously," Schallheim said. "I often spend my nights and weekends talking to parents and teachers, and my family can attest to this. It sometimes gets in the way of family, so I find that comment unwarranted."

With acrimony spilling into the public square, it's clear that effective communication between parents and the Anne Arundel County school board has hit an all-time low. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), anxiety among teens is on the rise.

"More children have been hurt by self-harm than COVID," said Severna Park resident Chris Acton, whose son is a senior. "The social restrictions, policy flip-flops and administrative inconsistencies have placed a terrible burden of anxiety on our children."

With homecoming dances canceled, classes disrupted and asymptomatic

students quarantined, many parents believe the Anne Arundel County Board of Education is hiding behind propriety and procedures to prevent public discussion.

"The school board picks who speaks," added Lisa Smith of Severna Park. "They determine the subject matter. They cut people off when they don't like the direction of the conversation."

"By silencing parent and student voices, they are practicing a form of bullying," she continued. "Many parents and children are afraid to speak."

Some parents claim they have been blocked on social media.

"We have a right to comment about what's happening in our schools," Smith said. "Proper decisions can't be made when you're only hearing comments that you agree with. Blocking parents from social media is censorship. I have a child in the system, and I have a right for my voice to be heard."

In Anne Arundel County, only 9.4% of students 19 years of age and younger have been vaccinated according to www.aacounty.org/coronavirus. According to www.maryland.gov, 268 out of 82,777 total AACPS students have tested positive for COVID as of November 17. The state website reports zero Anne Arundel County student mortalities associated with COVID.

"The lives of our children have been turned upside down," Gillespie said. "Healthy teenagers are being treated like senior citizens with multiple comorbidities. Our schools are getting into testing, policing and segregating students,

while publicly touting 'unity days' and inclusion."

Starting on November 22, a new flurry of COVID testing was introduced for employees and student-athletes through a partnership with Capital Diagnostics.

"Medical privacy for student-athletes is out the window as they are asked to take COVID tests twice-per-week at school, disrupting their normal academic and athletic routines," Smith said. "This public display of vaccine status intensifies isolation, anxiety and bullying."

According to the CDC, an uptick in substance abuse, eating disorders and emergency room visits for attempted self-harm is being experienced across the country.

"The relationship between the school board and parents is completely dysfunctional," Acton summarized. "The lack of transparency on how decisions are made, the confusion about priorities, and the silencing of parent voices are inconsistent with an elected body supposedly established to represent the citizens of their district. This has a direct impact on the physical and mental health of our children."

Schallheim said she and her fellow board members are doing their best in a tough environment created by the pandemic.

"Every member of this board takes their job seriously, with students as the focus of our decisions," Schallheim said. "I understand people are unhappy with the restrictions, some of which are mandated by the state, but all we're trying to do is serve our students."



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All We Need For Christmas

By **Stephen Mitchell**
Trinity Bible Church

The scenes were shocking. Festive holiday lights were overshadowed by the lights of police cars and ambulances. Sights of band members and dancers bringing Christmas cheer turned into sights of people running in fear and chaos. The sounds of jubilant joy turned into shrieks of screaming as a Christmas parade in Waukesha, Wisconsin, turned into a tragedy of unimaginable horror, pain and senseless violence.

What adds to the heartbreak is that this community, not unlike our own, was coming together to find some Christmas spirit amidst the long shadow of COVID, intensifying division and polarization that has saturated our nation, economic hardship that has affected so many, a mounting mental health crisis, and a lack of neighborly love and civility that is now increasingly becoming the

norm in our society. They were looking to have something to celebrate, they were looking to find some joy after two years of hardships. They're not alone.

Have you noticed that this year, perhaps more than any previous year, more people have decided to put up Christmas decorations early? I'm personally a "one holiday at a time" kind of guy. At our home, we've always put up our decorations after Thanksgiving, yet even my wife and I gave in to the demand for Christmas early and have started listening to the holiday classics station in her car. But why?

On our social media news feeds, many of our friends have been broadcasting that they've decided to put up their holiday decorations early, and they've all had the same reason: Between COVID and everything going on around them and in their lives, they wanted something to be "merry" about for longer than the typical month. It's like we're all so worn

down and exhausted inside and just want to capture the wonder, the warmth and the joy that comes with this time of year for as long as we can.

As we get older, we care less about getting items on sale from Best Buy, Kohl's or Walmart and more about things that don't come from Amazon Prime. We are less satisfied with what the world has to offer us, and yet we continue to want, continue to buy, to date, to party, to pursue pleasure and escape, all the while remaining wanting. We want that spirit of Christmas to distract us from reality, but we continue to fail to realize that what we really need is the Christ who is the wonder of Christmas, Christ who brings the warmth of love that is far better than any Hallmark Christmas movie.

It's Christ who fills your heart with joy unspeakable that permeates your soul to such an extent that you could face tragedy, discouragement, difficulty and darkness while having an inner strength that sustains you and overflows your heart with peace when you have no nat-

ural reason to do so.

On the night he was born into our cold, cruel and broken world, the angel who appeared to the shepherds declared that there is one reason we can take heart despite the evil and hatred all around us, one reason we can have hope when all seems lost and hopeless, one reason that we can have faith in the face of fear: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a savior who is Christ, the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11).

The question each of us must ask ourselves is if we are willing to make room in our hearts for the child born in Bethlehem, because whether you realize he is the one you really want, he is the one we need.

"I don't want a lot for Christmas; there is just one thing I need." — Mariah Carey

Stephen Mitchell is the senior pastor of Trinity Bible Church in Severna Park. He also is the host of a regular podcast, "Real Christian Talk with Pastor Steve," available on all podcast platforms.

Meet The Pastor: Matthew Hanisian St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church

The Severna Park Voice is helping the community learn about the pastors at the many churches in the area. This month, we got to know Matthew Hanisian from St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church.

How long have you been at St. Martin's-in-the-Field?

I've served as the rector at St. Martin's-in-the-Field since May 2016.

When did you decide that you wanted to be a pastor?

Like a number of people who eventually hear God's call to the priesthood, I resisted that call from God for the better part of a decade. My father is an Episcopal priest, and growing up, I was asked several hundred times if I was going to be a priest like him. My answer was always an emphatic "no!" Finally, in 2006, I came to the realization that I needed to be a priest and serve God. Ever since saying "yes" to God, my life has been far greater than I could ever have asked or even imagined.

What is your favorite thing about being a pastor?

My favorite thing about being an Episcopal priest is being in relationship with so many wonderful people. On a deeper note, I feel truly blessed that people trust me to walk with them during times of great fear, pain or suffering as well as in times of great joy and happiness. Also, baptisms are always special moments in my priesthood.

How long have you been at St. Martin's-in-the-Field?

I've served as the rector at St. Martin's-in-the-Field since May 2016.



Matthew Hanisian, pictured while leading a youth pilgrimage off the coast of Caldey Island, Wales, has served at St. Martin's since 2016.

Can you tell me about a moment in your life where your faith grew?

About five years ago, I was leading a group of youth and adults on our annual, week-long Appalachia Service Project (ASP) mission trip. At one of the evening gatherings, an adult leader commented to the group that everyone in the room was there because I had introduced ASP to their churches — there were youth and adults from the Episcopal Diocese of Washington where I had served previously, and youth and adults from St. Martin's, about 120 people total. My faith grew not because of the recognition, but because I saw how many young people were learning how to put their faith into action, loving their neighbor as themselves as Jesus commands us, and seeing what real change they could make in the world by

doing so. It was truly a holy moment.

Do you cook? What is your favorite meal?

I can cook and love to cook; everything on the grill is my specialty. That said, being married to a Parisian-trained French chef means that I'm not the best cook at our house ... by a long shot.

If you're not at church or at home, where could we probably find you?

You can probably find me on a golf course, working on the rule: "one chip; two putts."

Did you pick up any quarantine projects or hobbies?

My son and I built a coal forge in our backyard, and we took up blacksmithing. We've since upgraded to a propane forge

and enjoy banging metal into all kinds of shapes, knives and implements. The best part is that we've shared this hobby with several other friends and their sons, so we have a growing community. Being a "maker" is both creative and very satisfying.

What's a fun fact about you that most people don't know?

Kurt Vonnegut and I took a stroll once, ahead of a lecture he gave at Indiana University — quite an interesting and entertaining half hour.

Do you follow sports? What is your favorite team?

I try to follow sports. My favorite two teams are the Indiana Hoosiers men's basketball team and the Cincinnati Reds, my hometown baseball team.

What is an item on your "bucket list" that you haven't checked off, but really want to?

I would like to restore a classic British convertible at some point in my life.

What is your favorite type of music to listen to?

I like to listen to a variety of music. But right now, I seem to be listening to a lot of blues: T-Bone Walker, Elmore James and John Lee Hooker primarily.

What is the best thing about St. Martin's-in-the-Field?

Of course, the best thing about St. Martin's is our parish family. But, in particular, the best thing about St. Martin's has been our ability to change and adapt how we do practically everything "church" while continuing to grow and become even more vibrant than we were before the pandemic. Truly the holy spirit is present here.

SPHS Field Hockey Claims 25th State Title With 2-0 Win

Photos by Conor Doherty

Below: Severna Park Falcons players celebrated winning the 4A state championship following their gritty 2-0 win over Winston Churchill in the finals. Right: During the title match on November 13, Delanie Abere attempted to pass the ball toward the circle.



By Conor Doherty

Severna Park field hockey climbed to the top of a familiar peak, winning their record-extending 25th state title in a 2-0 win over the Winston Churchill Bulldogs on November 13. This is their second title under head coach **Shannon Garden**, with the Falcons winning in 2019. The next closest school in terms of state titles is Pocomoke, which won its 20th this season.

Cold weather and a sizable crowd at Washington College didn't faze the Falcons, who took control of the game early and never gave it up. The Falcons' grasp on
» Continued on page 39

Photos by Zach Sparks

Left: To reach the finals, the Falcons beat Dulaney 4-1 in the state semifinals. In that game, senior Zoe Day (far left) played keep away to preserve the lead, while midfielder Gen Mullervy played stellar defense and added a score.



Bruin Girls Soccer Falls Just Short With Loss In State Final

By Madeleine Stern

The Broadneck Bruins were nearly perfect during the fall 2021 season, but despite being nearly perfect, they fell just short of achieving their ultimate goal.

The Walt Whitman Vikings beat the Bruins 2-1 on November 20 in the 4A MPSSAA girls soccer championship. The game at Loyola University marked the fourth and fifth state tournament appearances for the Bruins and Vikings, respectively. Both teams had impressive records. The Bruins had an undefeated season until the final game with a record of 17-0-1 and the Vikings had a strong record of their own, 14-2-1.

The game was evenly matched at the outset, with both teams showing agility and aggression, but momentum shifted in Walt Whitman's favor after the Vikings scored an early goal.

"The first five or 10 minutes, we always want to score that first goal because that's how we play," said Walt Whitman senior forward **Delaney DeMartino**. "Every time we get that



Photo courtesy of Dennis McGinley

The Bruins had an undefeated season until the final game with a record of 17-0-1. At the state final, they cherished the moment.

first goal, we have a good feeling."

In the seventh minute, freshman defender **Evelyn Javers** sent a through ball upfield to sophomore forward

Gemma Davitian. Davitian's shot to the bottom right corner of the goal was outside the reach of Broadneck senior goalkeeper **Mason Smargissi**,

and the Vikings went up 1-0.

"I don't remember much," Davitian said. "I took one touch. I didn't even
» Continued on page 36

STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

Kate Murphy

St. Martin's Cross Country

By Conor Doherty

It's impressive to see what Kate Murphy has done in her first year ever participating in cross country. Running for St. Martin's-in-the-Field, she has finished second in every race she has run this season. This wasn't the first time she had taken up a running sport, though. In fourth grade, Murphy tried track and field but felt it wasn't for her.

"I've always enjoyed running throughout elementary school and I just needed something to do after school," she said. "I decided to give it a try and if I didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't do it next year, but I really got hooked on it."

Despite this being her first year doing cross country and being the only eighth-grade female runner, Murphy has already taken a leadership role on her school's cross country team. She sees her leadership style as being a combination of leading by example and being a moral and support leader for her fellow runners.

Beyond just running, Murphy enjoys how it is both an individual and team-oriented sport. "Before each race, we would get in a group and everyone goes around and says what their goal is for the race that day," said Murphy. "Cross country, you're moving around a lot, it goes by quickly and your teammates are very supportive."

Next year, Murphy will run for the Severna Park Falcons cross country team. "I'm



Despite this being her first year doing cross country and being the only eighth-grade female runner, Kate Murphy has already taken a leadership role.

“

No matter how fast you run, it's your personal goal that matters. You could get last place, but as long as you did better than your last race, it still counts as a great job.”

— KATE MURPHY

looking forward to it," she said. "I wanted to run more, and going into high school, even though it might be a challenge or more difficult, I think that it'll be good for me because it is a challenge and I like to do things where I have to push myself to do them and work for it."

Murphy thinks doing cross country beyond high school might be possible, but even if she doesn't continue past that level, running will still be a part of her life moving forward.

And for those who are thinking of joining cross country, Murphy says to just do it. "Go ahead and sign up and do it," she stated. "If you really don't like it, you can just do it for that season. You're putting in effort and you're trying to be there for your teammates, knowing that they are there to support you no matter how fast you run."

"No matter how fast you run, it's your personal goal that matters," she said. "You could get last place, but as long as you did better than your last race, it still counts as a great job."

In partnership with The Matt Wyble Team of Century 21, the Voice's Student-Athlete of the Month series recognizes the many student-athletes in our area who make an impact not necessarily by way of statistics or stardom, but by their unique contributions. Contact Zach Sparks at zach@severnaparkvoice.com to nominate a young person in our community making a positive impact through sports.

Student-Athlete of the Month

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From SP To Navy: Brothers Carry On Competitive Spirit



In his first season with Navy this year, Charlie Kriel finished with seven points on three goals and one assist along with recording six shots, five being on goal.

By Conor Doherty

When deciding what university they wanted to go to, Sam and Charlie Kriel planned on not looking far. The Naval Academy had always been their first choice. For the brothers, both of whom played on the Severna Park boys soccer team, the decision wasn't always about extending their playing careers, but rather, what the Naval Academy symbolizes.

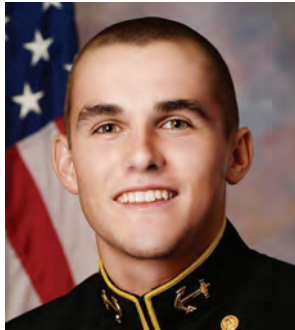
"The Naval Academy has been a part of our entire life, growing up in Severna Park," said Sam, a junior at Navy. "Seeing the personality traits of midshipmen from an outside perspective, the way they would hold themselves, I think that was really inspiring to me at a younger age. I looked up to that. They were very mature, respectful people and I'd never met a midshipman who I didn't look up to."

The Naval Academy is known for placing high expectations on its midshipmen with regards to academics and how midshipmen carry themselves, but that hasn't stopped Sam and Charlie from carrying on their sibling competitiveness.

"Playing together, it's the same competitive nature as if we were playing games at home," Sam said.

Charlie, a freshman, added, "The only thing that's changing throughout the years is where we are playing each other. Whether it's our front yard, or at the high school fields during practice or now to here, one thing that is consistent is we are together and it's always nice seeing a familiar face in the locker room or around campus."

While playing soccer is a passion the brothers share, they see it as an addition to what they are trying to achieve while attending the academy. "Soccer is a bonus of being here, but also knowing that you're not going to go any further than here might hurt some people in the way that they play," Sam stated. "It's different being here. Even though you might



Sam Kriel



Charlie Kriel

not pursue a professional career, the competitive level of this place really pushes you every day."

That's why, when Charlie started his journey at Navy, Sam offered some advice to help his younger brother be better prepared, advice that anyone thinking

of attending the Naval Academy can use.

"Do what you're told, nothing more, nothing less," Sam said. "A lot of people overthink things that they are told and it's usually something very simple, so I was able to find success, doing specifically what I was told, not having to go over the moon for someone but also not underperforming."

Charlie is grateful to have his older brother as a mentor, letting him know what to expect and how to get through the difficulties of being a midshipman.

"Having someone who has already gone through what I'm experiencing has helped out more than I could have imagined," Charlie said. "It's also helped me, not blend in, but never be a worry for the upperclassmen who are leading me. They know they're always going to get the best out of you. I haven't second-guessed or questioned anything I've heard from him."

Bruins' Season Ends With Heartbreaking 43-36 State Quarterfinals Loss

By Conor Doherty

As the football fell harmlessly to the ground, Bruins players looked stunned and the opposing sideline erupted in celebration. Playing in the state quarterfinals against the Charles Herbert Flowers (C.H. Flowers) Jaguars, the Bruins lost 43-36 in overtime, coming up six yards short of extending the game to another overtime period.

Both teams took a while to get going as the first quarter came and went without either of them getting on the board. But the second quarter brought an offensive explosion as both teams began to find their rhythm. The Bruins got the scoring going on a 1-yard touchdown on 4th-and-goal early in the second quarter. After forcing a punt, the Bruins struck again, needing just one play for senior running back **Davion White** to run 55 yards to double their lead. The Jaguars then responded with a 52-yard rushing touchdown to cut the lead to 14-6 with a missed extra point throw in.

After the Bruins drove 69 yards in just four plays to extend their lead to 21-6, the Jags had their own long drive of 70 yards as they scored on a 21-yard touchdown run, punctuated by a Bruins defender getting run over by the Jaguars running back on the play. The Jags two-point attempt didn't succeed, leaving the score at 21-12. And on their ensuing drive, Bruins senior quarterback **Josh Ehrlich** connected with a wide-open **Eli Harris** on a 51-yard touchdown pass to take a 28-12 lead into halftime. Altogether, the teams scored six touchdowns on six consecutive drives with nearly 400 yards of offense between the teams on those drives.

"We did not think we were the underdogs coming into this game," said Bruins head coach **Rob Harris**. "As good as the execution was in the first half, it was just as bad in the third quarter."

The bad execution Harris referred to was the offense stalling in the third quarter and two badly shanked punts, one of which traveled 13 yards and the other just six yards. Both punts set up the Jags inside the Bruins' 35-yard line and they were able to turn those mistakes into touchdowns, cutting the Bruins' lead to two points, 28-26, entering the fourth quarter.

For most of the second half, Ehrlich looked rushed and was forcing bad throws, none worse than the pick he threw as the Bruins were driving inside the Jaguars' 30 yard line. The Jags drove down the field on the ensuing drive and took a 33-28 lead. But Ehrlich responded, moving the Bruins down the field to retake the lead at 36-33.

"Coach was able to calm me down and we were able to get into the end zone," Ehrlich said.

The Jaguars were then able to get into field goal range, making a 22-yard field goal to tie the game. After scoring on a six-yard touchdown in overtime, the Jaguars stopped the Bruins from extending the game, sending them onto the semifinals and leaving the Bruins lamenting what could have been.

"It was a pleasure to be their coach," Harris said. "Enjoy the journey; this moment was tough for them. But the journey to that last play is what makes it special."

"It was a pleasure to be their coach. Enjoy the journey; this moment was tough for them. But the journey to that last play is what makes it special."

— **ROB HARRIS**
BHS BRUINS HEAD FOOTBALL COACH



Photos courtesy of Karen McCassie

Kyle Pierce scored a touchdown for the Bruins despite tight coverage from the C.H. Flowers secondary.



Broadneck's Davion White rushed for a 55-yard touchdown against Charles Herbert Flowers High School in the state quarterfinals.



Photo by Conor Doherty

Nathan Levicki avoided a tackle at the goal line to score a go-ahead touchdown.

Hornets 14U Second Team Ends Season With Championship

The Green Hornets 14U second team's undefeated season culminated with a 16-6 victory over the Southern Bulldogs in the championship game.

By Conor Doherty

The Green Hornets 14U second team won the 14U Central championship this fall, beating the Southern Bulldogs 16-6. For head coach Roy Bowerman, it was a title four years in the making. Bowerman had coached some of the same kids for the previous four years, having moved up to the next age group to keep coaching them each year. About six of the kids he started out coaching stuck with him all through the past seasons, with Bowerman calling them his OG (original) kids.

"The kids believed in the process, themselves and each other," Bowerman said. "One of my OG kids, who had been with me from the beginning, came to me as we subbed him



in with about a minute left in the championship and said, 'Coach, it took us four years, but we got here!' And gave me a big hug. That is what it is all about."

Bowerman will miss his team's camaraderie. "I hope that they remember that hard work and dedication produce results," Bowerman said. "They were dedicated to their

football family, and they worked hard each and every week."

Bowerman's team finished 9-0 on the season and scored 209 points while giving up just 18.

Despite Tough Ending, SPHS Reached New Heights In 2021



Photo by Conor Doherty

After the loss to North Point, several Severna Park seniors cherished the moment with head coach Mike Wright. Seniors included (l-r) Harry Lentz, Kyle Jones, James Henson III, Aiden Milewski, Alex McLain and (kneeling) Ashton Ferrer-White, Matt Marcantoni, Joe DeSimone and (forefront) Nate Brand.

By Conor Doherty

As the clock wound down on a frustrating 28-0 playoff loss to the North Point Eagles on November 12, a group of Severna Park players huddled together away from the rest of the team. They were members of the starting defense, consoling and lamenting what could have been but also congratulating one another for the kind of season many fans hadn't seen in a long time.

The Falcons finished 6-3 this season,

their first season finishing above .500 since 2011. They made the playoffs for the first time since 2008 and hosted their first playoff game since 2006. It was a great season for the team, which at times, looked dominant and at other times, got dominated themselves. Against North Point, the latter was true as the Falcons couldn't keep up with the Eagles' speed and agility, with North Point running backs continuously gashing the Falcons. The Eagles used that advantage, and the Falcons

own offensive issues, to score on their first three drives to take a 21-0 lead less than halfway through the second quarter.

From there, offense was hard to manufacture. Toward the end of the first half, both offenses got sloppy with the ball, with each throwing two interceptions in a span of four combined drives. In the second half, the Falcons defense played much better, but the offense couldn't get any momentum going as the Falcons threw five picks.

While the game didn't go the Falcons' way, head coach **Mike Wright** was glad to see the Falcons succeed this season after struggling for so long.

"I coached most of these players with success in JV," Wright said. "So, to finally be a part of the turnaround and see those graduated players that always worked hard and just came up short smiling on the sideline or reaching out to me excited about the future and this team is very rewarding."

Junior **Talan Livingston** was positive despite the loss.

"We're coming off a really good season, so next year, we definitely have something to work toward," Livingston said. "We have a ton of juniors coming back and I'm excited for that, but I'm definitely going to miss all the seniors. I've been playing with them since my freshman year. They're all just my boys."

For Wright, the goals for next season haven't changed due to this season's success. "Every season and team are far different to each other, but building from youth has proven to help us develop," he stated. "The mindset still has to be to overachieve, be competitive in every game and win. Everything will fall into place if that happens."

Winter Jam Basketball Tournament Is Back



Severna Park High School will host the fifth annual high school basketball tournament on Wednesday, December 29, and Thursday, December 30. This family-friendly event includes JV and varsity high school athletes from Severna Park, Annapolis Area Christian School, Old Mill, South River, Glen Burnie, Chesapeake, Wilde Lake, St. Mary's, Northeast and Atholton. Game times both days will be 9:00am, 10:45am, 12:30pm, 2:15pm, 4:00pm and 5:45pm. Daily admission will be \$5 cash, good for one full day. Concessions will be available during the event. For more information, visit www.severnaparkathletics.org.



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Women's 55-Plus Tennis Team Takes Third In National Tourney

By Lauren Burke Meyer

For Joy Epstein and Jennifer McGowan — co-captains of their United States Tennis Association (USTA) Mid-Atlantic Women's 55-plus 6.0 team — age is but a number. Their team placed third in the USTA League's 2021 national championship, beating the USTA Southwest Central Arizona 6.0 women's team.

"All of the players on our team are at least 55," McGowan said. "The average age was at least 60 years plus, and that's all I will divulge."

Taking up tennis in their mid-40s, Epstein and McGowan have both played tennis for about 15 years.

"Annapolis has a diverse group of players, and we were just lucky to all come together," McGowan said.

Their road to nationals began by winning locally in Anne Arundel County this past summer. In September, the Mid-Atlantic Women's 55-plus 6.0 team went to the Newport News sectional tournament, competing against teams from Virginia and Maryland before qualifying to compete at the USTA national championship tournament.

"A total of 15 sectional teams competed for the honor of placing in the



(L-R) The team included Kaye Witting, Becky Pugh, Perri O'Keefe, Lynne Powell, Cyndi Hargrove, Joy Epstein, Jennifer McGowan, Roberta Watts, Martha Van Cleve, Beth Jacobson and Jade Moore.

top four ranking teams from across the country," Epstein said. "Mid-Atlantic is the section that our team represented, which includes Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia."

Since they ranked fourth overall at the end of the second day of competition, they had the honor of competing in the semifinals and finals, coming in

third after the final match. The national tournament took place on October 29-31 in Orlando, Florida.

Once at nationals, McGowan said, "Competition was tough, playing against the top teams in each of the USTA sections."

When asked about their strategy, McGowan answered with three words:

"practice, practice, practice." She added the importance of being "flexible and focused on the team goals."

Epstein and McGowan's team practiced at several tennis courts in Anne Arundel County and look forward to being able to practice at the new tennis facility in Millersville when it's completed.

"Our team enlisted the help of Cathy Officer, who is a varsity boys and girls coach at Severn School," Epstein said. "Cathy helped us to practice drills together as a team and helped get us ready for the two tournaments we competed at."

Congratulations to Epstein and McGowan, along with their fellow USTA Mid-Atlantic team members: Martha Van Cleve, Elizabeth Jacobson, Lynne Powell, Virginia Umberger, Perri O'Keefe, Kaye Witting, Rebecca Pugh, Cyndi Hargrove, Loren Barnett, Jade Moore and Roberta Watts.

"Several of our team members had the privilege of also competing at the national level in 2019. We hope to be at nationals again next year," McGowan said.

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Bruin Girls Soccer Falls Just Short

» Continued from page 29

look at the goal. I had no idea where the goalkeeper was or anything. I just kicked it and then I heard everybody go crazy.”

Both teams had a series of corner kicks and drives downfield. Neither was able to find the back of the net for the rest of the first half, but Walt Whitman came close in the 31st minute. A shot by **Delaney DeMartino** hit the top right corner of the goal post. The ball deflected to the feet of her sister, sophomore forward **Riley DeMartino**, who shot the ball over the net. The play was an omen for the persistent offensive attacks Broadneck’s defense would face in the second half.

“Honestly, first half we were a little bit flat. Our shape could have been better,” Broadneck senior defender **Carly Johnston** said. “We were told from the very start that their forwards were good. They were. They were really good, really fast, really technical.

“I think after halftime, we came together and we were able to hold the line, but they would catch us on these breaks and they capitalized.”

In the 55th minute of the game, Walt Whitman nearly scored again, putting together a string of passes similar to the play that preceded their first goal. A through ball to Riley DeMartino left her one-on-one with Smargissi, but Smargissi ran out and grabbed the ball from DeMartino to end the scoring opportunity.

Pressure from the Vikings continued, and they scored their second goal of the night in the 58th minute. A direct kick sent players charging into the penalty box. Walt Whitman’s Javers was able to gain possession, control the ball, and send it into the bottom left corner of the goal.

“Everyone was around the ball. I knew I had a good pass right to the goal and it did end up poking out, so I got the goal, and it was really exciting,” Javers said. “I was really nervous for a second that it wasn’t going to go in, but it did.”

The Bruins also took a hit in the 61st minute when team captain and season leading goal-scorer **Éva Mowery** went down with a knee injury. Mowery needed help getting off the field and did not return for the rest of the game. She later reported feeling her knee shift and hearing a crack.

Being down was uncommon for the Bruins, but not unheard of. In an away game against Crofton High School on September 21, Broadneck trailed by two points, but ended up tying the game 2-2.

“In Crofton, it was our first time really being down and we kind of lost hope,” junior defender **Lilly Kelley** said. “We didn’t know how to fight. As the season went on, we had harder games, and as a team we learned how to keep going and not lose hope.”

Although down 2-0 in the 4A championship, Broadneck would not quit. Junior forward **Sadie Wilkinson** gave the Bruins a fighting chance with a goal in the 76th minute. In a solo effort, Wilkinson beat several defenders with her speed and footwork, giving herself space to shoot a



Photo courtesy of Dennis McGinley

With four minutes left in the game, Broadneck’s intensity and energy increased, demonstrating the grit of the team that nearly went undefeated this season.

ball over the head of junior goalkeeper **Sophia Mays**.

“When I scored, we felt more motivated and we felt that we could actually get back into it,” Wilkinson said. “Those minutes after, we were trying really hard to get that tying goal.”

With four minutes left in the game, Broadneck’s intensity and energy increased, demonstrating the grit of the team that was instilled in them the moment they became Bruin soccer players.

“They’ve just got that fighting mentality,” Broadneck head coach **John Camm** said. “It’s the mindset of the group. It’s the culture of the program, and these kids have embraced it and they’ve actually expanded on it.”

Unlike the Crofton game and despite renewed vitality, the Bruins were unable to tie the score and the Vikings left Loyola University as state champions.

The loss marks a sad end to an impressive season for Broadneck, but the Bruins are proud of their work nonetheless.

“When things weren’t always going our way tonight, we still hung in there, still fought, still played right down to the end, created some chances, got a really nice goal at the end,” Camm said. “Just a tough way to wrap up the season.”

Mowery was proud of how everyone played, and she said every player has grown “mentally and skill-wise.”

“From the start, our goal was to get to states and be able to play here at Loyola and I think we just kept that same mentality through the whole season,” Mowery said. “We worked hard every practice, every game, and I think it paid off.”



SPHS Boys Soccer Ends One Step Away From State Finals

By **Conor Doherty**

The game and their season was over in a flash, a stunning strike of a goal sending the Falcons home on November 13, sooner than they hoped. The goal gave Northwestern a 2-1 win, advancing them to the state finals, while leaving the Falcons looking back on a great season that they wanted to extend.

The Falcons finished 15-2-1 this season, having utilized their great defense to keep teams at bay. Prior to the state semifinal game, the Falcons had held their opponents scoreless in six of their previous seven games. On the season, the most goals given up by the Falcons was three, in a game against Broadneck in which the Falcons were starting a freshman goalkeeper due to injury.

“As the season went by, the backline strongly improved,” said senior goalkeeper **Brandon Asch**. “Our desire for the second-chance balls and in the air were phenomenal and I couldn’t be prouder of how many clean sheets we had this season.”

Last year, the Falcons played just five games in a spring season shortened due to



Photo courtesy of Christopher Fincham Photography
Despite stellar play from their defense and goalkeeper Brandon Asch, Severna Park lost 2-1 to Northwestern in the state semifinals.

the pandemic. Thus, this season was more important to many of the players.

“It meant the world to be given an opportunity to play a full season,” Asch said. “Not having a full season last year truly made me cherish every little moment this year with the team.”

As the season progressed, head coach **Ryan Parisi** saw what it meant to his players to be able to have another full season.

“It was incredible to be able to have a

full season for the kids,” Parisi said. “As the season went on, our team’s togetherness and desire to play for one another always put us in a position to compete.”

Now that the season has ended, the Falcons will have to overcome the loss of graduating seniors. That means replacing team leaders like **Gus Bachmann** and Asch. But Parisi isn’t worried.

“Every year, our senior leaders take great pride in developing the underclassmen,” he said. “That way, they can set the

program up to have continued success.”

For Asch, it will be tough moving on as he prepares for college, but the seniors will always have the memories of their time with the Falcons.

“Out of all of my years playing competitive soccer, I’ve never experienced an atmosphere like it,” Asch stated. “Kids in the stands cheering your name, coming to school dressed up in suits and ties, is something special and I don’t even know if the college level will be the same.”

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SPHS Claims 25th State Title

» Continued from page 29

the game first took hold on their second corner attempt when senior **Bekah Mayron** received a corner insert pass at the top of the circle. Mayron then passed it back to the inserter, fellow senior **Delanie Abere**, for the opening goal less than six minutes into the game.

Playing with the lead, the Falcons defense became a wall that Churchill was rarely able to get past. The Bulldogs could not capitalize off the handful of corner attempts that they got and only challenged Falcons goalkeeper **Charlotte Kramer** once as she had to make just one save the entire game.

The second half was eerily like the first as the Falcons added to their lead less than five minutes into the third quarter off a corner attempt. **Ava Drexler-Amey** received the insert pass and took a straight shot into the lower left corner of the goal.

“The second goal really gave us more confidence; it really gave us a boost,” Drexler-Amey said. “Knowing we had the lead, all we had to do was keep finishing to the end.”

With the win seemingly in hand and the defense never giving the Bulldogs any good chances to get a shot off, coach Garden subbed out Kramer late in the game to give senior goalkeeper **Sarah Krause** a curtain-call in her final high school game.

“This team, for this year, I think

we had the best defense that I’ve ever had,” Garden stated. “Our defense definitely got us to this point, and I’m sure won us this game. It’s a stellar backfield and a stellar goalkeeper.”

The Falcons’ defense was so good all season long that, aside from one game, they never gave up more than one goal in a game. And Garden said that unlike in past seasons, they didn’t have a consistent go-to goal scorer that the team could rely upon and build their offensive game plan around. Instead, as was apparent versus the Bulldogs, the Falcons utilized their defense to stop the opponent and quickly counterattack, which often led to opportunities at the offensive end of the field. Several corner attempts came about because the Falcons were able to quickly move the ball down the field, as defenders like **Zoe Day** turned defense into offense.

For Garden, it meant a lot to see her team win a championship after not having a season last year.

“I had some girls who were on JV last year and they really wanted a chance to come and play in a state championship,” Garden said. “They’ve seen, so many times, the history and tradition of winning and winning and winning, and they wanted their turn and they worked really hard to get here. So, I’m really happy that they have been able to experience this.”

Killer Whales Enjoy Strong Season



The seventh- and eighth-grade SP Killer Whales finished a 9-1-1 season this fall. The team included (l-r, top row) Ivory Bauer, Josie Gardner, Sol Cingolani, Regan Graves, Jaidyn Railsback, Anya Diggs and Isla Crawford and (l-r, second row) Scarlett Wissel, Julie Pumphrey, Zoey Stafford, Caitlin Kuvinka, Jocelyn Renn, Lauren Schuller, Breanna Foreman, Marissa Scott and Linnia Warner.

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Larry Sells Celebrates 20 Years As The Voice Of The Falcons

By Haley Weisgerber

It was an ordinary night for Larry Sells in the Severna Park High School press box on October 22 when he was called down to the field for an emergency by the athletic booster president, Kate Elliott, and former president, Patrick Kilpatrick. When he arrived at the gate, he was pulled onto the field and congratulated over the loudspeaker for completing his 20th season as the announcer for the Severna Park Falcons football team.

"That was such a shock to me," Sells said. "I couldn't believe it."

Sells volunteered to become the announcer in 2001 at a preseason football picnic. At the time, his sons, Tommy and David, were involved in the football program and Sells had experience in broadcast media, so he thought it would be fun. Twenty years later, all of Sells' children have graduated and he has continued to announce simply because he loves doing it.

"I'm on the 50-yard line," Sells said. "When it's cold, it's heated there. When it's hot, it's air conditioned there. When it's raining, I'm dry. What's not to like?"

The community has rallied around Sells as the voice of the Falcons. Many people have even told Sells that they know it's football season when they hear his signature saying, "That's another Falcons first down." The saying originates from a tough season where the Falcons were playing teams with almost undefeated records. He wanted



This marks the 20th season Larry Sells has been the voice of the Falcons football and baseball teams.

to find a way to involve the crowd.

"I wanted to try to give some energy when they did something good," Sells said. "And that's how that started. The crowd would roar."

Sells said he is not in the box alone. Over the years, he has had a series of spotters who stand in the box with him, including Dave Ferris, Cynthia Price and Leo Latonick. This football season, Severna Park varsity baseball coach Eric Milton was his second pair of eyes.

"There's a flow of information, but there's a pattern to it," Sells said.

"I have the ball and Eric has the tacklers."

Sells said he has seen a lot of improvements over the years in not only the football program but the field as well. Before the old field was demolished during the school's construction, Sells recalled the unfortunate placement of his press box.

"The press box on the old field was on the visitor side, so I was in enemy territory," Sells said. "I've got that saying and the opposing team did not always get so excited."

Before the new field was ready in 2018, Sells announced for Severna Park at other county schools.

After a tough 2020 season, Sells said it was great to be back for this season, especially because the Falcons made a historic playoff run.

"The last time they were in the playoffs was 2008," Sells said. "That was the year they beat Old Mill in a playoff game. My son was on that team."

While all of Sells' memories are positive at Severna Park, playoff seasons are by far his favorite.

"Playoffs are the best," Sells said. "Those are the best memories, and you know, just watching the team come together and stuff is my favorite thing."

In the spring, Sells will also celebrate his 20th season announcing for Severna Park baseball. One of the proudest moments of Sells' announcing career is watching Jackson Merrill, who was drafted with the 27th overall pick in the 2021 Major League Base-

ball draft by the San Diego Padres, throughout his high school career.

"Jackson Merrill was unlike anything I've ever seen," Sells said. "Severna Park High School was like a minor league baseball park. There were at least 40 pro scouts at every game."

Other special memories include watching his son play and celebrating many playoff runs with the baseball team.

"I was announcing in 2003 when Severna Park won their first ever school state championship in baseball in 2003," Sells said. "My son was on the team."

Aside from announcing, Sells has been working with the athletic boosters for years. He was the president from 2005 to 2009, he was inducted into the Severna Park High School Athletic Hall of Fame, and he currently is on the board and uses his sales expertise to secure sponsorships for the boosters. He has even stepped in to announce field hockey and basketball games when requested. Sells said he has no plan to stop announcing or working with the athletic boosters. As long as they will have him and he enjoys doing it, he will be in the press box supporting the Falcons every step of the way.

"I'm pretty sure it's appreciated because I hear from everybody that they're glad that I do what I do," Sells said. "And it's nice to hear when people say, 'Hey, here comes the voice of the Falcons.'"

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Arlotto Announces Upcoming Departure From School System

Superintendent George Arlotto announced on December 2 that he will leave Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) when his contract expires at the end of June.

In a letter to AACPS employees, families and the community at large, Dr. Arlotto said although he would have preferred to remain as superintendent, the Anne Arundel County Board of Education has informed him it will not offer a third contract.

“This decision is one of the most important and unique for a Board of Education, as hiring a superintendent is solely in its purview,” Arlotto wrote. “I have every intention to continue my work on behalf of our students and school system until my contract expires at the end of June. I wish our board, our awesome staff, our families and the Anne Arundel community only the best as you move forward, collectively, to support, nurture and love our students.”

Arlotto arrived in AACPS in 2006 after teaching and serving as a high school administrator in Virginia, the District of Columbia Public Schools, and Montgomery County Public Schools. As a member of the superintendent’s senior and executive staffs



Dr. George Arlotto visited students at Lothian Elementary School in September.

from 2006 through June 2014, Arlotto held roles as director of high schools; chief school performance officer; assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and school performance; associate superintendent; and chief of staff.

The Board of Education appointed Arlotto to a four-year term as superintendent of schools — a term that began on July 1, 2014 — and reappointed him to a second four-year term that

began on July 1, 2018.

“While I may not know where life’s journey will take me next, I am certain that AACPS will continue to thrive,” Arlotto wrote in his letter. “As a school system focused on the needs of students, orchestrated by thoughtful, caring, compassionate, talented and professional educators and staff, our students will continue to grow and succeed.”

In a joint statement, the Board of

“

Though the board has decided that it is time for a new leader to bring different experiences and vision to AACPS, we recognize the impact Dr. Arlotto has made in his eight years as superintendent.”

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JOINT STATEMENT

Education members wrote that they will engage in a nationwide search for a superintendent who will be tasked with implementing the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future; new, healthier start times for all students; and measures to support students and staff post-pandemic.

“Though the board has decided that it is time for a new leader to bring different experiences and vision to AACPS, we recognize the impact Dr. Arlotto has made in his eight years as superintendent,” they wrote. “We wish him all the best in his future endeavors and know that his experience and leadership will be a great benefit to his next organization.”

Bus Driver Goes The Extra Mile During Shortage



Kensington resident Bill Lippincott has gone from part-time bus driver to full-time driver so more kids can get to school and come home on time.

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Each morning, parents wake up and wonder if they will get a text or email notifying them about a bus delay. Wondering if their children will be stranded on a sidewalk.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) addressed the national bus driver shortage at a September Board of Education meeting.

“While the reasons are many, the facts remain that our shortages represent 9 percent of our driver workforce, about 60 bus drivers, which is in line

with the 10 to 15 percent shortage that has been widely reported in the press nationally within the news,” said AACPS Chief Operating Officer Alex Szachnowicz.

Often bearing the brunt of parents’ frustration are the current bus drivers who have not quit and who have covered extra routes and accepted unwanted shifts because they want to help kids get to school.

One of those drivers is Bill Lippincott from Severna Park. A driver for Fay’s Bus Service in Pasadena, he drove students to field trips and sports games prior to the pandemic. Now he’s working full-time, shuttling kids to Chesapeake High School, Chesapeake Middle School, Fort Smallwood Elementary and even as far as Reisterstown because some special needs students from Anne Arundel County attend schools outside the area.

“I’ve been with Fay’s close to 20 years,” Lippincott said. “We were three drivers short and they asked if I could do more.”

He said yes, without hesitation. But now the company is seven drivers short.

Fay’s is just one of several bus contractors used by AACPS. Lippincott estimated that 75 percent of the bus drivers who work for Fay’s are retired.

“Some of [the drivers] are retired and only want to do trips here and

» Continued on page 46

SPHS’ “Freaky Friday” Delivers Laughs And Heartfelt Lessons

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Teenager Ellie Blake and her mom, Katherine, can’t seem to understand each other, but on a strange Friday, the two swap bodies and are forced to walk in each other’s shoes, literally. Thus begins a series of events that unfolds in Disney’s “Freaky Friday,” the Severna Park High School

fall theater production, which opened November 12.

Parijita Bastola (Ellie) and Gianna Dicks (Katherine) did a commendable job of balancing their dual roles as both the adult Katherine and teenage Ellie, bringing humor and emotion to the show, along with stunning vocal chops.

“All of the music in the shows that we do at the high school have been old-timey or something magical,” Bastola said. “This was very true to real life.”

Dicks said she could not pass up a role in “Freaky Friday,” with its inter-

» Continued on page 46

Photo by Zach Sparks
Parijita Bastola (left) and Gianna Dicks starred as a mother and daughter who swap bodies in Severna Park High School’s production of Disney’s “Freaky Friday.”



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Q

Question of the month

Each month, the *Severna Park Voice* poses a question to a local fifth-grade class. This month, students from Ms. Klug's class at Oak Hill Elementary School answered the question:

What is your favorite thing about the holidays and why?

My favorite thing about the holidays is that there is football on all day.

Sebastian Boyle

The celebrations! I love parties and family time, and how holidays bring family together. I love the scare on Halloween, and the egg hunt on Easter.

Madison Bullock

My favorite thing about the holidays is celebrating with my family. Every year, we go and see my grandparents for a second Christmas because we just bring ourselves, where if they come up, my aunt, uncle and cousins also have to come up. I like spending the eight nights of Hanukkah with my family and my Grammy. Each night, one of my siblings takes turns to light all the candles with the shamash candle. Then we open up presents and we have a yummy dessert. On Christmas Eve, we put out cookies with eggnog and sprinkle magic dust in the yard at night for the reindeer. We leave lots of carrots for the reindeer on a special plate with the cookies near our fireplace.

Sabrina Calish

During the holidays, everyone can feel together and ignore their differences and just feel joy. If you're female or male, black or white, gay or straight, rich or poor, everyone can feel welcome. During Thanksgiving, everyone can sit down together and feel happiness while digging into delicious foods. During Christmas, you can all run down the stairs and see what presents Santa brought. On New Year's, families can stay up, watching the ball drop. Although, during the holidays, Santa brings you great presents, and your family brings you great food, the most important things that the holidays bring is togetherness and joy.

Molly Christesen

My favorite thing about the holidays is not having school.

Oak Hill Elementary School



Students from Ms. Klug's class at Oak Hill Elementary School answered the question, "What is your favorite thing about the holidays and why?"

When I don't have school, I can have more time with my family and friends. Also, the food is so good. I also love giving gifts and receiving gifts.

Jodi Deaton

My favorite thing to do on Christmas is to wake up, see the presents under the tree and start to open the presents. Then the next day, we go to all of our cousins' houses and hang out there.

Vince DePasquale

My favorite thing about the holidays is the chance to be with family and loved ones, and focus on the important things that we have and not the things that we want that are not so important. Because the holidays are not about the gifts, or the food and parties, although it may be tempting to think that. But no, it's about being together and spending time with your peers and loved ones (and maybe iPads).

Elza Dickinson

My favorite thing about the holidays is getting to spend more time with family. Shopping for friends and family gifts is fun. I love to decorate my room for the holidays. I also like to watch holiday movies.

Jules Draper

I like holidays because they are traditions that will bring people together for generations to come.

Tommy Eberhart

One of my favorite things about the holidays is putting up the decorations. This year for Christmas, I am going to ask my mom and dad for a penguin ornament for the Christmas tree. I am also hoping to get the Christmas penguin Lego set.

Austin Ervick

I love to see my family because they are sweet and loving. We all eat dinner on Thanksgiving and Christmas. We always have turkey or ham and

dessert. We play fun games and I get to see my family that I do not see all the time. On Christmas, we all get together in the morning and stay to the end of the day. That is why that is my favorite thing to do for the holiday.

Lily Fithyan

My favorite thing about Christmas/the holidays is presents because before I open the presents, I feel super excited about what they're going to be.

Scarlett Foster

My favorite thing about the holidays is spending time with my family. I love my family very, very much and when I see my family happy, it makes me feel happy too. When Thanksgiving comes around, I make a card saying all the things I'm thankful for and what that family member has done for me in the past. And when Christmas comes, I get everybody a thoughtful gift for them, what they would enjoy the most.

Everly Hall

I love spending time with my family! Technically, Halloween is my favorite holiday, right next to Christmas. What I love about Halloween is all the spooky things, decorations and the animals! I love skeletons, especially Jack Skellington in this movie called "The Nightmare Before Christmas." Skeletons are my favorite monster on Halloween. Almost all of the costumes I see are skeletons. I love how I get to go house to house and see all the faces I get my candy from. That is what I love about the holidays! Thiseni Kahavidanalage My favorite thing about the holidays is Christmas because it's a great time to play in the snow most of the time, and I get to spend time with my family too.

Every Christmas morning, I wake up and get lots of presents.

Andy Lee

I get to see my family and spend time with them. This is my favorite thing during the holidays because some of my family members live really far away and I appreciate that they are able to come all the way to Maryland to see my family. Another thing I like about the holidays is I can help cook dinner with my mom. I like to cook with my mom during the holidays because I like to feel helpful to my mom.

Emily Nagle

My favorite part about the holidays is spending time with family because most of the time I am at school when my family members come. On the holidays, I don't have school, though. Another

thing I like about the holidays is that there is no school. I like it because then I have no homework.

Alexa Paulson

My favorite things about the holidays are being able to see my family, doing unique activities, and everyone giving gifts to each other on Christmas. I like being able to see my family because my cousins live in Pennsylvania and my aunt and uncle live in Maine. That being said, I do not get to see them often, so it is fun to see them. I like doing unique activities because you only get to do the holiday activities once a year, so it is nice to do something unique. I like when everyone is giving each other gifts because when they do, it is showing that they care for you. I also like to see how excited people are when I get them something. So yes, there are a lot of good

things about the holidays.

Bryson Scott

My favorite thing about the holidays is seeing your family. I like seeing my family on holidays because we do fun stuff and make food.

Jack Seely

My favorite thing about the holidays is spending time with my family. I like it because when my grandma, grandpa, uncle and aunt come over it is like a party! I like when it snows outside because me and my family have a snowball fight. When we open presents, it makes me feel happy to see my family open the presents I gave them. "The Night Before Christmas," we get to open one present and we play with our present together as a family. When it is nighttime, me and my family eat dinner, laugh and play games together. I love it when my uncle, aunt, grandma and grandpa play games with me, my sister and my brother. My favorite game to play is "Zeus on the Loose."

Jackson Short

First, I love spending time with my family on Christmas and Thanksgiving. Also, I love getting gifts for Christmas and buying gifts for my friends and family on holidays.

Alex Stokes

My favorite thing about the holidays is getting time off of school. With time off, I have more time to be with family and friends. Which means you can travel to family and friends to celebrate the holidays together.

Lyla Stohler

My favorite part of the holidays is I get to have fun with my friends and family. During Christmas, I get to open presents and have cinnamon rolls, and during Thanksgiving, I get to have a Thanksgiving feast!

Sophie Tyler

Benfield ES Supports Kindness Through Raise Craze



Ali and Ben Carlin (third and first grade, respectively) collected trash at Severna Park Middle School.

Throughout November, Benfield Elementary students participated in Raise Craze, a campaign focused on doing acts of kindness and supporters pledging students as they complete these acts. Benfield students raised \$11,610 and completed 1,197 kindness acts both in school and in the community.

As a reward for the students, principal Sue Myers, allowed the top fundraisers to pie her in the face.

"Raising money to support our PTO with acts of kindness was a win-win for our school!" Myers wrote in a message to the *Voice*. "At a time when we are focusing on social-emotional wellness of our students as we reintroduce them back into full-time, in-person learning after being virtual for more than a year, Raise Craze fit perfectly with our school goals.

"Our students really took the initiative to show kindness and engage in these acts at school and in their community," she added.

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SPHS' "Freaky Friday"

» Continued from page 42
esting music and characters.

"I really like the casting too because it's really interesting to play different sides of the family, so you have a very clingy mom who's obsessed with making everything perfect and her daughter is very loose and 'everything is fun,' like a typical teenager," she said. "So, I just thought that was fun. I think the songs in the show are some of the most beautiful, and I'm very happy I have some of the songs I do because I think they are very interesting, and they are also very cool for me as an actress because I get to show different sides of emotions."

Henry Wright, as Adam, incited plenty of laughter from the crowd with his affable nature and unyielding love for sandwiches.

"I knew I wanted to play [Adam]

because I'm like, 'This guy is funny,'" Wright said. "I love comedic roles and it has a good score for music. If I got any part, though, I would have had the best time because the music is out of this world."

Kaelin Tufo, likewise, entertained as Ellie's charming, puppet-loving younger brother, Fletcher. Many other cast and crew members, as well as the musicians, made the show a thoroughly entertaining experience that also provided thoughtful lessons.

"I want [audiences] to know that there is always going to be that generational gap between the mother and the daughter," Bastola said. "We just have to understand each other. I know it's cheesy, but ... it's a really cute message for all ages — for parents, kids and grandparents also."

Photo by Zach Sparks

Henry Wright (far right) and the ensemble performed one of the many musical numbers in "Freaky Friday."



Bus Driver Goes The Extra Mile

» Continued from page 42

there, and they're working 40 hours a week," said Robin Pskowski, an owner of Fay's Bus Service. "It's been difficult."

Lippincott has about 10 high school stops, 20 for middle school, and four to five elementary school stops. He does it to benefit the kids, he said, although he does not see an immediate resolution in sight. Many drivers feel that way despite recent actions by county government.

On November 4, County Executive Stewart Pittman and the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC) announced they would use American Rescue Plan funds to give school bus drivers \$5,000 retention or new hire bonuses, while aides would receive \$2,000 retention or new hire bonuses. They called the bonuses "an immediate solution to challenges faced by school bus contractors in recruiting and retaining staff."

"We can't continue leaving kids stranded and parents' work schedules disrupted due to a national shortage of school bus drivers," Pittman said in a statement. "Dedicating \$4.2 million of our county's federal recovery funds to these bonuses is the right thing to do for parents and their kids."

Maryland School Bus Contractor Association representative Erin Appel said, "This is the quickest and most efficient way to help our bus drivers and get our kids to school."

That may have been welcome news for parents, but the problem is not resolved. Drivers must have a CDL (commercial driver's license) and go through AACPS training to work for a contractor.

"Even if there was an influx of people who wanted to drive, it's not something they can do overnight, getting a CDL and going through the county's training," said Lippincott, who got his CDL when he was a Montgomery County firefighter. "For somebody who has never driven a large vehicle, that can be intimidating and take a while to get used to."

Many people also have misconceptions about the job.

"I ran into someone who was retired the other day and said, 'We can get you a CDL,'" Pskowski said. "He looked at me like I had two heads before he would think about driving a bus. It's amazing the impression people have about driving a bus. It's not what people think. I think you see movies where kids are screaming, jumping, crawling, everything else. It's really not like that, but I think that's people's impression."

Many bus drivers quit during the pandemic. While Lippincott misses his old schedule, he does not want to give up on the kids who are depending on him and other bus drivers.

"I've had my shots. I'm in good health," he said. "Some of us have had to step up our game and do things we wouldn't normally do, and I'm OK with that."



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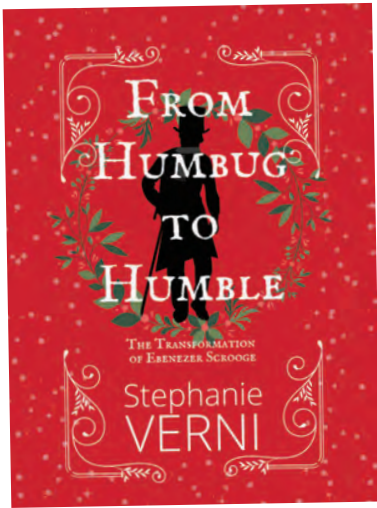
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Stephanie Verni Publishes Sixth Novel



Story Is Based On Ebenezer Scrooge



Stephanie Verni, a Severna Park author and professor of communication at Stevenson University in Owings Mills, has released her sixth book entitled “From Humbug to Humble: The Transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge.” The novella follows Scrooge in the years after he is visited by the three ghosts and delves into exactly how he changed for the better.

What good deeds did Scrooge do to leave behind his life as an old miser and curmudgeon? What became of Tiny Tim?

» Continued on page 50

Producer Discusses Documentary About Dreams, Success And Friendship

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Severna Park native Jane Bloom has an “Eat Pray Love” story. After working in television and film in Los Angeles, she decided she wasn’t creating the kind of impactful content that she wanted to make. She came back to Maryland, married Shipley’s Choice resident Jay Baur, and they traveled the world together for three years.

“I had everything: the big executive job, the car, the house, the awards, all those things,” said Bloom, a two-time Emmy Award winner. “I sort of realized that even though I was getting the outward recognition, I wasn’t creating the content I set out to make. And your dreams change.”

Bloom transitioned away from studio-based projects and focused mainly on independent film, telling meaningful stories. She now runs her own production company, The Oz Effect. Her latest role is serving as co-executive producer for “Through the Eyes of Others,” a documentary that hits close to home given her life choices and the subjects of the film.

The premise is this: As they prepare for their 20-year high school reunion, 11 Baltimore School for the Arts graduates reflect on the meaning of success, the power of purpose, and if they have given up on their dreams. In their teens, they were all actors who were expected to become stars. Most had already been on TV shows, off-Broadway, and in major motion pictures. “Through the Eyes of Others” looks at the barriers they have faced.

Their powerful story was captured by



Jane Bloom (right), pictured on the set of “Through the Eyes of Others,” makes independent films.

director Meagan Adele Lopez, co-executive producer Samantha Mitchell, and Bloom, who graduated alongside the other theater department students in 2000. The film is supported by the Saul Zaentz Innovation StoryLab, The Film Collaborative and the Maryland State Arts Council.

“When you really take a step back and think about who you wanted to be when you were 18 years old and who you are now, there’s a lot to unpack,” Bloom said. “And you start to think, are you proud of

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“I hope to tell stories that educate people but also help people to self-reflect, make people take a minute, take a breath, to think about are they living the lives they want to live? And if not, what are the barriers and challenges, whether they’re systemic or self-imposed.”

— JANE BLOOM

DINING OUT AROUND THE PARK

Level Offers Small Plates And Big Taste

By Mary Cobbler

Level is now one of my all-time favorite eateries in the area, certainly one of the best I’ve visited in 2021. Located at 69 West Street in Annapolis, Level is sophisticated and classy, and the food is outstanding, living up to its name. The restaurant’s original owners christened the restaurant “Level” because they wanted it to elevate the level of expectation for restaurant service, food quality

» Continued on page 50

Photos by Mary Cobbler

Top Right: The Mediterranean plate featured homemade hummus, artichoke, olive tapenade and cucumber-yogurt salad, served with naan. **Middle Right:** The fig and brie flatbread offers a burst of flavors — sweet figs, savory prosciutto and soft mellow bris — all on toasted flatbread drizzled with balsamic vinegar. **Bottom Right:** Level’s tuna tartare — served with cucumber, spicy soy vinaigrette, wasabi tobiko and giant crispy wontons — was perfectly spiced.



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Producer Discusses Documentary About Dreams, Success And Friendship

» Continued from page 47

the person you have become? Why or why not?"

Bloom said that even though society often encourages people to go for their dreams and people are told that they will "make it" if they give it their all, other factors are involved. One example from the film is Brandon Price, who played Stinkum on "The Wire."

"He was an absolutely amazing actor, and then he went to Julliard, and that was when his mental illness started to come forward," Bloom said. "Since then, he has struggled with mental illness, struggled with addiction. He's clean now, but this is somebody who really everyone thought was going to be the star and ends up having these human issues that we try to sweep under the rug."

Another Baltimore School for the

Arts graduate, Lauren, was told to forget her acting dreams.

"Lauren was a tremendous actress, and she was told by some of the teachers that she had the talent but she didn't have the constitution to be an actress, meaning that she liked stability and she wouldn't be able to live paycheck to paycheck," Bloom said. "And she listened to that voice."

The graduates also faced challenges with racism, trauma, motherhood and infertility. With the ongoing pandemic causing many people to rethink their life choices and future, the film is especially timely.

The filmmaking team is currently seeking additional funding so they can share the documentary.

"Independent film is very difficult to make, but it's really important that we support independent filmmakers because that's how new voices

get heard," Bloom said. "We don't want to rely on the people who run the big conglomerates to tell us what stories we want to hear."

As of December 5, the team was about \$2,400 shy of its \$15,000 post-production fundraising goal. The Seed and Spark fundraising campaign can be found online.

They are seeking funding because they believe in the power of the story they are telling. Bloom said she, Lopez and Mitchell have heard from many people who felt emotional when watching the five-minute trailer for "Through the Eyes of Others."

"At the end of the day, what matters is friendship, is family, is being there for yourself," Bloom said. "And to recognize the systemic challenges others face so that we can eradicate them and work together as a community to make an impact."

More About Jane

Jane Bloom's performing arts experience started with the St. Martin's-in-the-Field theater program. Currently, she develops impact-driven programs focused in social justice, trauma recovery and the neuroarts. She produced a music video with survivors of the 2018 Parkland shooting, and she co-created Camp Shine, which allows students to find therapeutic value through artistic activities.

Giving back is important to her. She has created mentorship and internship programs for young filmmakers and currently serves as a mentor to the Johns Hopkins film-making program, Baltimore School for the Arts, and Towson University.

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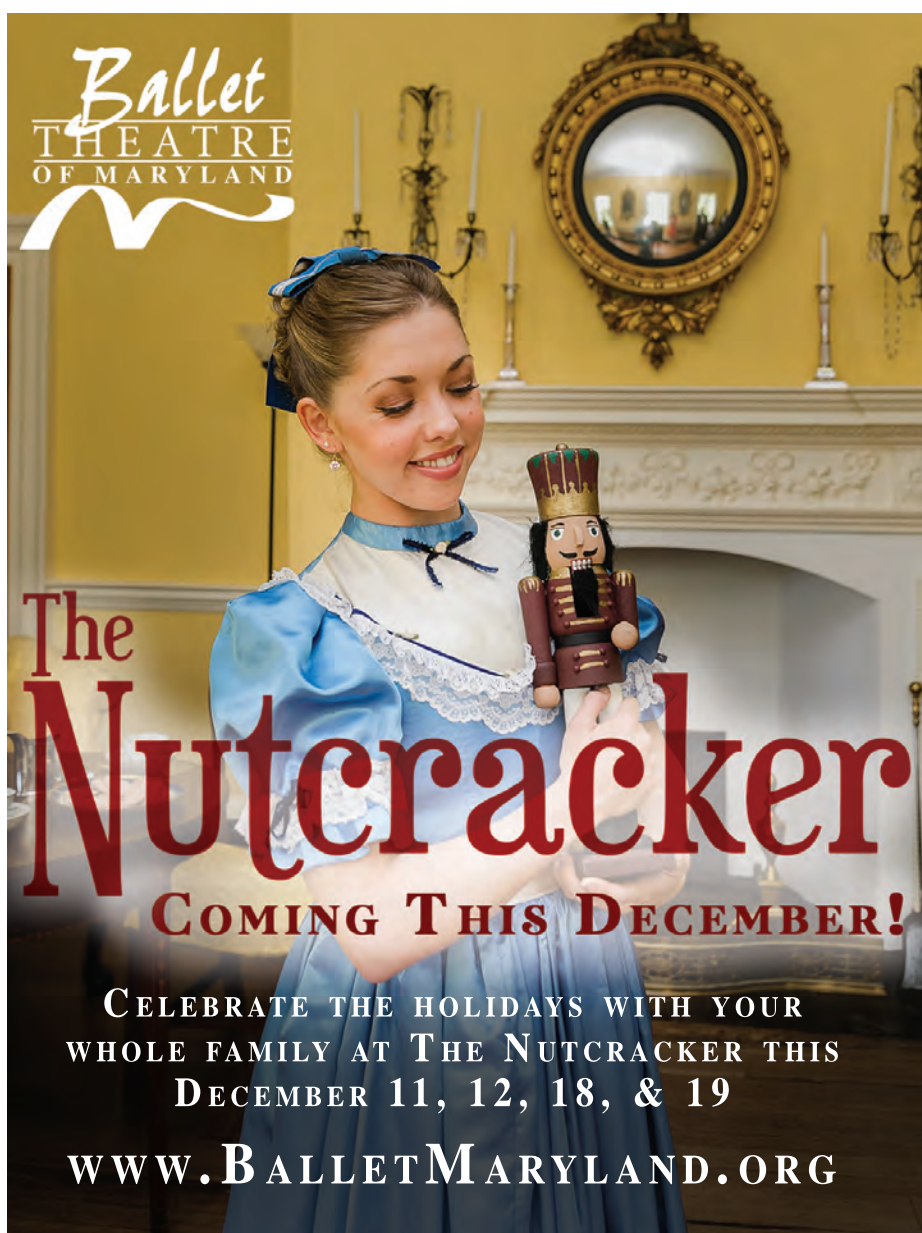
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Level Offers Big Taste

» Continued from page 47

and overall customer experience. Eric and Jennifer Sowers, who bought the restaurant in 2017, kept the name. With everything made from scratch and locally sourced, the food is fresh and fantastic.

My adult son and I arrived early on a Sunday evening when traffic was light and the restaurant wasn't overcrowded. We loved the old Annapolis building feel — the combination of wood, brick and brass. A smiling hostess led us to a cozy table by the window, looking out to West Street. The early evening colors and twinkle holiday lights on the street added a whimsical feel to the dinner. Colorful modern paintings by local artists depicting Annapolis brighten the walls throughout.

James, our waiter, was friendly, knowledgeable and helpful, arriving quickly with water and taking our drink orders.

Level is a unique dining venue focused on small plates, giving diners a chance to sample smaller servings of various food offerings. So, rather than dinner for two that may cost \$60 for two dishes, you can get four or five plates of smaller portions to share at Level.

We started our meal with Maryland bay fries. I expected typical fries topped with a seafood seasoning, but no — these were fresh cut, thin, delectable fries with seasoning similar to the sometimes-overused classic Maryland spice, but with more of a tang and deeper flavor. The “ketchup” seemed to be a mix of ordinary condiment and cocktail sauce, sweeter than either, which paired wonderfully with the fries that I couldn't stop eating.

The cheese arrived next — several local, rich gourmet cheeses, a mixture of hard and soft, served on a classic wood board with thin crostini, apples, spicy mustard, delightfully tangy pickles and an apple spread. It's the type of food that will make you want to savor each bite slowly.

Next up was our tuna tartare, of which I admit I've never been a fan. The texture of this type of tuna always puts me off, but not here! The tuna was served with cucumber, spicy soy vinaigrette, wasabi tobiko and giant crispy wontons. The

combination of various tastes adds to the experience. The spiciness doesn't overpower the dish but satisfied the latent spice girl in me.

My son particularly liked the Mediterranean plate with homemade hummus, artichoke, olive tapenade, and cucumber-yogurt salad, served with naan. The hummus was tasty but not spicy. Regarding the tapenade, I've found out that in this world, there are olive people and non-olive people. I am of the non-olive persuasion, and I'm sure personality traits are associated with those choices. But after tasting this dish, I crossed the line and can say that I now can accept the olive people. It was that good.

But my favorite, ta-dah — was the fig and brie flatbread. James brought out the dish — a beautiful-toasted flatbread topped with roasted sweet figs, soft brie, tender prosciutto, arugula and balsamic glaze. The delightful, sweet taste of the figs perfectly complemented the meat and cheese. The arugula provided a blast of zesty fresh flavor to the dish, and the prosciutto was savory — altogether a lovely plate.

We finished off the evening with banana bread pudding, a unique take on a classic. With a piece of brûléed banana, the “bread” was crisp on the outside, and soft, soothing, not overly sweet but rich on the inside, sitting atop a sauce similar to caramel but not as sweet.

The cost was reasonable. With five plates and three drinks, we paid \$85.

Level has an upstairs area used regularly for parties, weddings and special events. The restaurant also has a full bar. This is the kind of food for a romantic date night — I can see a movie scene in my head at Level, with the cheese and glass of wine.

In the words of a well-known Austrian bodybuilder — “I'll be back.”

Where To Find

LEVEL

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Verni Publishes Sixth Novel

» Continued from page 47

And did Scrooge ever find love? Verni was plagued by these questions and explores the answers, keeping with the flavor of Charles Dickens and his masterpiece, “A Christmas Carol.” As a longtime Dickens fan and writer, Verni imagines Scrooge's path to redemption that includes philanthropy, family, friendships and love. Dickens fans will be treated to a story that illuminates Scrooge's transformation in this heartwarming tale full of Christmas spirit that features characters such as Scrooge, Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's nephew Fred, Isabelle, Tiny Tim, and some new ones in this charming Christmas tale.

“This novella came into being after a discussion at last year's Christmas table where we all talked about Scrooge and what might have been after the spirits set him straight,” Verni said. “Plus, I've been obsessed with this story since I was little, so I figured I would try my hand at figuring out Scrooge's path forward, since we know from Dickens that it was a happy

and fulfilling one. I just tried to fill in the blanks, and I hope other Scrooge fans will love it.”

As a full-time faculty member in the communication department at Stevenson University, Verni instructs writing and communication courses. She has written five other works of fiction, “Beneath the Mimosa Tree” (2012), “Baseball Girl” (2015), “Inn Significant” (2017), “The Postcard” (2018) and “Little Milestones” (2019). She also has another promotional novella available on Amazon, for the Kindle, called “Anna in Tuscany” (2021). Along with two of her colleagues, she is coauthor of the textbook “Event Planning: Communicating Theory & Practice” (2019), published by Kendall-Hunt.

For more information about Verni and her work, visit www.stephanieverni.com. “From Humbug to Humble” can be purchased online via Amazon and Barnes & Noble in both paperback and for the e-reader, as well as in person at Park Books & Literacy Lab in Severna Park.

“House Of Gucci” Is An Imperfect But Entertaining Film

By Audrey Ruppert

Like much of Ridley Scott’s more recent work, “House of Gucci” reaches for the stars but struggles under the weight of its own hefty aspirations. It tries to be many things — camp comedy, true crime, corporate boardroom drama, operatic tragedy — but it never fully grapples with any of its subject matter long enough to truly understand it or leave a lasting impact.

It reads less like a film and more like a Greco-Roman epic, meant to warn its audience of the tragic consequences of unbounded ambition. At times it feels like a poorly produced rendition of “Macbeth” — a timeless story about power, greed, family and betrayal — which will haunt you even if the execution was less than stellar.

Lady Gaga plays Patrizia Reggiani, the passionate, driven and vivacious daughter of a trucking magnate. She encounters the fumbling, bookish Maurizio Gucci (Adam Driver) at a party and falls in love with him instantly - she sees a man with a lot of raw potential, who does not realize his own abilities. In time, both she and Maurizio’s uncle, Aldo (Al Pacino), convince the reluctant



Photo courtesy of MGM Studios

At times, “House of Gucci,” which stars Adam Driver and Lady Gaga, feels like a poorly produced rendition of “Macbeth,” a timeless story about power, greed, family and betrayal.

Maurizio to become involved with the family business, as Aldo has no faith in his buffoonish son, Paulo (Jared Leto).

Patrizia transforms Maurizio into a

confident man, an heir worthy of taking the mantle of the House of Gucci, even though he never wanted it in the first place. Along the way, however, she teaches Maurizio to be ruthless, to “take out the trash,” and to put the welfare of the Gucci brand before the welfare of the Gucci family — a lesson that will eventually backfire and bring the entire dynasty to ruin.

Gaga’s performance is perhaps the only aspect of the film which remains consistent throughout, and she has proven herself to be not only a talented songwriter but also a powerful actress. The rest of the film is all over the place, from the unexplainable smattering of Italian accents within the same supposed family (Jared Leto sounds like Mario and Driver sounds Milanese) to the confusing tonal shifts. So many moments in this film should have been epic, given the weight of what is happening; the grand rise and fall of such a family could have been a six-part miniseries. And yet, critical parts of the story feel glossed over or rushed despite its hefty runtime, and the film never truly engages with any of its core elements. For a film about Gucci, it’s shocking how

little fashion and the fashion industry is discussed or examined.

Driver is believable as a shy, nerdy and earnest man, but his transformation into a selfish and showy businessman with little self-awareness is not convincing — he’s just too likeable. Jared Leto feels like he’s in his own film half the time, talking to himself (although to be fair, he does play a narcissist who cannot see his own mediocrity, and that is basically Jared Leto in real life). Al Pacino has some great lines, but none of the characters seem to have any chemistry with *each other*. We have a series of character sketches, plush houses, stunning landscapes and beautiful outfits, but none of it comes together quite right. It borrows from the caricaturish, Italian American imagery of Gaga’s early music videos (think “Eh, Eh, Nothing Else I Can Say”) and from “The Godfather,” but I’m not sure those two things go together.

That being said, the story alone and the timeless lesson it teaches make “House of Gucci” more than worth the watch. When you put yourself before the welfare of a dynasty, you can destroy the very thing you sought to create.

Anticipated Video Games Are Coming This Season

By Conor Doherty

As the holiday season arrives, some of the most popular gift requests are video games. While the newest consoles from Sony and Microsoft are still seeing availability shortages, many new games can be played on older consoles. With that in mind, here is a list of some of the most anticipated video games coming out this holiday season.

Halo Infinite

Released December 8 — PC, Xbox Series S and X, and Xbox One



Photo courtesy of Microsoft

“Halo Infinite” continues Master Chief’s story in the third part of the ongoing saga.

After being delayed for a year, the long-anticipated “Halo Infinite” continues Master Chief’s story with the game serving as the third part of the ongoing saga. The game brings a true open world to the series for the first time, like other open-world games including “Far Cry” and “Assassin’s Creed.”

Metroid Dread

Released October 8 — Nintendo Switch

Taking the series back to its two-dimensional, side-scrolling origins, “Metroid Dread” is a direct sequel to 2002’s “Metroid Fusion” and finishes the nearly 35-year-long story started by the original game.

Forza Horizon 5

Released November 5 — PC, Xbox Series X and S, and Xbox One

The fifth installment in the popular open-world driving series, “Forza Horizon 5” will allow players to cruise around and explore a beautiful rendition of Mexico. Drive along the edge of an active volcano, explore the nooks and crannies of the city of Guanajuato, or cruise in any of the over 500 vehicles available in the game.

Marvel’s Guardians of the Galaxy

Released October 22 — PS4, PS5, PC, Xbox Series S and X, Xbox One and Nintendo Switch



Photo courtesy of Eidos-Montréal/Square Enix

Control the Guardians as they try to fix a series of catastrophic mistakes in “Marvel’s Guardians of the Galaxy.”

Based on the lovable and popular group of Marvel characters, “Marvel’s Guardians of the Galaxy” will allow players to control Star-Lord, the leader of the Guardians, as they try to fix a series of catastrophic mistakes that threaten to destroy the fragile balance of a universe already at the breaking point after a major war.

Battlefield 2042

Released November 19 — PS4, PS5, PC, Xbox Series S and X, and Xbox One

If you’re looking for massive and chaotic maps — filled with 128 players and fun, immersive and spontaneous gameplay — “Battlefield 2042” is for you. Along with numerous new maps, BF 2042 introduces two new game modes, the first being Hazard Zone. But it’s the other game mode, Portal, that has most players clamoring. Portal brings back classic maps, factions, and weapons from all of the previous Battlefield installments and allows players to make their own games. Want to watch 128 players fight with knives only or see the German army from World War II take on the modern American army? Portal allows players to do just that.

Call of Duty Vanguard

Released November 5 — PS4, PS5, PC, Xbox Series S and X, and Xbox One

The next game in a popular annual series, “Vanguard” returns Call of Duty (COD) to its origins, taking players back to World War II. While there have been quite a few COD games set in World War II, “Vanguard” will show more of the war to players than ever before, taking them to the Western and Eastern Fronts, the North African campaign, and the War in the Pacific.

Warning to all parents looking to buy a PS5 or Xbox Series S and X: due to chip shortages, the availability of these consoles will be limited. If you see someone selling these consoles for more than \$500 (original selling price for both consoles), be wary because they may be scalpers.

Closing The Year With Biden's Infrastructure Deal

Jason LaBarge
Financial Advisor
at Premier
Planning Group



I'm so tired of politics. Aside from COVID, it seems to me that 2021 was dominated by political talk and I'm tired of it. Unfortunately, you can't ignore it entirely. As someone who follows the market, I try to limit my political interest to topics that only impact the market.

President Joe Biden's most recent action warrants a conversation, as we just received the highly debated bipartisan infrastructure deal. What does that mean for the economy? In the short term, some of the infrastructure funding will go immediately toward clearing port and transportation bottlenecks, so that might help improve supply chain issues. Fingers crossed.

Some of the maintenance funds could get used in spring construction blitzes. Since the job market is already tight, the economy isn't likely to see an immediate surge in hiring due to infrastructure spending; however, multiple reports suggest roughly 800,000 new jobs could be added by 2030, though many of them will be temporary rather than long-term jobs,

according to the Washington Post. Economists don't think inflation is likely to increase due to the slow pace of spending, though the deal is projected to add \$256 billion to the federal budget deficit over the next 10 years. Bottom line, analysts project long-term benefits to the economy in lower business costs, increased labor force participation, and improved competitiveness, according to CNN.

Inflation might not be as temporary as the Federal Reserve would like it to be. Prices are up all over, and people are understandably upset at paying more at the grocery store, gas station and everywhere else. Many analysts hoped that data blips, supply chain clogs and other pandemic-related disruptions were creating a temporary spike in inflation that would resolve soon. However, inflation has remained stubbornly high. In the U.S., prices have increased 6.2% over the last 12 months — the biggest spike since November 1990. Since the Fed's goal is to keep long-term inflation around 2%, people are concerned that "temporary" inflation is lingering longer than we want (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).

So, are prices going to continue to rise in 2022? That's likely, but how much, how fast, and for how long depend on a lot of global factors, including whether the Fed raises interest rates or takes other actions. Will your taxes go up in 2022? That's the question of the month on Capitol Hill as
» **Continued on page 55**

Chamber Update

Liz League
CEO
GSPACC



Please give a warm welcome to our newest members: **Stage & Screen Studios LLC, Unity Bands Inc., 2 Bold Chefs and a Mediterranean Truck, Absolute Design Studio, United States Insurance Services, Chesapeake Electric, Neighborhood Barre, Anna O'Connor Coaching, DeMaio Family Chiropractic and Physical Therapy, and Three-2 Health and Fitness Studio.** Thank you to our renewing members for keeping us Chamber Strong!

We held a ribbon-cutting for the official grand opening of the beautiful **Three-2 Health and Fitness Studio** in Severna Park. Owner **Mark Fleming** has a huge following from his years working at the "Y" and Big Vanilla, and it was a packed crowd that evening. Mark explained that his goal in opening the studio is to educate individuals on how to live a healthy lifestyle through physical activity, proper nutrition and self-defense training along with living life to the fullest. He has created a fitness program for senior citizens as well and has partnered with **Café Mezzanotte** and **Garry's Grill** to provide health-conscious food options.

Following the ribbon-cutting, attendees enjoyed dinner at **Café Mezzanotte** next door.

The Learn and Lead Committee headed by **Jenn Triplett of Treebranch Group** and **Larry Sells of Larry Sells Consulting** hosted a "Center Stage" event profiling **David Orso of The David Orso Group**. David began his working career at Coca-Cola Enterprises, eventually investing in real estate. When the market crashed, he lost everything, but over time rebuilt his company into a multi-million-dollar business through hard work, team building, and a total focus on customer service. Each month the committee will feature a business owner in the community, so please join us for these virtual presentations and get to know the people behind the businesses. These events are free and open to all.

Our general membership social/2022 board member introductions were held at the **Vida Taco Bar** on November 18. Members enjoyed delicious appetizers and signature margaritas, and great networking. It was our way of thanking members for serving our community and supporting the chamber. Our general membership/new officer installation dinner will be held on January 13 at **Romilo's Restaurant and Bar**. The event is sponsored by the **Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation** and our keynote speaker is **Executive Director Ben Birge**.

On December 2, we held a ribbon-cut-
» **Continued on page 55**

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Frame & Frame Treats Clients Like Family

By Haley Weisgerber

People often say not to mix family and business, but at Frame & Frame Attorneys at Law, working with family and treating clients like family is just part of what makes the firm so special.

Vernon Frame started the firm in 1954. An insurance adjuster by day, Vernon attended law school at night so he could better serve the community.

"He would help anybody who came in the door," said his daughter, Tara Frame. "Whatever legal problem they had, he was available to help."

Tara knew she would follow in her father's footsteps from a young age.

"I can remember being around 3 years old and going into the office with him and pretending to be his secretary," said Tara. "It was just kind of always a given for me. That's what I wanted to do from when I was very young."

She became an attorney in 1995 and in 1996, she left the Baltimore firm she was working at and joined her father. Tara took over in 2002 when Vernon retired at the age of 80. Now, she has stayed true to her father's original vision and provides support for community members in need.

"We really take the time to get to know our clients," said Tara. "I feel like, especially in this day and age, a lot of other attorneys don't necessarily do that as well as we do."

That philosophy has paid off, and Frame & Frame has developed a loyal clientele and gets a lot of refer-



Tara Frame and Erica Redmond are two of the attorneys at Frame & Frame who are dedicated to creating the best experience for clients.

ral business.

"I think we really treat our clients as part of the family," said Tara. "To this day, I represent children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of my dad's clients. I treat everyone as I would treat my family with the same respect and courtesy."

The four attorneys and six support staff members at Frame & Frame are also a family.

"I love my team," said Tara. "I love coming into work

and seeing them and working with them."

Hiring new attorneys has allowed Frame & Frame to not only expand to include four locations in Pasadena, Annapolis, Frederick and Stevensville but also to grow in the services offered. Tara said her fellow attorneys, Erica Redmond, Veronica Zoberbier and Richard Adams, as well as her loyal and talented staff, are to thank.

"They have enabled us to really offer and deliver more quality service to people that we might not be able to otherwise," said Tara.

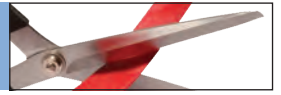
Frame & Frame started as a firm focused on general practices like bankruptcy, divorce, estate planning and so much more. Now, Frame & Frame focuses on five areas — estate planning, elder law, probate, family law and personal injury — to better serve its clients. Staff additions have allowed Frame & Frame to help people with special needs planning, Medicaid planning and LGBTQ planning.

"We promise to give them a great client experience," said Tara. "We promise to be a trusted advisor and resource for them, for themselves, and their families."

Tara said the close-knit community is perfect for this firm because of the commitment to helping as many people as they can. As the firm grows and that community expands, Frame & Frame stays true to its mission of treating everyone like a family and with dignity.

To learn more about Frame & Frame Attorneys at Law, visit www.frameandframelaw.com, call 410-255-0373 or email contactus@frameandframelaw.com.

RIBBON CUTTINGS



Three-2 Health & Fitness Celebrates Severna Park Location



Mark Fleming and Brandy Sears welcomed the community to a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Three-2 Health & Fitness Studio on November 11. The team shared their vision for a center that offers fitness and health options to all ages. Sears also talked about the studio's training classes for senior citizens. Three-2 Health & Fitness is located at 770 Ritchie Highway, Suite W11, in Severna Park.

Millersville Welcomes Absolute Design Studio



The Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce joined Absolute Design Studio owner Jessica Ford for a ribbon-cutting on December 2. Ford gave attendees a tour of the showroom and talked about the tiles, cabinets, custom features and more that can make anyone's home a canvas for their life. Absolute Design Studio is located at 740 Generals Highway in Millersville.

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Closing The Year

» Continued from page 52

lawmakers debate the Build Back Better deal that could come with tax law changes. We don't know when the bill will be passed, but I'm watching closely and preparing for possible future effects we'll see on the economy.

Whether you are traveling or staying local, I wish you a happy and healthy holiday season and a prosperous new year.

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» Continued from page 52

ting to celebrate the grand opening of Absolute Design Studio in Millersville. The studio features 4,000 square feet of tile and stone products including porcelain, ceramic, glass, natural stone and more. Talented owner and designer Jessica Ford can help you bring your project to life within your budget. Donations were collected for **Orphan Grain Train** at the ribbon-cutting.

Our holiday tree lighting and chamber open house was held on Friday, December 3, at the chamber. Community members flocked to see Santa and the Grinch and celebrate the beginning of the holiday season. We enjoyed performances from **The Dance Center of Severna Park, the Severna Park Elementary School chorus, and Creative Force Dance.** We were joined by County Executive Steuart Pittman, and our sponsors were **Chick-fil-A of Severna Park, Steak 'n Shake, The Big Bean, Delegate Heather Bagnall, Costco** and **United States Insur-**

Chamber Update

ance Services. Revelers were treated to cookies, hot chocolate and Vermont cider (The Big Bean specialties), candy canes, and pictures in front of the beautiful tree. Many thanks to our sponsors, our elves from the **Toast of Severna Park Toastmasters Club, ProSound Karaoke, Freeman Bagnall** as Santa, and **Jim League** as the Grinch!

Our wonderful Holiday Taste and Sip 11th anniversary event will be held at the Chartwell Golf and Country Club on December 9 from 6:00pm – 9:00pm. This event features our restaurants, caterers, liquor stores and bakeries all under one roof so you can taste and sip throughout the evening. Presenting sponsor is the **Matt Wyble Team of Century 21 New Millennium.** Gold sponsors are **the Gardiner and Appel Group** and **What's Up? Magazine,** the music sponsor is **Spring Arbor of Severna Park,** and bronze sponsors are **Griswold Home Care, Meridien DermSpa, Emerald Financial Group** and the **Tree-**

branch Group.

Zachary's Jewelers has donated a gorgeous Alor designer bangle for our raffle, and the silent auction table is overflowing with wonderful donations from our local businesses. We will have live performances by the **Chesapeake Harmony Chorus** and pianist **Jeff Harding.** For tickets, visit www.gspacc.com.

On Monday, December 13, our Successful Women in Business will hold its annual luncheon at **Café Mezzanotte.** This is a fun networking event and attendees can also do some last-minute shopping. The event is sponsored by **Lisa's Cake-pops,** and vendors include **Skinlogic, Q Sciences,** and **Higgins and Friends Pet Sitting.**

As always, visit www.gspacc.com for more information about the chamber and our activities. You can also email me at ceo@gspacc.com or call 410-647-3900. And remember to shop local and give local to support our wonderful businesses and nonprofits!

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Happy Holidays and happy New Year!



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