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# Fourth of July **PARADE EDITION**



## **Broad Stripes, Bright Stars and Big Hearts!**

### Page **13** DECORATED BIKE CONTEST

This year's event featured newcomers and returning families who entered festive and creative displays.

### Page **21** FLOAT DECORATING

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# Parade Showcases The Heart Of Severna Park

By Mark Patton  
mark@severnaparkvoice.com

In a year where summer has seemed a bit distant with the unusual weather patterns that have settled over the region, Fourth of July in Severna Park felt just like warm-month memories that scrapbooks are filled with.

Sunshine, warm temperatures and smoke-free air made an appearance for the 2023 Severna Park Independence Day parade, a beloved annual community tradition for more than 45 years.

"Today's parade, once again, is bigger than ever," said parade emcee Earl Schaffer from his perch near the corner of Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard and Riggs Avenue.

Schaffer's area was rocking as patriotic-garbed attendees applauded the passing floats, performers and vehicles that traveled nearby both the judge stand and Schaffer's booth.

The theme of this year's pa-

*Continued on page 6*



## And The Winners Are!

### BEST OVERALL

Linstead on the Severn

### BEST THEME

Orphan Grain Train

### MOST PATRIOTIC

Nathaniel McDavitt  
Scholarship Fund

### BEST COMMERCIAL

- ① Homestead Gardens
- ② Pedal Pushers Bikes
- ③ Kwon's Tae Kwon Do

### BEST COMMUNITY

- ① Olde Severna Park
- ② Chartwell
- ③ Severndale

### BEST NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

- ① Girl Scout Troop 10246
- ② Street Survivors Car Club
- ③ SPSHS Marching Band  
Woods Memorial Church

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# Parade Showcases The Heart Of Severna Park

*Continued from page 4*

rade — “Broad Stripes, Bright Stars and Big Hearts” — was evident with all sorts of stars- and stripes-themed accessories shimmering in the sun-soaked shadows of the parade route.

Dave Gray is a Manhattan Beach resident who has a tradition with a group of neighbors of going for a bike ride on the morning of July 4, followed by a breakfast out and then lining up with holiday gusto, waiting for the floats to approach.

“Sense of community, sense of patriotism and it’s just fun,” said Gray of the deciding factor to make the Severna Park parade part of a routine for his group.

Nearly 100 participating entries marched, walked, waved, pedaled, rode and even rowed their way through the parade route.

This year’s grand marshal was Wayne Gerst, owner of Gerst Towing Service, who greeted the crowd from the back of a 1973 Oldsmobile Delta 88 convertible.

Liz League, CEO of the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce and parade chair this year for the fifth time, said Gerst was a natural choice.

“We selected Wayne as he is a life-long member of our community



**BEST COMMERCIAL**  
Third Place  
Kwon's Tae Kwon Do



**BEST COMMERCIAL**  
Second Place  
Pedal Pushers

and has owned his small business for many decades,” League said.

As the red, white and blue on spectator shirts darkened with the morning humidity, members of Severna Park-based Boy Scout Troop 855 and Boy Scout Pack 918 carried an American flag while the national anthem brought hats off and hearts covered.

The Nathaniel McDavitt memorial flag has been a part of the parade for years. U.S. Air Force Airman First Class Nathaniel McDavitt was killed in 2016 while deployed in the Middle East. McDavitt was a 2011 graduate of Severna Park High School and an Eagle Scout.

“It made me feel pretty important,” said 10-year-old Tommy Wilusz, who helped hold the flag as part of Pack 918. “I get to be in the parade to honor someone.”

Tommy’s sister and fellow scout, 8-year-old Katie, said seeing people wave at them was a welcome sight.

“It felt really good and important,” Katie said.

The AIC Nathaniel H. McDavitt Memorial Scholarship Fund float also put the late airman in the minds of spectators — and judges. It was awarded Most Patriotic.

Robert Dorsey, who came with his wife and grandkids, has watched



**BEST CLUB**  
Third Place  
SPHS Marching Band



**“It’s a good community. We’ve been here 50 years, and every year, the support comes through. It’s great that the people around here are interested in our history and also service — the guys that come out and have put time in, and also for the guys who weren’t able to come back.”**

— ROBERT DORSEY, SEVERNA PARK RESIDENT

every parade for five decades, except for the year when the parade was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It’s a good community,” Dorsey said. “We’ve been here 50 years, and every year, the support comes through. It’s great that the people around here are interested in our history and also service — the guys that come out and have put time in, and also for the guys who weren’t able to come back.”

Judges tabbed the parade entry from Linstead on the Severn as Best Overall. The float, a replica of Linstead’s pier set atop a mock-up of the Severn River, included fish, Maryland crabs and turtles. Subtle isn’t the word for the entry’s highlight, a blue heron sculpture with a 16-foot wingspan.

Johnathon and Alexis Grubbkruger attended the parade with their 4-month-old son, Levington.

The couple agreed on what having a new addition to their yearly outing means.

“It makes it more joyful for us,” Alexis said.

Nico and Katie Romero, first-time parade attendees, enjoyed the festivities with their 11-month-old daughter, Cora.

“We love it,” Katie said. “The Homestead Gardens [entry] was so pretty.”

The judges agreed with Katie and named Homestead Gardens as winners of the Best Commercial category, followed by the second- and third-place entries of Pedal Pushers and Kwon’s Tae Kwon Do, respectively.

This year’s grand marshal also has some ties to the Best Theme winner — Orphan Grain Train’s entry that featured a globe with directional signs pointing everywhere from Baltimore



to Liberia.

The entry fits with the non-profit Christian volunteer network’s mission to share personal and material resources with folks of need, both stateside and abroad. Gerst donated the back of his Millersville farm to Orphan Grain Train in 2016.

Judges awarded Olde Severna Park as Best Community entry, followed by Chartwell and Severdale. Girl Scout Troop 10246 was named as Best Organization/Club entry, followed by Street Survivors Car Club. The Severna Park High School marching band and Woods Church tied for the final spot on the podium.

Morgan Schmincke recently moved to Severna Park from Arnold. She attended the parade with her daughters, Nora and Addy, and with her friend,

Jessica Hedges, who brought children along.

“We love the sense of community,” Schmincke said. “We love that our girls are young, and we can instill some traditions and ultimately come together to celebrate our country.”

Whether it was local band Ivy League performing songs from their 2022 album or nonprofits and businesses smiling along the route — or even local politicians shaking hands and waving to constituents — the parade offered the small-town feeling of a day slowed down, sights of families with children and chairs in tow walking down the street to lay stake to their time-honored parade watching spot, or the smile from a child who just snagged that last piece of candy, tossed from the parade route, before anybody else saw it.

As for the theme — big smiles, big floats, big laughs, and yes, big hearts, were all around. ■

*Zach Sparks contributed to this story.*

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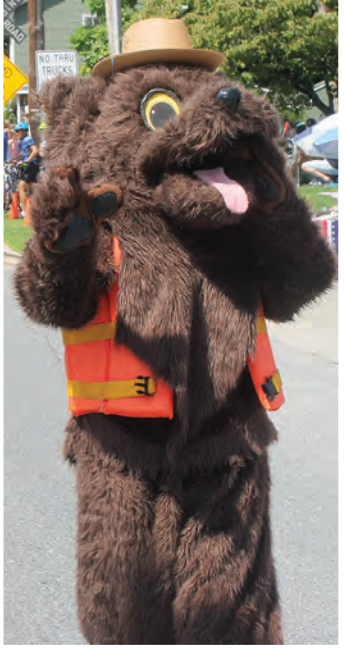
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*Most Patriotic*  
**Ava Paisley**



Third Place  
*Most Beautiful*  
**Gemma Dornblaser**

Participant  
**Mia Boyle**

Winner  
*Most Original*  
**Evie Dornblaser**

# Kids Get Creative For Decorated Bicycle Contest



Second Place  
*Most Patriotic*  
**Oliver Bark**

“It’s a lot of fun to see how excited the kids get.”

— COLETTE BARNES  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR  
DECORATED BIKE CONTEST



Winner  
*Most Beautiful*  
**Lola Rice**

Second Place  
*Most Original*  
**Piper Kruse**

By Lauren Cowin

This year’s decorated bicycle contest featured stars, stripes and “stuffies.”

While stuffed animals couldn’t be entered as contestants themselves, several accompanied their owners, and added a little pizzazz to the entries.

“I have a dog, because I have a dog,” said 6-year-old Oliver Bark of the small decorative pup he affixed to his bicycle. His real dog, a Labrador mix named George, stayed home for the festivities.

Oliver, whose bicycle also featured multiple American flags and “USA” on the wheels, was awarded second place in the category of Most Patriotic.

For 4-year-old Andrew Cullison, this year

marked his first decorated bicycle contest, and his first parade. Along for the ride in his firecracker-themed wagon was his stuffed wiener dog, appropriately named Frank. Andrew (and Frank) took home second place for Most Beautiful.

Four-year-old Ava Paisley couldn’t pick a favorite decoration on her wagon, because she liked all of them. Ava had no intention of riding in the wagon – instead, she planned to walk in the parade, while her stuffed purple Dino enjoyed the ride.

“I have a lot,” said Ava of the patriotic elements of her outfit, which she put together herself. She also dressed Dino up in red, white and blue pipe cleaners.

Ava was awarded first place for Most Patriotic. Roughly 24 children participated in the annual

*Continued on page 14*

## And The Winners Are!

### **MOST BEAUTIFUL**

- ① Lola Rice
- ② Andrew Cullison
- ③ Gemma Dornblaser

### **MOST PATRIOTIC**

- ① Ava Paisley
- ② Oliver Bark
- ③ Cameron Howard

### **MOST ORIGINAL**

- ① Evie Dornblaser
- ② Piper Kruse
- ③ Cameron Kelly



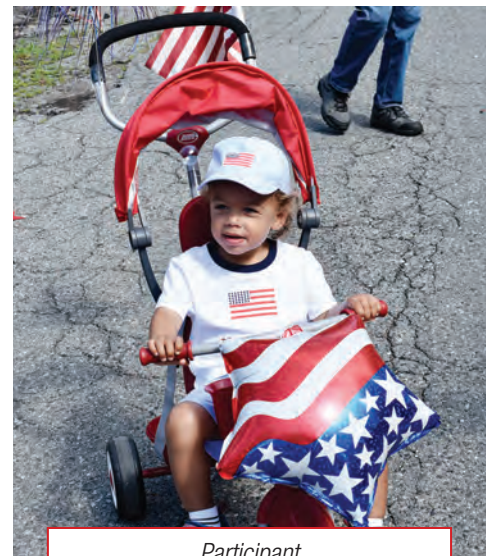
## Kids Get Creative For Decorated Bicycle Contest



Participants  
**Grant & Josephine Jurkiewicz**



Participant  
**Ayla Jhajarnia**



Participant  
**Hunter Johnson-Balthrop**

### Continued from page 13

event, which was sponsored this year by Lean on Dee. While many newcomers were featured in the 2023 event, there were also some familiar faces.

Sisters Gemma and Evie Dornblaser are old pros, having attended and won awards at previous contests. Gemma, 9, had some concerns this year.

"This is a new bike for me, so I'm not sure how this will go," said Gemma, who ended up with a third-place finish for Most Beautiful.

Her 7-year-old sister, Evie, presented a bicycle basket bursting with patriotic flare, leaving room for her stuffed cat, Chad. Evie and Chad took home the blue ribbon for Most Original.

Returning contestant William Kelly got an upgrade this year —

several months past his second birthday, he has now ditched the pushed tricycle of years past, opting to ride one himself. Also new this year was his 9-month-old brother, Cameron.

"I put a reminder in my phone about this, and I still ended up decorating last night," said William and Cameron's mom, Allison Kelly.

Cameron's Captain America-themed stroller won third place for Most Original.

Friends Piper Kruse, 7, and Lola Rice, 8, worked together, incorporating stars, streamers and partial balloon arches shooting from the backs of their bicycles. Piper received second place for Most Original and Lola won first for Most Beautiful.

"It's a lot of fun to see how excited the kids get," said Colette Barnes, who has been the volunteer coordinator of the contest for approximately 10 years. ■

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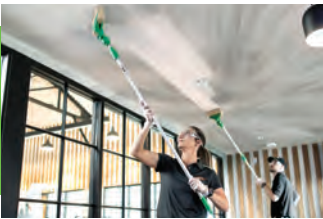
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# Groups Put Special Touches On Float Designs

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

For this year's parade, the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce chose the theme "Broad Stripes, Bright Stars and Big Hearts," but the American Legion Post 175 float contained something extra: Purple Hearts.

Float designer Daniel Cavegn credited his girlfriend, Gail Helm, and her friend Judy Davidson for the American Legion's concept, which showed the number of service members awarded Purple Hearts after being killed or wounded in action during each war.

Cavegn and Helm started the float and had help from about 15 people near the end of the process.

"This is packing material I pulled out of my shop because I pack stuff all the time," Cavegn said, showing off the finished design. "I said, 'They want broad stripes? I have plenty of that.'

"You have to paint these so many times to get them to turn from black to red," he said, pointing to the stripes. "The lumber work takes time, but we're gifted in the sense that we have plenty of carpenters and people who can work a saw."

With the float mostly decorated, the front remained blank. Karen Hart added another touch to recognize Gold Star and Blue Star families.

"Gold Star are people who have lost a child and [blue] is for people who are still deployed and still coming home," Cavegn said.

Several other clubs and communities made a statement with their entries.

## AIC Nathaniel H. McDavitt Memorial Scholarship Fund

The parade was also a bittersweet moment for the team behind the AIC Nathaniel H. McDavitt Memorial Scholarship Fund float. A former Severna Park resident, McDavitt was stationed in Germany in 2016 when a severe windstorm caused a building to collapse while he was inside.

"At his funeral, it struck me how different he was than a lot of people," said Chris Middleton, McDavitt's uncle and the catalyst behind the scholarship fund. "I couldn't let it go that he would have done much more in life had he lived."

The single-axle trailer included a jet on top because McDavitt liked to work on jets during his time in the Air Force. To complement the chamber's theme, the float emphasized the values of character, drive and service.



American Legion Post 175 honored Purple Heart recipients, Gold Star families and Blue Star families with a design that took a few weeks to complete.

"We give out money for the scholarship fund to kids who demonstrate character, drive and service like he did, but in their own way," Middleton said. "We want to recognize and lift up what they have done, like Nathan, as an example."

## DodgeBow Annapolis

On the business side, DodgeBow introduced itself to the community with a patriotic concept.

"We plan on having humans dressed in bald eagle suits and also American flag inflatables as we drive through the parade," DodgeBow owner Louben Repke said a few days before the parade. "Of course, we'll be carrying our bows and arrows with us as we flap our wings."

## Round Bay

Round Bay incorporated the chamber's theme into a float featuring sailing, a key activity for families in the community. Every summer, Round Bay enjoys a sailing camp, races and a regatta.

Residents of all ages gathered days before the parade, with kids adding creative details like fishing, crabbing and a jellyfish. For the sail, the children used an art technique they learned during their neighborhood beach camp.

"The Round Bay community is a gem located on the Severn River," Dinah Tysinger said. "Residents enjoy watching their children grow

up together sailing, swimming, and seeing the Blue Angels flyover during Naval Commissioning Week. It was fun to personalize our float with activities that represent our good times on the Severn River."

## Olde Severna Park

Olde Severna Park's decorating was organized by Tommy Williams and his wife, Lindsey, who added onto the parade theme with features that highlighted space.

"We really wanted to have a sustainable aspect this year and we were able to reuse the lighthouse float from the prior year to make the lunar lander," Williams said. "I used a Sonotube to make the rocket. We had the kids join in by painting everything."

In place of the NASA logo, the community wore Olde Severna Park Improvement Association symbols.

"A couple kids dressed in space suits and some of the adults dressed up like mission control," he said the morning of the event. "We have songs playing that have a space, rocket or moon theme."

## Severdale

Severdale went simpler with its theme: having fun and getting involved.

"We want the kids to have fun while also showing pride for their country and their community," said Severdale resident Stefanie Johnson. "Why just watch when you

**Continued on page 24**







**Left:** Two floats were created in remembrance of Nathaniel McDavitt, who worked on jets during his time in the Air Force.

**Right:** DodgeBow dressed its team in bald eagle suits and American flag inflatables.



## Groups Put Special Touches On Float Designs

*Continued from page 21*

can join in? All are welcome to participate however they are comfortable — walking, bikes, scooters, strollers, etc. Being our first year, our community came together to purchase a banner and residents donated decorations and candy to pass out. We are so excited to participate!”

### Linstead

Lastly, Linstead took the Best Overall title with a float that featured a blue heron sculpture with a 16-foot wingspan, made from recycled materials handcrafted by kids in the community.

The float was a replica of Linstead’s pier set

atop a mock-up of the Severn River.

“For us, bringing the float to reality has been a series of community-wide events over the last two weeks across generations of residents,” said float committee member Brian Donovan. “Our goal is to bring the Linstead community together and to share with residents, most importantly our kids, the importance of taking care of the Severn.”

Linstead kicked off float preparations during its annual community summer camp the week of June 19, when Linstead partnered with the Severn River Association to talk with kids about the importance of the river to the local ecosystem and help the kids understand their obligation to take care of the river.

“We followed it up last week with a community decorating night, where we worked with the kids to create colorful fish, authentic Maryland crabs, and turtles that will be affixed to the outside of our float in our replica of the Severn River,” Donovan said. “It was a phenomenal evening where we had kids working alongside our senior citizens like resident Jack Pepper, who built a custom replica of our lifeguard chair.”

Float committee member Justin Miller said the enthusiasm from so many community members led to a special result.

“We had kids staying up until 10:00pm, painting feathers,” he said. “We had people on their days off coming down to paint the water. We had all that, so it was really awesome.” ■



## Linstead



## Round Bay







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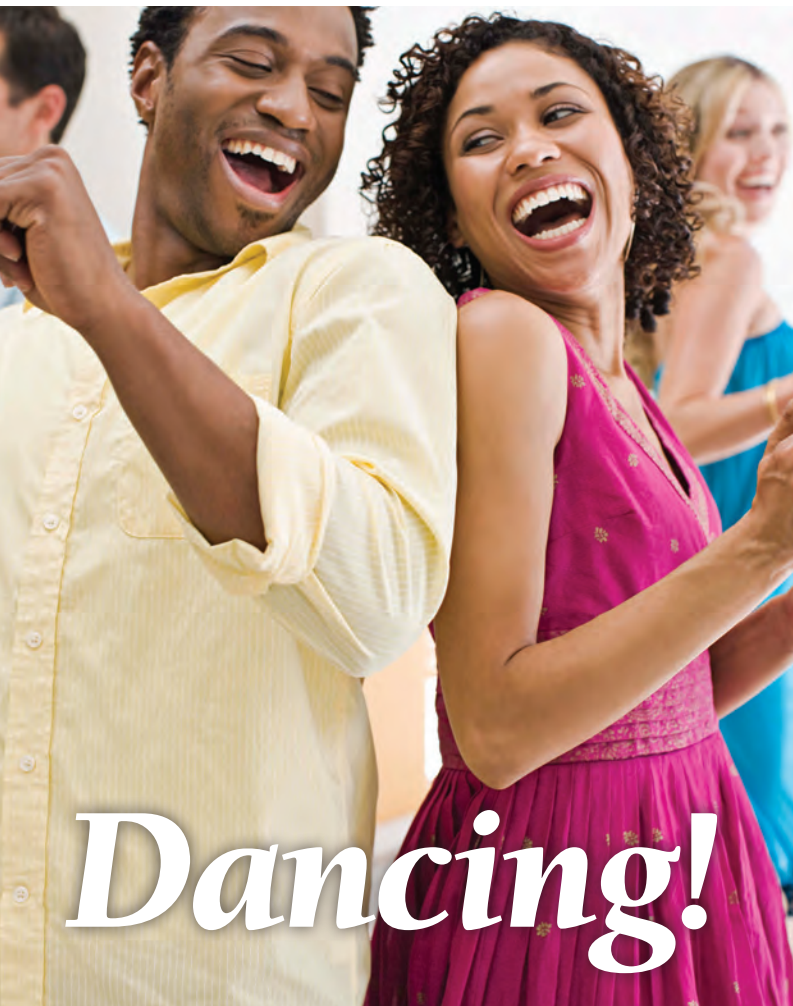
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Gardiner & Appel Group offered parking for the parade judges and food for volunteers following the festivities. Elmore Law Group offered its parking lot for the two "community champion" sponsor tents.

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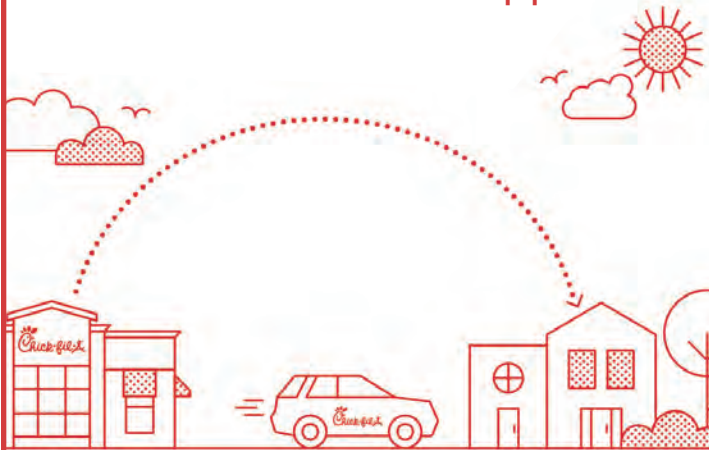
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# HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

# Library Celebrates Flag Day With Troop 1983

Story and photos by Sarah Sternhagen

**A**mong the several patriotic holidays celebrated in the U.S., Flag Day is known as one of reflection on the iconic symbol that represents the country.

The holiday falls on the U.S. Army's birthday, June 14, and honors the flag adopted to represent our nation since 1777. Though that flag had only 13 stars for the 13 colonies when it was first adopted, the flag has since grown alongside the U.S. to include the 50 stars for the 50 states. The Severna Park Library held a ceremony on Flag Day to change the flag flying in front of the library.

"A few years ago, we all noticed that the flag needed replacing, so I requested my branch manager at that time ... if I could put an event together with the local scout troop," said Laura Kellman, a library associate.

Kellman organized the event and contacted local Boy Scouts of America (BSA) troops. This year, the ceremony was held by Troop 1983, Severna Park's first, and currently only, BSA female troop. After Kellman introduced the group of onlookers the day of the event, scoutmaster Jason Port presented his troop and then the girls took it from there.

For the ceremony, Charlotte Triplett, the troop's senior patrol leader, read the poem "I am the Flag" by Howard Schnauber before a color guard came forward to lower the flag and raise a new one in its place. With the troop bugler playing in the background, the girls in the color guard lowered the old flag that had been flying for the past year, folded it into the traditional triangle shape and raised a new flag over the library.

"The library has really supported us for things like merit badges, so when they asked us to help them, we were really honored to help them," said Troop 1983 Scout Zoe Port. "It was a great experience."

Charlotte Shinnamon agreed. "Flag Day is one of the times when we get to take a minute to honor our nation," Charlotte said. "As Scouts, flag duties are really an important part of what we do, so it was great to do this for the community."

After the Scouts did their part, they sang "God Bless America." Kellman gave closing remarks, and as the sun began to set, the flag was illuminated at the top of the flagpole for its first day of flying over the Severna Park Library. ■



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