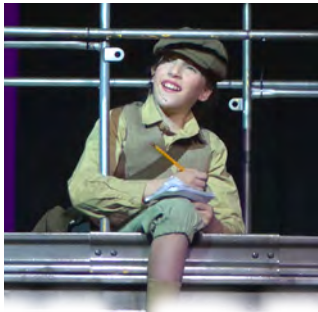




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# SEVERNA PARK VOICE

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SEVERNA PARK, MD

JANUARY 2024

## Lawmakers Share Plans As 2024 Session Gets Underway

By Zach Sparks

[zach@severnaparkvoice.com](mailto:zach@severnaparkvoice.com)

During last year's 90-day General Assembly session, Maryland lawmakers focused on abortion, expediting minimum wage increases and incentivizing the sale of zero-emission vehicles, among other priorities.

During the 2024 session, which runs from January 10 through April 8 barring an extension, elected officials have plenty of priorities, but implementing all of them won't be easy. Maryland's state government is expecting a projected structural deficit of \$761 million in the next fiscal year. The state is also facing a \$3.8 billion annual price tag for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, an education reform law.

With that in mind, Severna Park and Broadneck Peninsula legislators shared the bills they are most passionate about passing.

### HEALTH CARE

Dental care access bills are among the top priorities for Delegate Heather Bagnall, a Democrat from District 33C. She is looking at Medicare services and items like dentures that are not always covered by Medicare insurance.

She is working with the Oral Health Task Force, a temporary committee of health experts who gathered in 2021. They are also discussing dental screenings for young patients. Bagnall said the vaccination recommendations "align nicely" with oral health screenings.

"A lot of folks don't know how important dental screenings are," Bagnall said.

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## GUARDIAN FLAMES

Firefighter Completes  
Nearly 40 Years Of  
Service To County

By Steven Jacobs

Student Intern

After dedicating more than 38 years of service to the Anne Arundel County Fire Department, Lieutenant Mark "Muck" Muckelbauer retired in the fall. For almost four decades, he stood as a symbol of resilience, courage and selflessness.

### Career Journey

Muckelbauer remembers two events that sparked his interest in firefighting. One was the television show "Emergency!" in the 1970s. The other occurred

» Continued on page 10



## Check-Washing Cases Affect Area Residents

By Zach Sparks

[zach@severnaparkvoice.com](mailto:zach@severnaparkvoice.com)

Days after depositing his \$1,500 monthly mortgage check in the blue mailbox by the Kohl's off of Ritchie Highway, Ron Mox was notified that his mortgage was not paid. Next, he received a call from his bank. The check was stolen, and he would have to change all his account passwords.

"I was told they are using fly traps and pulling out the envelopes and changing the name to theirs," he said, adding that he has not been reimbursed and had to change all his passwords.

Mox was the victim of a check-washing scheme that has become more widespread. Checks are being stolen and cashed from United States Postal Service mailboxes and personal mailboxes. In addition to fly traps, stolen keys are being used by some criminals to access post office boxes.

Officers from the Anne Arundel County Eastern District Police Station said approximately 20 cases have been reported in Severna Park and Pasadena



over the past six months.

The United States Postal Inspection Service recovers more than \$1 billion in counterfeit checks and money orders nationally each year.

In a video filmed in 2017, U.S. Postal Inspector Troy Sabby explained how the crime works.

"You get a chemical," he said. "You put it in a little wash bin. You can put a check in there and the handwritten ink will come off and you can therefore use that check and put whatever you want in there."

In one case Sabby used as an example, 10 con men were making checks out to fake names and producing phony IDs.

"These people were able to get a hold of blank temporary driver's license copies and so then they were able to put whatever information they needed on there, and they're very good at it," he said. "It's a fairly simple crime for the suspect to do and it's a very hard crime for the victims to wash what they did to them away."

Another Severna Park resident,

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## Margueritte Mills - Volunteer Of The Month

Every month, the Severna Park Voice recognizes the good work of a local volunteer to honor Voice founder and lifelong Severna Park resident Margueritte Mills.

## Volunteer Makes Memories At Kinder Farm Park

By Zach Sparks

More than 20 years ago when Cathy Cox started visiting Kinder Farm Park with her family, she could not imagine that the site would become such a big part of her life.

"We live down the street, so we'd take kids to the playground or hike the trails," said Cox, who has a daughter and a son.

Before long, she was offering her assistance to the Friends of Kinder Farm Park organization. While she has been willing to help wherever needed, Cox has spent most of her time selling tickets for the park's most popular events.

"Cathy has devoted a great deal of volunteer time to our biggest events, the Fall Fun Day and Jingle Bell Hayride," said Karen Haghghi, vice president of the Friends of Kinder Farm Park. "Even after our Fall Fun Day was canceled, she was willing to help out the following weekend for our Pop-up Harvest Day. She is a giving and efficient volunteer."

Giving to others comes naturally for the Severna Park resident.

"I thoroughly enjoy volunteering,"



*Cathy Cox enjoys being at Kinder Farm Park, where families can see farm animals, use the playground and participate in annual events.*

Cox said. "I like watching all the little kids get excited while they are making scarecrows or carving pumpkins."

Cox enjoyed similar moments with her own children and now she gets to witness that joy again, not only on the faces of young park visitors but also in the enthusiasm of her two grandchildren. Her daughter, former Friends of Kinder Farm Park volunteer Lauren Whiting, is continuing the same traditions she experienced with her mom.

They do not need to be attending an event to appreciate the park, but activities like the Jingle Bell Hayride allow them to share their love of the county resource with more people.

"It's gotten bigger and better with more animals and a sleigh ride," Cox said of the Jingle Bell Hayride.

Cox has done her part to spread the word, notifying community members about Kinder events while working her shift at Walgreens.

She encourages others to volunteer.

"The Friends of Kinder Farm Park are all so nice and fun to be around," she said. "If someone is a people person, they will enjoy it. They're eating food and listening to music."

Cox has volunteered for other events, like decorating a sailboat for Carrollton Manor's float in the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce's Fourth of July parade one year. She expects to volunteer at Kinder Farm Park for several more years.

"It's a lot of fun," she reiterated, "not just for Severna Park, Millersville, Arnold or Pasadena, but for all people and all ages. It's family oriented and it's the place to be."

## Reel Counsel Sets New Fundraising Record For Cancer Survivorship Program

Reel Counsel, a Fish for a Cure (F4AC) team established in 2018 by Eagle Title and Liff, Walsh & Simmons, set out to break the fundraising record for the fishing and fundraising event in November. The team did just that by raising a total of \$164,095.20 and winning the Paul C. Dettor Captain's Challenge for the second year in a row, raising the highest amount in the 17-year history of the event.

The one-day event on the Chesapeake Bay is a culmination of months of planning, organizing and fundraising for the benefit of helping patients in the cancer survivorship program at the Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center's Geaton and JoAnn DeCesaris Cancer Institute.

"Cancer has affected us all as a team in some way, and collectively we understand how this disease can



turn lives upside down," said Jay Walsh, captain of the 2023 team of Reel Counsel; managing partner of Liff, Walsh & Simmons; and CEO of Eagle Title. "Nurse navigators are the health care professionals who become your advocates and help you navigate the most difficult times.

We all understand how important they are and wanted to give back to extend our gratitude."

The 2023 Fish for a Cure event raised over \$650,000 this year, with the Reel Counsel team's efforts representing 25% of the total.

The Reel Counsel team would like to extend their heartfelt thanks and appreciation to everyone who donated not only funds but also time and encouragement.

"Without the support from our family, friends and colleagues, we could not have done what we did," Walsh said. "We are very grateful."

The 2023 Reel Counsel team members include Jay Walsh, Brad Walsh, Tom Simmons, Barry DesRoches, Erin McNaboe, Bradley Benjamin, David Lilleflore, Ed Okonski, Jeff Kelly, Joel Wotell, John Rosso, Michael DuVall Jr. and Nick Clark.



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From our family to yours, may the magic of the Holiday season bring joy to your home and a New Year filled with the keys to new beginnings.



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# Child Support Guidelines Updated

David V. Diggs



When I began practicing family law in 1987, child support awards were unpredictable and often varied from county to county and judge to judge. Early in my career, child support laws evolved with the introduction of statutory guidelines. Child support guidelines were initially adopted in Maryland in 1989. A long-past-due update became effective on October 1, 2010. The guideline tables were further refined as of July 1, 2022.

These guidelines have lent much needed uniformity to child support disputes. Payment obligations are set according to a formula which considers each party's gross income and allots responsibility proportionately. For example, let's assume the following facts:

1. *The mother of 12-year-old twins earns \$229,693 annually, working as a nurse anesthetist.*
2. *The children's health insurance coverage and hers are paid as a benefit of employment.*
3. *The father earns \$94,000, as a contractor and visits the children on alternating weekends.*

In this hypothetical, the father's child support payments will be \$1,297 per month or \$301.63 per week. The July 1, 2022, statutory change resulted in an approximately \$200 monthly deduction for this dad. Child support obligations are greater when work-related child care, private school and/or extraordinary medical expenses are factored into the equation.

Courts may consider certain additional factors and deviate from the guidelines. Child support

will be reduced if alimony is paid to the other party or if the payor has pre-existing child support obligations. Other expenses — such as mortgage payments, assumption of marital debt and college education — might reduce payments. Lastly, if a parent has the ability and opportunity to work but chooses not to do so, he or she is said to be "voluntarily impoverished." The court will attribute "potential income" to this parent, meaning an amount that he or she should be earning. Potential income is only ascribed to parents of children older than 2.

Prior to the change that took effect on October 1, 2020, a different formula was used in which the non-custodial or visiting spouse had the child for greater than 35% of the overnights in a given year. This formula results in a lower level of support, due to the presumption that the parent having "shared physical custody" will bear some of the burden for direct expenses. If the father in the above scenario has shared physical custody, something that he would obtain if his weekends extended to Monday, and if his Wednesday dinner visit extended overnight, then mother would owe father \$459 per month, a swing of \$1,951 per month, attributable to three extra overnights in a two-week period.

With the October 1, 2020, change, the "cliff" effect from application of the shared physical custody guidelines has been smoothed a bit. The statute lowered that number of overnights from 35% to 25% or from 128 to 92. The hope is that this change will result in less haggling over how many overnights each parent may have with the children.

A common misconception involves the notion that there is some connection between the obligation to pay child support and the right to visitation.

A custodial parent may attempt to deny visitation to a former spouse who has fallen behind on child support. Conversely, a parent who has been unreasonably denied access to her child may suspend payments. In either case, the court will apply its version of the old axiom "two wrongs do not make a right."

The proper response by the party who has been wronged is to file a petition for contempt, whereby the offending party will be sanctioned by the court and warned against further nonpayment of support or interference with visitation privileges.

Custody and support orders are never final. Maryland courts always retain the power to modify child support, based upon a showing of a material change in circumstances. Typically, a change in circumstance, which allows a court to revisit child support, involves job loss, significant changes in income and/or substantial changes in a minor child's financial needs. If child support has not been reviewed for several years, it may be time to do so, in order to assess whether or not a modification is justified, particularly in light of the enactment of the new statute, modifying the applicable formulas that are applied.

Child support is one of many issues to address when a marriage falters. Certainly, if you find yourself contemplating separation or divorce, you will have questions about support and other issues. You should consult with an attorney who is familiar with this area of the law and who will assist you in making informed decisions.

*If you need further information regarding this subject, you can contact the Law Office of David V. Diggs LLC, located at 8684 Veterans Highway, suite 302, in Millersville. Call 410-244-1189 or email david@diggslaw.com.*

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# Allison Hamilton Keeps Coffee Flowing At The Big Bean Through Providence Of Maryland Support

By Meredith Winter

Although Allison Hamilton loves coffee, the strawberry-banana smoothie is her favorite drink on the robust menu at The Big Bean. The 26-year-old Glen Burnie resident has been happily employed at the Severna Park coffee shop for two years now, with the support of Providence of Maryland.

Established 62 years ago, Providence is a nonprofit organization with a mission “to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to discover and live their best lives in Anne Arundel and Charles counties in Maryland.” Hamilton is one of over 300 people Providence currently supports through services including career services, residential services, community engagement, mental and behavioral health support, and more.

The Big Bean co-owner Greg Coster shared that Hamilton plays a very important role on the coffee shop’s team. “With cafes and restaurants, there is a lot of side work and Allison is a master of helping make sure that our baristas are prepped and set up for success every day, whether it be stocking things, wrapping things, prepping things – any way that she can help them out,” Coster explained. “She is literally like the jack of all trades.”

Hamilton, who is The Big Bean’s second Providence of Maryland recruit, explained that her day-to-day tasks include wrapping pastries, stocking juices, folding apparel for sale, keeping plenty of lids and sleeves on the ready for the baristas, and much more. She enthusiastically shared that she loves her job and her team. Sipping a mango smoothie on a chilly January morning, she stated, “I like my coworkers. They are nice and kind, and they help me out.”

The special relationship she’s built with owners Greg and Christie Coster



Allison Hamilton (center) has enjoyed working at The Big Bean coffee shop alongside owners Greg (right) and Christie Coster (left) for the past two years. A jack of all trades according to Greg, Hamilton supports the shop’s team of baristas by prepping and stocking all that they need to serve customers well.

tops her list of her favorite things about working at The Big Bean. The three joke and jest throughout each shift – Hamilton has affectionately nicknamed Greg “coffee bean” – but Hamilton also lets them know when it’s time to get serious again.

“She’ll say to me, ‘All right Greg, I have to get back to work, stop joking around,’” Coster said, laughing. “She’s got the personality where she’s able to do her work, and do it really well, but adapt to the lighthearted nature that we try to keep here, and for that reason she’s a perfect fit for what we do.”

Hamilton secured her spot on The Big Bean roster with the support of Providence employment consultant Ashley Mundell, who began working with the young coffee lover in 2020.

Mundell shared that Hamilton has long worked at home babysitting her nieces and nephews, so when she came to Providence, she was ready to roll up her sleeves and get to work in the job field.

Providence offers the people they serve two approaches to gaining employment. The first, regular supported employment, includes traditional job development, interview skills, job applications and job interviews. The nonprofit’s customized employment approach is more involved and includes meeting the future employee in their home, getting to know their friends and family, becoming familiar with their skills and interests, and supporting them regularly in the workplace. Mundell partnered with

Hamilton through regular supported employment, noting that the hard-working young woman was fairly independent from the start.

“She feels at home (at The Big Bean),” Mundell said, echoing what Hamilton expressed about her job. “They’re her second family, they’re very supportive. She can communicate with them about any of her needs, she advocates for herself well, and they are very open when it comes to feedback.”

Over Hamilton’s two years at The Big Bean, which has been fueling Severna Park’s caffeine addiction for over two decades, her role has expanded as she continues to eagerly take on new responsibilities. The next skill she hopes to add to her resume is smoothie making, Coster shared, noting that she’s already learning to make her own blended beverages.

When she’s not at work, Hamilton enjoys listening to music, singing, dancing, watching Disney shows, and babysitting kids.

The Big Bean is just one of 77 local businesses who count on employees like Hamilton whom Providence supports. The 220 Providence staff who come alongside these employees believe that the community is at its best when every person is an engaged contributor, and all are treated with dignity and respect.

Providence Vice President of Community Relations and Development Aimee Bullen said, “We really do meet people where they are. We believe in people. ... We see ourselves as working alongside someone to get them what they need to do it on their own, to live their best life.”

Mundell echoed, “We’re not leading them; we’re supporting them on their own path.”

With her varied skills and caring circle of support, there’s no telling where Hamilton’s path may lead her next.

## MLK Awards Committee Recognizes BOE Member



Dana Schallheim is one of 12 civil rights and human rights activists or groups honored at the 36th Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Program in Hanover in early January.

The largest Anne Arundel County celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday was held in early January, and Severna Park’s Board of Education representative was one of 12 local activists recognized in his honor.

Dana Schallheim received the Alan Legum Civil Rights Award. The Martin Luther King Jr. Committee members chose Schallheim because she supported the passage of Drake Smith’s Board of Education resolution stating that Black lives matter in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, helped reform policies around bullying and bias, championed new Anne Arundel County Public Schools policy protecting LGTBQ+ students, and voted in favor of removing a racist’s name from a middle school.

Schallheim currently serves on the Board of Education’s policy and equity committees and is chair of the scholarship committee.

“Carl Snowden, on behalf of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Dinner Committee, told me that I am being honored as a recipient of the Alan Hilliard Legum Civil Rights Award because of my work and advocacy on the Anne Arundel County Board of Education, which has ‘ensured that all students are treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve,’” Schallheim said. “Alan H. Legum was a distinguished civil rights attorney and cherished friend of the honorable Carl Snowden. He worked tirelessly on behalf of others throughout his lengthy

career. I am quite humbled not only to accept this award named for a lifelong friend of someone I respect so much, but, like Alan Legum, my call to serve others does not hinge on accolades.

“We are at a pivotal moment,” she added. “Our freedoms are in jeopardy. For as long as the voters allow me, I will continue to fight so that all 85,000 students belong so that they can grow and succeed in Anne Arundel County Public Schools.”

This year’s other winners of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. awards are Midshipman First Class Max Josef Bueno, winner of the Drum Major Award; Joseph Butler, winner of the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center Award; Delegate Bonnie Cullison, winner of the Courageous Leadership Award; Midshipman First Class Kaylah Gillums, winner of the Drum Major Award; Erica Griswold, winner of the Drum Major Award; the Harris Family Foundation Inc., winner of the Coretta Scott King Award; Roslyn Johnson, winner of the Dream Keepers Award; Jared Littmann, winner of the We Share the Dream Award; Governor Wes Moore, winner of the Morris H. Blum Humanitarian Award; James Spearman, winner of the Peacemaker Award; and Ralph Thomas, winner of the Drum Major Award.

The 36th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Program were held at the Live! Casino & Hotel Ballroom in Hanover, Maryland. Congressman Jonathan Jackson, the youngest son of the Rev. Jesse Jackson and godson to King, was the keynote speaker.



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## McKinsey Park Gets New Flag

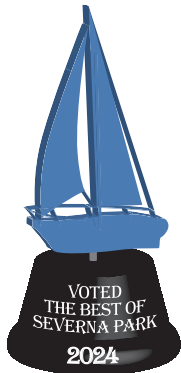
*The parents of five children in the U.S. military, Bill and Mary Kelly wanted to do something special for the community of McKinsey Park, which they joined about a year ago. Bill researched, planned and submitted a plan to put a flagpole at the community entrance. On January 8, 32 McKinsey Park residents witnessed a celebration of raising the flag. Eileen Marion sang patriotic songs. The group then had a pizza lunch provided by the Kellys and a homemade red, white and blue cake made by Marion.*

## Best Of Severna Park Contest Returns

Each year, the Severna Park Voice asks readers to name their favorite businesses, professional services and non-profits in town. This February, the Best of Severna Park contest is back, and you get to choose your favorite places that make the area so unique.

The official Best of Severna Park ballot will be printed in our February edition, and we will begin accepting votes (print and online) immediately. Voting will continue through March, with the winners being announced in the April edition. Rules will be printed with the February ballot, but you can get started now by brainstorming your favorite businesses and services.

Do you know of a category we missed in past years? Send us a suggestion by emailing [spvnews@severnaparkvoice.com](mailto:spvnews@severnaparkvoice.com).



## Check-Washing Cases

» Continued from page 1

who asked to remain anonymous, had \$5,000 stolen.

"In my instance, the check that was washed was cashed through a mobile app into a bank account," the man said. "This may or may not be considered wire fraud since the deposit was made to a bank electronically. In any case, these crimes are not just a theft that involves the U.S. mail but have broader implications that could justify a multi-agency task force to work these crimes."

The FBI handles white-collar crimes that "can destroy a company, wipe out a person's life savings, cost investors billions of dollars, and erode the public's trust in institutions," according to its website. One of the FBI's partners is the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Both the FBI and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service could not be reached for this story.

The Anne Arundel County Police Department shared a few measures people can take to avoid becoming victims of check-washing fraud.

"I encourage community members to help prevent this activity from happening by switching to online

banking," said Eastern District Detective Sergeant Bryan Isaac. "This eliminates the ability of a thief to cash or counterfeit your paper check or to use your personal information for other ill-intentioned purposes."

If electronic banking is not an option, Isaac said, the following tips may help prevent someone from becoming a victim of fraud. Deposit

*"You get a chemical. You put it in a little wash bin. You can put a check in there and the handwritten ink will come off and you can therefore use that check and put whatever you want in there."*

— TROY SABBY  
U.S. POSTAL INSPECTOR

mail before the last pickup at a local post office. Retrieve mail frequently. Never leave mail in a mailbox overnight. Before going on vacation, request to have mail held at the post office or have it picked up by a friend or neighbor.

"And here's a tip for when you're

writing checks: use a gel pen," U.S. Postal Inspector Andrea Avery said in another informational video. "They have ink characteristics that are difficult to remove from checks."

Mox and other Severna Park residents wish they had known about the spike in fraud sooner, but they want their Anne Arundel County neighbors to be educated so they don't suffer from the same scam.

"The world right now is really cruel," Mox said.

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# River Associations Cite Safety Issue In Round Bay Development

By Zach Sparks

[zach@severnaparkvoice.com](mailto:zach@severnaparkvoice.com)

Roughly one month after the Magothy River Association released a documentary about Mount Misery — a historic hilltop in the Round Bay neighborhood — a developer was granted a grading permit to clear the land in August. Now, both the Magothy River Association and the Severn River Association are citing an additional reason for opposing the Severna Park development.

In a letter sent to International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 1563 in Millersville, the Magothy River Association stated that a private driveway has been approved for a 20% slope to access two 5,000-square-foot homes on Mount Misery, which was vital to the defense of Washington, D.C., during the Civil War.

The slope is 6% above the maximum allowable slope per county code. A house fire on that hill could expose firefighters and Round Bay residents to danger, the letter said.

“Supporting the firefighters sometimes does not mean sending a \$25 check in the mail,” said Paul Spadaro, president of the Magothy River Association. “We should support the union.”

The river associations want the grading and building permits to be withdrawn until safety issues are resolved.

Jesse Iliff, executive director of the Severn River Association, decided to get involved after learning about the issue from Spadaro.

“We’re an environmental group, so a fire code is not something we generally think about,” Iliff said, before adding that the two issues are connected. “If any area would need environmental

protection, this would qualify.”

Iliff and Spadaro both expressed dismay over the county granting the variance for the slope after being sued by the developer.

“It sets a bad precedent if a company of people target ecologically sensitive land and sue the county to get what they want,” Iliff said.

In a public letter shared in the fall, County Executive Steuart Pittman said the developer met all county requirements to build at the Round Bay site.

“Landowners have a right to build on their property whatever the law allows,” Pittman wrote. “Neighbors, county employees, county council members and county executives are not empowered to deny grading or building permits for reasons other than noncompliance with county code, even when we’d prefer no development on the site.”

Spadaro and Iliff both contend that the slope does not conform to county code.

Having served as a pro bono attorney for the Chesapeake Legal Alliance, Iliff has seen variations and exceptions granted for developments in the past. Although Anne Arundel County grants fewer exceptions for projects in the critical area — land within 1,000 feet of tidal waters and wetlands — than other Maryland jurisdictions, he said, everyone needs to do their part as green spaces continue to dwindle.

“It’s the same battle of the public good versus private property rights,” he said. “As more forests, marshes and meadows turn into developments ... we hear, ‘This is just two lots. This won’t break the (Chesapeake) Bay’s back.’ The bay suffers the death of 1,000 cuts. That mentality needs to stop.”

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# Celebrating 15 Years Of The Watershed Steward Academy

By Janet AlJunaidi

Fifteen years ago this month, what were you doing? In December 2008, the Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy (AAWSA) was officially formed, after several years of about 40 partner groups working together to create it.

This month, WSA celebrates its 15th anniversary and many successes, including training over 300 Watershed Stewards.

But what do Watershed Stewards do? And what is a watershed anyway?

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a common outlet — in our case, the Chesapeake Bay. Anne Arundel County has 12 watersheds that drain into the bay.

The mission of AAWSA is “to train and mobilize community leaders to drive change for sustainable landscapes and clean waters.” During their course, steward candidates acquire skills and knowledge and then work with their communities, which can be defined as neighborhoods, congregations, businesses, schools, libraries, etc., on projects that reduce pollution at its source; and all of these actions together improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Stewards learn about methods and solutions to control water runoff; how to use assessment and planning tools;

how to write grants to obtain funding for projects; accessing resources for native plants, trees and materials; and understanding county agencies and their functions in permitting and promoting healthy waterways.

Besides training and classwork, each Watershed Steward candidate works on an outreach project in their community. That project can be one of two types: either educational, “environmental literacy,” or in-ground, or “rainscaping.”

WSA will celebrate its 15th anniversary this month with the graduation of its 15th class of Watershed Stewards, with many family, friends, and county officials in attendance to mark the occasion as well as the work WSA has done. Besides the 325 stewards trained to date, WSA can boast that since 2009, those stewards, working with neighbors, businesses, schools and one another, have participated in hundreds of projects to reduce pollution in our watersheds. Since 2009, stewards have installed over 4,350 projects, planted more than 202,500 native plants and trees, and engaged nearly 205,000 residents. WSA has also worked to train over 150 Tree Troopers to date.

Watershed Stewards also form friendships with others while acting to make a difference and come away from

the program with new perspectives.

Karen Kiehne, a Severn Watershed Steward of class 15, said, “The Watershed Stewards Academy opened my eyes to simple practices that I have been missing as well as missteps I have been taking in my gardening efforts that can make a world of difference to our rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. My eyes are opened to the ability for one person to change the world for the better — one yard at a time!”

John Garofolo, a Stoney Beach Watershed Steward of class 15, agreed.

“WSA is much more than a teaching organization — it’s a growing family of knowledgeable people who care about each other, their communities, and nature and want to learn and make a difference and help other stewards with their projects. I’m honored to now be a part of ... WSA. It’s fun and enlightening, you’ll meet great people, you’ll enjoy getting your hands dirty and getting your community involved, and especially in making a difference!”

A new WSA cohort will form in the spring.

To learn more about AAWSA, visit [www.aawsa.org](http://www.aawsa.org).

*Janet AlJunaidi is a Watershed Steward candidate.*

## 15 Things You Can Do For The Chesapeake Bay

- Consider installing a rain barrel.
- Replace an area of turf grass or hard surface with native plants.
- Keep up regular maintenance of your septic system.
- Clean up pet waste.
- Compost food waste.
- Avoid pesticides.
- Properly dispose of household hazardous wastes.
- Reduce plastic waste, especially single-use plastics.
- Bring a reusable bag when shopping. If you forget, use paper over plastic.
- Carry a reusable bottle or coffee cup with you.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge rather than running faucet water until cool.
- Volunteer with Save Our Trees, the Severn River Association, the Magothy River Association, or other environmental groups.
- Vote for lawmakers who prioritize clean water.
- Practice clean boating.
- Keep storm drains clear of debris.

## Guardian Flames: Firefighter Completes Nearly 40 Years Of Service

» Continued from page 1

when he was in the 10th grade and he was talking to a friend who had joined a volunteer fire company.

“I remember thinking, ‘You can do this for free?’” Muckelbauer said. “So, in April 1981, I joined a local volunteer fire company. I took classes and rode the apparatus. I still had an interest in pursuing this as a career. I was successful in the hiring process. And on July 25, 1985, I reported to the Anne Arundel County Fire Department headquarters in Millersville, and such began my career in Recruit Fire School, Class 21.

“After being promoted to lieutenant, I had many assignments at some of the busiest fire stations in the county, located in Glen Burnie areas,” he said. “This kept me busy and motivated me to continue this career. It’s just another day, but the next thing I know, it’s 38 years later.”

Muckelbauer responded to approximately 15,000 emergencies.

“When someone dials 911, it’s the worst day of their life,” he said. “No matter if it is for a chirping smoke alarm, to assisting someone who fell, or to a house on fire.”

### Most Memorable Rescue Mission

Muckelbauer recalls one specific motor vehicle incident that exemplifies the courage, quick decision-making and emotional resilience it takes to be a dedicated firefighter for such a long time.

On a summer evening, the fire department received a call reporting that someone was trapped in a vehicle following a collision. Units arrived, and the report from the first arriving fire officer was that a vehicle was overturned, and someone was trapped inside, having agonal respirations.

“When my fire engine arrived on location, we saw that a pickup truck had struck BGE poles and broke them in half, with lines on the ground,” Muckelbauer said. “The vehicle was upside down and the driver was still in the driver’s seat. However, he had slid down enough that his head was resting on the roof, in a precarious way that cut off his breathing. His legs were entangled up in the gas and brake pedal,

and he was hanging from inside the pickup truck.”

Muckelbauer directed his firefighter inside the vehicle from the passenger-side window. He confirmed that the driver was not breathing. Muckelbauer ran to the driver’s side to survey the situation.

“The driver wouldn’t budge,” Muckelbauer said. “I had to lay on my back, stick my body inside the window, reach up and find his legs. I followed his legs up with my hands, then found the gas and brake pedals. Pulling myself up into the truck to reach more, I found his foot that was entangled between the two pedals. It was pitch black inside the truck ... it was all guesswork wondering how his foot was stuck. I maneuvered his foot from between the pedals, and yelled to my firefighter, ‘Pull him now.’ My firefighter, Jon, pulled him out of the truck and he began breathing instantly.”

### Survivor’s Story

During a funeral procession, tragedy struck. It is a day that is forever etched into the memory of Severna Park resident Betty Winkelmeyer Wells. It was around 2007, and Winkelmeyer Wells witnessed a heart-wrenching car accident as the procession she was involved in made its way down the street.

“It was not a clear day, and the procession went through the traffic light as usual,” Winkelmeyer Wells said. “I could see from the passenger side, this car trying to beat the light, and when he hit our Lincoln on the driver’s side, we spun around from going north to south.”

The sudden impact sent her world reeling. And in the middle of the chaos and shock, a beacon of hope emerged in the form of Muckelbauer.

“And because I already had a neck injury from years ago,” she said, “that was my first concern ... Right away, firetrucks and ambulances showed up on the scene ... and a fireman, who, because of the head gear and everything, I did not recognize, immediately put me in (the ambulance), bracing my head and my neck, got over top of me, so I would be able to see him when I was strapped in and said, ‘This is Mark.’

“And I’m like, ‘Mark who?’ Winkelmeyer Wells said. “Finally, he gave me his last name ... and I said,

‘Oh my gosh, Mark.’ Why I did not initially recognize his voice or his face I could not tell you.”

### Reflections and Personal Insights

No matter the profession, a lot of aspects can change over a 38-year tenure. When asked about how the fire department has advanced over the years, Muckelbauer said that “The NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) guides many departments, including Anne Arundel County. Safety comes in many ways. When I left the department, we had two sets of turnout gear; if one was used inside a fire, after the fire, you sent it for cleaning, without question. As we now know, there are many carcinogens in smoke. Gone are the days of smelling smoke on turnout gear after a fire. Little did we know years ago, this was dangerous. There was a distinct aroma when you walked into a fire station and could smell the smoke from a previous fire. The risk of cancer is tremendous for firefighters. This one step can hopefully eliminate this threat and save lives in the future.”

Muckelbauer has become a familiar face in the community because of his life-saving efforts and also for educating the younger generation about public safety as a career path.

“When you are a firefighter, you are in the spotlight, and people see you when they see that fire engine,” Muckelbauer said. “Children are particularly impressionable. On many occasions, we made impromptu stops, to see a child that was waving. Can you imagine, as a child, waving to a fire engine, and then the fire engine stopping?”

Since retiring from the department in September, Muckelbauer has had time to reflect on the significant impact he made, leaving an exemplary outline for future firefighters in the county.

“Looking back, I see days when we made a difference in someone’s life, either in an emergency or just taking time with someone who needs help,” he said. “Great customer service was what I wanted my crews to give. When we left a house, I would always ask the individuals who needed assistance, ‘Is there anything else we can do for you?’ I can’t say I made a significant impact, but I can say I gave the best customer service that I could to our community.”

## Lawmakers Share Plans

» Continued from page 1

"All the data tells us that when getting good early care, your long-term outlooks are vastly improved."

Bagnall is advocating for reimbursement for community health workers and sponsoring a food map concept that she called "one small bill for a big effort." The food map would provide data on food systems, geographic patterns and community trends.

"With the dynamic food map, we can see how we can address food insecurity as a social determinant of health," Bagnall said, noting that Johns Hopkins and the Capital Area Food Bank maps serve as examples.

Delegate Rachel Muñoz, a Republican representing District 31, plans to sponsor a bill that would offer mothers the opportunity, not the requirement, to see a sonogram before an abortion.

"The sonograms are being done anyway," Muñoz said. "From my pro-life work, I've found that many women suffer from pain and trauma because they were not given the information prior to having an abortion.

"I don't see it as a pro-life bill," she said. "I see it as a pro-women's health bill because we are giving women options."

Senator Dawn Gile, a Democrat in District 33, wants to make prescription drugs more affordable.

### CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The juvenile justice system is expected to garner much discussion this session following the passage of the Juvenile Justice Reform law last year. That bill stated that children under age 13 may not be charged with a crime unless it's a violent offense. Opponents of that law believe that it hinders law enforcement from carrying out investigations.

Muñoz serves on the judiciary committee and is hearing both sides of the debate.

"Democrats want to protect young children. Republicans are saying public safety is the No. 1 priority," Muñoz said. "I am a mother of five. If criminals are using children to commit crimes, like carjackings ... what happens is these children are positively reinforced for committing crimes. We need everyone to speak the same language and cooperate to protect our kids."

Related to crime and public safety, Gile supports a school-mapping initiative that would help law enforcement in case of a school shooting.

### EDUCATION

Funding the Blueprint for Education is possibly the biggest challenge facing the legislature. The blueprint has five pillars, or focus areas: early childhood education, high-quality and diverse teachers and leaders, college and career readiness, more resources for all students to be successful, and governance and accountability.

"I believe in the blueprint," Gile said. "I believe it's a smart investment in Maryland's children, especially in our early education, but no doubt it's expensive, so we have to work on ways of funding it."

Muñoz and District 31 Delegate Brian Chisholm are among the many Republicans who don't see where the state will find the funds. Democrats remain steadfast in their support of the plan.

"There is a clear and full-throated

commitment from the executive and legislative branch to see it through," Bagnall said. "COVID and online learning threw us a curveball, but we have to be creative and strategic. What I'm learning from our leadership is there is a commitment to figure out both."

### BUDGET, TAXES AND FEES

Chisholm wants to cut the costs and fees associated with starting a small business so that their owners can "can get off the ground without the regulatory humps to get started."

To help first-time homebuyers last year, Chisholm introduced the Affordable Housing Act of 2023, which would eliminate the state transfer tax on the purchase of primary residences priced at \$350,000 and under. Although the bill did not pass, Chisholm hopes it will be adopted with some tweaks.

"This is a commonsense approach to embolden the first-time homebuyers, and the lower-priced market consumers, to enter the current market space on their way to wealth creation," Chisholm explained to the Severna Park Voice last session.

Chisholm is concerned about the early retirement of electrical plants, like Brandon Shores in Curtis Bay. He hopes to push legislation so these facilities will not be forced to retire.

"Everyone has this big push for electric vehicles, but that electricity still has to be generated," Chisholm said. "They seem to poo-poo any nuclear plants ... I think it's the cleanest form of energy we have right now. Wind and solar produces 10% of the energy we have right now. The consumer is the one who is going to pay for this — our poor, our elderly. Your power bill is not something you can choose to ignore."

### SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

Gile wants to address a sliding scale used by the Department of Veterans Affairs for health benefits. Veterans may have a 100% disability rating but a condition that the department considers "temporary."

"Let's say you have cancer, the Department of Veterans Affairs might not consider that permanent, but it can rise to a level that is debilitating," Gile said.

She also wants to eliminate military discrimination, such as employers who don't hire military spouses because they see a resume that includes jobs all over the place.

Muñoz is sponsoring a bill to waive parking fees for drivers with a "certain individually earned, combat-related armed forces special registration plate or a certain disabled veteran special registration plate."

### OTHER ITEMS

One of Gile's priorities is getting the Department of Natural Resources to strengthen drunk boating laws. The bill is inspired, among other reasons, by the death of Anne Arundel Community College lacrosse player Nick Barton. A man was under the influence of drugs and alcohol while operating a boat on the West River in 2021. Their boat struck a channel piling.

Senator Bryan Simonaire has proposed legislation to create a program in Maryland to help the blind and deaf.

**Read the full story online.**

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# SP Tech Consultant Writes Book On Mount St. Mary's

By Alyson Kay

Information technology entrepreneur and freelance writer John Singleton's new book, "The Meaning of Mount St. Mary's," is the culmination of his years of research into the history and mythology surrounding his alma mater, Mount St. Mary's University.

The project began shortly after Singleton graduated with a Master of Business Administration degree in 1987.

"As a graduate, I wanted to better understand the identity of the college and why it was formed," Singleton said.

Along with his work as CEO and technology consultant at Communications Resources Inc., Singleton also works as a freelance writer, including 20 years at the Severna Park Voice, a passion he attributes to his liberal arts education.

"I've taken many philosophy and theology courses over the years and that's where I got my desire to write," Singleton said.

He credits his freelance jobs with giving him the confidence to write a book.

During the coronavirus pandemic, Singleton used his downtime to sort through the research material that he collected over the years with the goal of publishing.

The project resulted in a coffee table book with art and illustrations, as well as the stories of 12 people who helped form Mount St. Mary's University, along with Catholic education and Catholicism in the United States. Singleton refers to them as "heroes."

"The Mount's heroes are dragon slayers," Singleton said. "They stick up for the little guy. They snatch victory from the jaws of defeat even when confronted with overwhelming odds."



Photo courtesy of Paul Auchincloss

John Singleton (left) and Mount St. Mary's University President Emeritus Tom Powell posed with a copy of "The Meaning of Mount St. Mary's."

The stories are told chronologically from its founder, the Rev. John Dubois, to its current president, retired Army Brigadier General Timothy Trainor.

"It's a book of fables, a book of heroes, that creates a mythology about Mount St. Mary's that I felt was missing," Singleton said. "So, I started writing about the university in a mythological way. A way that was

fitting to its core identity and to celebrate its history, legends and lore."

The coffee table book format helped Singleton to highlight one specific person featured in the book, artist John LaFarge, who contributed greatly to American religious art in the 19th century. His artwork is featured on every page.

Singleton identifies with Dubois the most out of the 12 heroes he wrote about because of his work in religious freedom.

"Our First Amendment is a foundational freedom to Americans," Singleton said. "That's why I would point to Dubois and what he did as really important."

The book also emphasizes the importance of Maryland and Mount St. Mary's in the history of Catholic education in America. Early graduates helped found many Catholic colleges, including University of Notre Dame, Catholic University, St. John's University, Fordham University and Seton Hall University.

Other types of religious schools were also started by Mount St. Mary's graduates, including the parochial school system that was formed in New York City in the 1850s in part due to Fordham University founder Archbishop John Hughes' advocacy for state support for parochial schools.

The book ends with a poem by Singleton about climbing the mountain of Mount St. Mary's.

"I liked writing poetry when I was a kid, so when I went to write about Mount St. Mary's, it came to me pretty quickly," Singleton said.

"The Meaning of Mount St. Mary's" is available in limited-edition hardcover at the Mount St. Mary's bookstore and can be purchased for pickup or shipping on the university's website.

## We Believe In You(th) Campaign Continues To Have An Impact On Severna Park

By Zach McGrath

Over a year since its inception, the We Believe in You(th) campaign, launched by Metro Maryland Youth for Christ (MMYFC), continues to impact young people in Severna Park.

MMYFC is a chapter of the larger Youth for Christ organization, founded in 1940 and associated with Billy Graham. The organization aims to provide support and programming for people ages 11-19.

Currently, MMYFC runs programs that reach out to deaf youths, young people in detention centers, military children living at Fort Meade, and teen parents. The overall mission of the organization, according to MMYFC staffer Brooke Atkinson, is "to meet and minister to these young people in any place they may find themselves in."

The We Believe in You(th) campaign is a relatively new initiative for MMYFC. It aims to expand MMYFC's mission to support youth beyond its organization. The initiative provides opportunities and resources for community members who frequently interact with young people — including coaches, teachers and parents — to express how much they believe in and

support the youth in their lives.

While the We Believe in You(th) campaign is still in its infancy, its ethos and mission have been long-running trends in MMYFC's work in Severna Park.

"Our church has been involved with Youth for Christ for years," said the Rev. Dan Smith, pastor of Severna Park Evangelical Presbyterian Church. "The We Believe in You(th) campaign hasn't been so much a singular event but an emphasis on the work we need to do to support our young people."

Since the campaign's inception in 2022, dozens of local businesses, churches and organizations have partnered with MMYFC to support the We Believe in You(th) initiative.

A year after the We Believe in You(th) campaign began, MMYFC hosted a week of events just before the holiday season to celebrate the campaign's growth and reach more young people across the greater Baltimore region.

The week started with a kickoff event at Redemption City Church in Baltimore. Restaurants hosted spirit nights throughout the week to unite youth and supportive mentors. One

» Continued on page 14

## Joy, Gratitude And Faith Bloom In Author's Book

By Judy Tacyn

Growing up in Ghana, Severna Park resident Asantewaa Tweedie faced adversities that most Americans cannot imagine or understand, but she never lacked opportunities to face challenges and attack them with unbridled, bold faith.

"God is right there next to you," Tweedie said. "Let him love you."

Tweedie's book, "A Bouquet of Flowers," is a spiritual read for everyone regardless of where they are in their faith journey or relationship with God.

"A Bouquet of Flowers" reads like a leisurely stroll through an expansive botanical garden in the spring, like stopping to read each placard at the roots of fragrant, colorful and delicate plants and the joyful realization the beauty of each petal is a creation and a gift from God.

"My book is my appreciation of life," said Tweedie, who shares her experiences in receiving God's love, loving yourself and loving one another. "Writing has been my getaway to share what's on my mind that I wasn't able to say before."

Tweedie's parents separated when she was a young child in Ghana. She was loved unconditionally by her father but faced challenges, none of which she allows to define her or di-



Photo by Judy Tacyn

Severna Park resident Asantewaa Tweedie's new book, "A Bouquet of Flowers," is a spiritual walk through the garden of life, love and faith.

minish her faith.

"Adversity is a bridge, not a burden," she said. "My book is an attempt to show people how to be appreciative of everything we have. Everything we have is a gift from God. A privilege."

» Continued on page 14

## We Believe In You(th) Campaign Continues Impact



Severna Park Campus Life participated in We Believe in You(th) events in November.

### » Continued from page 13

of these restaurants was Severna Park eatery La Posta Pizzeria, an especially supportive campaign partner.

During the week, MMYFC worked hard to involve as many young people and mentors as possible.

"We tried to create both a physical and digital movement to cast as wide a net as possible; we worked a lot with our sponsors on the ground by giving out T-shirts and swag," Atkinson said. "We did a lot of social media work as well — it's where young people of every background can be reached — so we tried to complement physical and digital word of mouth."

Smith found the week to have an impact not only on local youth but also his entire congregation.

"I found the strongest impact of the week to be on adults who don't have direct ties to Severna Park High School," Smith said. "If you don't have children at Severna Park High School, you can have an assumption of what teenagers are like, so by bringing a spotlight on the reasons to be excited by our local youth, we hoped to show people they do have very real reasons to be encouraged about our future," Smith said.

The week culminated with an event held at Lighthouse Church in Glen Burnie. Over 100 young people attended the event and were welcomed with an itinerary of activities and games. MMYFC staff ended the event with a commissioning message. They explained why the initiative mattered to them, their

continued plans for supporting youth, and an affirmation of the young people with whom MMYFC works.

Atkinson's favorite moments of the week occurred during the Lighthouse Church event when young people shared the week's impact through testimonials.

"It felt good when students, some of whom were feeling down or discouraged, shared how much it meant to get a personalized text message, letter, or note from a mentor they respected," Atkinson explained. "The air of encouragement and uplift the young people felt really made the week worth it."

MMYFC conducts programming and provides support for youth ages 11-19 year-round. Information on how to get involved can be found at [www.mmyfc.org](http://www.mmyfc.org).

## Joy, Gratitude And Faith Bloom

### » Continued from page 13

Everything. We turn on the faucet and warm water comes out. That's a privilege. I think we have too much and that excess fosters entitlement. We need to slow down and return to God."

Published by Christian Faith Publishing and released in November 2023, "A Bouquet of Flowers" is filled with delicate, colorful illustrations of botanical gifts. Each flower represents characteristics or qualities. Tweedie provides explanations of each bloom, spreading her seeds of wisdom and nourishing each page with sprinklings of Bible passages and reflections.

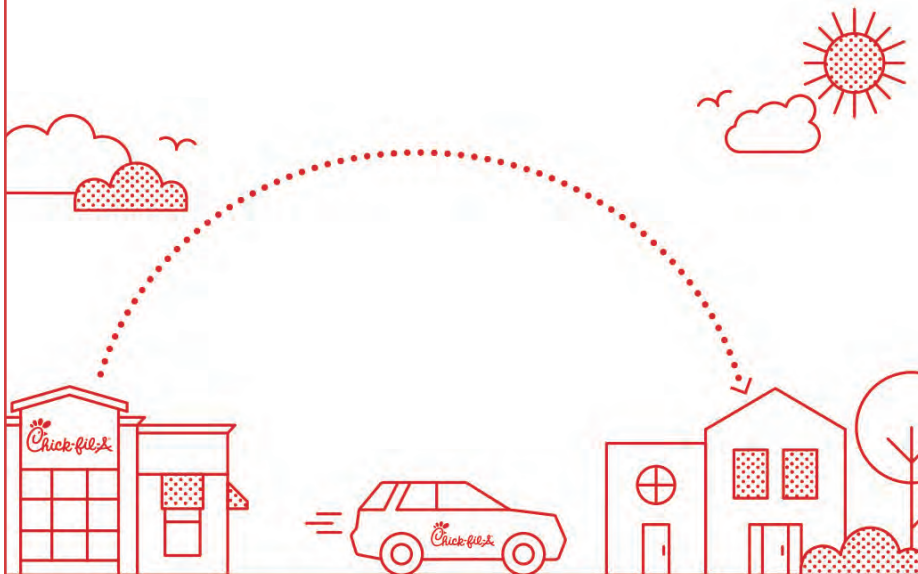
Tweedie's attitude of gratitude and joy radiates from the pages of her book, and her infectious personality and smile. Her passion for gardening led her to compare God's love to plants. As she spent more time in gardens, Tweedie felt God was communicating to her through flowers.

"It is time to present to God a bouquet of flowers. He is a love waiting patiently for affection," said Tweedie, speaking about equating gratitude to a flower. "I am encouraging this analogy to every act of kindness as a flower. When you act with kindness, joy, love and gratitude, you choose to share a flower. It's time to present God with a bouquet of flowers."

"A Bouquet of Flowers" is available on all major book retail sites as well as [www.readerhouse.com](http://www.readerhouse.com) for a 10% discount as of mid-January.

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## Ten Years In The Making: Comprehensive Rezoning

**Amanda Fiedler**  
Councilwoman  
District 5



the Anne Arundel County Council, 2024 means the introduction of the eagerly anticipated first round of comprehensive rezoning for our county.

Comprehensive rezoning is the follow-up to the approved and recommended land use in Plan 2040, or the General Development Plan (GDP), that was passed in 2019. By law, the GDP and rezoning must be done once every eight years, but the process has been delayed considerably due to shutdowns in 2020.

For comprehensive rezoning, the county is divided into nine regions. Three of the nine regions will be reviewed at a time. The review process for zoning applications includes discussion and recommendations by

The new year is here. This time marks a fresh start for many; a time of new beginnings and putting away the trials and tribulations of the last year. For

the Stakeholders Advisory Committee, a group made up of appointed community members, business owners, environmentalists, developers and others who reside in the region under review. The Planning Advisory Board, a group of seven community members appointed by the county executive, with a vote by the county council, then review the same applications, hold public testimony and make recommendations on each zoning application.

The Office of Planning and Zoning will then compile all of these, including their own recommendations, into a supplementary document that will coincide with the rezoning bill for each region.

In the initial group of three regions that will come before the council is Region 4, consisting of most of our district (the Severna Park, Millersville and Broadneck area).

What is a zoning change? A change in zoning means that a property is either requesting a more intensive use of the existing zoning category (residential, commercial, industrial, marina) or changing entirely from one category of zoning to another. No two applications are the same; the circumstances of

each property are nuanced in their request. It is also possible that a property owner can request to be downzoned — but this rarely, if ever, happens.

While there is an opportunity for property owners to apply for a zoning change during the legislative process (during the bill's deliberation period before the council), most properties that the council will consider for rezoning have gone through this multistep process. The council will be tasked with making the final decision on each application. The unpleasant reality is that in some cases, this process pits neighbor against neighbor and the council will be tasked with being both judge and jury, or that is what it may feel like.

In preparation for this important and impactful work, it became clear to me that the council was going to face challenging decisions due to the age of our zoning code, and the limitations that exist and have not kept up with the way each zoning category has changed over the years. Two specific areas stood out to me, our small business district (SBD) zone and our marina zones.

» Continued on page 18

## Budget Season Has Begun!

**Dana Schallheim**  
Board of Education  
District 5



Happy 2024! I wish all residents of Anne Arundel County a happy and healthy new year! Now that it's January, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County will be

knee-deep in the budget process for 52 days until the Fiscal Year 2025 budget is struck during the February 21 Board of Education meeting.

At first blush, the draft FY2025 operating and capital budgets appear to be both balanced and realistic. I will focus on a few highlights.

### Compensation - \$60.5 million

This year's recommended compensation package includes one step and a 3% cost-of-living allowance (COLA) for all employees including teachers and staff in bargaining units I through VI. As with every year, the final compensation package must be negotiated with all bargaining units. Additionally, a \$17 million investment in our self-funded health insurance fund is proposed.

### Student Mental Health Positions - \$3.2 million

The superintendent, Dr. Mark Bedell, is recommending adding 24.5 new positions which comprise more than eight school counselors, eight school psychologists, six additional social workers and two additional pupil personnel workers. These positions will be located at the new Severn Run High School and Two Rivers Elementary School as well as in community and Title 1 schools.

### Blueprint Mandates - \$6.6 million

Implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future remains a top priority in order to meet the letter of the law. Funding will be focused on three of the five pillars this year – concentration of poverty, college and career readiness, and prekindergarten classes.

### ESSR Funding Cliff - \$7.5 million

Federal funding received during the pandemic is beginning to sunset. For programs that were supported by this funding to continue, they must be moved into the unrestricted portion of the operation budget or be discontinued. The superintendent is recommending that funding remain for classroom coverage, which pays for teacher coverage when a substitute cannot be secured, lease agreements for laptops for Unit I and Unit IV employees and cloud storage, and funds for a learning management system (LMS), Google Voice/Text services, Google Enterprise services, Google Meet, and Google Drive services.

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## The State Of Marriage In Maryland

**Scott Poyer**  
Clerk of the  
Circuit Court  
Anne Arundel  
County



Despite any rumors you may have heard to the contrary, it turns out that people are still meeting, falling in love and getting married. In the four years before the COVID pandemic, the number of marriage certificates processed by the clerk's offices across the state averaged about 40,000 per year. But then COVID hit, and with access to weddings being a bit tricky, the marriage numbers took a hit too. In Fiscal Year 2020, there were only about 27,000 marriages in the state, an almost 33% decrease. However, since COVID, the number of marriages in Maryland has been bouncing back steadily. In Fiscal Year 2021, the number of marriages climbed back to about 33,000. In Fiscal Year 2022, they were 35,000, and when the numbers come out for 2023, it looks like we will be back to normal.

Other trends are also evident in

The end of the year is a good time for updates on the current state of affairs in various areas. I thought it might be a nice time for an update on a happy topic, the state of marriage in Maryland.

“Despite any rumors you may have heard to the contrary, it turns out that people are still meeting, falling in love and getting married.”

the marriage data. One continuing long-term trend has been the number of marriage ceremonies taking place outside of traditional churches. Throughout much of U.S. history, marriage ceremonies were conducted by traditional clergy in traditional churches and houses of worship. However, that is no longer the case. Today about 50% of marriage ceremonies in Maryland are performed by a clerk in a courthouse. And even for those who are listed as having been married by clergy, many are not traditional clergy.

The development of the internet has made it easy to be ordained as clergy online by organizations that offer ordination to anyone who will pay the one-time fee. As a result, many of the clergy performing marriage ceremonies today are friends and family members who became ordained online for the special occasion. Exact numbers on this trend are hard to come by, but given the thousands of marriage certificates coming through my office, I would estimate as many as 15% to 20% of marriages are performed

by non-traditional clergy. Taken together with the 50% of marriages that are in a courthouse, I would estimate that for couples being married today, there is only about a 30% to 35% chance that they will have been married by traditional clergy in a traditional church.

The other major trend is marriage between couples of the same sex. Since marriage between couples of the same sex became legal in Maryland 10 years ago, on January 1, 2013, tens of thousands of couples of the same sex have been married in the state. On average, I would estimate they represent about 10% to 15% of all marriages performed every year in the state. Ten years ago, it was illegal; today it is a routine daily occurrence. The impact on hundreds of thousands of people in Maryland has been enormous. It would be no exaggeration to call it life-changing for those couples and their families.

In summary, the institution of marriage is alive and well in Maryland. How people get married has changed quite a bit. But people are still meeting, falling in love, and getting married the same as they always have, and hopefully they will be for many more years to come.

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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## Ten Years In The Making: Comprehensive Rezoning

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I have introduced two bills that are intended to improve each of these categories, the Small Business District Bill and the Neighborhood Marina Bill. Bill 92-23, the SBD bill, slightly expands the size that is allowed and the types of businesses that can exist in an SBD, along with loosening some architectural requirements for SBDs located on higher classified roadways.

Small businesses are often faced with refinancing for improvements or necessary maintenance. Banks typically do not look favorably at a business requesting financing when they are located on land that is not zoned for commercial use. Requesting commercial zoning can be challenging. There is understandable concern from residents of over-commercializing areas that have a low commercial, more residential feel. The small business district laws, as they stand, aren't a viable option either. The code greatly limits the size and type of a business that is considered appropriate for this zoning designation.

The concept of a small business district began with one of my predecessors, so it seems almost fitting to update it so that it works for businesses and surrounding communities in 2024 and beyond.

The Marina Bill adds a new category of marina zoning, as a

large gap exists between our lower marina zone (MA1) and the next intensive marina zone (MA2).

MA1 zoned properties are marinas that are owned and operated by a homeowners' association, have riparian rights and are available only to community members. MA2, the next level of marina zoning, allows for commercial marinas, including lodging, gas stations, restaurants, pubs, etc.

If a small neighborhood marina that rents boat slips only for piers needs to change its zoning in order to improve its property and/or conform to our county code, it has only MA1 and MA2 as an option. If it is not a community marina, MA1 isn't an option. The potential intensity of MA2 causes obvious concerns for neighbors. Bill 3-24 adds MA1-B to the county code. MA1-B, as proposed, gives the ability for these marinas to be designated as a small neighborhood marina with limited pier slips for commercial use on marinas of three acres or less. No restaurants. No pubs. No gas stations.

These bills, if passed, won't solve every circumstance the council will consider, but they will improve our options for finding the best solution for everyone.

Please share your thoughts with me on these and other matters at [amanda.fiedler@aacounty.org](mailto:amanda.fiedler@aacounty.org).



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## Budget Season Has Begun!

» Continued from page 16  
**English Language Development**  
 - \$607,005

As our county continues to grow and become more diverse, English language development remains critical. The recommended FY25 budget includes funding for seven teachers in this area.

**School Support - \$1.6 million**

Dr. Bedell has proposed expanding athletics to all middle schools across the county. This category also includes funding for virtual tutoring and virtual help, replacing a grant that previously supported these programs.

**Special Education - \$1.3 million**

The superintendent continues to invest in our students with special needs and is recommending eight new Individualized Education Program (IEP) clerks, one transition facilitator, one birth-to-five teacher, and five occupational therapists.

The entire 423-page budget can be found online at [www.aacps.org/fy-2025budget](http://www.aacps.org/fy-2025budget). Over the next month and a half, I will be analyzing every aspect of what Superintendent Bedell has recommended, listening to constituents' concerns, questions and ideas, and developing potential amendments to this budget. Never hesitate to reach out to me to make your voice heard, especially if you cannot attend the aforementioned budget hearings. As always, I can be reached at [dschallheim@aacps.org](mailto:dschallheim@aacps.org) or by phone at 443-534-2660. I look forward to hearing from you.

## Letter To The Editor

**Editor's note:** The author of this letter is running for a seat on the Board of Education.

According to data from the Maryland State Department of Education, over one-third of Anne Arundel County Public Schools' 116 institutions experienced a decline in their school performance ratings last year. The recently released Maryland Report Card, which evaluates schools on a one-to-five-star scale using various academic and non-academic criteria, revealed that 44 Anne Arundel schools received lower scores in the 2022-2023 school year compared to the previous year.

The district's current rating stands at a mediocre 3.42, reflecting a disappointing dip compared to the previous academic year of 2021-2022. This decline signals a pressing need for change within our school board, as the level of dissatisfaction among stakeholders continues to mount. It is imperative that we address the shortcomings and implement changes to elevate the educational standards and overall performance across our public school system.

**LaToya Nkongolo**  
**Severna Park**

## Pittman Announces County's First Director Of Hispanic/Latino And Multicultural Resources

Alison Flores will serve as Anne Arundel County's first director of the Office of Hispanic/Latino and Multicultural Resources. County Executive Steuart Pittman said he created the Office of Hispanic/Latino and Multicultural Resources to better serve and support the diverse communities in the county.

"Alison's experience with community engagement, communication and local government will allow her to connect with our diverse communities and deliver for them," Pittman said. "I look forward to her establishing new ways for local government to engage with our residents."

Flores most recently served as the deputy director for the Prince George's County Office of Community Relations. Prior to that, she served as the Latino affairs liaison for the Prince George's County Executive's Office, where she successfully developed and managed relationships and worked to ensure that Latino residents had access to government services and programs. She holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

The director of the Office of Hispanic/Latino and Multicultural Resources will promote inclusivity, understanding and collaboration among all



**Alison Flores**

communities.

"I am honored to lead the newly created Office of Hispanic/Latino and Multicultural Resources," Flores said. "Under County Executive Pittman's leadership, the county has made great strides toward creating a more inclusive government. I look forward to serving in this new role and working to connect and enhance the quality of life for all our residents, business owners, and community organizations."

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## Falcons Are Nearly Perfect Through Half Of Girls Hoops Season

By Tom Worgo

The Severna Park Falcons girls basketball team won't overwhelm opponents during pregame introductions.

There is no certain candidate to play college basketball. Yet Severna Park outworks foes and their players possess great athleticism.

Those qualities were never more evident than last season when the Falcons reached the Class 3A state semifinals for the first time since 1988.

"Once you get a taste of something, you want more of that," said Severna Park coach **Kristofer Dean**, whose team returned six players with varsity experience. "They know what it takes to get there. I think all of these girls that were on the team last year got that taste and they are hungry for that again."

If Dean, a seventh-year coach, and his players aren't talking about the final four, they should be. The Falcons have the potential to be as good as the 2023 Falcons were.

What's the proof? Severna Park's 10-1 start.

"It's important to get off to a good start for the mentality of the team," Dean said. "And I think we just have to keep improving every day. It could be the same situation as last year where we peak at the end of the year."

Severna Park is not just winning. The Falcons are post-



Photos by David Bashore

**Left:** Charley Coward (22) looked for a way around the defense of Broadneck's Samantha Miller. **Right:** Severna Park's Maria Bragg (4) brought the ball upcourt against defense from Broadneck's London Best during a December match.

ing some impressive victories.

It started when their season opened against neighborhood rival Severn School on December 4. Severna Park rallied from a 13-point deficit to post a 43-36 victory.

"It didn't look good in the second half with two minutes remaining," Dean explained. "But something just clicked. They scratched and clawed their way back into the game. It's our best come-from-behind victory in a few years."

The Falcons also had impressive victories over Arun-

(state semifinals) again."

Feemster and another returning starter, sophomore shooting guard **Maria Bragg** should help Severna Park maintain their consistent play. Dean has built his team around those two players.

Feemster can rebound, drive to the hoop and hit the outside shot. She's a tenacious defender and she's a role model for the younger players, too.

"She is just a really tremendous athlete and player,"

» Continued on page 28

del, winning by a whopping 44 points, beating Long Reach by 16 and topping Patterson Mill by 11. Severna Park's loss came to Broadneck.

"It has given us a big confidence boost after we lost some very impactful players from last year," Severna Park guard/forward **Ryn Feemster** said of the team's early-season play. "We feel we can make it back that far

## Broadneck Girls Bolt To 7-1 Start

By David Bashore

Through mid-January last season, Broadneck's girls basketball team had seven losses. This January, the Bruins are rolling on a seven-game win streak.

After a season-opening loss, the Bruins ripped off seven straight wins heading into last Tuesday's showdown with Crofton. That was anchored by a 26-point demolition of reigning 4A state champion Glen Burnie, in which they allowed the Gophers just five points through the first 20 minutes of play.

So far on the season, the Bruins have proven they can win in various ways. There was the press-fest against Glen Burnie, where Broadneck led 42-5 midway through the third quarter before cruising to a 52-38 win.

**Samantha Miller** led the Bruins with 16 points, followed by 15 from **London Best** and 10 from **Mackenzie Wharton**.

"We knew that if we could run them, we would get some transition points and layups to tire them out a bit," Miller said.

There was also a low-scoring game against Severna Park, a 46-38 Broadneck win on December 15 where they needed to simply grind for

» Continued on page 31



Photo by David Bashore

BHS' Ginger Kerdock (11) brought the ball upcourt against Severna Park during a rivalry matchup in December. Kerdock hit two key shots late to help her team grind out a 46-38 win.

## New Bruins Boys Basketball Coach Takes The Reins

Resilient Bruins Start 7-3

By Tom Worgo

When new Broadneck boys basketball coach **Jeff Starr** took over the program in the offseason, he looked back before he focused on the future.

Starr became Broadneck's fourth head coach in the school's 40-year history following **John Williams**, **Daryl Reid** and **Ken Kazmarek**.

Starr loved the stability that the program — which won a county championship last year — offered.

"Being a coach and a player in the county for 30 years, I knew it was a great program," Starr said. "It had a good history and feeder program. The pieces were in place for it to sustain being a good program. That definitely made it appealing."

The 46-year-old Starr wants to stay around for a long time like his predecessors. That means perhaps a decade or more.

"I would stay as long as they would have me," Starr said. "My youngest son is in third grade right now. I would love to still be coaching at Broadneck when he is a senior."

It was a job Starr just couldn't pass up. On top of the location, he took a

» Continued on page 28



Photo by Dennis McGinley

Jeff Starr compiled a 160-57 record in 10 years as Arundel's head coach. He also coached the boys team at Crofton High for three years and the Annapolis girls team for two years. Starr hopes to stay at Broadneck for many years to come.



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# Broadneck Wrestling Begins Season With Strong Showing

By **Mauricio Palmar**  
Student Intern

It's not the UFC, it's not Showtime boxing and it's definitely not WWE, but diehard combat sports fans await the start of the wrestling season every December. Whether at the high school, collegiate, or professional level, wrestling has been a lasting part of American culture for centuries, and the Severna Park area is no exception.

Broadneck and Severna Park started their seasons against each other, adding another chapter to the storied rivalry between the two schools. Historically, Severna Park wrestling has outpaced Broadneck in terms of county championships, winning five compared to Broadneck's two championships. However, Broadneck came out on top when they faced off on December 5.

It was nearly a clean sweep for the Bruins as they defeated Severna Park by a 51-21 margin. Outside of three Broadneck forfeits, Severna Park's only points came via a decision won by sophomore **Michael Queen**. It was an impressive way to start coach **Reid Bloomfield's** sixth year as Broadneck's wrestling coach, and one that he hopes will set the tone for a Bruins' season as good as the last.

Last winter, Bloomfield's Broadneck squad was wildly successful. Under his tutelage, the team went 30-4 and had three wrestlers on the Capital Gazette's All-County first team at the end of the year. That group, which included **Jake Chambers** at 182 pounds and **Dax Avila** at 195, was highlighted by **Liam DeBaugh**, who won the state championship at 160 pounds en route to being named the Capital Gazette's Wrestler of the Year.

All three of those wrestlers were part of a senior class that saw eight starters graduate, with DeBaugh wrestling at Frostburg State University and Chambers playing lacrosse at the Coast Guard Academy. Bloomfield understood that this was going to be a year of transition for the team, but he feels confident that the athletes he has right now can fill the gaps left by the class of 2023.

"(Losing athletes) is something that every coach deals with. We had a talented team last year with a lot of great athletes, but that is part of it. I try not to look too much in the past," Bloomfield stated. "The seniors from last year passed the torch and created a lot of new leadership opportunities for our underclassmen, and so far, they have taken advantage of them."

The team has had many standout performers to this point, such as **Cam Williams** at 132 pounds, **Bran-**



**Above:** Broadneck senior **Domenic Ascione** pinned Severna Park's **Josh O'Donnell** in this contest at 190 pounds. **Below:** Broadneck junior **Cam Williams** defeated Severna Park sophomore **Seth Macola** in an 8-2 decision at 132 pounds. The Bruins topped the Falcons 51-21 during the match, held in December.



**den Whyte-Taylor** at 120 and **Austin Combs** at 165. Combs, a senior who committed to Flagler University's lacrosse program earlier in the year, transferred to Broadneck in the second semester of his junior year. It can often be difficult for athletes to adjust to a new environment, but coach Bloomfield has been impressed with how Combs has performed so far.

"Combs has been explosive for us," Bloomfield stated. "He's a great kid and is really fun to have in the room."

The senior started the season 13-0, one of the few wrestlers on Broadneck's team to not drop a single match through late December.

Through early January, the Bruins were 12-2 as a team, with a second-place finish at the Husky Duals Tournament at Patterson Mills High School. They went 6-2 at the tournament, but Broadneck has managed to go undefeated in their other matches, owning dominant wins over Severna Park, Meade, Kent Island, Arundel, North County and Glen Burnie.

"After losing eight starting seniors, I've been impressed by the level at which we have started," Bloomfield said. "I had a feeling that this team would be really tough in February, but I didn't expect this much success this early. That being said, we still have a long way to go."

## Wrestling Program Gets Infusion Of Talent At SPHS

By **Tom Worgo**

The Severna Park wrestling team's strength comes in numbers.

The Falcons' varsity squad features 17 wrestlers this season. That total might not seem like a big number in the county for a lot of other wrestling teams.

But to second-year head coach **Sam Ziff** and his wrestlers, the figure means a lot. It's a big step forward in the development of the program.

Severna Park had only 11 wrestlers last year, which consistently forced the Falcons to give up 18 points by forfeiting three matches in dual meets.

Now, they are more competitive in dual meets and the mention of a forfeit is coming from opponents. Not the Falcons.

"It was really hard to fill out the roster last year," said senior **Nate Kohler**, a three-year starter on varsity. "We have a lot of new guys this year and it's a great opportunity

to grow the program. I think we are making a name for ourselves."

It may be hard to find someone who has more enthusiasm for the program than Ziff, a Severna Park graduate who won a Class 4A state wrestling championship at 152 pounds in 2013.

He's had a big hand in getting underclassmen to join the program and give it a boost. The roster contains a combined nine freshmen and sophomores in the 14-wrestler lineup.

"I definitely think we have the right building blocks in place for success," Ziff explained. "When I came over here, I wanted to build off each year. That's as far as getting people into the program, so we have the numbers, and getting them in early to develop."

Sophomore **Michael Queen** has experienced a lot of success early in his career.

He posted a 43-6 record last year at 120 pounds, won a county championship, placed third in the region and advanced to the state tournament. He

moved up to 126 this winter.

Queen has been an inspiration for lower-weight wrestlers on the roster: freshman **Cory Rogers** (106), sophomores **Noah Ballinger** (113), **Andrew Bonk** (120), **Seth Macola** (132) and **Aidan Holly** (138).

"He is on pace to be the winningest wrestler Severna Park has ever had," Ziff said of Queen. "He is really exciting to watch. He is such a student of the sport. He trains year-round and he is always coming up to me and asking, 'What can I improve up?'"

Queen has elevated his wrestling from last season thanks to his off-season work, which includes competing in national tournaments. He got off to a perfect 24-0 start.

Queen has become a more intense wrestler.

"I am going harder in practice and always pushing myself," Queen said.

Kohler is another Falcon to watch. He's poised for a stellar season after missing a good part of last year

because of a hand injury. Still, he finished with a 16-4 record and placed fifth in the county at 152.

Kohler placed third in the county and advanced to the state tournament as a sophomore.

He started 17-4 this year at 165 and went 6-1 in the Oakland Mills duals.

The team's grapplers in the upper weight classes — seniors **Joshua O'Donnell** and **Gabriel Morris** and freshmen **Brett Gleisner** and **Andrew Wise** — would like to have similar success as Kohler.

Senior **Terrence Murray** (144), sophomore **Tom Brockett** (150) and junior **Benjamin Freedman** (157) complete the starting lineup.

"It's great having wrestlers winning a lot of matches and winning tournaments," Ziff said. "But what I strive for is for each kid that comes out to love and enjoy the sport. This sport teaches you about yourself. You are out there about yourself. You are working with a team to get you there."

# Falcons, Bruins Vie For Spot Atop Ice Hockey Standings



Photo by David Bashore

Severna Park's Griffin Grotheer (94) and Broadneck's Ryan Kucharski (36) jostled for the puck during their game on December 19 at the Brigade Sports Complex.

Broadneck's ice hockey team defeated Severna Park 7-4 on December 19 at Brigade Sports Complex in Annapolis to hand the Falcons the only loss of their season to date.

As of January 15, Severna Park sits

in third place in the Maryland Student Hockey League with a 5-1 record, while Broadneck is in fourth with a 6-2 mark. Broadneck and Severna Park are first and second, respectively, in goals scored (Broadneck 56, Severna Park 52).

# Severn School To Serve Up New Sport In Fall 2024

By Judy Tacyn

When the University of Nebraska hosted Omaha in an outdoor women's volleyball match on August 30, 2023, at Memorial Stadium, 92,003 fans became part of what is now the largest recorded crowd to watch a women's sporting event in the United States. The surge in volleyball's popularity can be felt here in Anne Arundel County, with public high schools Arundel and Broadneck topping the state rankings at No. 1 and No. 6, respectively.

When the 2024-2025 school year starts, a new team will be in town as Severn School will put its first girls volleyball team on the court.

Julian Domenech, in his 16th year as athletic director at Severn, said the team has been a few years in the making.

"We've been thinking about volleyball for four or five years as we've seen its popularity grow, the development of strong club teams in the area, and students and parents asking about the sport," Domenech said.

Erin Bernhardt, a former Division I and international player, will be the head coach. She brings a wealth of professional playing and coaching experience to Severn, including the past six seasons at St. Mary's High School in Annapolis.

The addition of a sport to the school's athletic roster is just the first one added since wrestling entered the scene at the upper school in 2010.



Photo by Judy Tacyn

Volleyball is coming to Severn School. Athletic director Julian Domenech hopes to add trophies to the Severn School athletic cases.

"We have five sport opportunities for females in the fall," said Domenech, "but we see the surge of strong volleyball programs in the county, and we look forward to being a part of that by playing some public schools as well as IAAM conference schools."

The athletic department is excited to track interest in the volleyball team.

"We think we can be competitive. We expect students who play winter or spring sports, like basketball, will be interested in playing," Domenech said.

Read the full story online.

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# STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



## JOEY TRAMONTANA

Severna Park Football, Scrub League Basketball  
By David Bashore

Whether it's on the athletic field, in the classroom, or in the community, Severna Park junior Joey Tramontana finds a way to make a difference. Tramontana is involved with the Severna Park

Photo courtesy of Fincham Photography  
*By the end of football season, Joey Tramontana was the lead running back for the Falcons. He is also an active volunteer.*

varsity football team, where he wound up being the lead running back by season's end. He also hopes to make the varsity lacrosse team this spring. He also participates in the Scrub League winter basketball session.

In the classroom, he has a 3.7 GPA, and he is especially strong in math. His leaning toward numbers has him thinking about a future studying business in college.

It's the combination of sports and academics that helps him stay balanced. Instead of athletics being one more thing to worry about in an already busy high school schedule, Tramontana credits the addition of sports with being the catalyst for some of his best academic work.

"When I'm in season, I usually manage my time better. When I'm out of season, I don't have something keeping me in line as much, so there's some time where I'll just push an assignment back because I can," he said. "But sports keep me focused on what needs to be done for the day before I go do my activities for the day."

"My parents have always told me to just never take anything for granted, and it's stuck with me that there are a lot of less fortunate people. I love when I can help people."

— JOEY TRAMONTANA

In the halls of Severna Park High School, most students know Tramontana as an athlete. But he has sought out opportunities to get involved.

"I try to help out whenever I can," he said of an informal relationship with some school-based inclusiveness programs.

Where his biggest community passion lies is in helping others over the summer. In addition to sorting equipment for Baltimore students through Leveling the Playing Field, Tramontana participated in a summer work camp in South Carolina through Woods Church, as he helped build houses as part of a Habitat for Humanity project.

He enjoyed the experience so much that he hopes to become a student counselor for the program at some point.

"It gave me a view of not living in Severna Park. I've lived here my whole life, so it was a good experience to be in a different environment for the week, just to see how others live," Tramontana said. "I was on the work site helping build the house for the people, and it was good to get to know everyone else and be along on the journey with them."

"My parents have always told me to just never take anything for granted, and it's stuck with me that there are a lot of less fortunate people. I love when I can help people."



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# AACC Women's Soccer Season Ends With Heartbreaking Overtime Loss

*Severna Park's Tina Tinelli Named To All-Region And All-Tournament Teams*

**By Kevin Murnane**

**A**nne Arundel Community College's (AACC) women's soccer team had a successful and surprising year in their inaugural season playing in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division II conference. The Riverhawks finished with an 8-5-3 mark and recorded seven shutouts during the year.

The Riverhawks had a young team with only three players returning from the previous year. "Our record was impressive because we had so many freshmen who had never played together," said head coach Jim Griffiths. "We started practice in mid-August and our first game was on August 29."

Griffiths relied on a stifling defense as his team allowed only 13 goals for the entire season. The Riverhawks held their opponents to a .127 shot percentage and an average of only 10 shots per game.

"It wasn't until the final third of the season that we had everyone healthy," Griffiths said. "The first part of the season, we were always missing one or two key players."

AACC gained momentum going into the Region 20 tournament by winning their first two games and then suffering a crushing loss to CCBC-Essex on a last-second goal in overtime.

"It was really a good game and the goal-winning kick barely squeezed into the top corner of the net with one second to go," Griffiths said. "The players also built great team chemistry as the season



Photo courtesy of Anne Arundel Community College  
*Severna Park resident Tina Tinelli was named first-team All-Region 20 in women's soccer by the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA).*

went on. Being on a junior college team, it's hard to bond because the players don't go back to the dorms and dining halls together, like four-year schools."

One of the freshmen who helped to create that

team culture was Severna Park resident Tina Tinelli, who played outstanding defense throughout the year and was named to the NJCAA All-Region 20 and regional All-Tournament team.

"Tina is a good athlete and has a rocket for a leg," Griffiths said.

That powerful leg was on full display during the championship game where Tinelli scored a goal on a 45-yard penalty kick.

Like many of her teammates, Tinelli balances being a full-time student with work, practice and homework.

"Soccer is something I love," Tinelli said. "I've been playing since I was 3 or 4 and have made so many friends playing sports."

Tinelli remarked that the first few days of practice at AACC were challenging because she recognized so many players from rival high schools. Those players are now teammates who worked together to become a cohesive squad in a few weeks.

Tinelli said the key to their successful season was the long road trips to colleges in Massachusetts, West Virginia and New York that gave the players time to discuss topics outside of soccer.

"Some of the fun memories from the season were getting ice cream in Massachusetts and finding the next McDonald's," said Tinelli, who is an information assurance major.

"I didn't know what to expect this year because I only knew a few of the players, but this season exceeded all of my expectations, and Coach Grif really brought out the best in all of us," Tinelli said.

Tinelli was named to the girls soccer second-team All-County at Chesapeake High School last year. Tinelli also participated in indoor and outdoor track for the Cougars as a high-jumper. Her personal best was 5 feet, 2 inches.

The Riverhawks expect to have a strong nucleus coming back next year as 13 players on this year's squad were freshmen.

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## New Bruins Boys Basketball Coach Takes The Reins

» Continued from page 20

job at Broadneck as a math teacher. “It was the perfect storm,” Starr explained. “The basketball and teaching job opened. I live in the community right off across from the community college. I had to pursue the opportunity. Our family dynamics changed as far as picking up our three boys. My wife took an athletic director position at Southern High.”

Starr’s relationship with Broadneck Athletic Director **Kevin Necessary** also made a difference. The two worked together at Arundel High when Starr was the school’s boys basketball coach and Necessary served as athletic director.

Starr’s basketball resume is impressive, including his stint as Arundel coach.

He coached there for a decade and compiled a 160-57 record in 10 years. Starr also coached the boys team at Crofton High for three years and the Annapolis girls team for two years.

At Broadneck, Starr has raised expectations and perhaps the Bruins’ level of play,

They’re off to a 7-3 start with wins coming over Annapolis Area Christian School, Glen Burnie, Old Mill, Southern, St. Mary’s and Severna Park. Broadneck’s losses include contests against Severn School and Gilman.

Comeback wins against Severna Park and Glen Burnie were especially impressive. The Bruins trailed by 16 headed into the final six minutes

against the Falcons before pulling out a stunning win, 57-56, behind 25 second-half points and 31 total from senior guard **Jordan Brown**.

Against Glen Burnie, Broadneck trailed by 17 after three quarters but scored 35 in the fourth to win 62-57.

“Our teams in the past have been a little shaky,” said Brown, whose team went 17-8 last year. “But we are a young team this year and we really play together. That’s why we are off to a good start.”

No player is more important to the Bruins’ success than the 6-foot-1 Brown, who is being recruited by a bevy of Division III schools.

He’s splitting time at point with 5-foot-10 sophomore **Kamarin Williams**, who was promoted from last year’s JV team.

“I think he is the best player in the county,” Starr said of Brown.

Sophomore guard and St. Mary’s transfer **Ashton Sellman** (6-6), senior guard **Shawn Lewis** (6-0), and senior forwards **Grant Kelly** and **Devin McGowan** (6-4) also start for the Bruins.

Top reserves include junior forward **Joey Smargissi** (6-3), junior guards **Jacob Aponte** (6-1) and **Drew Cahill** (6-1) and senior forward **Luke Baldwin** (6-5).

McGowan has been especially impressed with Cahill.

“Drew comes off the bench and knocks 3 immediately,” McGowan said. “He really helps us all over the court.”



Photo by David Bashore

*Broadneck trailed Severna Park by 16 headed into the final six minutes before pulling out a stunning win, 57-56. Jordan Brown led the comeback with 25 of his 31 points coming in the second half.*

## Falcons Are Nearly Perfect

» Continued from page 20

Dean said. “She can do it all and defend against anybody. And her leadership is great. She will be named a captain (as the season moves along).”

Dean continues to mold Briggs into a solid player. She’s more than capable of knocking down a top-of-the key jump and contributing on defense.

“Her athleticism is probably next to none of anybody I have ever coached,” the coach admitted.

Junior forward **Maddy Sullivan**, senior guard/forward **Sally Trent** and junior point guard **Charley Coward** complete the starting lineup.

Dean gets excited when he talks about the team’s depth. Junior guards **Erin Hussey** and **Peyton Jeffers**, along with senior guard **Gabby Rosati** and senior forward **Amelila Smith**, provide quality play off the bench.

“We have more size than last year,” Dean said. “The speed is still there, which is really good.”

Senior forward **Kylie Curran**, junior guards **Josie Crockett** and **Abby Cover**, junior forward **Lena Slade** and junior center **Kate Behe** round out the roster.

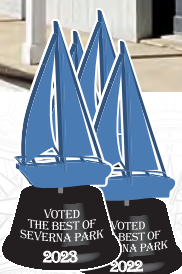
“Basketball is not the number one sport here,” Dean said. “Our players come from soccer and other sports. It takes us a little while to jell. By the end of the year, we are jelling. I think more people are realizing (after last year) that hey, ‘They are pretty good at the end of the year.’ So, watch out for Severna Park.”

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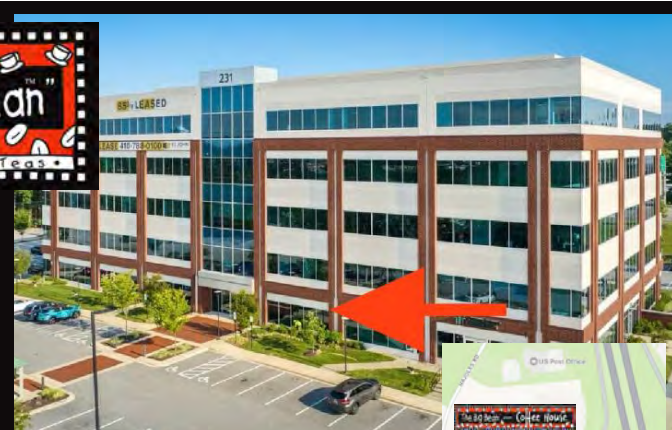
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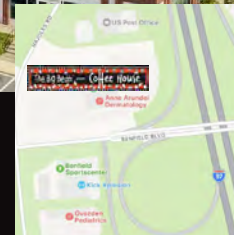
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# Severna Park Boys Overcome Wobbly Start To Basketball Season

By David Bashore

After three games and two come-from-ahead losses, there was frustration in the Severna Park boys basketball program. The second of those losses, a crushing one-point loss to Broadneck where the Falcons led by as many as 21 points, could have caused collapse — especially after the Falcons lost in similar fashion to Arundel in the season opener.

Severna Park flashed some knockout-punch quality in spurts, but putting a complete 32 minutes proved elusive in the early going, and when Broadneck mounted its furious rally, the Falcons had seen that movie before.

“There was some, ‘Here we go again,’” said Severna Park coach **Pete Young** after the Broadneck game. “I thought we did OK in the moment, and we were able to get the lead back (at one point). We just need more experience in that situation, and we need to finish one and then I think we’ll be OK.”

Since then, Severna Park has been more than OK.

Photo by David Bashore

*Severna Park’s Charlie Hartman (10) drove around Broadneck’s Kamari Williams. After that loss to the Bruins, the Falcons won six straight contests.*

Instead of wallowing in early-season doldrums, the team adopted Young’s big-picture approach. It may help that the Falcons appear to be thinking the best way to avoid last-gasp losses is to eliminate the possibility altogether. Since the Broadneck loss, they’ve won six games in a row, the closest margin of victory being 18 points when they beat Westlake 47-29 three days after playing Broadneck.

After Westlake, Severna Park beat Crofton 63-40, Green Street Academy 58-37, Watkins Mill 62-24, Chesapeake Science Point 79-41, and North County 72-39.

*Severna Park hosted Northeast on Monday and Old Mill on Tuesday during the week of January 15. Results were not available at press time.*



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## Green Hornets 2032 Boys Win Maple Leaf Kickoff Box Lacrosse Tournament



*In their first box lacrosse tournament, the Green Hornets lacrosse team defeated Penn Lax 2032 by a score of 7-0 to win the Maple Leaf Kickoff.*

The Severna Park Green Hornets 2032 boys lacrosse team trains year-round, including box lacrosse training at the Moose Athletic Club in Glen Burnie during the winter months. In their first box lacrosse tournament, the Green Hornets lacrosse team won the Maple Leaf Kickoff in Reading, Pennsylvania, on December 16.

Coached by **Brad Reppert**, **Derek Howells** and **Eric Wedemeyer**, the team swept all four games en route to the tournament championship. The Green Hornets team — also known as the Repsnakes — beat Delco Lacrosse Club, 6-0; Penn Lax 2032, 10-3; and Team 11, 11-1, to advance to the championship game, in which they defeated Penn Lax 2032 by a score of 7-0.

Throughout the tournament, Severna Park was paced offensively by **George Fester** (nine goals, one assist), **Caden Howells** (six goals), **Bryce Arnold** (five goals, three assists) and **Connor Wild** (four goals). **Braxton Reppert** (three goals), **Carter Wasserman** (three goals), **Sammy Coleman** (two goals, one assist) and **Mark Wedemeyer** (two goals) also contributed to the scoring.

Defensively, goaltenders Connor Wild and Mark Wedemeyer allowed only one goal per game. The stout defensive effort was led by Caden Howells (10 caused turnovers), Braxton Reppert (eight caused turnovers), Carter Wasserman (six caused turnovers), Connor Wild (five caused turnovers) and **Henry Smith** (four caused turnovers).

## Falcons Tab Zichelli New Boys Lax Coach

Severna Park High School has hired Bob Zichelli as its new boys lacrosse coach, the school announced in December.

Zichelli succeeds Dave Earl, who stepped down in the spring after leading the Falcons to a seventh successive state championship.

A former Division I lacrosse player at

Mount St. Mary's, Zichelli is no stranger to Severna Park lacrosse. He has lived in Severna Park for 30 years and coached in the school's boys lacrosse program from 2004-2014, spending time as the head JV coach and assistant varsity coach.

Zichelli also has extensive experience within the Green Hornets youth lacrosse program.

## Broadneck Girls Bolt To 7-1 Start

» Continued from page 20 long stretches. In that game, **Ginger Kerdock** stepped up and hit two key shots late when Broadneck needed someone to make a momentum-swinging basket.

"I've been struggling shooting a lot, and that was the first time (in a while) I had some confidence, so it was really good to help," Kerdock said.

In between, there have been a lot of highs and few lows. The Bruins squeaked out a three-point win over Old Mill 42-39 on December 8 to start the run and narrowly beat Maryvale Prep 39-35 over the holiday break. There were comfortable victories over Northern (66-32), Southern (42-31) and Eleanor Roosevelt (47-30).

Broadneck sits at 7-1 through January 14, the only loss coming by six points in the season opener to a quality St. Mary's squad, though it's still one the Bruins felt like they could have won.

Through eight games, Wharton leads the team in scoring at 13.1 points per game, while Best averages 12.8 and Miller 11.3. Both Wharton and Miller lead the

team in rebounds at 5.4 per contest. The team is averaging 30 rebounds, 12 assists and 13 steals per game.

Though the season is not quite halfway done, the Bruins are feeling bullish about where they're at.

"We have kids who can be gritty. We have kids who can play fast. We have kids who can play finesse. When you have a team that can win in different ways, and with this experience, it's fun to watch," said Broadneck coach **Juan McKinney**. "They're playing hard. If we play defense at a high level, we'll be fine, because we can score the ball. We like where we're at, but there's a long way still to go."

Miller was quick to pinpoint the places that this team can continue to improve upon to get where they want to go.

"We knew we could be good, but seeing it come along has been great. We have a lot of pieces," Miller said. "Sometimes we need to learn how to rein it in, attack the basketball more. Sometimes we find ourselves in foul trouble, and we need to attack the basket and do that to other teams instead."

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# College Report

## Athletes Excel At The Next Level

By David Bashore

A standout two-sport athlete at Severna Park High School, **Trey Smack** went against the grain when it came to his college choice: he dropped lacrosse to focus on football.

Two years later, it's evident he made the right call.

The Severna Park grad, now a sophomore at the University of Florida, cemented himself as the Gators' placekicker in the third week of the 2023 season and established himself as one of the best kickers not only in the Southeastern Conference but in the entire country.

"It was an interesting season," Smack said. "I go into the season trying to compete for a job. During the Tennessee game, I come in, I do my job, I kick the field goal, and next week I didn't know what was going to happen. I started getting on a hot streak during the Charlotte game."

Once he got the opportunity, he never looked back. He made all three of his kicks against Tennessee — a field goal and two extra points — and then was perfect on five field goal attempts the follow-

ing week against Charlotte, punctuated by a career-best 54-yard kick. It was the longest field goal by a Florida kicker in seven years, and Smack matched that distance later in the season against South Carolina.

"It all goes back to the operation, with **Rocco Bradshaw**, (the long snapper) and **Jeremy Crawshaw**, (the punter and holder). I trust those guys at deeper ranges too because they know what I need to make a longer field goal," Smack said. "Jeremy will lean it back so I can drive it better, and Rocco gives me laces (out) every time too. It's credit to them, because all I have to do is the exact thing that I've done all week. It's good to have the range, and it's really good that coach (**Billy Napier**) has trust in me to make those field goals."

From that hot streak, the job became his, and he made the most of it. In total, Smack hit 17 of his 21 field goal attempts — one was blocked — and was perfect on 29 PAT attempts. For his efforts, Smack was named a semifinalist for the Lou Groza Award, which is given annually to the top kicker in college football. He hopes to go one



Photo courtesy of Molly Kaiser/ University of Florida

During a September game against Tennessee, Trey Smack hit his first-career field goal on a 27-yarder, made both point-after attempts and had six kickoffs.

better next season and make the finalists' cut.

With two seasons now under his belt, Smack understands better what needs to be done in order for him to unlock his full potential.

"Being in college football for a year and realizing I wasn't ready last year gave me an overview of how it all works: This is what I need to do to be successful, how any

times I should kick a week, kick a day, and going through a training regimen that would be very consistent," he said. "I'm just tweaking some things in the offseason, just so I can stay more consistent. Changing a couple of things that might help me out, and just having the same mindset that I'm going to be more consistent, more clear, and more technical this (next) year."

Several others athletes from the Severna Park and Broadneck area suited up for college teams this fall.

### FIELD HOCKEY

**Alex Clough, Broadneck** — *Ithaca*

A senior, Clough kept goal for Ithaca, where she started 20 games and logged seven shutouts, allowing 22 goals and making 74 saves as the team made the NCAA Division III tournament. Clough was an honorable mention all-conference nominee.

**Maya Everett, Broadneck** — *Maryland*

A freshman, Everett played in 21 games and logged seven shots for the Terrapins, who reached the NCAA Division I quarterfinals.

**Arden Huntman, Broadneck** — *Salisbury*

A freshman, Huntman played in 16 games for Salisbury, scoring 11 goals as the team reached the NCAA Division III quarterfinals.

**Jess Kopernick, Broadneck**

— *Stevens Institute of Technology*

A junior forward, Kopernick played in 20 games for the Ducks, scoring four goals and adding two assists as the team made the NCAA Division III tournament.

**Ella Phillips, Broadneck**

— *Washington and Jefferson*

A junior defender and team captain, Phillips scored twice and added seven assists in 16 games for the Presidents.

**Makenna Quigley, Broadneck**

— *Stevens Institute of Technology*

A junior midfielder, Quigley started 20 games for the Ducks, scoring six goals and adding three assists as the team made the NCAA Division III tournament.

**Safiya Stimely, Broadneck**

— *St. Mary's (Maryland)*

A freshman defender, Stimely played in 19 games,

starting 18 of them. Her first collegiate goal came in an October 4 game at Immaculata. St. Mary's reached the NCAA Division III playoffs.

### FOOTBALL

**Dom Downs, Broadneck** — *Salisbury*

A freshman linebacker transferring in from Seton Hill, Downs appeared in two games for Salisbury, logging one tackle.

**Josh Ehrlich, Broadneck** — *Susquehanna*

A sophomore quarterback transferring from Marist, Ehrlich helped the River Hawks to an undefeated regular season and an NCAA Division III tournament berth by tossing for more than 1,500 yards and 13 touchdowns and rushing for over 850 yards and eight more scores.

**Machi Evans, Broadneck**

— *Washington and Jefferson*

A freshman receiver, Evans did not appear in a game this fall.

**Dave Fitzgerald, Severna Park**

— *U.S. Merchant Marine Academy*

A freshman defensive lineman, Fitzgerald did not appear in game action this season.

**Brody Friedman, Broadneck** — *Delaware*

A sophomore defensive back, Friedman did not appear in game action this season.

**James Henson, Severna Park** — *Salisbury*

A sophomore slot receiver, Henson appeared in four games for Salisbury, rushing four times for nine yards.

**Jayden Joyce, Broadneck** — *Davidson*

A sophomore offensive lineman, Joyce appeared in nine of the Wildcats' 11 games this fall.

**Braden Layne, Severna Park**

— *U.S. Merchant Marine Academy*

A junior linebacker, Layne appeared in four games, logging 11 tackles (eight solo).

**Nathan Levicki, Broadneck** — *Presbyterian*

A sophomore tight end, Levicki did not feature in any games for the Blue Hose this season.

**Tristan Newhouse, Severna Park**

— *Fairleigh Dickinson*

A freshman punter and kicker, Newhouse did not see action for FDU this season.

**James Patz, Severna Park**

— *U.S. Coast Guard Academy*

A junior receiver, Patz appeared in all 10 games for the academy this season, catching 43 passes for 634 yards and five touchdowns — second most on the team in all three categories.

**Trey Smack, Severna Park** — *Florida*

A sophomore kicker for the Gators, Smack made 17 of his 21 field goal attempts, including a career long of 54 yards, which he hit twice (against Charlotte on September 23 and South Carolina on October 14). He was also perfect on his 29 extra point attempts and earned SEC Special Teams Player of the Week honors twice.

**Tucker Smack, Severna Park** — *Salisbury*

A freshman punter, Smack appeared in six games for Salisbury, netting a punt average of 37.2 yards on 15 punts. His season long was a 62-yard boot on October 7 against William Paterson.

**Caelan Shepard, Broadneck** — *Buffalo*

A senior offensive lineman, Shepard appeared in all 12 games this season for the Bulls.

**Mason Stillwell, Broadneck** — *Catholic*

A junior defensive back, Stillwell delivered a first-



team all-conference season, logging 53 tackles (34 solo) in 10 games played. His lone interception came in the season opener against McDaniel on September 1, and he recovered a fumble against Lycoming on October 14.

#### **Jake Wanner, Broadneck** — *Wilkes*

A freshman linebacker, Wanner did not appear in a game this fall.

#### **Ethon Williams, Broadneck** — *Shepherd*

A junior receiver who transferred in after injuries and a couple of transfers threatened to derail his college career, Williams caught eight passes for 62 yards and a touchdown in five games played. On November 29, he announced his intention to enter the transfer portal as a graduate transfer.

## MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

#### **Carson Sloat, Severna Park** — *Navy*

A junior, Sloat participated in six meets this season, placing a season-best 11th at the Harry Lang Invitational on September 2. Sloat finished 41st out of 109 runners at the Patriot League championship meet.

#### **Collin Sly, Broadneck** — *St. Mary's (Maryland)*

A freshman, Sly supported the tail of St. Mary's' running roster this fall, highlighted by a 63rd-place finish at the United East conference championships, where St. Mary's finished third.

## MEN'S SOCCER

#### **Gordie Bernlhor, Severna Park**

— *Catholic University*

A senior midfielder, Bernlhor was named Landmark Conference Offensive Player of the Year and second-team USCAA All Region V. He scored 15 goals, including seven game-winners, for Catholic, leading the team to the conference championship and an appearance in the NCAA Division III Tournament.

#### **Nathan Carey, Severna Park** — *Roanoke*

A fifth-year forward, Carey played in 14 games, starting 12. He went scoreless on 18 shots.

#### **Bryce Costello, Broadneck** — *Frostburg State*

A senior defender, Costello started in six games this season.

#### **Jack Dunshee, Broadneck**

— *St. Mary's (Maryland)*

A senior midfielder, Dunshee saw action in three games this season, starting once.

#### **Luke Eberle, Annapolis Area Christian (Arnold)** — *Liberty*

A senior midfielder, Eberle started all 18 games for the Flames, scoring seven goals and adding four assists. Eberle was also named CSC Academic All-District.

#### **Jordan Ehart, Mount Saint Joseph (Severna Park)** — *UMBC*

A graduate student defender, Ehart captained the Terriers in all 14 of his starts this fall. His lone goal contribution came on an assist in a September 23 game against Albany.

#### **Riley Erbe, Broadneck** — *AACC*

A freshman midfielder, Erbe played in nine games this season, starting three.

#### **Michael Johnson, Broadneck** — *Delaware*

A sophomore forward, Johnson played in 18 games, starting one. His lone goal contribution came on an assist against Mount St. Mary's on September 5.

#### **Charlie Kriel, Severna Park** — *Navy*

A junior defender, Kriel started 19 games, playing all but 62 minutes and helping the Midshipmen to eight shutouts.

#### **Tyler Madairy, Broadneck**

— *Penn State-Harrisburg*

A senior midfielder, Madairy played in two games this season.

#### **Charlie Meehan, Broadneck** — *AACC*

A freshman midfielder, Meehan played in 13 games this season, starting seven. He logged three assists.

#### **Jake Meehan, Broadneck** — *VMI*

A junior midfielder, Meehan played in four games for the Keydets this season.

#### **Brandon Morse, Broadneck** — *McDaniel*

A junior midfielder, Morse played in 17 games for McDaniel, starting 16 of them. He registered three goals and an assist, averaging 80 minutes played per match.

#### **Evan Souder, Severna Park** — *Washington College*

A freshman defender, Souder made two appearances for Washington, which reached the NCAA Division III national semifinals.

#### **Zach Tetteimer, Broadneck** — *Loyola (Maryland)*

A sophomore defender, Tetteimer did not appear in any games this season.

## WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

#### **Avery Arizzi, Broadneck** — *St. Mary's (Maryland)*

A freshman, Arizzi bolstered the back end of the roster for St. Mary's in the fall, highlighted by a 23rd-place finish at the United East conference championship meet, which St. Mary's won.

#### **Mollie Fenn, Broadneck** — *Richmond*

A sophomore, Fenn was part of a Spiders team that qualified for the NCAA Division I regional meet, where she finished 166th out of 246 entrants and the team finished 18th. Her individual best was a second-place finish at Virginia Union's Panther Invitational.

#### **Anna Janke, Broadneck** — *Queens*

A senior, Janke featured in four races for Queens this fall. Her season best finish was 25th in the Pirate Cross Country Invitational at East Carolina on October 14. She finished 52nd in the Atlantic Sun conference championship meet.

#### **Lydia Willhite, Broadneck**

— *Columbia International*

A junior, Willhite led Columbia International to a fifth-place finish at the NCCAA championship meet, finishing 17th individually. Her top finish of the season was a 12th-place effort at the Aikah McMillian Invitational in September.

#### **Sophia Zell, Severna Park** — *Maryland*

A senior, Zell anchored the tail of Maryland's roster this fall. She was one of the team's top seven at the Big Ten championships, where the Terrapins finished 10th, and she scored in the NCAA Mid-Atlantic regional meet, finishing 95th out of 196 entrants.

## WOMEN'S SOCCER

#### **Lela Clark, Broadneck** — *Frostburg State*

A senior midfielder, Clark played in 22 games for the Bobcats, starting 21 of them. She had four goals and two assists in the season, helping Frostburg State reach the NCAA Division II tournament.

#### **Felicia Fishburne, Severna Park**

— *St. Mary's (Maryland)*

A freshman forward, Fishburne played in 18 games, making nine starts. Both of her goals came in the same game, against Gallaudet on October 17. She also had one assist during the season.

#### **Sam Hoffman, Broadneck** — *Thiel*

A senior goalkeeper, Hoffman started all 16 games for Thiel this season, making 130 saves and posting one shutout, against Penn State Beaver on September 6.

#### **Sydney Holmes, Severna Park** — *Rochester*

A freshman forward, Holmes earned a starting position and had three goals, including two game-winners, along with five assists for the Yellowjackets, which reached the NCAA Division III national quarterfinals.

#### **Mia Hull, Broadneck** — *AACC*

A freshman forward, Hull played in 14 games for the Riverhawks, starting 13. She scored six goals and five assists on the season.

#### **Sierra Lane, Severna Park** — *AACC*

A freshman midfielder, Lane featured in 14 games for the Riverhawks, starting once. She scored her only goal of the season on September 12 at West Virginia-Potomac.

#### **Eva Mowery, Broadneck** — *Maryland*

A sophomore forward who missed all last season due to injury, Mowery played in seven games for the Terrapins. Her season high minute count was 43 against Michigan on October 1.

#### **Ella Raines, Severna Park**

— *St. Mary's (Maryland)*

A junior forward, Raines played in 13 games, starting 11, for St. Mary's. She scored four goals, two coming against Lancaster Bible College on October 28, and added an assist.

#### **Tina Tinelli, Chesapeake (Severna Park)** — *AACC*

A freshman defender, Tinelli anchored the Riverhawks' back line, starting 16 games and helping the team record seven clean sheets. Tinelli also scored five goals and assisted on two others, as part of an all-around season that landed her first-team All-Region 20 honors.

#### **Sadie Wilkinson, Broadneck** — *Lipscomb*

A freshman forward, Wilkinson played in 11 games for Lipscomb this season. Her season high in minutes played came August 17 against Troy, with 52.

## WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

#### **Natalie Luscomb, Broadneck** — *Lehigh*

A sophomore right-sided attacker, Luscomb played in one match this season, logging two kills and a block assist.

#### **Emma Quandt, Broadneck** — *Salisbury*

A junior middle blocker and right-sided attacker, Quandt played in 29 matches, logging 1.6 kills and 0.9 blocks per set to anchor a Salisbury team that reached the second round of the NCAA Division III tournament. Quandt's season high in kills was 13 against Christopher Newport on November 10, and she logged double-digit kills on six occasions.

#### **Bella Rubino, Broadneck** — *Salisbury*

A freshman outside hitter, Rubino played in 19 matches and posted 1.33 kills per set on the season. Her season high in kills was 11, which she logged against Washington College on September 12.

#### **Madeline Stewart, Broadneck** — *American*

A freshman setter, Stewart played in seven matches, logging nine assists.

#### **Hannah Waters, Broadneck** — *McDaniel*

A freshman setter and opposite, Waters played in 23 matches for McDaniel, logging 4.3 assists and 1.65 digs per set. Her season high in assists came on September 9 when she dished out 37 against Mount Aloysius, while she served 20 aces on September 22 against Valley Forge.

#### **Jillian Zukley, Severna Park**

— *St. Mary's (Maryland)*

A freshman middle blocker, Zukley played in 28 matches for St. Mary's, averaging 1.26 kills per set. Her season high in kills came on September 13, when she logged 10 against Randolph College.

## CLUB SPORTS

#### **Griffin Bodziak, Broadneck** — *Virginia Tech*

Bodziak (class of 2022) played goalie for the Virginia Tech men's club soccer team, which finished as runners-up in the national tournament in Austin, Texas, in November. This was Virginia Tech's first time in the national championship game, and they won three straight overtime matches in the elimination round to get to the finals.

## Athlete Uses Deal With Shoe Company To Give Back



Quincy Wilson coordinated a New Balance shoe giveaway for youth at Wayman Good Hope AME Church this Christmas Eve.

By Zach McGrath

At 15, Quincy Wilson is already a big deal in track and field. A sophomore at the Bullis School in Potomac, Maryland, Quincy smashed records and impressed commentators during his freshman season.

He also impressed the congregation at Wayman Good Hope AME Church this Christmas Eve when he gave shoes

to the children of the church.

“I wouldn’t have been able to reach this point in my life without the support and prayers from Wayman Good Hope AME Church,” Quincy said.

To understand how Quincy pulled off this act of generosity, it helps to know his background.

Quincy ran 46.12 for the 400-meter  
» Continued on page 39

## Read All About It: Theater In The Park Presents “Newsies Jr.”



Extra, extra. In case you have not heard the news, a group of Theater in the Park performers took the stage for a musical from January 10-14. A total of 154 kids spread over four groups, ages 6-16, rehearsed at the Severna Park Community Center and performed at Anne Arundel Community College. Juniors (ages 6-9) were directed by Phil Kittiver, the preteen group (ages 9-11) was directed by Kylie Sjolie, teens (ages 12-16) were directed by Atticus Boidy and a mixteen group (ages 9-16) was directed by Drew Sharpe.



## Student Art Featured At The Mall

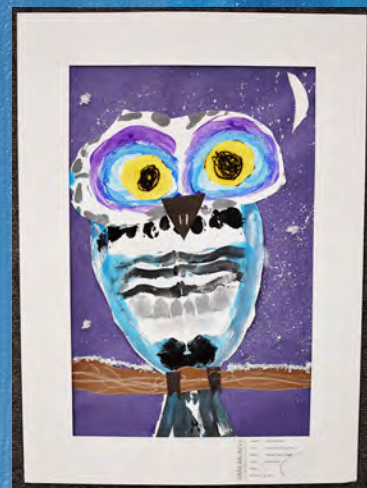
Elementary school students from across Anne Arundel County had their artwork displayed at Westfield Annapolis Mall from December through early January as part of the annual AACPS Winter Wonderland Art Exhibit.

More than 200 pieces from young artists were chosen, including several by students in Severna Park, Arnold and Millersville.

Photos by Lauren Cowin

Top to Bottom, Left to Right: This mixed media winter animal quad is the work of Harper Gesling, Jade Sturgis, Brenden Muehlhauser and Elio Pineda

— all second-graders at Benfield Elementary School. Broadneck Elementary School fifth-grader Ella Barton created this snowy scene, titled “The Stary Sky,” with tempera and watercolor paint. Severna Park Elementary School first-grader Cora Cruikshank used tempera paint and paper collage for her “Symmetrical Snowy Owl.” Natalie Wang, a fourth-grader at Oak Hill Elementary School, created this winter scene using mixed media. Severna Park Elementary School fifth-graders Paige Shushan and Joanna Thoms made their “Winter Assemblage” with cardboard and found objects.





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## Educator Of The Month

**Kelcey Wohlgemuth**  
St. Martin's  
Episcopal School



By Lauren Burke Meyer

For St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal School (SMES) learning support coordinator Kelcey Wohlgemuth, her role translates to all things special education.

However, that's just the beginning of her contributions.

She not only teaches academic support classes to first grade through eighth, but she also collaborates with division coordinators, teachers, students and their families to determine the best learning strategies, methods and avenues for students.

"My teaching philosophy is deeply student-centered and grounded in the concept of unconditional positive regard," Wohlgemuth said. "I acknowledge and celebrate the diverse strengths and abilities each student brings to the learning space."

Wohlgemuth strives to create an environment where there's teacher-student respect and value. For instance, building on student strengths, providing support where needed and fostering an open dialogue that encourages expression, advocacy and discovery. The educator has found that this formula lays a solid foundation for students to feel empowered and, ultimately, thrive in their educational journey.

Wohlgemuth earned her undergraduate degree in fine arts from Salisbury University.

"I had hopes of becoming an art teacher, but my first teaching experience was at a special education school, and I absolutely fell in love," she said.

From there, she went to Goucher College to earn her master's degree in the "art of teaching" with a concentration in special education. Wohlgemuth began teaching at

"My teaching philosophy is deeply student-centered and grounded in the concept of unconditional positive regard. I acknowledge and celebrate the diverse strengths and abilities each student brings to the learning space."

— KELCEY WOHLGEMUTH

SMES in September 2021. Prior to that, she was a stay-at-home mom for three years to her two sons, now ages 5 and 7. Before her time at home, she was the associate director of the High Road School, a special education facility in Lanham, Maryland.

Owen Abbey, middle school social studies teacher at SMES, noted that all of Wohlgemuth's efforts for the school cannot be overstated. In his opinion, she's the hardest-working teacher at their school.

"I have learned so much from her as an educator and have implemented many strategies she suggests that have worked wonders," Abbey said.

Wohlgemuth works with eighth-graders to get them into the high school of their choice, tutors students outside of school, and is on the lower school and middle school admissions committees.

"Simply put, she is one of the busiest people I have ever met," Abbey said.

Her commitments even stretch outside the classroom.

At St. Martin's, Wohlgemuth has coached fifth through eighth grade girls' lacrosse. Wohlgemuth has loved having the opportunity to connect with the girls in a more relaxed environment because it "allows us to see each other in a different light and helps deepen our connection on the field and in school," she said.

Abbey isn't the only one who sings Wohlgemuth's praises.

"Every staff member has positive things to say about her, and every kid she works with enjoys her positive attitude and her desire to see them improve," said Abbey, who also noted how parents love Wohlgemuth because of her consistent effort with their children.

Do you know other great educators like Wohlgemuth? Nominate them today by emailing [spvnews@severnaparkvoice.com](mailto:spvnews@severnaparkvoice.com).

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# Broadneck Educator Awarded For Academic Excellence



By Steven Jacobs  
Student Intern

The National Society of High School Scholars annually recognizes 10 high school educators across the country who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to preparing students for success in college and in life. In and out of the classroom, these winners are peer role models who demonstrate leadership and excellence in education.

Of the top 10 educators of the year, nine are selected as finalists who are awarded \$1,000, and the top selected educator of the year is awarded \$5,000. Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) teacher Gail Davis of Broadneck High School received the coveted award on October 26. Kamilah Murray, a Broadneck High School student, nominated Davis for this annual Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction Award. Davis is one of only four educators to be selected as a finalist from Maryland since 2012.

Directed toward first-generation college-bound students, AVID is a middle school and high school elective that provides students direct instruction on study skills, opportunities for in-school tutoring, access to college tours, directives on the financial aid and college application process, as well as support for taking honors and AP courses that are beneficial to college success. AVID offers a variety of classroom activities and resources that provide students with academic, social, and emotional support that will help them thrive in their college's most rigorous courses.

Murray is one of the students who has received that support through AVID, thanks to Davis.

"I would say that her teaching style has impacted me in a pretty good way," Murray said. "She always talks about speaking up for ourselves, which has helped me a lot."

Davis, a La Salle University graduate with a double major in English and education, aspired to be a teacher at a young age. She was also a collegiate athlete, as she received a full scholar-

*Gail Davis was recognized by the National Society of High School Scholars earlier this school year.*

ship for basketball. Davis was a team captain her senior year, and her passion for athletics continued post-grad. As a graduate assistant at La Salle, after obtaining her master's degree, she coached basketball at the United States Naval Academy for two years and at Georgetown University for six years. She then started her high school coaching career in New York in 1998. During these experiences, she recognized that she was educating her athletes to be top-tier basketball players, which is ultimately where her evolution as a teacher began.

"I first ended up getting into college basketball coaching, which is education in a different form and teaching in a different form," Davis said. "But then, as life evolved, it became difficult to do that with a family. So, I chose coaching at the high school level, as well as teaching. So, I'm a second career traditional educator in the classroom."

Retiring from coaching in 2019, Davis is now able to use her coaching skills in the classroom, fostering an environment where students improve their performance and overall development.

Davis' passion for athletics extends across professional and personal boundaries. Her husband, Emmett Davis, is the men's associate head basketball coach at the United States Naval Academy. Their three sons — Emmett, Shane and Brendan — are former or current collegiate athletes. Some of Davis' current AVID student-athletes say their teacher's dedication to supporting her sons' athletic accomplishments, and the details she shared with students about her sons' experiences, has helped her establish a special bond with current student athletes in her classes.

Juniors Mari Hayes and Donovan Boyer are members of the football team at Broadneck.

"I come to Mrs. Davis all day, every day," Hayes said. "You can talk to her about personal stuff, anything. On the field, I know she's motivated me before my games. ... But she definitely stays on my grades too and makes sure that you'll go to your teachers and get what you need to get done."

Boyer said, "She's really helped me throughout my recruitment process for football and lacrosse. You know, just giving me tips, since she's been through all this stuff before. So, she knows what happens, and what needs to get done. She's really just been like a guide for me, all throughout high school. And she was the one that motivated me to choose the major that I want to pursue in college."

Davis is proud that her entire 11-year teaching career has been in Anne Arundel County.

The beauty of the AVID program, Davis said, is that it allows her to team-build and collaborate with students.

"And that's where I really see the big-growth in the students," she said.

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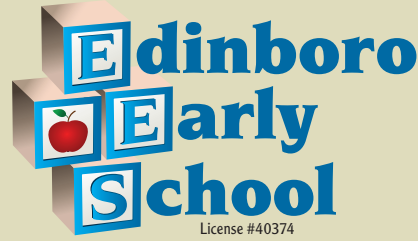
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## BROADNECK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Each month, the Severna Park Voice poses a question to a local fifth-grade class. This month, students from Mrs. Barton's class at Broadneck Elementary School answered the question:

### What is one goal you have for yourself in the new year?

In 2024, I'm going to eat more foods and also take runs.

**Andrew R.**

My goal is to stay more mindful, read more often and always stay on the bright side.

**Audrey Z.**

My goal this year is to write a whole story because I can never finish one.

**Ava D.**

My goal is to be a better friend.

**Avery B.**

In 2024, my goal is to get stronger

for football season.

**Carter B.**

In 2024, I hope to practice sports five days a week and go running.

**Connor M.**

I would like to accept some people that might not have a friend to talk to, play with, and make them feel like they belong here.

**Cooper C.**

I want to become a better soccer player.

**Dax S.**

In 2024, I will build at least 100 different LEGOs that don't come from LEGO sets.

**Eli S.**

My New Year's goal is to make some new tasty dishes and recipes.

**Ella B.**

In 2024, I will clean up my swimming in the 100- and 200-meter race to make it less sloppy.

**Emily S.**

I would like to be a more organized and have better footwork in lacrosse.

**Josie R.**

My goal for the new year is to get straight As and keep learning.

**Katie M.**

In 2024, I hope to be more active in my community and in my world.

**Kayla R.**

In 2024, I'm going to get my aerial, which is a very tough gymnastics move.

**Keleena S.**

I would like to travel or go sight-seeing more.

**Lauren W.**

In 2024, I will do 10 pushups every day.

**Lucas K.**

I want to hit 1,000 friends on TikTok and Twitch.

**Mason G.**

I want to always be in the middle of reading a book! Who knows how many books I'll read!

**Millie L.**

In the new year, I hope to get better at dance by not giving up.

**Raegan D.**

In 2024, I'm going to push to my physical limit and also have my sister's attitude.

**Ryan C.**

I will try to stay positive and look on the bright side, even when it might be hard for me.

**Scarlett H.**

In 2024, I'm going to be going on a bike ride almost every day in the spring and summer to see the sunset.

**Toby A.**



The Question of the Month is proudly sponsored by **Just-in-Time Renovations**  
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## Broadneck High School Creates People's Garden

By Avery Smith

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) visited Broadneck High School this fall to present the Earth Team Regional Group Volunteer Award to the school's Signature Program.

State conservationist Suzy Daubert presented the award to Signature students Aesah Culley-Simmons, Ellie Eger, Nolan Gille, Conor Keating and Olivia West. While countless students have had a hand in installing and maintaining the Broadneck High School People's Garden, these five students are the founders of the garden.

In fall 2022, after a field trip to the

People's Garden in Washington, D.C., Signature Program students and teachers were inspired. They had learned that the first-ever People's Garden, created in 2009 in honor of Abraham Lincoln, started a movement of agricultural education. Since then, People's Gardens have been created throughout the nation and have brought together people and their communities.

By learning about the power of these gardens, the Broadneck High School Signature Program felt a garden would be beneficial for the school and nearby community. Their version of the garden opened in spring 2023 and has already provided educational opportunities for

students and strengthened program partnerships with the community.

Installing a garden from scratch is no easy feat, and these motivated students needed to overcome the challenges of flooding, approvals, summer care, and funding. Since the Signature Program wanted to keep the garden fully sustainable and organic, their work was cut out for them.

This team of volunteers never gave up, however, seeing every challenge as a new opportunity for growth.

The Broadneck People's Garden team recalls noticing many pollinators in this garden after only a few months of hard work, igniting any lost passion and

encouraging them to take risks in the future. As the nearby school landscape shows no signs of pollinators, this was encouraging. When accepting the award, Broadneck students expressed their desire to grow new things in the future, wanting to stay involved through the new transitions of the garden.

Soon, the Signature Program students and teachers plan to plant garlic, lettuce, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower, as well as start a pumpkin patch for the preschool students in the school.

Volunteers have started donating fresh-grown food to shelters. Since this garden is open to the public, individuals all around the area can visit the People's Garden and connect with nature on their own.

The volunteers of this People's Garden want to teach other students and community members about the possibilities of organic gardening. They want individuals to take risks by creating their own gardens, learn about the importance of organic growing, and press the practice of sustainability.

The Broadneck High School People's Garden was made possible by donations from Cape Conservation Corps, Cape St. Claire Garden Club, Cape St. Claire Improvement Association, Chaney Enterprises, the Education Foundation of Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Lowe's Home Improvement and the Magothy River Association.

## Athlete Uses Deal With Shoe Company To Give Back

» Continued from page 34

race in the U.S. Outdoor Track and Field U20 championships in July and was crowned the New Balance nationals indoor 400-meter champion.

Quincy's performances caught the attention of many people, including those with New Balance. He became one of the youngest American athletes to sign a name, image and likeness contract with a major sports brand company. This development deal includes input into product development and wearing New Balance gear for competitions.

While Quincy competes out of Pottomac, he has deep ties to Severna Park. His mother, a fifth-generation resident

of Severna Park, is a Severn School Athletic Hall of Famer for soccer and basketball.

"My mom is my biggest inspiration on and off the track," Quincy said. "She always encourages me to be my best self while competing and giving back to the community."

Quincy coordinated the holiday giveaway with New Balance.

"New Balance has been great to work with," he said. "When I told them my idea, they were incredibly happy to help."

Quincy paired the gifts with an important message: running has many more applications than just

competition.

"I wanted the kids to know that you can use running to help out when you're mentally down, stressed or overwhelmed — you can always lean on walking or running as an outlet," he explained.

Quincy is looking forward to completing a promising season. As of early January, he is ranked second in the nation for the 600-meter category and is looking forward to competing at the VA Showcase in Virginia Beach, an important and highly publicized race. Most of all, however, this season he wants to thank his supporters and continue to make them proud.

## Retired Cop's Novel Brings Crime On Baltimore Streets Into Focus



Photo by Judy Tacyn

Steve Danko, pictured in his Severna Park home with his wife, Lorry, has given readers a look into crime from the perspective of a former law enforcement officer.

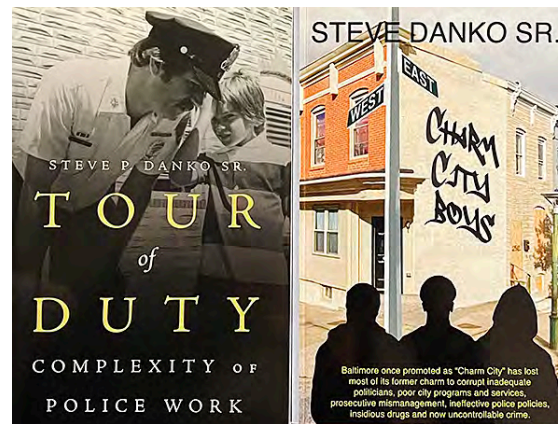
By Judy Tacyn

Baltimore native and Severna Park resident Steve Danko Sr. has a new badge of honor to add to his 25 years in the Baltimore Police Department: fictional author.

His second book, "Charm City Boys," self-published and released last October, is a must-read for American history buffs and Maryland natives.

"Charm City Boys" follows three friends whose lives intersect though amateur baseball following different origins and upbringings in Baltimore City neighborhoods. The story is set in the volatile 1950s and 1960s in Baltimore, a political hotbed not just in Maryland at that time but across the United States. The three friends never would have imagined how their lives would intertwine for years to come based on vastly different and often impulsive decisions made in their youth.

Spider becomes a drug dealer, Mike slips into addiction and Ralph heads into law enforcement. As the culture climate develops in Baltimore, the



Steve Danko has released two books, "Tour of Duty" and "Charm City Boys," inspired by his career in law enforcement.

three young men experience violence, arrests, prison, investigation, and the degradation of what was once known as Charm City.

Using his extensive experience as witness of both sides of the law and having grown up in Baltimore, Danko paints a vivid picture of life on the streets and the crime underworld of Baltimore.

Although the story is fictional, Danko's characters are closely related to people he's met, friends he's made and even Danko himself. Ralph goes into law enforcement to avoid the cost and rigors of college. Danko himself served the Baltimore Police Department as a patrol officer and then in homicide. Danko admits that Ralph's experience and personality is 90% his own. It's Danko's insider view that makes this story jump off the pages by putting the reader right into the underworld of crime in a large American city.

» Continued on page 42

## Harambe Documentary Spearheaded By Severna Park High School Alumni



SPHS 1991 grads Erik Crown and Tod Schneider teamed up on the new documentary, "Harambe," now available on Amazon Prime Video.



meaning of "Harambe" is "the community coming together for the common good." Those behind the film are doing that in his memory.

Crown explained the movie should not be thought of in the anti-zoo vs. pro-zoo model, but as a pro-animal movie.

"It is important to challenge societal preconceived notions of captivity and conservation, as we move toward a better model for all animals, including endangered keystone species like Harambe," Crown said.

Initially, Crown and Schneider reconnected after more than 30 years under interesting circumstances.

Crown returned to Naples, Florida, from Medellin, Colombia, after working on a project about Pablo Escobar's hippos for a screening hosted by the Calusa Waterkeepers. He saw Schneider was in that area and involved in

» Continued on page 43

## LSO To Perform "An Armed Forces Salute!"



SPHS graduate Parijita Bartola will open the concert by singing "The Star-Spangled Banner."

The Londontowne Symphony Orchestra's "An Armed Forces Salute!" will honor the contribution active duty and veteran military members make to the U.S. The show is set for January 20 at 7:30pm at Maryland Hall.

The rousing program of patriotic music includes the following: "Armed Forces - The Pride of America!" along with "Variants of" » Continued on page 42

By Lauren Burke Meyer

The 2016 shooting of Harambe captivated the world. Harambe — a critically endangered western lowland silverback gorilla — was shot and killed after a child fell into his enclosure at the Cincinnati Zoo. The story made international news, and Harambe's photo quickly became an internet sensation that sparked an important discussion on captivity.

Severna Park High School 1991 graduates Erik Crown and Tod Schneider collaborated on the new documentary, "Harambe," released in September 2023. Crown wrote and directed the

film. Schneider is one of the executive producers.

Packed with unreleased photos and video of Harambe, the documentary features narration by Peter Egan, along with exclusive interviews with wildlife expert Ian Redmond; Dan Van Coppenolle, who named Harambe; and Jeff McCurry, Harambe's personal photographer whose photo of Harambe went viral and became an iconic meme; among others.

The documentary explores animal captivity from a modern perspective through the lens of Harambe's tragic life and death. The Swahili word



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# “Wonka” Is Another Magical Film Inspired By Pure Imagination

By Audrey Ruppert

My first thought when I saw advertisements for “Wonka” was ... why? In a world already oversaturated with reboots, prequels and remakes, were the masses really crying out for another story from this particular franchise? I was also skeptical of Timothée Chalamet being cast as Willy, because he seems to lack the inherent weirdness or wackiness needed for the character. I was pleasantly surprised by what a delightful, sugary tale “Wonka” was.

Roald Dahl tales (“Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” “Matilda”) are often Dickensian in nature: children living in poor and exploitative conditions against a bleak industrial backdrop, with just a pinch of magic among the mess to give the characters hope of escaping, or rectifying the wrongs of their situations. “Wonka” captures that aesthetic extremely well and delivers far more than just a pinch of magic and wonder. The costumes, sets and backgrounds are wonderfully thought out, with the grubby, very grimy and the colorful absolutely delightful. It feels like a well-written fanfiction - an alternative creation in the same universe that keeps to all the principles of the original.

Almost all the musical numbers are unique, but they’re catchy and well written, well worthy of being performed next to the originals - the “Scrub Scrub” song is still stuck in my head. Chalamet brought a surprising twinkle and earnestness to the role. He’s not quite reached the level of plotting or bitterness as the Gene Wilder

Wonka, and he’s not completely off the wall like the Johnny Depp Wonka - he’s a very appropriate Wonka for the prequel, a younger and resourceful man with dreams of bringing delight to children and the wider world.

As in many Dahl stories, adult themes are present, though packaged in a way children can understand and work with. Wonka just wants to share something so seemingly innocent with the public, and he is so loveable that you, of course, want him to succeed - but he faces a corrupt police chief and monopolizing industrialists who scheme at every turn to suppress his genius in favor of their own profits. However, it’s not gritty or overly dark as can be the trend these days - it’s still a kids’ film with age-appropriate jokes and gags. There are genuinely tear-jerking, difficult moments throughout the story when Wonka faces unfair challenges and sabotage, but there is resolution and a bit of a lesson for children to learn and adults to remember.

Chalamet did a lovely, joyful rendition of Wonka (and yes, he can sing). Hugh Grant had me laughing as the Oompa Loompa, and a cast of staple English supporting actors (James Carter, Olivia Colman, Rowan Atkinson) are solid. Keegan Michael Key brings some comic relief. The little girl, Noodle (Calah Lane), is delightful.

“Wonka” is a worthy sequel in the franchise and well worth taking the whole family to see (though be prepared - both you and your children will desperately want some chocolate afterward).



Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

Actress Calah Lane plays Noodle, a young girl who becomes captivated by the charm and entrepreneurialism of Willy Wonka.

## LSO To Perform “An Armed Forces Salute!”



Photo courtesy of Michael G. Stewart

The LSO provides classical and light classical concerts for the enrichment and enjoyment of Maryland residents of all ages and backgrounds.

» Continued from page 40

the Navy Hymn,” “American Salute,” “America the Beautiful,” “Band of Brothers Suite,” “Stars and Stripes Forever,” “God Bless America,” “God Bless the USA,” “Rise Up,” “Esprit the Corps” and more.

Severna Park High School graduate Parijita Bartola will open the concert by singing “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Bartola is an 18-year-old singer/songwriter who was the first Nepali American on NBC’s “The Voice.”

Major General Andrew Davis will set the tone of the concert with a personal reflection on the contributions and sacrifices of military members. He retired from the Marine Corps in 2008 after a 38-year military career including tours in three wars. Margaret Bergen Davis, recently retired from Blue Star Families, will address the vital contributions of service members’ families.

The orchestra is conducted by Dr. Anna Binneweg. As the music director/conductor of the Londontowne Symphony Orchestra, the Anne Arundel Community College Symphony Orchestra and a frequent guest conductor on the national and international scene, Binneweg repeatedly captures audiences with her enthusiasm and passion for music.

This concert will feature two guest conductors, Commander Diane Nich-

ols (U.S. Navy) and Gregory Pascuzzi. Tickets for the “An Armed Forces Salute!” concert are \$25, and they are free for students of all ages. With a military ID, veterans and active-duty service members will be admitted for free.

Tickets are available from the Maryland Hall website ([www.marylandhall.org](http://www.marylandhall.org)) or at the door.

Learn more about Londontowne Symphony Orchestra at [www.lso-music.org](http://www.lso-music.org).



The Londontowne Symphony Orchestra is conducted by Dr. Anna Binneweg.

## Retired Cop’s Novel Brings Crime On Baltimore Streets Into Focus

» Continued from page 40

“I consider myself a storyteller, not a writer,” said Danko, who also says he only writes during the winter months. “My books have come from trying to capture my ‘war story’ experiences in the police department.”

Danko’s first book, the 2015 release “Tour of Duty,” outlined the complexity of police work. Danko was in the police department for 25 years, followed by 24 years in fraud

investigation with an insurance company, until he retired at age 70.

He’s been out of police work for 36 years, but he sees his experience and Baltimore’s stories repeat time and time again.

For Charm City to return, he said, “We (downtown Baltimore and other cities) need to get serious about what’s happening in our cities and government.”

Danko’s books are available on all major bookseller websites.

# AACC Presents A Staged Reading Of "Hurricane Diane"



Workshop in 2019, in a co-production between WP Theater (producing artistic director Lisa McNulty and managing director Michael Sag,) and New York Theatre Workshop (artistic director Jim Nicola and managing director Jeremy Blocker).

"Hurricane Diane" was commissioned and originally produced by Two River Theater (artistic director John Dias and managing director Michael Hurst).

Directed by Madeline Austin, the cast includes Eliza Geib (Beth), Leo Kubit (Diane), Mychael Lewis (Renee), Amanda Matousek

(Pam), Jana Naylor (Carol) and Rachel E. Harris (stage directions).

The design team and crew includes Sean Urbantke (production manager), Maggie Urban (assistant production manager), Zachary Sexton (student sound designer), Nathaniel Wofford (sound technician), Aidan Hender-son (student lighting designer), Ryan Brown (student lighting technician), Elaina Kohrs (student costume design-er), Liz Hall (student stage manager), Andrew Agner-Nichols (student assistant director/assistant stage manager), Katie O'Neil (student scenic/props designer) and Michelle Hickman (cos-tume advisor).

Warning, this show contains profan-ity and adult situations. The show is not suitable for all ages.

Performances are January 19-20 at 7:00pm. Parking is free. Get tickets by going to [www.eventbrite.com/cc/aacc-performances-2606819](http://www.eventbrite.com/cc/aacc-performances-2606819). Or contact [boxoffice@aacc.edu](mailto:boxoffice@aacc.edu) or 410-777-2457.

AACC Theatre is presenting a staged reading of "Hurricane Diane" from January 19-20 in Anne Arundel Community College's humanities room 112, Little Theatre. "Hurricane Diane" was written by 2019 Obie Award for Playwriting winner Madeleine George.

The story follows Diane (the Greek god Dionysus in disguise) as she returns to modern-day earth to help stop the effects of climate change. To do so, she must seduce four house-wives in a suburban New Jersey neigh-borhood. In this Obie-winning comedy with a twist, Pulitzer Prize finalist Madeleine George pens an eviscera-tion of the blind eye as people turn to climate change and the bacchanalian catharsis that awaits.

"Hurricane Diane" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French Inc. "Hurricane Diane" had its New York City premiere at New York Theatre

## Harambe Documentary

» Continued from page 40

coral restoration work in the Florida Keys. So, Crown reached out to him and ended up staying with Schneider during his visit.

The old friends instantly re-clicked and picked up as though not a day had gone by.

"I am lucky to have reconnected with such a good friend, then to have his vision align with the work we are doing. His input and partnership have been invaluable," Crown said.

Schneider — who grew up in Chartwell — learned about Crown's fascinat-ing journey, from working on the television show "Scrubs" to being the first TMZ paparazzo at LAX airport.

"His struggle with environmental cancer and shift to purpose-driven documentary filmmaking deeply resonated with me, inspiring me to venture into the film industry as an executive producer," Schneider said.

In November 2022, Crown started a new round of radiation for cancer wrapped around his tailbone. He was in radiation for the maximum amount possible. Luckily, a follow-up MRI nine months later showed the cancer was

about half the size.

"They told me it would never fully go away, but to have the pain relief and mental relief that it is smaller has been like getting a second, second, second chance," Crown said.

Together, Crown and Schneider are dedicated to producing films that not only create conversation but also make a significant societal impact.

"Our goal is to craft content that in-troduces new perspectives to viewers, ignites meaningful discussions and encourages simple everyday actions to tackle global challenges," Schneider said.

"Harambe" asks viewers: Are we serving these animals in a way where the outcomes are better than they would be if the animals were in their natural habitat? You decide.

The documentary is available to rent on Amazon Prime Video in the U.S. and U.K. It's also on [www.films-foraction.org](http://www.films-foraction.org). A portion of the movie's proceeds will be donated to non-gov-ernmental organizations that help gorillas get out of captivity. To learn more or keep up with where to watch, visit [www.harambemovie.com](http://www.harambemovie.com).

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## Issues That Will Affect The Markets In 2024

**Jason LaBarge**

LaBarge  
Financial



Three key issues are impacting the market in 2024: the election, interest rate changes and military campaigns throughout the world.

Are any of us ready for another presidential election? I am not even referring to the candidates. I am referring to the election itself, the campaigning and the aftermath. What impact will the uncertainty have leading up to the election and what impact will the ultimate winner have on the market directly after election night?

The S&P 500's record during U.S. presidential elections suggests investors could experience a decrease in returns but still earn positive results. Since 1952, the S&P has averaged a 7% gain during presidential election years while it has averaged 17% during the year prior. Similar returns are experienced for presidents seeking re-election. Every president who has avoided a recession two years prior to

re-election went on to win, and every president who had a recession within the previous two years before re-election went on to lose. Although the chances of a recession have fallen in recent months, the New York Federal Reserve's recession probability model suggests there is still a 51.8% chance of a recession in the next 12 months. The Fed forecasts the unemployment rate will increase from 3.7% to 4.1% in 2024. These facts will influence the election and are going to dramatically impact the market.

In addition to the election, changes to interest rates will have an impact in 2024. The Federal Reserve held interest rates steady at its last meeting in 2023, yet we saw rates climb to their highest levels in over 22 years in 2023. They have indicated that three cuts are coming in 2024. Some analysts are expecting up to six cuts in 2024! The goal here is to keep inflation low while keeping rates as low as possible as well.

The important factor in all of this is the impact rates have on small to mid-size banks. I have been watching this topic closely. In 2008, we experienced what problems can arise from a faltering banking industry. Will we have

» **Continued on page 46**

## Chamber Update

**Liz League**  
CEO  
GSPACC



Please give a warm welcome to our newest members and enjoy reading about all the small businesses that supported our chamber events. They truly make our community the

best place to live! Find them in our directory at [www.gspacc.com](http://www.gspacc.com).

**Oscar's Alehouse Pasadena** – Welcome to the third location of Oscar's Alehouse at 8026 Ritchie Highway in Pasadena. The original Oscar's was established in 2012. The team members pride themselves in providing the best craft brews and food in the area with 36 beers on draft to choose from. The scratch kitchen features a wood-burning grill that fills the restaurant with that homegrown, smoky aroma. This family-friendly atmosphere is the perfect place for your night out.

([www.oscarsalehouse.net](http://www.oscarsalehouse.net))

**Jody A. Limbacher, CPA, LLC** – Jody A. Limbacher, CPA, is a family-oriented business that takes pride in its diligence and dedication to clients. They understand that when you are dealing with the IRS, it can be a stressful time.

That is why the team of CPAs will work diligently to resolve your tax issues as quickly as possible. They also offer tax preparation services for individuals and businesses in the Annapolis area.

([www.limbachercpa.com](http://www.limbachercpa.com))

**Annapolis Moms Media** – Annapolis Moms was created in 2011 for moms in Annapolis and surrounding areas to share experiences and help each other. Founded by Lisa Peri and co-directed by Jessica Opert, Annapolis Moms Media has a goal to create a stronger bond within the community, offering a platform for open discussions, invaluable insights, local recommendations and unwavering support. They strive to connect, uplift and grow together as they navigate the joyful journey of motherhood. They also have a nonprofit called **Friends of Annapolis Moms**.

([www.annapolismomsmmedia.com](http://www.annapolismomsmmedia.com))

**JAW Drop Productions LLC** – JAW Drop caters to small- to medium-size businesses for all their marketing needs. Your business is their passion. Founder Jo Gilley is a brand builder, story curator, multimedia designer, and all-star marketing utility player experienced in social strategy, community advocacy, process improvement, digital design, print design, video, and event planning.

**Rapid Response Defense Inc.** – Own-

» **Continued on page 46**

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### Muñoz Estates & Trusts Brings Families Comfort During Trying Times

By Zach Sparks

Planning and administration for estates and trusts can seem complicated and burdensome. With that in mind, Rachel Muñoz makes the process as simple, straightforward and painless for people as possible.

"I wanted to build something in my community that is positive, something that serves and protects families," Muñoz said.

After graduating from Severna Park High School, Muñoz attended the University of Maryland, College Park, majoring in psychology with a minor in philosophy. Inspired by the need for advocacy in her community, she studied at the University of Maryland School of Law during nights while raising three kids with her husband, Andrew, here in Severna Park.

Now a mother of five and a state delegate, Muñoz started her own law firm at the end of 2022. She works with families who come to her from "every corner of the state, which I did not expect."

About two-thirds of the U.S. population dies without a will. Without directives, the state decides how assets will be distributed.

Muñoz feels blessed to help families plan for their



*Rachel Muñoz helps people plan for their families' future so that their wishes are honored.*

futures, navigate difficult decisions and find common ground.

"Sometimes, people are embarrassed about finances or conflict within the family," she said before emphasizing that it's normal to have problems. "With a background in counseling, I already knew there is no such thing as a dysfunctional family because they all are," she joked.

With the probate process, it can take a year to 18 months before a family can access funds. Planning can expedite the process.

"I like walking with families and bridging the gap,"

she said. "When we're done, I love to see them experience such a relief because they have done something to protect their family and finances, no matter what comes next in life."

Muñoz wants clients to plan so that their wishes are honored. Although that task might seem overwhelming, her goal is to talk through options in a comfortable environment. For example, she does not sit behind a big desk or require long intake forms like some firms.

"When we sit together at a conference table, I want it to be a collaborative process," Muñoz said. "You either do the hard work now or your family does it later."

"I try to make it a safe space," she added. "Family members are stressed and burdened. It can be traumatizing for a person."

Muñoz meets with families in her Riggs Avenue office, located in the LaBarge Financial building.

"I feel like I've learned so much from Jason and his team," Muñoz said. "If (clients) have complex questions about financial planning, taxes, or retirement, they can help answer those questions right here in the office. I love having this space. I've been with firms that started local and ended up in those big gray corporate buildings."

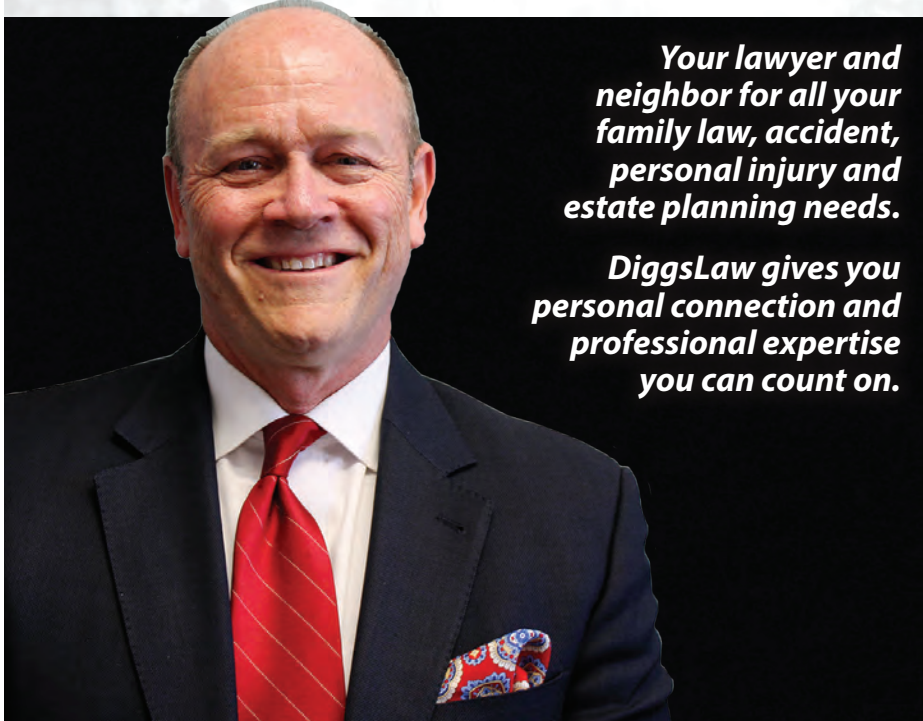
Jason LaBarge, financial advisor and president of LaBarge Financial, said the expertise offered by Muñoz Estates & Trusts gives his clients a more holistic, well-rounded approach in addition to his services.

» **Continued on page 47**



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## Chamber Update

» Continued from page 44

er Lou Goodwin has more than 20 years of martial arts training in taekwondo, hapkido, aikido, iaido and kenpo. He also has 10 years of experience working in the security field. His classes will give you “self-confidence through self-defense training.”

([www.rapidresponsedefense.com](http://www.rapidresponsedefense.com))

**Pomfret & Telljohann Wealth Management Group** – Deciding how, and where, you will spend your retirement years may be challenging, but getting your savings plan in shape shouldn't be. That is why Pomfret & Telljohann Wealth Management Group does what it does, working with individuals and families to help them achieve financial well-being. They also work with organizations to craft the best retirement plans for employees. Both James Pomfret and Sarah Telljohann are winners of the Five Star Wealth Manager Award, with James winning every year since 2012.

([www.pomfrettelljohannwmg.com](http://www.pomfrettelljohannwmg.com))

**Pitaya Mexican Restaurant** – At this family-owned Mexican restaurant, the staff believes that food is more than just sustenance – it is an experience. They strive to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere where you can savor the flavors of Mexico, while enjoying the company of your friends and family. Join them for a taste of Mexico.

([www.facebook.com/pitayamexicanrestaurant](http://www.facebook.com/pitayamexicanrestaurant))

**La Sierra Authentic Mexican Restaurant** – The menu is crafted with love and care, featuring traditional dishes made from fresh, locally sourced ingredients. From classic favorites like tacos and enchiladas, to lesser-known regional

specialties, La Sierra has something for everyone. The team takes pride in their handmade tortillas, salsas and guacamole, all of which are made fresh daily in their kitchen.

([lasierraannapolis.com](http://lasierraannapolis.com))

We held three ribbon-cutting celebrations in December. The first was the re-branding of the **Severna Park Women's Clinic** in Severna Park. Next was the grand opening of **Side Street Framers & gift gallery** in Pasadena. Finally, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of **Emidio Vincenzo Escape Salon and Spa** in Severna Park.

Our 13th annual Taste and Sip event was held at **Chartwell Golf & Country Club** on December 5 and was a tremendous success. We had 26 vendors comprised of restaurants, liquor stores

and specialty stores, and close to 350 attendees. Our silent auction was bountiful with generous donations from our small-business community. The event included entertainment, raffles and more.

Deepest thanks to our event creator and sponsor, **Matt Wyble of Next Step Realty**. Gold sponsors were **KMA Law Office, Level Up Builders, Smart Fit Kids Academy, Gardiner & Appel Group** and **Taichi Bubble Tea**. Silver sponsors were **Shore United Bank** and **Park Modern Realty**. Bronze sponsors were **Kogen Dojo Defense Academy, Checkmark Power Washing, Chesapeake Auto Body, Griswold Live Assured Home Care, Whale Works Design and Illustration, Assisted Living Locators, M&T Bank** and **Friends of Christine Marie Celeste**.

Many thanks to our sponsors, silent auction donors, volunteers, entertainers, host and attendees who made the event a huge success.

Our Successful Women in Business group held its annual holiday luncheon in Park Books' community space! We had nine vendor sponsors, which included the **Jing Ying Institute of Kung Fu & Tai Chi, Dotty's Skin Care, Melaleuca Earth Sense, Earth Radiance Holistic, Integrative Family NP LLC, The Blended Essentials, S.H.E.P. Legacy Solutions, Cascades of Wellness** and **Touchstone Crystal by Swarovski**. The luncheon was catered by **April's Table**, and we enjoyed dessert from **Nothing Bundt Cakes** and coffee from **BD Provisions**.

For more information about the chamber and our events, visit [www.gspacc.com](http://www.gspacc.com).

## Issues That Will Affect The Markets In 2024

» Continued from page 44

more Silicon Valley Bank situations in 2024? The Fed's ability to lower rates and keep the economy steady is perhaps the most important storyline to follow in 2024.

Finally, military threats could impact our economy in the coming year. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the U.S. has allocated over \$100 billion in aid. Can the U.S. sustain this kind of support with the state of our current national debt? The ongoing war between Israel and Palestine now poses threats to commercial shipping and the global economy. Does China take this opportunity to take over Taiwan while the U.S. is preoccupied with Ukraine and Israel? The most important thing

all of us can do to help alleviate these concerns is to vote.

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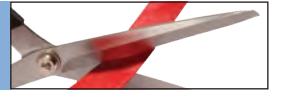
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## RIBBON CUTTINGS



### Side Street Framers & Gift Gallery Opens Second Location

Longtime Severna Park establishment Side Street Framers & gift gallery is now serving the Pasadena community as well with the opening of its second location at 8220 Ritchie Highway, suite 6. Community members gathered to mark the occasion with a ribbon cutting ceremony on December 9.



### Escape Salon & Spa Celebrates 20th Anniversary With Ceremonial Ribbon-Cutting

Emidio Vincenzo Escape Salon & Spa marked two decades in business with a ribbon cutting celebration and open house on December 16. The Severna Park salon offers services for nails, hair, skin care, massage, waxing and more.

### Park Welcomes Mexican Restaurant Along Ritchie Highway

Pitaya Mexican Restaurant celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by a mariachi band and open house, on January 6. The new eatery, located at 497 Ritchie Highway, suite 2, offers authentic Mexican cuisine ranging from tacos to enchiladas to fajitas and more.



## Muñoz Estates & Trusts

» Continued from page 44

“Rachel brings an acumen that is unique to our industry because she understands the full complement of what a client needs,” LaBarge said. “Our clients love that because most financial planners don’t have that service. I know Rachel has each client’s best interest at heart.”

Jessie Ringle, LaBarge Financial’s chief operations officer, holds a similar perspective.

“Instead of an isolated view of an estate plan, she has a peripheral view of how the plan works with everything else so that it goes hand in hand,” Ringle said.

When she is not in her Severna Park

office, Muñoz offers concierge appointments and visits private homes, client offices, as well as nursing homes so she can bring her services to elderly clients.

“I’ve had grown adults crying in my office,” Muñoz said. “I think (the process) is scary for most people. If you can find someone compassionate and understanding, it can be pleasant. It’s an honor to be able to take some of that weight off people’s shoulders.”

Muñoz Estates & Trusts is located at 7 Riggs Avenue in Severna Park. To learn more about services for estates and trusts — planning and administration, call 410-541-0269.

## Liff, Walsh & Simmons Attorneys Named 2024 Maryland Super Lawyers

Nine attorneys from Liff, Walsh & Simmons have been included on the Maryland Super Lawyers and Rising Stars 2024 lists. The Super Lawyers selection process, renowned for its rigorous methodology, honors lawyers with significant peer recognition and professional achievement.

Super Lawyers selects the top 5% of attorneys each year, while Rising Stars is no more than 2.5% each year. The attorney-led research staff evaluates candidates on 12 peer review and professional competence indicators. The Rising Stars list consists of the state’s top young attorneys.

### 2024 Rising Stars

- Jonathan McGowan – business/corporate
- Bradley Walsh – real estate
- Paul Skrickus – real estate
- Andre Habib – business/corporate
- Kelly Callahan – securities and corporate finance
- Gregory Ferrera – estate planning and probate

### 2024 Super Lawyers

- Terrence Liff – business/corporate
- James Crossan – business litigation
- Thomas Simmons – real estate



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## RETIREMENT CHECKLIST

### REVIEW RETIREMENT INVESTING NEEDS

- Risk Tolerance may change as you stop earning a paycheck
- Rebalance your portfolio
- Learn how to withdraw funds & minimize taxes
- When to sign up for Social Security
- Consider an Annuity
- Do you know your guaranteed income sources?

### TAKE INVENTORY OF YOUR ASSETS

- Evaluate your current budget
- Write down every debt, liability, savings balance, insurance, etc.

### BUILD EMERGENCY FUND

- 6 months to a year worth of funds for emergencies

### SECURE HEALTH INSURANCE & LONG-TERM CARE

- Where will healthcare coverage come from?
- Will you be completely covered by Medicare or have supplemental insurance?
- If retiring early and Medicare is not an option, if you do not receive from former employer, or spouse's insurance, you will need to get insurance on your own

### ELIMINATE ALL DEBT

- Tackle the debts with the highest interest rates and smaller balances first
- Mortgages are good to save for last since most will have lower interest rates

### DETERMINE RETIREMENT NEEDS

- How much do you want per year vs. how much do you need per year?
- Where do you want to retire?
- Do you still want to work in retirement?
- Decide on retirement date & notify HR/Employer

### PLAN OUT YOUR ESTATE

- Create a Will
- Appoint Power of Attorney
- Establish guardians for living dependents
- Appoint beneficiaries on life insurance plans, retirement accounts, and shared assets
- Funeral Arrangements
- Dissemination of sentimentally valuable family heirlooms
- Review plans every 5 years or when you experience a life changing event

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