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# SEVERNA PARK VOICE

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1981

SEVERNA PARK, MD

NOVEMBER 2024

## SPAN Program Brightens Holidays For Area Families

By Meredith Winter

In Severna Park, a humble house tucked behind Our Shepherd Lutheran Church serves as a depot of help and hope for area residents in need. For nearly 35 years, SPAN — Serving People Across Neighborhoods — has carried out its mission of providing “food and/or financial assistance to qualified individuals and families to help them get through critical or emergency situations.”

Through the generosity of the community, the nondenominational ministry also helps to provide Thanksgiving and Christmas meals as well as Christmas gifts for children for many of the families SPAN serves through its annual Holiday Caring program.

Maia Grabau, SPAN’s director of operations, shared that last holiday season SPAN was able to bless about 375 children with gifts and over 150 families with meals. This year, the nonprofit hopes to assist the same number of families and children, and the Holiday Caring program is already in full swing.

Grabau noted that as the costs of housing, utilities and other necessities continue to increase, so too does the need for help. “This last year, we assisted about 870 families with emergency financial assistance and about 650 with food, and those numbers are definitely higher than the previous couple of years,” she said, noting that SPAN helped roughly 4,000 people total last year.

While many Holiday Caring families in need of meals and gifts contact SPAN directly, others come through the local schools. Tara Luecking, one of two school counselors at Broadneck Elementary,  
**» Continued on page 6**

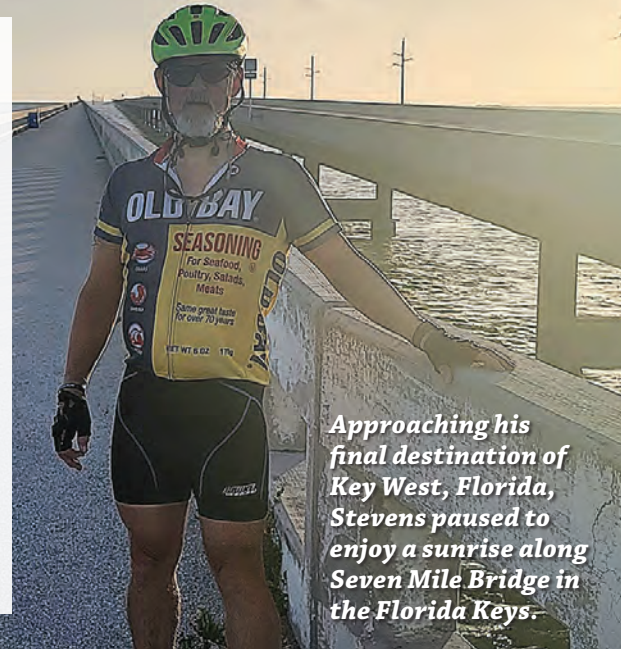
## Tim Stevens Cycles From Delaware Through Florida, Stopping To Aid Storm Victims

By Meredith Winter

September 1, 2024, marked the one-year anniversary of “trop rock” star Jimmy Buffett’s passing. So, it was a fitting day for longtime Severna Park resident and bona fide Parrot Head Tim Stevens to set out on the adventure of a lifetime in honor of his favorite musician and in celebration of his recent retirement.

Stevens, who turned 65 the day after he retired this past July, completed a 1,900-mile solo bicycling journey from Ocean View, Delaware, to Key West, Florida, this fall. The excursion took him through scenic historic cities and a few treacherous remote areas, and along the way he formed friendships with people he will remember for years to come.

Stevens has been an ardent cyclist and Buffett fan since the ‘70s. In 1972, his older sister’s daring cycling trip from Boston to Miami, paired with her gift of a bicycle repair manual called “Anybody’s Bike Book,” ignited his own passion for bike riding. Four years later, while hitchhiking across the country,  
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Approaching his final destination of Key West, Florida, Stevens paused to enjoy a sunrise along Seven Mile Bridge in the Florida Keys.

## Health Care Amid Hurricane Helene

Local Pediatrician Serves On Volunteer Medical Mission

By Lauren Cowin

When Hurricane Helene wreaked havoc on the Carolinas and beyond in late September, concerned citizens nationwide watched in horror, and wondered how to help.

For Dr. Andre Gvozden, owner of Gvozden Pediatrics in Millersville, help meant deploying to North Carolina for a volunteer medical mission.

Through Heart to Heart International, a nonprofit that provides free medical services to vulnerable populations, Gvozden joined a team of doctors and nurses who filled a health care void during this critical time. Gvozden has worked with Heart to Heart’s disaster response team for a decade, serving on 11 missions both in the United States and abroad.

“The whole infrastructure tends

to collapse at once, so organizations like ours help,” Gvozden explained, noting that often with a natural disaster, the local doctors’ offices are closed due to damage, leaving the hospitals overwhelmed.

Heart to Heart set up camp in Haywood County, west of Asheville, North Carolina, near the health department so that doctors and nurses would be visible to the population. Gvozden

likened its set-up to a “mini urgent care on wheels,” capable of treating a whole host of medical needs and stocked with prescription medications.

For two weeks, the volunteer medical providers treated an estimated 200 patients for an array of ailments. The first wave brought in injuries sustained during hurricane clean up, such as wounds and infections from stepping on nails.

Later, the health care workers saw more intestinal infections from contaminated water, and secondary clean-up injuries.

“The flood disrupted the yellow jackets and they were swarming everywhere,” said Gvozden, who treated linemen, tasked with getting power back up and running, who came in with bee stings and poison ivy.

As word got out that free medical care was available, patients with chronic conditions, who had perhaps been hesitant to seek treatment in the past, trickled in.

“It’s Appalachia where we were, they’re very self-sufficient, and I think for generations, have taken care of themselves,” Gvozden said. “We saw some pretty sick people

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Photo courtesy of Heart to Heart International

**Dr. Andre Gvozden, owner of Gvozden Pediatrics in Millersville, served on a two-week medical mission to North Carolina following Hurricane Helene through Heart to Heart International.**

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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.

## For Karen Fox, Giving Back Is A Family Matter

By Meredith Winter

*"We can't change the world, but we can help one family at a time."*

This simple yet powerful truth is what Severna Park resident Karen Fox hoped to convey to her four boys by getting her whole family involved in serving their community many years ago.

For roughly 15 years, Fox has supported Severna Park-based SPAN's (Serving People Across Neighborhoods) Holiday Caring program, which invites community members to sponsor area families in need with meals for Thanksgiving and/or Christmas, as well as Christmas gifts for their children.

Along with her husband, Steve, and their four sons, who all graduated from Severna Park

High School (SPHS) and range in age from 18 to 25, Fox has not only sponsored meals and gifts but also helped with the distribution of both for many years.

Whether shopping for groceries or gifts, wrapping presents, dropping off donations or helping distribute items on pickup days, Fox has tried to involve her sons at every level. She recalled taking them to purchase a coat for a child one year, noting that it's hard for some kids to process that there may be a family in their community who cannot afford to buy a coat for their child.

"It's just a really heartwarming service that SPAN provides, and it's actually so eye-opening how prevalent the need is — even here in the land of 211,46," Fox said. "I always wanted my kids to realize that just because you guys have a full stomach three meals a day and a very blessed life where you have, really, no true need, five minutes up the road there are kids who are not so fortunate."

A firm believer in giving back to her community, Fox has also served as a sports team mom many times over, functioned as treasurer for SPHS' Falcon Athletic Boosters Club, and helped the homeless through Giving Back, Linda's Legacy.

When their boys were young, Steve helped coach their



Photo by Meredith Winter

*For many years, Severna Park resident Karen Fox has rallied her whole family, including her four sons, to serve the community through SPAN's Holiday Caring program; Giving Back, Linda's Legacy; and other outlets.*

to look for a new volunteer to whom she could hand over the reins. Early in the 2024-2025 academic year, Fox began training a qualified new treasurer and has been telling people, "She's going to do a better job than me!"

Fox and her family volunteered for many years with another Severna Park-based nonprofit — Giving Back, Linda's Legacy (GBLL) — as well. GBLL supports people experiencing homelessness in the Anne Arundel County, Baltimore and Washington, D.C., area with meals, clothing and other necessities through a holiday drive. Fox recalled making hundreds of fleece scarves with her boys while watching football, preparing countless bagged lunches as a family, and distributing backpacks with socks, toiletries, food and more around Baltimore to those in need on Christmas Eve.

Now that her boys are either in college or off living on their own, Fox noted that there are fewer opportunities to volunteer regularly as a whole family. But that will not stop them from coming alongside a local family this month to sponsor their Thanksgiving and Christmas meals and Christmas gifts through SPAN.

"I will go the extra mile for (them) to ensure they have a wonderful holiday season, as best as I can," Fox said.

Green Hornets teams, so Fox figured she might as well be the team mom. She planned parties, coordinated snacks and much more. She continued to be involved with her boys' sports teams during their time at SPHS, and she ultimately filled the role of treasurer for the boosters for the past few years.

She began as treasurer in 2020 when schools were closed due to COVID, which gave her the opportunity to assess how things were done and bring about helpful updates. A bookkeeper by profession, Fox took the boosters' accounting methods from paper and pen to more efficient online and automated practices. As her youngest son's 2024 SPHS graduation day approached, she began



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## Long-Term Strategy To Guide Restoration And Water Quality Improvements In The Severn River Watershed

The Severn River Association (SRA) is launching the Severn River Action Plan (SRAP), a long-term strategy to guide and prioritize restoration throughout the Severn River watershed. The SRAP enables SRA to assess the Severn's subwatersheds, track projects, and enhance capacity for implementing critical restoration.

The SRAP replaces two previous Severn River planning documents: the 2002 Watershed Management Plan and the 2006 Final Report. Unlike these overviews, the SRAP offers a detailed, targeted approach and identifies optimal restoration

sites, weighs costs and benefits, and outlines an implementation path.

The SRAP ranks subwatersheds by need, identifying and focusing on Weems Creek as the top priority. This approach ensures resources are directed to high-impact areas, offering a clear framework for future restoration.

"This document serves as an important strategic plan that will guide how SRA sequences its future restoration projects in order of greatest need," remarked Ben Fertig, SRA restoration manager.

As part of the long-term vision, action plans for each subwatershed will

be developed in order of ranking. Successful implementation of these projects is critical to achieving a healthier and more resilient Severn River. SRA is committed to securing resources and to working with community stakeholders to bring this vision to life.

"The SRAP is our restoration lode-star, guiding our assessment strategy for years to come in order to deliver on our vision of a thriving Severn River," said Jesse Iliff, SRA executive director.

A six-page summary can be downloaded from the SRA website at [bit.ly/SRAPsummary](http://bit.ly/SRAPsummary), and the full report can be read at [bit.ly/SRAPfullreport](http://bit.ly/SRAPfullreport).

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# Clarity Business Solutions Night Golf Event Raises \$6,000 To Support Services From The Heart



The October golf event included dinner, a silent auction, and raffle baskets featuring items donated by local businesses.

Supporters gathered for a charity night golf event hosted by Clarity Business Solutions Inc. on October 3. The event was held to raise funds and awareness for a Severna Park organization, Services from the Heart. This event took place at Compass Pointe Golf Courses in Pasadena, offering participants the chance to play their favorite sport under the stars while contributing to a meaningful cause.

Services from the Heart is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing essential resources to local students and families in need. The funds raised from this event will go directly to sustaining those efforts, which include

providing backpack meals to students and families.

Participants were provided with glow-in-the-dark golf balls, illuminated fairways, and markers, creating a fun and glowing experience. The event included dinner, a silent auction, and raffle baskets featuring items donated by local businesses.

Thanks to the generosity of sponsors and participants, the event exceeded its fundraising goals. Clarity donated \$6,000 to Services from the Heart. Every dollar raised will be used to further the mission of Services from the Heart, helping to provide ongoing services that uplift the community.

## Anne Arundel County Women Helping Women Scholarship Program Awards Eight Scholarships

Five Annapolis-area chapters of PEO joined together in 2019 to create a program designed to award local scholarships for women enrolled in the health sciences program at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC). PEO is an international women's Philanthropic Education Organization. The nonprofit organization was established 150 years ago to help women pursue educational goals. The scholarship program is funded through the PEO Foundation where every dollar collected goes to recipients. The PEO international organization overall has awarded over \$368 million to over 118,000 women in scholarships and grants.

The scholarship program is need-based and can be used for college fees, uniforms, books and equip-

ment, transportation and other college-related expenses. The first scholarships were awarded in 2023 and 2024 to two applicants (DiMayera Williams and Kristen Burge) and totaled \$3,300. The 2024 awards were given to eight applicants (Casey Marshall, Corrine Mead, Layla Osiruphuel, Tabitha Jarkin, Jenny Stanton, Chinalyn Trinkle, DaMiya Williams and Kristen Burge) and totaled \$7,500. Individuals receiving the recent awards are enrolled in AACC health sciences programs for nursing, emergency medical technicians, chiropractic and other health sciences fields.

The scholarship program is growing as more students at AACC in health sciences become aware of the scholarship. For more information on the program, visit [www.annearundelcowomenhelpingwomen.com](http://www.annearundelcowomenhelpingwomen.com).

# Shoptoberfest Draws Families And Fun Costumes To Park Plaza

The Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce held its annual Shoptoberfest event on October 19, with costume contests, martial arts demonstrations, shopping opportunities and other activities.



Photos by Dalton Bashore

Dogs came to Shoptoberfest in pickle outfits, sombreros and other creative costumes.



Photo by David Bashore

Billy Greer (right) of the Jing Ying Institute of Kung Fu & Tai Chi interacted with costumed kids at last month's Shoptoberfest.



Side Street Framers & gift gallery was one of several vendors onsite.



Lean On Dee shared information about home care services for seniors.

## Holiday Caring

» Continued from page 1

shared that SPAN has helped some of her school families in need in recent years.

"SPAN has a deadline for their applications for assistance in October. This is so helpful for our families, to reassure that they will be taken care of, well in advance, so they do not have to worry or stress during the holidays!" Luecking said. "As school counselors, we appreciate having (SPAN) as a valuable resource for our community and our families are grateful for their generosity."

Recipients of the community's outpouring of kindness at the holidays include many single moms, some large families, and even foster children in the care of people like Tirrell, who was introduced to SPAN two years ago.

"SPAN has been a tremendous part of my life since 2022 when my own child died 11 days before Christmas," Tirrell, a teacher assistant with Anne Arundel County Public Schools, said, explaining

that her son died suddenly at the age of 19. "It was a sad, hard year for me. SPAN brightened my life by allowing me to distribute among needy children the Target gift cards that were intended for my son."

Following her son's passing, Tirrell became a foster care provider, and to date, 17 children have found refuge at her home. SPAN has come alongside her commitment to caring for children by providing food assistance. Last year, SPAN also helped make the holidays special.

"Ms. Maia called just before Thanksgiving asking if I could use a turkey for Thanksgiving. When I happily said 'yes,' she went on to ask if we could use help for Christmas," Tirrell recalled. "I cried because I had not thought that far down the road. Holiday (Caring) came through with all kinds of girls' clothes and toys."

Another Holiday Caring participant, Carmen, shared that her large family, including her brothers and cousins, has benefitted from the program as well. She discovered SPAN's holiday assistance during the pandemic, and is thankful for

the gifts. "For the kids, they feel happy," she said. "For us, we feel very grateful."

A single mother of five children, Ashley, has been a grateful recipient of SPAN's assistance and the Holiday Caring program for several years. But even more than the physical aid, she is especially thankful for the personal care she has received from the people at SPAN.

Amid job loss and a medical diagnosis, Ashley said SPAN was there. "There's nothing like someone who is a part of a church organization that actually genuinely cares, and wants to help, and cares about your children — you feel the love at this place," she said.

"If it wasn't for them, I don't know what I would have done," she emphasized, sharing that the women at SPAN motivated her not to give up when things were bleak. Instead, they have helped Ashley feel special and cared for, reaching out to her when they have gluten-free items and checking on her periodically.

The Holiday Caring program is possible because of the many generous individu-

als, businesses, churches, scout troops, Bible study groups, and others in the community who give of their time and resources to bless people they may never meet with needed food and treasured gifts at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Holiday meals typically include non-perishable side and dessert ingredients as well as a grocery gift card for a turkey or ham and other fresh items. Solo donations of grocery gift cards are encouraged as well. For Christmas gifts, SPAN provides donors with a family's ID number and gift requests for each child. SPAN recommends spending about \$50 per child on gifts. Again, separate donations of Target and Walmart gift cards are appreciated, too.

For those interested in providing a meal and/or gifts, Grabau stated they can email her directly at [spanhelps@yahoo.com](mailto:spanhelps@yahoo.com) or fill out the Google form linked at [www.spanhelps.org/news](http://www.spanhelps.org/news). The collection date for Thanksgiving meals is November 11, and Christmas gifts and meals can be dropped off on December 8.

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# Stevens Cycles From Delaware Through Florida, Aids Storm Victims



**Left:** Tim Stevens (right) completed a 41-day cycling journey from Ocean View, Delaware, to Key West, Florida, at noon on October 11. He arrived at the southernmost point of the continental U.S. with cycling friend Chris Birks, who accompanied him along the ride from the Tampa Bay area. **Above:** Stevens and his wife, Deborah, enjoyed a Jimmy Buffett tribute band concert in Delaware before he embarked on a 1,900-mile cycling journey to honor his favorite musician and celebrate his recent retirement.

## » Continued from page 1

Stevens' cousin stopped at his home in Minnesota and gave the teen his first Jimmy Buffett album, "A1A." He fell in love with both almost instantly.

Nearly five decades and countless concerts and cycling excursions later, Stevens and his wife, Deborah, visited friends in Ocean View, Delaware, this past Labor Day weekend to enjoy a performance by the Jimmy Buffett tribute band Changes in Latitudes. Then, his journey began.

Through a blog shared with family and friends, Stevens documented his ride daily in photos and stories paired with excerpts from Buffett songs. He traveled down Delmarva to the Virginia Beach area and into North Carolina with only a few hiccups. Enter a Buffett song title that would become a mantra throughout this experience: "Breathe In, Breathe Out, Move On."

Along the way, Stevens crashed with friends, camped under the stars, stayed in hotels, and enjoyed the hospitality of Warmshowers hosts — cyclists who open their homes to other touring cyclists. His host in Greenville,

North Carolina, was a marine biologist who also happened to be a passionate cycling advocate and whose commencement speaker at graduation was none other than Jimmy Buffett.

In Wilmington, North Carolina, Stevens stayed with a former Severna Park neighbor, Lori, and her boyfriend, and enjoyed one of his best meals of the whole trip at a restaurant where her son was a master chef. That day, he shared on his blog, "I am so fortunate to have the health to do this ride, the friends (some old, some newly made, and some friends of friends) who support me along the way, and the resources (financial, emotional and mental) to draw from and complete it."

As he approached Charleston, South Carolina, on September 15, Stevens had to contend with the iconic 2.5-mile Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge that ferries roughly 95,000 vehicles in and out of the Holy City each day. Whipping winds forced him to walk his bike across the top span of the bridge.

Later that day Stevens recorded his own revised words for Buffett's "Trying To Reason With Hurricane Season,"

foreshadowing a challenging fact of coastal living that would become another prominent theme of his journey.

He took a down day to explore Charleston before continuing south, where he was again met by a looming cable-stayed bridge heading into Savannah, Georgia. He was grateful for the alternative option of crossing the river by ferry, and for the opportunity to explore the city's iconic riverwalk and historic squares. Stevens' Buffett song selection that day was "Savannah Fare You Well."

On the road again, Stevens enjoyed a free concert in Darien, Georgia, before hitting 10 brutal miles of rough terrain thanks to one of several bad suggestions from Google Maps. Slogging through sand, mud, swamp and brush, he texted his host that he was four miles out and not convinced he would make it there alive. He did make it, eaten up by mosquitos, and reflected on Buffett's "Lucky Stars."

Stevens arrived in Florida on September 23, elated to pick up State Road A1A — which Florida lawmakers unanimously voted to rename Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway earlier this year.

With hundreds of miles still ahead of him, Stevens enjoyed a trolley tour of St. Augustine with a friend and stayed there an extra day to ride out Hurricane Helene. He arrived in Orlando after his longest single day of cycling — 86 miles — before meeting up with his friend, Chris Birks, who had planned to ride the final leg of the journey with him.

A resident of a beach town in the Tampa Bay area that was ravaged by Helene's storm surge, Birks was fortunate that his home sustained minimal damage.

"Feeling sick at the devastation around the area," Stevens wrote upon surveying Indian Rocks Beach. "The amount of destruction here is more than I have ever personally seen. Most everyone's yard is piled with the ruined contents of their home. So sad."

"Today was a different kind of exhausting," he shared the next day, after taking a break from his bike to help rip out drywall, cabinets

and insulation in flooded homes. He was amazed by how the locals worked together and generously supplied one another with food and cleaning necessities.

A big fan of ice cream, Stevens recalled a local ice cream shop where floodwaters had flipped over the freezers. "There (was) just melting, rotting, stinking ice cream all over the place," he said.

After helping with cleanup efforts, Stevens and his travel companion set out on October 1 for their final destination and one of Buffett's residences: Key West. They dodged thunderstorms as they traversed the southern half of Florida and arrived in Key Largo as the Sunshine State again braced for direct impact of a powerful hurricane, Milton. They offered to help locals prepare for the storm, and between blog entries, Stevens shared a prayer for those impacted by Helene and Milton.

On October 10, they crossed a couple of long bridges battling a hefty headwind and arrived hot and weary at a hotel in Marathon Key. In addition to sharing a Buffett song, Stevens penned his own stanzas:

*So the final ride is tomorrow.*

*It's been a marvelous trip.*

*It's tinged with both joy and sorrow.*

*To think I actually did it.*

*I've had adventures galore,*

*And good luck known only in dreams.*

*But to see my wife once more,*

*Well, that's my cake with ice cream!*

Stevens was delighted to reunite with Deborah the next day, shortly after he and Birks arrived at their journey's end. "Made it to the southernmost point of the U.S. in Key West at 12 noon October 11," he shared with his followers in real time, repping Maryland in an Old Bay cycling jersey in photos. With his wife by his side, Stevens rounded out his trip by exploring Buffett's haunts and Key West attractions.

Reflecting on his remarkable 41-day expedition, Stevens noted several highlights including exploring Charleston, Savannah and St. Augustine, as well as sampling local fare such as the grouper Reuben in Tampa, yellowtail snapper in Key Largo, and home-cooked meals prepared by various hosts. But the people he met from

Delaware to Florida were perhaps the best part of the whole trip.

Amid a contentious presidential election season, he shared that those folks were "phenomenal," regardless of party affiliation. He blogged, "There are still amazing, generous people in this world, some you know directly but others you encounter randomly. These trips restore my faith in humanity, give me a reason to improve how I treat others, and help reinforce the point that working together we can solve a lot more problems than when we work in isolation."

Stevens hopes that his most recent cycling journey, combining lifelong passions, will encourage others to follow their dreams and to recognize that the relationships we have and can build are priceless.

## Health Care Amid Helene

### » Continued from page 1

who were really reluctant to go to the emergency room."

Despite the myriad adversities faced by the patients who visited the Heart to Heart truck, volunteers were struck by their immense kindness, gratitude and resilience.

Even while sharing photos of the flooding and damage to their own homes, the hurricane victims found silver linings, and they acknowledged it could have been worse.

"It was unbelievable, the amount of resilience," Gvozden recalled. "They say, 'We'll build back up.' It's very inspiring."

Just two weeks after Hurricane Helene left its trail of destruction, Hurricane Milton barreled into Central Florida. Between the two storms, at

least 250 lives were lost across North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia and Florida. Millions of people were without power, and the physical devastation will last long after the camera crews and volunteers leave.

*"The one thing that I've never seen in all my years is the amount of kindness those (storm victims) have for each other, how they support each other and help their neighbors."*

— DR. ANDRE GVOZDEN

"I believe we're going to become a little numb to other people's suffering, which is normal," Gvozden said. "I would like to help people remain mindful that people are hurting. Even if it didn't affect us, we are all in this world together."

Gvozden acknowledged he is only capable of giving his time

to these medical missions because of the support of his wife, Cathy, and the rest of the staff at their pediatric practice, who kept the office fully running during his absence. He stressed that enabling others to serve is a service in and of itself.





## Admiral Cleaners Seeks Donations For “Call For Coats”

Admiral Cleaners is organizing its annual coat drive to collect, clean and distribute thousands of coats to those in need in the local community this holiday season. This initiative will run throughout October and November, with the support of both national and local charities.

Admiral Cleaners is asking families to donate their seldom-used or outgrown coats by dropping them off at any of Admiral's four locations to help warm up someone's winter - the more, the merrier! The Severna Park shop is located at 40 West McKinsey Road.

Admiral's pickup and delivery customers may leave their coats in a separately marked bag for their driver.

Many businesses and schools actively participate in the program, as it offers a meaningful yet simple way to give back to the community. To make it easier for participants, Admiral Cleaners will provide collection boxes for those who wish to get involved, allowing them to contribute to this philanthropic effort and make a positive impact.

Admiral Cleaners, one of Maryland's oldest and largest dry cleaners, has been coordinating the “Call for Coats” campaign for over 30 years. The store has collected and distributed more than 100,000 coats for area families in need.

For more information, visit [www.admiralcleaners.com](http://www.admiralcleaners.com) or call 410-267-8381.

## Student Teams Win Collegiate Inventors Competition

### Severna Park Resident Is Member Of Runner-Up Undergraduate Team

The 2024 Collegiate Inventors Competition, an annual competition for college and university students and their advisers, provided a glimpse into the future of American innovation and emerging technological trends from the nation's brightest young innovators. Students were recognized and honored in mid-October for their inventions — from a fetal surgery device to technology allowing for faster recovery from power outages.

Ten finalist teams comprising 19 students from nine colleges and universities across the United States presented their inventions to a panel of final-round judges composed of the most influential inventors and innovation experts in the nation: National Inventors Hall of Fame Inductees and United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) officials.

“For nearly 35 years, the Collegiate Inventors Competition has served as a launchpad for emerging inventors who have the potential to make a significant impact on the world,” said National Inventors Hall of Fame CEO Michael Oister. “We are proud to recognize and reward these young innovators who have harnessed an innovative mindset and the power of intellectual property to solve the world's greatest challenges.”

The competition's first-place winners



Photo courtesy of National Inventors Hall of Fame  
At the 2024 Collegiate Inventors Competition, a team from Johns Hopkins University including (l-r) Gloria Kalnitskaya, Severna Park resident Eric McAlexander, and Selena Shirkin were honored as runners-up for their invention designed to reduce risks in fetal surgeries.

(\$10,000 prize) were an undergraduate team from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who created “The Nerve Ninja,” a precise solution for safer surgeries, and a graduate team from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who developed nutrient-stabilizing materials to help fortify foods for better world health.

The runners-up (\$5,000 prize) were an undergraduate team from Johns

Hopkins University and a graduate team from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Advised by Ahmet Baschat, the Hopkins team members were Selena Shirkin, Gloria Kalnitskaya, Ayeeshi Poosarla and Severna Park resident Eric McAlexander. They presented the FetalCare Port System, designed to reduce risks in fetal surgeries.

Fetal surgery can correct life-threatening fetal abnormalities in the womb with minimally invasive procedures. However, without specific surgical tools designed for fetal use, surgeons must adapt instruments meant for other procedures and indications. To address this issue, the FetalCare Port System is tailored to the uterine environment, reducing risks of membrane rupture and pre-term births — critical problems in fetal surgeries. The system's unique design, with an obturator that allows for more precise cutting through the uterine membrane and a radially expanding port sheath, streamlines the surgical process and improves overall efficiency.

The graduate team was honored for their photoconductive semiconductor switch, designed to allow for faster recovery from power outages and improved grid stability.

Established in 1990, the Collegiate Inventors Competition is a program of the National Inventors Hall of Fame and is sponsored by the USPTO. In addition to cash awards, the winning teams also receive a USPTO Patent Acceleration Certificate.

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## Election Countdown

### Early Voting Ends With Strong Turnout

By Lauren Cowin

After a dramatic, months-long campaign season, voters can finally make their voices heard at the ballot box.

In-person early voting ran from October 24-31. According to the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections, early voting started off strong, with roughly 50,000 early voters county-wide as of October 27.

An amendment passed by Maryland voters in 2018 allows for same-day registration and voting at polling centers. Absentee ballots must be postmarked or dropped in a ballot box or taken to a polling center by 8:00pm on Tuesday, November 5. There are ballot drop boxes at the Severna Park and Broadneck libraries, as well as several other locations throughout the county.

Along with the presidential contest between Vice President Kamala Harris (Democrat) and former president Donald Trump (Republican), here are some of the decisions for Anne Arundel County voters to make at the polls.

#### U.S. Senate

Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks (D) and former Maryland governor Larry Hogan (R) are vying for the Senate seat occupied by Senator Ben Cardin (D) for nearly 20 years.

This race has taken a decidedly negative turn, with a steady stream of attack ads being lobbed from both sides.

Hogan left office in early 2023 with approval numbers that are almost unheard of in today's politics. In mid-September, the public polling between Hogan and Alsobrooks showed a five-point margin. According to the Real Clear Politics average, the numbers are beginning to turn in Alsobrooks' favor.

#### U.S. Congress

State Senator Sarah Elfreth (D) of Annapolis and attorney Rob Steinberger (R) of Arnold will face off to replace Representative John Sarbanes (D) to represent Maryland's third congressional district, which represents much of Anne Arundel County, as well as Howard County and extending to parts of Carroll County.

Elfreth has spent roughly \$2 million on her campaign, while her competitor has spent just shy of \$50,000, according to quarterly reports filed at the end of September. The seat is seen as a likely Democratic win.

#### Board of Education

Members of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education are not chosen on a partisan basis, but LaToya Nkongolo and incumbent board member Dana Schallheim have been vocal about their stark differences this campaign.

The Severna Park Voice asked both

candidates to answer a series of questions earlier this month, and those responses can be found on politics section of the Voice website.

#### Judge of the Circuit Court Circuit, District 5

Another nonpartisan race on this year's ballot is circuit court judge.

Voters may choose up to two candidates. There are four running: incumbents Christine Celeste and Ginina Jackson-Stevenson, along with former administrative law judge Claudia Barber and attorney Tom Casey.

Check out the Voice's candidate Q&A from the October edition to learn more about the judicial candidates.

#### Constitutional Amendment

While it's a hot-button topic in nearly every presidential election year, the issue of abortion has taken a front seat this year since the reversal of *Roe vs. Wade* in 2022.

Maryland voters will see a state constitutional amendment regarding abortion on this year's ballot. Question 1 — Declaration of Rights — Right to Reproductive Freedom tasks voters with deciding whether to make abortion and other reproductive measures a constitutional right in Maryland.

Voters can visit the Maryland Board of Elections website at [voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/votersearch](http://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/votersearch) for a complete sample ballot tailored to their address, as well as information on where to vote on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5.

## Affordable Housing Bill Passed By Anne Arundel County Council In Close Vote

By Ian Ferris  
Student Intern

As the Anne Arundel County Council voted 4-3 to pass the Housing Attainability Act on October 7, the room erupted in applause, led by dozens of advocates who had fought for more affordable housing.

The act aims to make housing more affordable and attainable for county residents, particularly essential workers like teachers, police officers and firefighters.

Workers in education, health care, and other social services make up 22.2% of all workers in Anne Arundel County, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The law requires that new developments with 20 or more units set aside at least 10% of homeownership units and 15% of rental units as moderately priced dwelling units (MPDU). Developments with 10 to 19 units must either comply with the mandate or pay a fee to opt out under certain conditions. Developments with fewer than 10 units are exempt from the mandate.

However, the most impactful aspect of the act is its density provisions. The bill introduces a tier system for developments that exceed baseline density. For homes built within the baseline density, the standard MPDU requirements apply. If a development reaches 100% to 115% of the baseline density, 25% of the additional homes must be MPDU. If the density exceeds 115% then 40% of the extra homes must be MPDU.

To qualify for an MPDU, renters must earn less than 75% of the area's median income, while homebuyers must earn less than 100% of the area's median income. The median income for an individual in the county is \$85,563 and \$110,000 for a family of three, according to the county's bill summary. The average family size in Anne Arundel County is 3.14, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

A small group of activists wearing yellow shirts bearing the acronym ACT (Anne Arundel Connecting Together) packed the council chambers in support of the bill. ACT is a nonpartisan, interfaith network of 18 congregations and community groups in Anne Arundel County. The group seeks to "build power to improve the lives of our families and seek justice for all in our communities," according to its website.

"I should not be here tonight," said the Rev. Stephen Tillett, co-chair of ACT and Asbury Broadneck United Methodist Church pastor, whose mother had been hospitalized after a fall that day. "But I heard some folks might be getting weak-kneed, so I thought it was important to be here. I am here to support Bill 72-24 and ask that there are no more delays. We have delayed enough."

He left immediately after his statement to visit his mother in the hospital.

Matt Johnston, executive director of the Arundel Rivers Federation, expressed support for most of the bill during his testimony but raised con-

» Continued on page 12

## The Grass Roots Of Land Use

**Editor's note:** This letter originally appeared in the county executive's weekly email newsletter on October 18 and has been updated.



**Steuart Pittman**  
Anne Arundel  
County Executive

Dear neighbor, I often think, talk and write about land use. I unseated an incumbent county executive, in part, by offering what we now call a "smarter, greener and more equitable" vision for future development of our county.

I take a lot of pride in the document that sets forth scores of strategies to implement that vision: Plan 2040.

The thousands of county residents who have commented, attended community meetings, and filled out surveys relating to the creation of

Plan 2040, the Green Infrastructure Master Plan, the town center plans, transportation plans, rec and parks plans, and region plans are what make the plans relevant. Residents organize and advocate, not just for the plans, but for every budget item and every piece of legislation that is guided by the plans.

Nearby county leaders have marveled at things we've accomplished, things that protect our environment, things that facilitate economic development, and things that address our shortage of housing that our people can afford. But we're not done.

In the coming months, we have a lot of Plan 2040 implementation bills going before the county council. There will be a bill to incentivize redevelopment of previously developed sites. There will be a bill to update our law requiring adequate transportation facilities before development is approved. There will be a bill to update the impact fees paid to cover the costs of county services when new buildings are constructed.

We also have the recommendations for region plans and comprehensive rezoning working their way through the planning advisory board, through my office, and then to the county council from three of our nine stakeholder advisory committees.

And finally, there is a long-awaited cleanup bill to address inconsistencies and complexities in development regulations that make implementation difficult for everyone.

I love this work. It's the stuff that has long-lasting impact and is at the core of addressing the fundamental challenge we face as a species: living at peace with one another and in harmony with the natural world.

But it's not easy work. We each come at it with different interests, and whether we are elected officials, county staff, community leaders, or neighbors, we must be willing to listen to one another and collaborate.

I recently met with volunteer chairs of stakeholder advisory committees whose work on their regions was just completed. I asked questions about the process, about what was difficult and what was rewarding. I heard a

» Continued on page 12

## County Executive Launches “Pittman And Friends” Podcast

In October, County Executive Stuart Pittman released his new podcast, “Pittman and Friends,” which is now available on major podcast platforms such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube and Pocket Casts.

This podcast gives an inside glimpse at governing, offering light-hearted and revealing conversations with the county executive, his staff, community leaders, policy experts, and elected officials.

The first episode featured Christine Anderson, Anne Arundel County’s chief administrative officer, tackling topics like government service delivery and budgeting, streamlining processes, increasing transparency, and the new PAVE program for minority-owned business contracting opportunities.

The second episode on October 15 highlighted Matt Fleming, director of the Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County. Fleming’s childhood adventures in Saudi Arabia sparked a lifelong passion for coastal resource management and resilience. His journey weaves through the challenges of balancing environmental conservation with economic growth. From early experiences in the Red Sea to tackling coastal management issues in North Carolina, Fleming’s story is one of dedication to making Maryland’s communities more resilient in the face of climate change.

Released on October 22, the third episode featured Carl Snowden, a prominent author, activist and community leader. Listeners can discover how Snowden’s early life on a Maryland farm, where he witnessed racial injustices, ignited his lifelong commitment to civil rights and propelled him to influential roles in government and with the Caucus of African American Leaders.

New episodes are released weekly on Tuesdays. To learn more about “Pittman and Friends” or to listen to the first episode, visit [www.aacounty.org/pittmanandfriends](http://www.aacounty.org/pittmanandfriends).

## Affordable Housing Bill

» Continued from page 11  
cerns about net density and impervious surface coverage, noting that increased density could exacerbate environmental issues in the county.

Other residents also voiced concerns about how increased density and development might worsen runoff, which has affected the county’s watersheds in the past.

In her closing statement, county council chair Allison Pickard addressed these concerns, saying, “It was somewhat like hearing nails on a chalkboard when I heard talk about paving over wetlands and steep slopes, where we

» Continued from page 11

lot of praise for the way Office of Planning and Zoning staff presented information and incorporated input into documents, but I also heard how hard it was to move people from long-held prejudices and preferences, and how challenging it was to engage residents who are raising children and sometimes working multiple jobs to cover basic needs.

But I also heard that participation was rewarding. That these community leaders walked away even more committed to strengthening the fabric of their communities, through the built environment and through engagement.

On a Saturday, I spoke at a combined first meeting of stakeholder

advisory committees for the final three of our nine county regions. I warned them that they will be asked to balance countywide priorities set forth in Plan 2040 with the interests of neighbors who love where they live and want no change, and that as leaders it will be their responsibility to ensure that everyone who speaks up is respected and heard.

As the country enters its final weeks before Election Day, many of us ponder how it is that we became so divided, and how dividing us from one another became such an effective political strategy. I’m convinced that the only way out of our predicament is for leaders to listen, to meet people where they are, respect where they come from, and slowly build trust.

I haven’t mastered that art, but I’ve worked on it, as a community organizer, a business owner and a public servant. But it was my 25 years as a professional horse trainer that helped me the most. Forcing your will on 1,200-pound animals never works. Meeting them where they are and moving forward together gets you there sooner.

I can’t determine the outcome of national elections, but I can set the tone for land use debates in Anne Arundel County. Feel free to pin back your ears or step on my foot if you think I’ve stepped over the line. But hopefully, we’ve been through enough over the last six years that we can gallop together on the path of smart, green and equitable use of our land.

## We Want Your Input!

Anne Arundel County is updating the County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The goal is to identify mitigation projects and actions that reduce risk to the hazards affecting our community. Public input is needed to identify mitigation projects and actions of interest to the community. Please join us at one of the public meetings or virtual events to provide your input.



### Public Meeting Dates / Times

- 10/21 Hillsmere Elementary School Cafeteria at 5:30 - 7pm (virtual option available)
- 10/30 Edgewater Library at 5:30 - 7pm
- 11/12 Deale Library at 5:30 - 7 pm
- 11/14 Maryland City at Russett Library at 5:30 - 7 pm
- 12/3 Broadneck Library at 5:30 - 7 pm
- 12/11 Office of Emergency Management Auditorium at 5:30 - 7 pm (virtual option available)



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## Falcon Girls Repeat As County Soccer Champions, Not Done Yet

**Editor's note:** The Severna Park Voice went to print before the Falcons' regional playoff game on October 29. Check the Voice website or follow @SPVoiceSports on X for updates.

By David Bashore

In October's Anne Arundel County Public Schools girls soccer tournament championship game, Severna Park faced a Chesapeake squad that was as up for the challenge of taking down the Falcons as any team in recent memory.

In the end, though, the challenge

ended like so many have over the last three years: the Falcons still standing and claiming victory.

Second-half goals from **Maria Bragg** and **Ava Scott** brought the game to life, and Severna Park held firm to repeat as county champions with a 2-0 victory on October 19.

A couple of moments of magic helped the Falcons finally unlock the Cougars' defense and settle the result. Bragg's goal forced Chesapeake to come out of a defensive shell and take chances in search of an equalizer.

Moments later, Severna Park land-

ed the knockout punch when Bragg got the ball and cut it back for Scott, who lashed in a left-footed shot from outside the penalty area to complete the scoring.

"They were really good about enclosing us to one side of the field in the first half, and in the second half, we did a good job of trying to switch the fields," Bragg said. "When I got the ball in the corner, I was able to get it to Ava, and then she took her shot."

With yet another championship in tow, the Falcons then turned to the

» Continued on page 25

Photo by Alex Bardakh

Severna Park endured a tough test against Chesapeake to repeat as county champions with a 2-0 victory.



## Peaking At Right Time, Bruin Boys Oust Leonardtown

**Editor's note:** The Severna Park Voice went to print before the Bruins' region final on October 29. Check the Voice website or follow @SPVoiceSports on X for updates.

By David Bashore

Roadneck's boys soccer season, at least in the win-loss department, has been a case of two steps forward, one step back. The season has featured lopsided wins with good performances — like the 6-0 win over Old Mill, the 10-0 win over Suitland, and 4-2 wins over Annapolis and North County — and then a dip in form and a stunning setback: a 5-2 loss to Chesapeake on October 4 and a 4-1 defeat to South River in the county semifinals.

But the Bruins were diligently putting the pieces together behind the scenes, win or lose, hoping they would all work together on the same night when it mattered most.

The result: there would be no sad, silent two-hour bus ride home from Leonardtown this time.

Behind an all-hands-on-deck defensive effort and an 80th-minute goal from **T.J. Remson**, the Bruins eliminated the defending state champions 1-0 on October 25 and advanced to the 4A East II region final on October 29.

After two scares in their own defen-

» Continued on page 22



Photos by Dennis McGinely

Left: T.J. Remson (pictured against Chesapeake) scored the only goal of the game as the Bruins knocked Leonardtown out of the playoffs on October 25. Right: Wilson Banwell has seven goals and a team-high seven assists for the Bruins this season.

## Severn School Graduate Is A Shining Example To Follow Your Dreams

### AJ Gersh Is The New Sports Reporter At Channel 45 In Baltimore

By Kevin Murnane

Author HD Ryan once wrote, "Dare to dream big, then do something about it."

Severn School graduate **AJ Gersh** has followed his dream of being a sports broadcaster ever since he can remember. Now, he is a familiar face on the FOX45 TV station.

Gersh began his "broadcasting career" by providing the play-by-play of televised Orioles games to his parents, sister and grandparents at their home in Linstead.

Gersh then took the next step of that dream by attending broadcasting camp every summer from the time he was 12 until he was 18 years old.

"Camp was great," Gersh said. "It was held at the College of Notre Dame (now Notre Dame of Maryland University), and it was a week-long camp and we did something different every day. We practiced interviewing, doing play-by-play, talk shows, and the highlight was holding a press conference with the Oriole players and broadcasters. At the end of the week, they gave us a 10-minute tape of our highlights."

Gersh was an energetic child growing up and was involved at Temple Beth Shalom in Arnold, where he was a cantor, and was class president of Severn's middle school from grades six through eight and during his freshman year at Severn School.

Gersh also played soccer at Severn School, and even though he was not a starter, Gersh was elected captain his senior year.

"AJ was the most impactful player and team member I have ever coached," said Severn head soccer coach **Mike McCarthy**. "He was instrumental in leading that team to the conference championship."

In addition to playing soccer, Gersh was in every play and musical that Severn orchestrated in his four years at the Ever-

» Continued on page 26



AJ Gersh



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# STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

## COURTLYNN EDWARDS

Severna Park High School  
Volleyball

By David Bashore

**C**ourtlynn Edwards likes to do new things. During the COVID shutdown, she took up drawing. At Severna Park High School, she's helped lead the charge for a Black Student Union chapter. And on the court, the senior middle blocker is standing out as a team leader on a volleyball team led by a new voice for the first time in years.

And she takes all that responsibility in stride. "Last year, we had five graduating seniors that had a really big impact on the team dynamic and how it flowed as a whole," Edwards said. Coming into this year, me and the other senior **Maev** **Byrne** decided we needed to step up and be the role model because our team is so young. To be a presence on and off the court, being so young and a leader is really exciting."

Edwards has stepped into that role nicely, anchoring the Falcons' middle of the formation and helping the team to a first-round bye in the regional playoffs. But the experiences and confidence she's gained through volleyball are as great a reward as the accomplishments themselves.

Last season, she got to play for coach **Tim Dunbar**, who also coached her mother when she played at Severna Park. Then new coach **Caitlin Mills** came in, first as an assistant and now as the head coach, bringing along Edwards' JV coach as an assistant.



"Everything's coming full circle with the experience at Severna Park volleyball," she said.

But more importantly, she has learned more about herself and what matters to her. When there wasn't anything to do during the COVID shutdown, Edwards drew, and she discovered she really liked it.

"There's a whole bunch of drawings in my room that are just for me, that are up on the wall in my room," she said. "Now it's always school, come home, take a nap, get up, go to practice, eat, come home. I still doodle here and there when I have the time, because I do like to draw."

Beyond all the AP classes — Edwards has taken

*At Severna Park High School, Courtlynn Edwards helped lead the charge for a Black Student Union chapter. And on the court, the senior middle blocker is standing out as a team leader.*

six in her time at Severna Park — and the other honors like the Science National Honor Society, getting a chapter of the Black Student Union on campus was something Edwards felt was important not only for herself and her community, but for the school at large.

"It's really about coming together and talking about our experiences in Severna Park, because a lot of the people who have been here and are Black have been here all of our lives," Edwards said of the group she and friend **Dashiya Powell** sought to help form. "And we're still learning about our own history; there are many things that we didn't know."

With the leadership in BSU, in volleyball, in the school's athletic leadership council, and other initiatives, it's no wonder that Edwards is constantly on the go. But she's got her eyes on a career in forensic science, and she knows that keeping things tight on the academic front is the most important thing she can do right now. She currently has a 3.9 GPA.

"My mom has always drilled into my head that I'm a student-athlete, not an athlete-student, even though I want to think that sometimes," said Edwards, who plans to attend Fayetteville State University in North Carolina and hopes to play volleyball there as well. "You have to be very technical (for forensic science), so I'm trying to get ready for that."

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# Bruins Top Arundel to Win Volleyball County Title

By David Bashore

Championship point in the Anne Arundel County Public Schools volleyball tournament championship was emblematic of the entire match. Players from both sides flung themselves around on the floor, scrambling the ball up and willing it to not hit the ground.

After a back-and-forth rally, Broadneck junior outside hitter **Anna Graves** found the hole in Arundel's block, forcing the ball through and to the floor, then roared as her teammates raced to mob her in celebration.

After six straight losses to Arundel, including the previous three county championship matches, Broadneck finally got one up on their longstanding rivals in a pulsating 25-23, 25-21, 21-25, 25-22 battle at Annapolis High School on October 19.

The match featured high-quality volleyball throughout. Aside from an Arundel run early in the first set, neither team was able to muster a significant lead in any of the four sets. Both teams fought, clawed, and sacrificed simply to find a way to keep the rally going. Eventually, Broadneck's depth and tenacity pulled them to victory.

"We really put everything onto the court, and it was such a good feeling to hold on to that win," said Broadneck junior attacker **Kennedy Smith**, who had 17 kills to pace the Bruins. "I think we've learned in past games that if we get on each other, or frustrated or in our heads, that's not going to benefit anyone on the team. We really try to talk and emphasize the things we want to do better, not the things that are going bad, and it's worked."

Graves had 14 kills for the Bruins, while **Amanda Protzman** added seven kills. The setter tandem of **Sydney Lawrence** and **Barrett Bolter** each recorded a double-double, with Lawrence logging 27 assists and 11 digs and Bolter adding 12 assists and 13 digs.

Gaudy stats certainly help, but it was the dogged mentality to chase down every lost cause and ensure every piece contributed to the whole that got the Bruins across the finish line.

"It was really intense at times, but we just really wanted to calm each other down and work together," Lawrence said. "In the loud environment, knowing who should take the ball in certain scenarios is important."

Even though the match was nip-and-tuck throughout, there were hints that Broadneck might have their day. In the third set, Lawrence dove to scrape a ball up barely before it hit the floor. Her dig attempt went straight into the knees of Broadneck libero **Chloe Richie** and immediately over the net. Broadneck won the point.

"There are a lot of things that happen, like when the serves hit the net and then they trickle over and they don't go your way, and you think it's not our night," Broadneck coach **Tracy Realbuto** said. "But when things like that go your way, you do get a sense of maybe it is our night. But aside from the chaotic and lucky plays, those are only a handful of the 25 points we scored (per set). Our girls played smart, they were aggressive at the right times, and they didn't play tentative or scared at all."

Mindset matters, and a shift in mindset helped the Bruins be ready for their moment.

The two teams have contested the last five county championships, with Broadneck winning in 2019 and Arundel the last three. Because the county championship is classed as an exhibition and doesn't factor into playoff seeding, Realbuto has tried in the past to use that knowledge to relax the team.

Not so this time.

"Volleyball is such a mind game with motivation and momentum, staying composed, all these mental things," Realbuto said. "Normally going into these games, I'm telling the team the game doesn't matter, it doesn't affect records or seeding or any of that, but tonight, I told them it matters, because I want them going into the playoffs confident. I wanted that for them, I wanted that confidence, and I feel like we are confident going into the playoffs."

"We've believed it. I think we just need to demonstrate it, and I think we did some



Photos by David Bashore

**Above:** It was all joy for the Bruins after winning their first volleyball county title since 2019. **Left:** The team hoisted the championship plaque after beating Arundel in the county final.



stuff tonight that made people go wow."

The wows were only stopped by the end of Broadneck's demonstration that they were, in fact, the best team in the county. After digs on both sides to extend a rally, Lawrence's set put the ball on a platter for Graves, who stuffed it through the Arundel block and down, triggering equal parts jubilation and relief.

"I felt just so proud of our team," Bolter said. "Coach believing in us and us believing in each other was so huge."

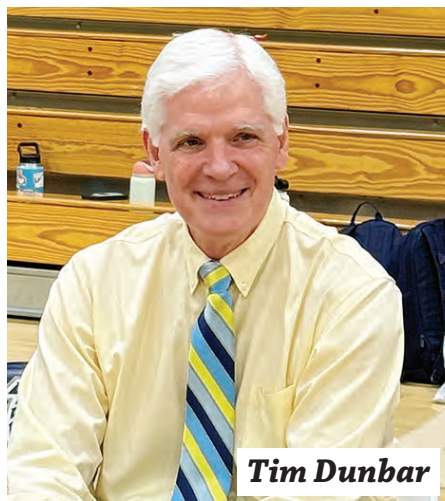
The Bruins wrapped up the regular season by splitting matches against Reservoir (a four-set loss) and River Hill (a straight-set win). That put them in second place in the final 4A East Region II regular season standings, earning a first-round bye in the region playoffs.

They'll next take the floor November 1 or 2 in the region semifinals against either Suitland or Annapolis.

## Falcons Honor Longtime Coach

For more than four decades, Severna Park High School social studies teacher Tim Dunbar has been a steady presence at the school. He spent 37 seasons as a volleyball coach, including three junior varsity and 24 varsity seasons at Severna Park High School, plus nine seasons for his daughter's team at The Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore. He led the Falcons to state championships in 1991, 1992, 1993 and 2014.

Although he still teaches, the longtime coach stepped down before the 2024 fall season, leaving the volleyball program in the hands of coach Caitlin Mills. To honor Dunbar, Severna Park High School held a retirement ceremony in October.



**Tim Dunbar**

Read the full story at [www.severnaparkvoice.com](http://www.severnaparkvoice.com).

## SPHS Volleyball Looking To Region Semifinals

By David Bashore

The Severna Park volleyball team had a tough stretch in October, but everything they want to do is still in front of them.

The Falcons went 3-4 in their most recent seven matches. They had setbacks against Broadneck, Crofton, Old Mill and Glenelg, sandwiched around straight-set victories over Meade and Northeast. Their most recent match was a five-set victory over Atholton on October 24, which secured a first-round bye in the 3A East I region tournament.

**Lizzie Ranaghan** led the Falcons in kills, logging double figures in five of the seven matches and a high of 12 in the win over Atholton. In that match, both **Courtlynn Edwards** and **Genevieve Willis** also logged double figures, while **Jennifer Hong** had 22 assists.

Edwards leads the team in hitting efficiency and total blocks, while Ranaghan leads in kill rate. **Kathryn Rojek** leads in dig rate, and Willis and Hong have equally shared the assists total.

Severna Park will visit J.M. Bennett November 1 or 2 with a trip to the region finals on the line.

# Broadneck Freshman Wins Martial Arts Championship Fights

By Alyson Kay

This year, Broadneck High School freshman Natalia Trombley traveled to New York and Delaware, clinching wins in three matches in two competitions in two different martial arts.

Trombley practices kickboxing and Muay Thai, two striking martial art forms. Muay Thai is the older of the two and allows a few more techniques than kickboxing, including the use of elbows and a close-quarters upright technique called clinching, which is also seen in grappling martial art forms like wrestling. Kickboxing is a hybrid martial art started in mid-1900s Japan and incorporates techniques from karate, western boxing and Muay Thai.

Originally starting at 12 years old because her parents wanted her and her siblings to learn self-defense, Trombley grew to like fighting and improved quickly.

"She's the hardest worker in the room at any given time," said Matt Van Valkenburgh, Muay Thai head instructor at Kogen Dojo and one of Trombley's coaches. "She always has a positive attitude."

Trombley has participated in four competitions in the almost three years that she has been a martial arts fighter. In April, she won a match at a Golden Era Muay Thai championship exhibition.

"I really enjoyed the atmosphere," Trombley said.

"I've never been to a fight like that in New York. It was very fun, and I feel like my opponent was a really great matchup."

More recently, she participated in the World Kickboxing Association national Muay Thai and kickboxing championships in Delaware in August, where she won two gold medals for a fight in Muay Thai and a fight in kickboxing.

When she's not fighting, she enjoys watching fights outside of her dojo.

"I really like just seeing other fights going on, seeing the other gyms, and seeing how other people's fighting



Natalia Trombley (right) won her fight in the glory rules kickboxing division at the World Kickboxing Association national Muay Thai and kickboxing championships on August 23 in Harrington, Delaware.

cutting," Trombley said.

Practice at the Kogen Dojo generally involves jumping rope and a lot of drills. Students shadow box, spar, and use punching bags and pads. They also practice clinch fighting.

Trombley also recently started high school at Broadneck High School. Balancing her new school workload, especially for the AP classes she is taking, was difficult at first. But after a couple weeks, she got used to it.

"I have practice at the end of the day," Trombley said. "As soon as I get home, I do some homework. Then right after practice, I do the rest of my homework. I also do homework during pre-periods at school."

In 2023, one of Trombley's coaches asked her if she'd like to help out as an assistant coach. She came into it with some experience.

"I have four younger siblings and I'm kind of used to being a coach, in a way, to younger kids," Trombley said.

She joins a class for younger kids that starts before her class to assist the students in their techniques, give them tips and be a partner for kids who need a partner.

"She's a good influence on the kids, because her technique is really good," Van Valkenburgh said.

At first, Trombley found communicating with students difficult. "I have trouble with public speaking," Trombley said. "But after a while, I've gotten used to it and I feel more comfortable in that area."

The experience has given Trombley a desire to be a head coach one day. "I really like teaching people techniques and stuff like that," she said.

styles are," Trombley said.

The time right before a fight can be a bit of a challenge for her. "I'm not nervous in the ring, but I get very nervous before the fight," Trombley said.

The coaches help their students by giving pep talks before fights. They are also careful not to put too much emphasis on winning matches.

"Win or lose, as long as they try their best and do their best to do what they train for, then we're not too concerned about the result," Van Valkenburgh said.

Trombley's day starts in the morning with an hour run, then strength and conditioning workouts like push-ups, squats and sit ups, followed by another mile run.

Nutrition is also important for her training outside of her classes.

"Usually, I cut weight, so I have to have a balanced diet and make sure I'm eating all the right stuff for my weight



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# Despite County Loss, Bruins Field Hockey Primed For Another Run

By David Bashore

In the first half of Broadneck's 4A East II region field hockey semifinal playoff game against Annapolis on October 24, **Katelyn Kearns** found herself in possession of the ball against three defenders.

No problem: she flicked the ball up to herself, popped it in the air a second time, then brought it down after running through the defenders. Out of nowhere, Broadneck had a four-on-two, from which the Bruins scored.

Suffice it to say, there was no hangover from the previous weekend's county championship loss to Crofton.

Kearns scored one goal and added three assists, to go with a goal and an assist from **Raleigh Kerst**, as the Bruins cruised past Annapolis 7-0 to return to the region championship match for the sixth straight time.

"We definitely did a good job keeping our heads up, playing hard, and just keeping the intensity up," Kearns said.

Asked about her bag of field hockey tricks, she added, "Just a lot of practice. My game's a lot of speed, so I just get the ball on my stick and go as fast as I can. At practices, I kind of air dribble sometimes, and I guess that helps with things like that."

**Cate Imber, Grace Figueroa, Abbie Morris, Cayman Holmes and Charlotte Robertson** also scored for the Bruins, while **Faith Everett** and **Laurie O'Leary** assisted.

Broadneck has balanced tough competitive matches with confidence-build-

ing ones, and it's paid off thus far.

The Bruins completed their gauntlet of IAAM opposition, taking on the final two of the three A Conference championship contenders. They lost to Bryn Mawr 2-1 on October 4 and drew Garrison Forest 1-1 on October 9, to go with their draw against Archbishop Spalding earlier in the season.

In the county, it was largely cruise control. A pair of narrow wins over South River, 2-1 in the regular season and 2-0 in the county playoffs, book-ended wins over Old Mill and Arundel by a combined 19-0.

But then came the county championship loss to Crofton, 2-1. Imber scored, and the Bruins had a penalty corner that extended play past the final horn, but they couldn't convert.

Still, while the Bruins would naturally have preferred to win and bring another plaque back to Broadneck, they took a healthy dose of perspective: last season they beat Crofton twice and won the county championship, only to lose to the same Cardinals in the state semifinals.

If that counties-for-states trade happens again this season, the Bruins would take that every time. But they have to get there first.

"For anybody who's fortunate enough to make it to that game, it's a free game, because win or lose, it doesn't affect your ability to make the playoffs. It's a great tune-up game to see where you're at," said Broadneck coach **Shannon Hanratty**. "We also



Photo by Steve Overton

*Katelyn Kearns (pictured in the county championship against Crofton) has been a force for the Bruins. She scored one goal and had three assists in her team's region semifinal win over Annapolis. Next up, Broadneck will travel south to take on Leonardtown in the region championship.*

"It's almost tradition at this point — we actually look forward to the bus ride. We can go and get really hyped on the bus and stuff like that, and we can get our energy up together."

— KATELYN KEARNS

know that, up to today, the calendar was in marker because we were able to do it, but everything after this is penciled in until you earn it."

The Bruins' next act is to take the now-familiar bus ride to Leonardtown for the region championship. This is the fourth straight year they'll travel south,

meaning that it's all the players know.

"It's almost tradition at this point — we actually look forward to the bus ride," Kearns said. "We can go and get really hyped on the bus and stuff like that, and we can get our energy up together. We just want to keep the season going as long as possible."

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# Severna Park Field Hockey Fires Into Region Semis



Photos by Steve Overton

**Left:** Emma Weber pursued the ball to thwart Old Mill's offense during the Falcons' 7-1 region semifinal victory on October 24. **Right:** Emerson Clarke attempted a shot against the Patriots. The win set up a region championship date with South River, who Severna Park hosted on October 29.

**Editor's note:** The Severna Park Voice went to print before the Falcons' region championship match on October 29. Check the Voice website or follow @SPVoiceSports on X for updates.

**By David Bashore**

A particularly promising season for the Severna Park field hockey team remains alive and well: only one hurdle remains from the state round of the postseason.

The Falcons enter the stretch run having won six of their last eight games as they now stand one game away from a return to the state quarterfinals.

The team's run started with successive wins over Chesapeake (1-0) and Arundel (10-0) bridging September to October, followed by a 5-4 loss to Kent Island. That was followed by three straight wins — 5-0 over Annapolis, 6-0 over Bel Air, and another 6-1

win over Annapolis in the county quarterfinals.

Severna Park's most recent game came against Old Mill, with the Falcons winning 7-1 in the 3A East I region semifinals on October 24.

**Hannah Pope** scored twice, while **Grace Redmond** added a goal and two assists. **Ava Zimmerman** and **Grace Moran** both had a goal and an assist, while **Sophia Weber** and **Emerson Clarke** also scored.

The big win helped the Falcons bounce back from their fourth defeat of the season, falling 3-2 to Crofton in the county semifinals. Of Severna Park's four losses, three have come to Broadneck or Crofton.

The Falcons (9-4) have a region championship date with South River, who they'll host on October 29. The two teams met earlier in the season with Severna Park scraping a 1-0 win in overtime.

## Falcon Boys Stumped By South River In County Final



Photos by David Bashore

**Left:** (L-R) Severna Park's Aiden Min, Christopher von Diezelski, Jacob Broadwater and Parker John celebrated von Diezelski's goal early in the county title game against South River. This was the Falcons' lone score as they fell to the Seahawks, 3-1. **Right:** Braxton Barr evaded the Seahawks' defense during the matchup.

**By David Bashore**

When South River pipped Severna Park to the Anne Arundel County Public Schools tournament championship on penalty kicks October 19, the thought was that the team could trade the county title for advancing past the Seahawks in the upcoming regional rematch.

After all, the Falcons won the county championship in overtime over South River in 2023, only to see the Seahawks win the rematch a week later in the region semifinals on their way to winning it all.

This time, there would be no script-flip, though, as South River took that rematch, ending

the Falcons' promising season at 11-2-2.

South River bounced Severna Park from the playoffs for the second straight season, winning 3-1 at Severna Park on October 26.

The Seahawks took a 1-0 lead into halftime and doubled the advantage 15 minutes into the second half. **Stephen Bacho** weaved through the defense and scored a few minutes later to bring the Falcons within a goal, but they couldn't get any closer and gave up the third on the counter-attack late on.

In the county championship game, **Christopher von Diezelski** buried a shot from just outside the penalty area 10 minutes in to give

the Falcons the lead. But a long free-kick goal tied the game for South River and rounded out the scoring.

In the shootout, Severna Park's first penalty kick cannoned off the left post and out. The other nine shots went in, giving South River a 5-4 shootout win and the county championship.

With the season ending, the Falcons will bid farewell to 12 seniors: von Diezeleki, **Dimitri Bordone**, **Daniel Nikitin**, **Parker John**, **Jason Blain**, **Samuel Blake**, **Cole Earhart**, **Tully Espinola**, **Eneko Allen**, **Theodore Skopp** and **Jake Sobocinski**, as well as goalkeeper **Matt Schisler**, who missed the season due to injury.

## Peaking At Right Time, Bruin Boys Oust Leonardtown

» Continued from page 14

sive third, Broadneck made one last foray to avoid overtime. **Ryan Ball** stole the ball and quickly laid it off to Remson, who backheeled it to himself to create space, then took two touches and let fly from 25 yards. Remson watched the ball bounce twice, the Leonardtown keeper dive, and the net ripple behind him as the shot nestled just inside the left post.

Bedlam ensued as Remson was mobbed by his teammates — who quickly had to gather themselves and fend off one final Leonardtown attack deep into officials' time before they could finally celebrate for real.

"I just got the ball, picked my head up, saw I had space to drive, and I knew we had to get the goal, so I took the shot. I was ecstatic — there's nothing like beating a really good team," Remson said. "It's great to come back here and claim the win against them, doing it for the seniors of the team last year. Had to do it for them a little bit too."

They did it in part for those departed seniors, who saw their high school careers end in Leonardtown a year ago, but the Bruins also did it for themselves. A signature win, and a full 80-minute performance, had eluded Broadneck all season — and it finally came in their biggest game yet.

Remson was the hero, but the entire team's effort was nothing short of heroic. All 14 players who saw action defended doggedly when needed, and applied pressure when able.

Wingers **Will Epley**, **Wilson Banwell** and **Ball** ran tirelessly, along with



*Mason Kaline (right) jostled for a ball against Chesapeake and has helped solidify the Bruins' defense at right back.*

holding midfielder **Ascanio Satta**, who had the thankless task of sitting deep and helping break up attacks before they turned into danger. Meanwhile, senior midfielder **Jed Meehan** and forward **Braeden Kelly** probed forward in search of the way through Leonardtown's defense.

Midfielder **Quinto Barrett** and defender **Wyatt Shaw**, though limited in time, stole a precious few minutes

for teammates to rest and provided extra energy.

It was not all backs-against-the-wall, but there were stretches where Broadneck rode luck and tenacious defending. Most notably, Remson and **Erik Akhtar** both cleared goal-bound balls off the line in the final 10 minutes to keep the game scoreless. Minutes later, Remson grabbed the game's only goal.

**Joe Brenner** had five saves in keeping his third solo clean sheet of the season.

"It was an outstanding performance against a class, class team. (The Raiders) are very good," said Broadneck coach **Sean Tetterer**. "Our players committed to the game plan, and they followed through and maintained it. Credit to their endurance and to their desire to get the result."

The defensive trio of **Mason Kaline**, **Eli DeWalle** and **Brady Miller** absorbed wave after wave of Leonardtown attacks, teaming with dropping midfielders to repel the Raiders time and again. Miller in particular was frequently tested and matched each test, winning balls in the air, on the ground, and from opponents' feet.

"Brady was the first to the ball tonight, Brady was winning headers, Brady was blocking shots, Brady was going to ground ... he was outstanding tonight," Tetterer said. "Can't say enough about his desire and his work rate. He had his hands full with them tonight, and he absolutely rose to the challenge. Lots of blocked shots ... just a great defensive team effort."

After missing time due to a concussion suffered against Severna Park, and then

being involved in a challenge against South River with the freaky outcome of a badly broken leg for his opposite number, Miller could have allowed his mindset to go into a tailspin. Instead, he turned in a man-of-the-match defensive masterpiece when the stakes were at their highest.

"Coming back from my concussion, and what happened in the South River game, it put me really low," Miller said. "I just came out here and did my job, we did what we needed to do, and confidence is through the roof right now. It was this or nothing. We needed to get the win and get through."

Though the sub rotation shortened drastically against Leonardtown, one of the brightest spots in the Bruins team has been the ability for contributions to come from anywhere.

Kelly remains the team's leading scorer (11 goals) but has been joined in double figures by Meehan (10), while Banwell has seven goals and a team-high seven assists. In October, the Bruins got two-goal performances from Meehan (twice), Remson, **Raef Barradell** and **Jaydyn Lowe**.

In total, the Bruins have 54 goals from 13 players, plus two own-goals, and they have 38 assists from 14 players.

As they head into the region championship game, a rematch with Annapolis, the Bruins are budding with confidence at the right time of the season.

"A win like (Leonardtown) definitely gives the boys a lot of confidence," Tetterer said. "This has been a really fun season, and I'm not ready for it to end, and they showed me they're not ready for this to end either."



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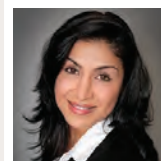
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## Green Hornets White Team Wins U15 Boys Soccer Cup During Columbus Day Tournament



*The Severna Park 2010 boys White team won their flight in the 2024 SAC Columbus Day Tournament, with games split between Covenant Park in Howard County and Coppermine CopperPlex in Harford County. The team went 3-0-1 en route to the championship and outscored their opponents 11-4. The team includes Alexei Vilcu, Carson Viskocil, Charlie Merchant, Chris Gramil, Colten Kurz, Cooper Smith, Dominic Tangrea, Gavin Chasse, Heath Gardner, Henry Kennedy, Jack Queen, Jesper Viviano, Michael Mihoces, Nicholas Skopp, Nolan Whitley, Owen DiMauro, Sam Gillespie and Evan Williamson. The team is coached by Craig Gillespie, Steve Viskocil, Scott Merchant and Brian Whitely.*

## Young Bruins End Season In Region Semis

By David Bashore

The Broadneck girls soccer team had their ups and downs in 2024, perhaps no more clearly shown than in the region playoffs.

Two days after crushing Annapolis in the opening round, the Bruins saw their season end with a 6-0 defeat at Leonardtown on October 25.

Two early goals sent the Raiders on to victory, ending the Bruins' season.

"They had us circled on their schedule since last year when we beat them," said Broadneck coach **John Camm**. "They've been looking for this game for a while. They're a very good team, and they very well could win the state tournament. We're just a bit young and make young players' mistakes — we'll be back, and better than before."

**Grace Gartrell's** hat trick fired the Bruins past Annapolis 5-0 in the region quarterfinals, three weeks after the teams played to a scoreless deadlock. **Lola Banks** and **Raegan Milnes** had the other goals.

That in itself proved the progress of a young

team that primarily played freshmen and sophomores for the bulk of the season.

"They've made progress throughout the season. We have some points of emphasis, like taking better care of the ball, not being so loose with it, things like that, and they've done a great job with all of it," Camm said. "Sometimes the other team is just more athletic and experienced. A year or two from now, we'll be more experienced and more athletic."

With the conclusion of Broadneck's season, with a record of 7-8-1, the Bruins say goodbye to seniors Gartrell, **Sienna Miller**, **Elizabeth Favazza**, **Emma Donnelly**, **Grace Mills**, **Mackenzie Walker**, **Breanna Brown** and **Maya DeMella**.

Camm paid tribute to the departing players, particularly those who stuck with the program and continued working despite seeing limited minutes.

"All the seniors, the kids that played all the time to the ones who probably didn't play as much as they would have liked, they've been great role models," he said. "They've put the team first, and I'm really happy with them."



Photo by Dennis McGinley

*Lola Banks (right) and the Broadneck girls soccer team tied Annapolis 0-0 in the regular season. In a region quarterfinal rematch, Banks scored one goal as the Bruins beat the Panthers 5-0.*

## Falcon Girls Repeat As County Soccer Champions, Not Done Yet

» Continued from page 14

regionals, where they advanced to the region final with a 4-0 win over Stephen Decatur.

The game started out similar to the county championship, with the added threat of the season being over with a loss. Nevertheless, Severna Park remained patient, stuck to the plan, and finally broke Decatur's resistance just before halftime when Bragg got on the end of **Emerson Scott's** corner to break the deadlock.

Almost immediately after halftime, Bragg surged down the left flank, drew the goalkeeper out, and rolled the ball to **Emma Lawrence** to slam home the Falcons' second score. A pair of late goals from **Ella Baxter** rounded out the scoring

Photo by Alex Bardakh

*Ava Scott looked to spark a scoring opportunity during the Falcons' county championship match against Chesapeake in October. Scott had one of her team's two second-half goals.*



as the Falcons set up an October 29 regional final date at J.M. Bennett.

"The longer you stay 0-0, the more hope the other team gets, so getting that goal right before halftime was really important," said Severna Park coach **Rick Stimpson**. "Our girls are just so patient because we've been in this situation so many times before, and they just keep creating chances."

Thus began the challenge laid down by the coaching staff and seniors from the undefeated 2023 state championship squad: earn the next day. Though that team now lives only in the history books, the holdovers hope to take the lessons learned to establish their own legacy.

"That's been our motto this season, 'Earn it,'" Ava Scott said. "We know what it feels like to win, but at the same time, we're not chasing that experience. We want to create a new experience where we still win. Last year was fantastic and amazing, and I'm so grateful for that. Now I'm looking toward this season with these girls and hopefully being able to do the same thing."

# At 7-1, Bruins Tuning Up For Another Playoff Run



Photos by Dennis McGinley

**Above:** Ian Mauldin rushed 23 times for 166 yards and three touchdowns in Broadneck's 38-10 win over Old Mill on October 10. **Below:** Broadneck's Thomas Anglim helped anchor a dominant Bruin defensive effort against the Patriots.



By David Bashore

The Broadneck football team's October 2024 looked a lot like their October 2023: a surprise loss surrounded by dominant wins.

If November 2024 plays out like November 2023, where they made a run to the 4A state championship game, that'll be just fine by the Bruins.

Broadneck played their second "county game of the year" contender of the season, a 27-26 loss to Annapolis on October 18 in which they were held by a late Panthers defensive stand. They sandwiched that loss, though, with three dominant performances: winning 49-7 over Severna Park on October 4, then avenging last season's county loss to Old Mill 38-10. They wrapped it up with a 43-0 win on senior night over North County.

The Severna Park result stretched Broadneck's dominance over Severna Park to 13 years — the Falcons haven't won this matchup since 2011. But that doesn't make the game any less meaningful for the two teams.

"The kids get up for Severna Park. They play a lot of lacrosse and baseball with a lot of those guys, so it's a good game, still a fun game," said Broadneck coach **Rob Harris**. "We just want them to stay focused and realize that each day you need to get better, each game you need to get better, and I think they did a good job of that."

Nobody had more than 50 yards receiving for the Bruins, and seven players caught at least one pass. **Joey Smargissi** had the most targets, hauling in four catches for 44 yards and one of the Bruins' seven touchdowns.

Six Broadneck players found the end zone: Smargissi, **Ian Mauldin**, **Aaron Foote**, **Mari Hayes**, **Carson Pierce** and **Cordaro Foote**.

"We love competition, and everything was clicking," Smargissi said. "Everyone was clicking. Slots, outside receivers, Ian, C.J. ... great job by all the guys."

The Old Mill rematch, long circled on Broadneck's calendar, didn't have near

the drama of the 2023 game won 31-28 by Old Mill. The Bruins had perfect balance in their offense: 239 rushing yards, 239 passing yards. Of those 478 yards, Mauldin had 193 and three more touchdowns, giving him 14 on the season.

"We really wanted this game because of how they beat us last time," said Mauldin, who had 125 of his 166 rushing yards after halftime to make up for lost time after being injured against Old Mill last season. "It was fun. A lot of hard, physical runs. We knew we would eventually break them if we kept running at them, because they were starting to get tired."

Broadneck's rushing yardage came on 41 carries, nearly six yards per rush. Watkins' passing yards came on 29 attempts, more than 10 yards per attempt and almost 15 yards per completion. Between rushing and passing, Hayes had 99 yards and a touchdown on six touches, and Aaron Foote added 60 yards and a score on seven touches. Smargissi and Pierce combined for 103 receiving yards on nine catches.

"I keep saying we have five elite skill players, and great players behind them too," Harris said. "C.J. does a great job of distributing the ball and making sure everyone gets involved. When we can distribute the ball, we really like our chances."

The Broadneck defense was just as dominant. Old Mill had a total of 286 yards — 143 rushing, 143 passing — but more than half of that came on two plays: a 99-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter and a 49-yard run in the fourth quarter.

The defensive effort came from expected and unexpected contributors. The defensive line and linebackers were solid, and when safety and secondary leader **Blake Levicki** went down with a leg injury, two plays later, his replacement **Kobe Owen** intercepted a pass and sent the Bruins off on another long drive.

"That's this team," Harris said. "A guy goes down, and everyone is ready for their number to be called and go make a play, even if they don't always get the attention. Kobe's one of those guys who's really important to us, and he was ready to make a big play."

Since the beginning of the COVID-shortened 2020-2021 season, Broadneck is 32-2 against AACPS opposition and 34-3 against county opposition overall (1-1 against Archbishop Spalding, 1-0 against St. Mary's).

Beating Old Mill was important, but it wasn't the only thing on the Bruins' mind that night.

Broadneck's game against Old Mill was a "green-out" in honor of 10-year-old **Riley Whitney**, in the middle of his second battle with neuroblastoma, and his family. In honor of Whitney's favorite color, some players wore green undershirts or green gloves, and a few had their ankles taped with green wrap.

Broadneck closes the season at Severn Run on November 1, then waits to learn their first opponent for the playoffs, which partly depends on the Annapolis-Arundel result the same night. With an Annapolis win, the Bruins would host a first-round game on November 8. With an Arundel win and a Broadneck win, the Bruins would likely receive a bye directly into the second round.

## Severn School Graduate Is A Shining Example

» Continued from page 14  
green Road campus.

"I think I was in 10 shows at Severn, and I just love to sing," said Gersh, who has written hundreds of songs. "I think I was the busiest kid on the planet."

Gersh also enjoyed growing up in Severna Park by riding his bike on the B&A Trail, walking in the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce's Fourth of July parade, and going out on the Severn River via the family's kayak or boat.

"I have great memories of my grandmother picking me and any friends up from school and we would go to Rita's, Garry's Grill or Jen's," Gersh said. "I really missed Severna Park after I left for college."

Gersh studied broadcasting at Syracuse's prestigious Newhouse School of Public Communications. He also became president of his Psi Upsilon fraternity.

"Syracuse has a state-of-the-art television studio where I gained unbelievable experience," Gersh said. "In our TV

classes, we did a 30-minute newscast every week and we rotated responsibilities from news to weather to sports. I enjoyed anchoring and the sports segment the best."

After graduating magna cum laude in 2019, Gersh had his first stop in his broadcasting career in Abilene, Texas. He became the morning news anchor for 18 months before moving to Springfield, Illinois, and continuing as a morning news anchor for the next three years.

"I woke up at 2:30am every morning and went into the station and wrote, edited and produced the news before going on the air," Gersh said. "I would be in bed at 8:00pm most nights."

Gersh still had a dream of being a sports broadcaster and to keep being involved in covering sports. He would volunteer his time while he was in Abilene and cover high school football games and bring that tape back to the studio to edit and produce it for the station.

His contract in Springfield was ending and he saw there was an opening for a sports broadcaster at another

Sinclair-owned station at Channel 45 in Baltimore.

He went through a lengthy interview process and his dream became a reality in August. Gersh moved back to Severna Park and pursued his lifelong ambition to cover sports in his hometown.

Currently, Gersh handles sports reporting during the week and is the weekend sports anchor as well as a major contributor to Channel 45's "Sports Unlimited" every Sunday night.

Gersh is proud to have grown up in Severna Park and calls his years at Severn School "an amazing experience."

He also gained confidence in his public speaking and leadership skills by being captain of the soccer team and providing pregame speeches and supporting his teammates.

"AJ exemplified what it means to lead by example, showing that influence and inspiration often come from the heart rather than statistics," McCarthy said. "It comes as no surprise that AJ has taken those abilities and built a successful career as a sports broadcaster."

# Severn School Surpasses Expectations In New Conference



Photo by Kevin Murnane

Severna Park resident and Severn School starting quarterback Ty Bussard (left) knew he fit into head coach Demetrius Ballard's (right) high-octane offense after Bussard transferred from McDonogh two years ago.

## By Kevin Murnane

Severn School's football team advanced to the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) B Conference this year with hopes of competing and challenging its young athletes against private schools in the Baltimore area.

So far, the Admirals have beaten John Carroll, which was in the B Conference title game last year, Boys' Latin and St. John's Catholic Prep in Frederick.

"When I came here three years ago, I made the decision to play our freshmen on varsity and I knew we would take our lumps," said head football coach **Demetrius Ballard**. "Now that decision has paid off as those freshmen are our leaders of this team and our future is bright."

Part of that improvement was the introduction of a year-round weight lifting program as well as nutritional counseling.

"We were the weakest team in Maryland when I took over," Ballard said. "Some of our players couldn't bench press the 45-pound bar."

Ballard came from the successful Archbishop Spalding football program and was one of its strongest recruiters. Ballard is also the vice president of the Anne Arundel Youth Football Association (AAYFA) and president of the Old Mill youth football program.

Those relationships have paid huge dividends for the Admirals in adding football players from throughout the region, including the Eastern Shore and surrounding counties.

Severn quarterback **Ty Bussard** played as a freshman at McDonogh but was fighting for playing time with another freshman quarterback in **Braeden Palazzo** and wanted the opportunity for a starting role.

"I contacted coach **(Kyle) Schmitt** at Spalding, but they had a couple of quarterbacks, but coach Schmitt suggested I contact coach Ballard since he was building a program at Severn," Bussard said.

A Severna Park resident, Bussard immediately bonded with Ballard and was drawn to Severn's dynamic offensive

scheme and plans to incorporate Bussard's athletic and passing ability into their fast-paced offense.

"Right away, I knew Severn was a great fit for me," Bussard said. "Severn was building something special, and I knew they would be moving into the B Conference. I wanted to have that opportunity to play in coach Ballard's system."

Ballard was thrilled to add a strong-armed quarterback to run his offense and then recruit receivers and running backs to have a balanced attack.

"Ty is a football junkie," Ballard said. "He commands our offense and is always studying tape of our opponents."

In an October 5 homecoming game against Boys' Latin, Bussard's passing ability shined as he threw for 279 yards using a multitude of receivers and relied on three standout receivers for 17 of Severn's receptions.

Bussard also has become one of the team's vocal leaders as he continuously cheers for his defensive teammates as they take the field, telling them, "It's time to go to work."

Bussard credits his offensive line for the team's success as it continues to use a balanced attack of running and passing to keep the opponents on their heels.

As of October 15, the leading receivers for the Admirals are senior **Daniel Growney**, junior **Jack Fowler** and sophomore tight end **Lincoln Watkins**.

The running attack has had workhorse **Charlie Runco**, gaining over 700 yards so far with eight touchdowns.

Four players have over 30 tackles each as of mid October, with junior linebacker **Jules Floyd** with 39 tackles, junior defensive lineman **Talin Krashoc** with 36 tackles and three sacks, junior linebacker **Jamere Branch** with 33 tackles and sophomore defensive back **Dominic Montgomery** with 33 tackles.

Growney, who also plays cornerback for the Admirals, leads the team with four interceptions as of mid-October.

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# Falcons Battle Back To .500 Late In Season



Photos by David Bashore

**Left:** Tyler Lawhorne returned a punt for a touchdown and also had an interception in Severna Park's 35-0 rout of Severn Run. **Right:** During the first half of the victory, Vince Nguyen and the Falcons offense found tough sledding.

By David Bashore

In the past, Severna Park's football team might have taken a shellacking from rival Broadneck, the team's fourth loss in a row, and decided to just play out the string the rest of the way.

Not in 2024.

Despite a demoralizing 49-7 defeat to the Bruins that dropped them to 1-4 on the year, the Falcons instead flipped the script, winning three straight to close the month and get back to .500 on the season with one week left before the playoffs.

Behind a renewed commitment to running the football and a suddenly stingy defense, the Falcons posted successive shutouts over Northeast (24-0) and Severn Run (35-0) before outlasting Crofton in a 41-28 barnburner on senior night.

The telltale sign that something was different with the Falcons came in the win over Severn Run. Severna Park was expected to blow away the winless Wolves with their vaunted passing attack, but it didn't happen. In fact, quarterback **Vince Nguyen** had just 21 passing yards at halftime, and leading receiver **Cole Cavanaugh** was held without a catch altogether.

In fact, the Falcons' 7-0 lead came courtesy of a punt return touchdown from **Tyler Lawhorne**, who also made an interception in the end zone to deny Severn Run a score of their own.

"Those kinds of games are going to happen sometimes, and Severn Run had a great game plan for dealing with our offense," said Severna Park coach **Nick Marks**. "We needed to spark something in the second half, so we made some changes, and the guys did a nice job. Our defense was outstanding tonight and really helped keep us in the game." The offense's struggles led Marks

to turn to junior quarterback **Isaac Graves**, who ran for a touchdown and threw for another, and sophomore running back **Lucas Zyvloski**, who was called up to the varsity squad earlier in the month.

Originally set up to spell starter **Chase Griner**, Zyvloski showed a mix of patience, vision and burst the Falcons sorely needed. He took over as the primary runner in the second half and had three 20-plus-yard runs on his way to a 140-yard rushing effort.

"I really didn't think I was going to get another carry after the first quarter, but I just tried to run where my blockers were going," Zyvloski said. "They made some great holes for me and gave me a lot of room. I couldn't have done that without the O-line."

With his effort, Zyvloski became the first 100-yard rusher in Marks' tenure as Falcons head coach. The Falcons racked up 171 rushing yards, 143 of them coming in the second half. Graves connected with **Dash Havens** for a 12-yard touchdown pass, while **Joey Viskocil** wrapped up the scoring with a 17-yard run to trigger the rolling clock midway through the fourth quarter.

The turnovers from Lawhorne in the first half and **Nolan Cogan**, **Mason Keegan** and **Landon Williams** in the second provided the Falcons with plenty of breathing room to sort out the offense that was largely stymied.

"We got a lot of confidence from shutting out Northeast, and we really want to keep that 'donut' (on the scoreboard)," Lawhorne said.

The Falcons close the regular season with a November 1 trip to Glen Burnie. Victory would not only ensure a final record of .500 or better, but it could also potentially earn the Falcons a home playoff game.

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## Three SPHS Students Recognized As Semifinalists For Prestigious National Scholarship

By Judy Tacyn

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation released the names of 16,000 semifinalists in the 70th annual National Merit Scholarship program this fall. Severna Park High School students Abbie Heath and Peter Judge, and former Severna Park student and Marylander Benjamin Elliffe, top the Maryland scholars.

According to a September press release, more than “1.3 million juniors in about 21,000 high schools entered the 2025 National Merit Scholarship program by taking the 2023 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than 1% of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state. The number of semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state’s percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.”

### Abbie Heath

Abbie Heath is a 17-year-old senior who plans to go into a STEM field of study in college next year, but since she’s also interested in sociology and



Photo by Judy Tacyn

*Abbie Heath and Peter Judge are among the top 1% of graduating seniors based on PSAT scores, and they were named National Merit Scholarship semifinalists for the 70th annual National Merit Scholarship program.*

than I made [this summer]. That might mean time to take a summer class or internship instead of working full-time for cash over the breaks when I get to college, or it could mean the difference between being able to go to a more expensive college that I feel more affinity with and going to one less fitting,” Heath added. “In terms of decision making, it may allow me to pursue those things I’m truly interested in; this is a hefty sum that will really change things for me.”

Heath said Severna Park High School is full of opportunities for students, including the supportive teachers and staff that challenge students to reach their full potential by giving them the confidence to explore and exercise their abilities.

“What really sticks out about our school is that the teachers are, mostly, here because they’re passionate about

history, she may have to rule out something or double major. She would prefer to study on the West Coast or in New England.

Heath volunteered as much as she could over the summer, often several days per week, while working three days per week to help pay for college. She said the scholarship will make a tremendous difference in her future decision making.

“This scholarship [is worth] more

making a change in students and shaping well-rounded people to do great things in society,” added Heath, noting Eleonor Nulud, an Advanced Placement chemistry teacher, who was an early and steadfast influence during her high school experience.

Heath was a four-year member of the Model United Nations (MUN) club, and an officer for the past two. She was a two-year co-captain of It’s Academic, and as a member of the math team, she twice earned the Donald Wertz Memorial Award for placing in the top five national math placement scores.

She has earned numerous awards including Best Delegate for general ability in regional MUN conferences, the Maryland Seal of Biliteracy for Spanish junior year, perfect Advance Placement test scores, and recognition as a member of Mensa Maryland and the U.S. Mensa.

### Peter Judge

For Peter Judge, as a senior committed to the United States Coast Guard Academy to study naval architecture and marine engineering, he is ineligible to receive the scholarship’s financial award, but he is proud to have been recognized.

“Severna Park High School has prepared me for the next step by giving me the opportunities to take classes that set me up well for studying engineering, such as AP physics, AP calculus, and the engineering classes from the Project Lead the Way program the school offers,” Judge added.

He’s the captain of the high school sailing team and an avid member of

» Continued on page 35

## Teen Novelist To Host Writing Workshop

By Lauren Cowin

Author and Severna Park High School senior Sabrina Richter will host a workshop on writing and publishing at the Severna Park Library on November 23 from noon to 1:30pm.

Dubbed “How To Write a Book: A Teen Author’s Guide,” the event will allow Richter to guide participants through the step-by-step process of writing a book, from plot conceptualization to publishing.

“I think it’s really important for people of all ages, especially young people, to start writing for fun and to explore that creative side of them,” said Richter, who self-published her debut fantasy novel, “Gift of the Fallen,” earlier this year.

Richter will walk participants through how to get started on a first draft and navigating its difficulties, editing, and whether or not to solicit opinions from others and make plot changes based on that feedback. She will then explain the administrative process to include time management and file organization.

Beyond the writing process, she will get into self-publishing – how to and whether to enlist freelancers, what software to use and creative marketing, if time allows.

If this approach to teaching writing and publishing

seems like a more methodical take on the creative process, perhaps that’s due to Richter’s academic focus: she intends to major in engineering after high school.

That someone with a STEM background pens fantasy novels should not be so shocking, Richter said. “I don’t think it should be strange at all to like all of those things,” she said. “I meet a lot of kids in my engineering classes who say they hate writing, and I don’t know if I believe them. I don’t know if they’ve really been exposed to just writing for the sake of exploring.”

The workshop is open to anyone interested, but it is tailored to teens and young adults.

Richter was inspired to write her first book after she finished reading the “Lord of the Rings” series. She remained deeply interested in the fantasy genre but couldn’t find anything with a plot that she deemed satisfying. So, she created her own.

Her hope with this workshop is to not only inform future authors on the nuts and bolts of writing a book, but also to jumpstart the creative juices for those who may not even deem themselves writers.

“When more people start to write for fun ... the level of writing increases for mass media,” said Richter, who would like to see a return to deeper, more thought-provoking writing across the board.

In addition to her work as an author, Richter is the president of the tech crew for the Severna Park High School drama club, takes two classes at Anne Arundel Community College and works part-time as a math tutor. She also has a fantasy trilogy in the works.

“Gift of the Fallen” is available for purchase on Amazon, and to borrow from the Anne Arundel County Public Library.



Photo by Lauren Cowin

*Sabrina Richter will share her firsthand knowledge on the writing and publishing process during a workshop at the Severna Park Library on November 23.*

# SPHS Drama Department Invites Audiences To “Catch Me If You Can”

By Abby Jeffers  
Student Intern

In a story that epitomizes the saying “fact is stranger than fiction,” Severna Park High School’s (SPHS) drama department will present “Catch Me If You Can: The Musical” from November 8-16.

The production is based on the story of Frank Abagnale Jr., an infamous con artist who operated in the 1960s. The show opens in an airport where, after several years of pursuit, FBI agent Carl Hanratty has captured Abagnale. At the time of his arrest, Abagnale had been pretending to be an airline pilot, one of the many personas he had assumed over his career of crime.

Eager to share his story, Abagnale engages the audience with his version of the events that have led to his arrest. Drew Kessler, who plays Frank Abagnale Jr., explained how many components of the production combine to tell Abagnale’s sto-

ry. “I am excited for people to see the songs and dances that the cast has worked hard to learn, and the set that the crew has dedicated so much of their time to building,” Drew said.

Abagnale’s story begins when, as a teenager, he decides to run away from home. Seeking adventure, he assumes a variety of characters: an airplane pilot, a doctor and a lawyer, among others. The show follows Abagnale’s life, including his stint as a doctor, during which he falls in love with, and becomes engaged to, one of the nurses with whom he is working. Fearing his imminent arrest, Abagnale flees shortly before his engagement party. Agent Hanratty tricks Abagnale’s fiancé into telling him where Abagnale has gone. The story returns to where it began, in the airport where Abagnale is ultimately arrested. Abagnale is tried and sentenced to 15 years in prison. He is released after serving seven years, and he joins forces with Hanratty and the FBI to capture other

con artists.

The cast members have enjoyed working on the show and are eager for opening night to arrive. “It’s been a really fun experience,” said Kaelin Tufo, member of the ensemble. “The music is challenging but in a super awesome way, and the choreography is all so fun.”

Many people have contributed to the success of the show. Andrew Gordon leads choreography, Emily Sergo is the band director, and Michael Brisentine is the music director. Alex Stavrevski, who plays Frank Abagnale Sr., credited the directors for their commitment to producing a great show.

“I really enjoy working with the directors because they have all worked so hard to put this show together, and you’re going to love it!” Alex said when asked about the show.

The production will be held at SPHS’ auditorium. The November 8, 9, 15 and 16 shows will begin at 7:00pm. On November 16, there will also be a matinee at 2:00pm. The November 10 and 16 shows are matinees and will begin at 2:00pm. Tickets are \$15 per adult and \$10 per child, and are available at [www.gofan.co/app/school/MD9637\\_1](http://www.gofan.co/app/school/MD9637_1).

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# Q.

## Question of the month

Each month, the Severna Park Voice poses a question for local students. This month, we asked Mrs. Fickinger's fifth-grade class at Jones Elementary School:

### If you could invite anyone to join your family for Thanksgiving, who would it be and why?

I would invite Ryan Reynolds because he's a celebrity.

**Brennan S.**

I would invite my grandpa because he died two days before my brother's birthday last year, and I really miss him and would do anything to see him again.

**Cara D.**

I would invite "The Rock" because he is strong and could lift my couch.

**Carter A.**

I would invite Patrick Mahomes because he is my favorite football player.

**Channing P.**

## JONES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



I would invite the homeless so they have food to eat too.

**Ella K.**

I would invite my friend Chloe from Pennsylvania because she's one of my best friends, and I met her on a cruise and haven't seen her since.

**Eva S.**

I would invite Olivia Rodrigo because she is my favorite singer and I want to get her autograph.

**Everly H.**

I would invite the YouTuber Nick DiGiovanni because I love watching his videos and I think he's a

good cook.

**Georgia S.**

I would invite Jeff Bezos because I want to ask him about space travel.

**Hayes W.**

I would invite Belle because she is my favorite Disney character. Jackson S.

I would invite Tyler because he's my friend.

**Ja'Kii K.R.**

I would invite Adam Sandler because my parents and I love watching his movies. I think he would make everyone laugh, plus

he's cool.

**Kate L.**

I would invite Duff Goldman because he makes great desserts.

**Luca L.**

I would invite Adam Sandler because he's really funny and I think he would fill in the awkward silence.

**Luke Y.**

I would invite my dad's father because he was really special and he passed away.

**Michael M.**

I would bring my cousin Ruth

because she always brings me joy.

**Nalah M.**

I would invite Savannah because I've known her since preschool and she is my best friend, basically family.

**Olivia D.**

I would invite my mom's grandma because I haven't met her before.

**Ryan W.**

I would invite my dad's father because I never got to meet him.

**Sammy C.**

I would invite Gordon Ramsay because I am not the best cook and he would cook me a five-star meal.

**Sofia K.**

I would invite Bluey because I like him.

**Sofia M.**

I would invite Mr. Beast because I want to get \$10,000 from him.

**Sully L.**

I would invite Sabrina Carpenter because she is my favorite singer and she could sing to us.

**Tessa B.**

I would invite Kevin Hart because he's funny.

**Tucker W.**

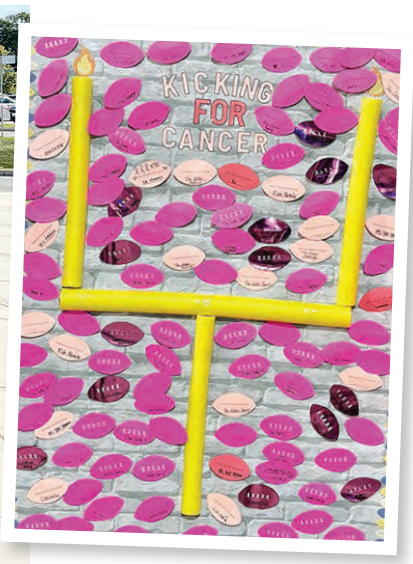
I would invite Jeff Bezos so he can get me everything from Amazon for free.

**Tyler S.**

I would invite Cristiano Ronaldo because he has been my favorite soccer player for many years and I've always wanted to meet him.

**Zach D.**

## SPHS Students Raise Over \$1,200 For Breast Cancer



**Left:** Students raised \$900 during the week, so Principal Nate Johnson and Assistant Principals Staci Cassarino, Justin Gardner and Tracey Stakem were drenched in Gatorade by SPHS football players. **Right:** SkillsUSA students worked in conjunction with the school's football team and came up with the concept of an MVP Wall of Champions. Students, faculty and community members could donate to the cause, and for every \$2 donation, a pink football would be placed on the wall with their name or the name of someone they know who has been touched by cancer.

Severna Park High School (SPHS) students participating in SkillsUSA, a workforce development organization, orchestrated a project to raise funds in support of breast cancer awareness in October. The project was spearheaded by five students: Nyla Chestnut, Parker Carroll, Brooke Barnes, Kendall Williams and Grace Lopez.

As of late October, the SkillsUSA students had raised over \$1,200. They worked in conjunction with the school's football team, led by head coach Nick Marks, and came up with the concept of an MVP Wall of Champions. Students, faculty and the community could donate to the cause, and for every \$2 donation, a pink football would be

placed on the wall with their name or the name of someone they know who has been touched by cancer.

It was a great way to create a shared experience and teach students that whether good or bad, everyone can find a common connection. Over the course of a week, SPHS "punished" administrators. For every \$200 raised, one administrator was doused in Gatorade during the Falcon 30 Block. It was live-streamed to the rest of the school.

The students raised \$900 during the week, so Principal Nate Johnson and Assistant Principals Staci Cassarino, Justin Gardner and Tracey Stakem took the plunge and were drenched in Gatorade by SPHS football players.

The project was titled "Ignite your Potential: Gatorade Gridiron Splash."

During the football team's October 18 shutout versus Severn Run, students set up a display and raised additional funds to get to their total and promote awareness. All proceeds will be donated to the NFL's Crucial Catch, a program that promotes cancer prevention and early detection, and the American Cancer Society.

The link of the student-run video can be viewed on the "SP Productions" YouTube page.

SPHS' varsity boys soccer team also supported breast cancer awareness in October by packing comfort kits for the nonprofit Pinked Perspective.



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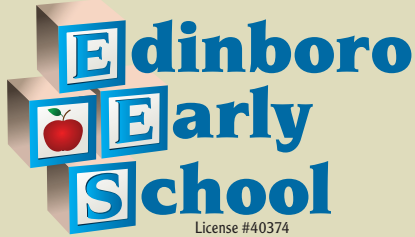


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# Educator Of The Month

## Meghan Stinchcomb St. John the Evangelist Catholic School



Photo courtesy of Kitt O'Brien Photography

By Zach Sparks

**M**eghan Stinchcomb's job title is upper school music and art teacher, but her importance to St. John the Evangelist Catholic School is more significant than any job title could suggest.

"She was our Teacher of the Year last year and is fiercely dedicated to St. John and her students," explained St. John's advancement director, Lynne Fish.

Stinchcomb always has the students' best interests at heart whether she is leading rehearsal for a school play or teaching a classroom lesson.

"Middle school is so awkward," Stinchcomb said. "You don't know who you are yet. Performing is totally different than acing a math test. You're singing, you're dancing, and you're sharing a side of yourself that your peers don't see in the classroom all the time. I always want them to feel satisfied and proud of their performance."

Stinchcomb attended The Catholic High School of Baltimore and was a music education major at Towson University, where she was involved in the marching band and symphonic band. After 12 years teaching at her former school, Catholic High, she was a St. John parent volunteer when she started filling in as a long-term art substitute during the 2018-2019 school year. Her work with the students led to a full-time position.

Although she has experience performing, she can relate to kids who are outgoing and those who are more reserved.

"I call myself an introverted extrovert," she said. "I don't seek the spotlight, but I am comfortable on the stage."

Now, she creates a space where kids can feel comfortable on the stage.

"I want them to be comfortable, confident and to have fun," Stinchcomb said. "The more they have fun, the more likely they are to want to continue."

Because she mentors the same children from sixth to eighth grade, seeing that growth is her favorite part of the job, especially when they pull off an achievement.

"You see the students have goosebumps or rub their arm," she said. "They are so limited in their life experiences, they may not have experienced that before."

Her work is not limited to the theater program. As an elective educator, she has taught everything from technology to music throughout her career. Some focus areas have come easier to her than others.

"If I had to teach someone to play tuba, after a few YouTube videos and a few hours of practice, I could," she said. "Singing is harder to get used to."

Stinchcomb joined the St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church choir and has worked with Helen Kirby.

"Being part of the church choir has improved my ear and musicianship so much," Stinchcomb said.

At the end of October, Stinchcomb prepared students for an All-Saints Mass. She also enjoys collaborating with teachers of other content areas.

When students learn about geodes in science class, Stinchcomb tries to time her unit so the kids are also painting geodes in her class. Or when students learn about the geosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere, she will have students draw those concepts.

"Anytime you can collaborate and (the students) can make a connection, it brings more meaning to the content area," Stinchcomb said.

She is humbled to be part of St. John. Not only was she the school's most recent Teacher of the Year, but she was also in consideration for the Archdiocese of Baltimore Teacher of the Year honor.

"I feel like I just do my job and have an overabundance of enthusiasm for most things in my life," Stinchcomb said. "It's very nice to be recognized. I never do any of the things I do for recognition. I love our students, and I love our school."

The music and arts teacher, who means so much to her school, is thrilled to belong to such a "family-oriented place."

"These kids are kind people," she said. "We want to create well-rounded students, successful at our school and in life, but also kind, knowledgeable and considerate."



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# International Family Involvement Specialist Earns Educator Of The Year Award



Frances Cruz-Serrano has worked to facilitate communication with and provide resources for international families.

**Shared by AACPS**

Frances Cruz-Serrano, a Severna Park resident who has served as Anne Arundel County Public Schools' international family involvement specialist, has been named the inaugural recipient of the Educator of the Year Award given by the Anne Arundel County Office of Hispanic/Latino and Multicultural Resources.

Cruz-Serrano has worked for Anne Arundel County since 2015, serving in a variety of capacities. In each of them, she has worked to facilitate communication with and provide resources for international families.

"Receiving this award is not just a personal honor but a recognition of the collective effort and dedication of our team, which works tirelessly to bridge the gap between our international families and

the educational system," Cruz-Serrano said. "Every day, we strive to ensure that every family feels valued, understood, and empowered to support their children's academic journey. This is essential not only for their success but for the enrichment of our entire community."

For the last several years, she has coordinated the school system's International Parent and Community Leadership Academy (IPCLA). The IPCLA is aimed at improving communication between the school system and international families as well as diversifying the pool of leaders in schools and the community who can better support the academic achievement of international students and English language learners.

Cruz-Serrano received her award at the Anne Arundel County Hispanic Heritage Awards ceremony on October 10.

# Class Of 2025 Commencement Ceremonies Scheduled

**Shared by AACPS**

Graduating seniors at 14 county high schools will once again receive their diplomas at the Live! Event Center at Arundel Mills in Hanover this spring, with ceremonies at eight other schools scheduled at other venues, Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) Superintendent Mark Bedell announced.

The ceremonies at the Live! Event Center are part of an ongoing partnership be-

tween Anne Arundel County schools and Live!, which provides the state-of-the-art venue free of charge and enables AACPS to stream those ceremonies live on AACPS' YouTube channel. This year's ceremonies at Live! will be held from June 2-6.

Graduating seniors at Broadneck High School are scheduled to walk across the stage on June 2 at 6:00pm. Severna Park seniors will have their ceremony on June 3 at 6:00pm.

# Three SPHS Students Recognized

**» Continued from page 30**

the school vocabulary club. He noted that his favorite classes are AP physics and language.

**Benjamin Elliffe**

Benjamin Elliffe, who now lives out of state, finds he isn't able to take as many Advanced Placement classes in his new school as he could have at Severna Park High School. He said he feels being recognized as a semifinalist will show colleges that he is committed

to his academics.

"Both academically and financially, being named a merit semifinalist takes a lot of pressure off. It has opened the door to more colleges," Elliffe said. "If I am granted a scholarship by the college board, it would help a lot."

Semifinalists represent the top 1% of graduating seniors in the nation. The 2,500 National Merit Scholarships will be offered in the spring of 2025 and represent a \$2,500 award.

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## Severna Park Community Observes Breast Cancer Awareness Month



The Severna Park High School varsity boys soccer team packed comfort kits for Pinked Perspective during October.

By Katie Melynn

Observed every October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month brings attention to a disease that directly impacts around one in eight women during their lifetime according to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). While breast cancer does not focus on a single month of the year, October is a great time to show support and raise awareness around the fight so many women are facing each day.

In Anne Arundel County, community organizations rallied around current patients, survivors, families and others affected by the disease to connect them with resources.

"This past May, during a routine mammogram, I was diagnosed with breast cancer," said Kimberly LaBrier, founder and co-owner of Kimberly James Jewelry. "Since then, I've been deeply moved by the support and strength of other women in our community also touched by breast cancer."

After her personal experience with the disease, LaBrier wanted to make routine checkups part of the conversation of breast cancer awareness.

"This October, my business partner Jenn and I launched our pink campaign and have been sharing stories from some of these courageous women in the hopes of raising breast cancer awareness," she said. Her vision is that the campaign would act by "inspiring others to prioritize their health by scheduling annual mammograms."

Lisa Dickstein with Wish List Boutique partnered with Kimberly James Jewelry to host an event bringing the community together. "We wanted to give back in a meaningful way," Dickstein said. "We can help people right here in our community."

A portion of the sales of a curated pink collection, chosen for the beauty and energy of the gemstones, is donated to Pinked Perspective, a nonprofit with local and national reach. Designated a

501(c)(3) in 2014, Pinked Perspective celebrated 10 years of work under the leadership of founder and breast cancer survivor Kara Hamilton.

"I learned a lot through that, so when I finished up my treatment, I wanted to find a way to give that information out to others," Hamilton said. Pinked Perspective provides kits for women going through mastectomies or other treatments and procedures to battle breast cancer.

Each kit includes pajamas, a pillow and a blanket to provide physical comfort after surgery and during recovery. Books and letters address the need for spiritual support and connection. A journal and pen allow each patient to record their medical information, feelings and experience during their journey.

"I did not want another day to go by without thanking you for the wonderful 'package' you left me at my hospital bedside," said one recipient. "I have used" **» Continued on page 39**

## Do You Know The Signs Of Type 2 Diabetes?

Pedram Javanmard  
Luminis Health



November is Diabetes Awareness Month, highlighting a crucial health issue that affects more than 38 million Americans. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC), 90% to 95% of those with diabetes have Type 2 diabetes, a chronic metabolic condition where the body doesn't use insulin effectively, leading to elevated blood sugar levels.

Each year, 1.9 million new cases are diagnosed, yet more than 8 million Americans remain undiagnosed. If current trends persist, one in every three people born in the year 2000 will develop Type 2 diabetes in their lifetime.

What accounts for the high number of undiagnosed cases? The symptoms of Type 2 diabetes can develop gradually, leading many people to attribute cases to other factors. Additionally, a lack of awareness about these symptoms often prevents individuals from seeking a diagnosis and learning how to manage their condition effectively. During Diabetes Awareness Month, it's important to raise awareness and encourage regular screenings to improve health outcomes.

### Symptoms Of Type 2 Diabetes

Left untreated, Type 2 diabetes can lead to several complications, including cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, loss of vision, neuropathy, reduced circulation, loss of limbs, and more. That's why you should see a physician as quickly as possible if you see any signs of Type 2 diabetes.

Here are some of the critical signs of Type 2 diabetes:

**Frequent urination:** High blood glucose causes your kidneys to filter out excess glucose, leading to increased urination, especially at night.

**Increased thirst:** Dehydration from frequent urination can cause persistent thirst, even if you're drinking more fluids than usual.

**Unexplained weight loss:** If your body cannot use glucose effectively due to insulin resistance, it may start breaking down fat and muscle for energy, causing weight loss.

**Fatigue:** Difficulty in using insulin for energy can leave you feeling persistently tired, especially after meals.

**Blurred vision:** High glucose levels can affect the lenses of your eyes,

**» Continued on page 39**

## How To Talk To Your Parents About Retirement

By Bethany Good

Lean on Dee Senior Home Care

My mom turned 65 this past June, which means it's time to start having conversations about retirement. Specifically, when should mom retire? Does she have enough retirement savings to carry her through the next few decades? Thinking about mom's retirement made me feel overwhelmed and unsure of what came next. I realized my family should get the ball rolling on retirement planning before crises occur. So here is what I've learned about the topic so far.

### Don't Wait To Talk About Retirement

As I've been researching how to talk to your parents about retirement, one thing

keeps coming up: start early. Don't put the conversation on hold just because it's intimidating. When discussing finances, be gentle and avoid sounding condescending. Here are some questions to ask your parents or loved ones about the future:

1. Do they want to stay in their home, live in a retirement community, or stay with relatives?
2. What kind of retirement savings do they have? How much do they have in their retirement account, and how long will that last?
3. When can they collect Social Security benefits (SSA)?

### Ask About Their Finances

Money is a complicated topic, and for some families, it's one they would sooner avoid than discuss. But it's crucial to find out if your parents have

hidden debt or other financial problems before it's too late.

- Find out where they bank, and keep account numbers, passwords and other details in a safe, accessible place.
- Do they need help managing their finances? If the need arises, figure out who is the best person to be their money manager.
- Do they have a trusted financial advisor? If so, get their contact information and keep it safe with their other account information and passwords.

### What About Social Security?

How much can mom draw from SSA, and will that be enough to cover living expenses? First, determine when your parent will be eligible for their full benefits.

**» Continued on page 39**



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## How To Talk To Your Parents

» Continued from page 37

This is called full retirement age (FRA), which depends on when your parent was born. My mom was born in 1959, which means her FRA will be 66 and 10 months. If she retires before this date, she won't be able to collect 100% of her benefits. However, her benefits will continue to accrue between her FRA and age 70.

Mom is healthy right now, so it might be worth delaying retirement until she turns 70. She can work and draw benefits, but the earnings limit is \$22,320. You lose \$1 in benefits for every \$2 earned over the cap. Since my mom is self-employed, SSA only counts her net income after taxes. It's worth checking [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) for more information about drawing benefits.

### What's Next?

After learning more about retirement, I decided that my three siblings and I should plan for a family meeting to discuss our mom's future. To spread out the responsibilities, each person could research a different aspect of retirement. My brother, Andrew, has access to our mom's bank accounts. He would be in charge of sharing information about her retirement savings and finances.

My sister will gather and make copies of mom's will and other documents. I will research SSA and other benefits. My brother, Daniel, will start looking into housing options when mom needs more support with daily tasks.

### Other Essential Resources For Families

#### Social Security Calculator

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

#### Retirement Age Calculator

[www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/ageincrease.html](http://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/ageincrease.html)

#### Learn More About Medicare

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#### AARP Family Caregiver Resource Line

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#### Maryland Department of Aging Local Resources

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*As our parents age, we should have a plan for the next leg of their journey. If you need assistance caring for your parents or older loved ones, Lean on Dee Senior Home Care is here to help. Contact 410-449-4538 or visit [www.leanondee.com](http://www.leanondee.com).*

## Signs Of Type 2 Diabetes?

» Continued from page 37

causing them to swell and leading to blurred vision.

**Slow-healing wounds:** High blood sugar affects circulation and nerve function, slowing the healing of cuts and wounds.

**Frequent infections:** Diabetes weakens the immune system, making you more prone to infections, such as those in the skin, gums and urinary tract.

### When To See A Doctor

You should see a physician if you have one or more of these symptoms. Early detection and treatment of Type 2 diabetes can help you maintain a good

quality of life and avoid serious complications. You can learn to manage Type 2 diabetes by making lifestyle changes, monitoring blood sugar levels, and taking medication, if necessary.

Recognizing the signs of Type 2 diabetes is the first step in managing the disease so you can lead a healthy and fulfilling life. The diabetes program at Luminis Health can provide everything you need to manage Type 2 diabetes and any complications, including education, monitoring and treatments.

*Pedram Javanmard is an endocrinologist at Luminis Health with expertise in a wide range of endocrine-related diseases.*

## Breast Cancer Awareness Month

» Continued from page 37

the book 'Jesus Calling' every single day (and many times during the day). Your beautiful letter meant so much to me to hear your experiences, as well. I cannot thank you enough and feel like I know you already."

The Severna Park High School varsity boys soccer team packed comfort kits for Pinked Perspective during October. A group of Severna Park pink warriors, calling themselves "The Breasties," uses texts and get-togethers to support each other during their fight.

Partnering with Dr. Christy Asonglefac, Pinked Perspective hosts recurring Empower Hour workshops at The Edge Dance Complex to build a community of pink warriors in support of one another.

"The Empower Hours help educate and provide resources to ladies coming out of treatment so that they can start regaining function, regaining mobility," Hamilton said.

This October, Pinked Perspective also hosted Think Pink fundraisers in partnership with Chesepiooc Real Ale Brewery in Crofton and Oscar's Alehouse

East in Pasadena.

"We like to see people come, enjoy the food trucks and outdoor activities," Hamilton said. "We welcome breast cancer survivors that have been supported and we get to meet each other. It is one of our main fundraisers for the year."

One of the hallmarks of breast cancer awareness initiatives this year has been partnership. Whether at an in-person event or through behind-the-scenes work, the outpouring of support from the community has been tremendous.

"Our message to the community is to say thank you for standing with us and helping to make a difference," LaBrier said. "Let's continue to uplift, empower and support each other."

*Anyone interested in donating a mastectomy kit, joining a support group or event, or supporting Pinked Perspective in another way can visit [www.pinked-perspective.org](http://www.pinked-perspective.org) for more details. Follow Kimberly James Jewelry's Pink campaign on social media @kimberlyjamesjewelry and see coverage of the fundraising event @wishlistboutique\_md.*

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## Book By Local Experts Aims To Slow Misinformation Tsunami On Climate Change And The Environment

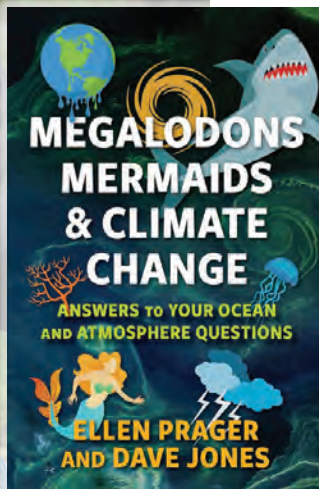
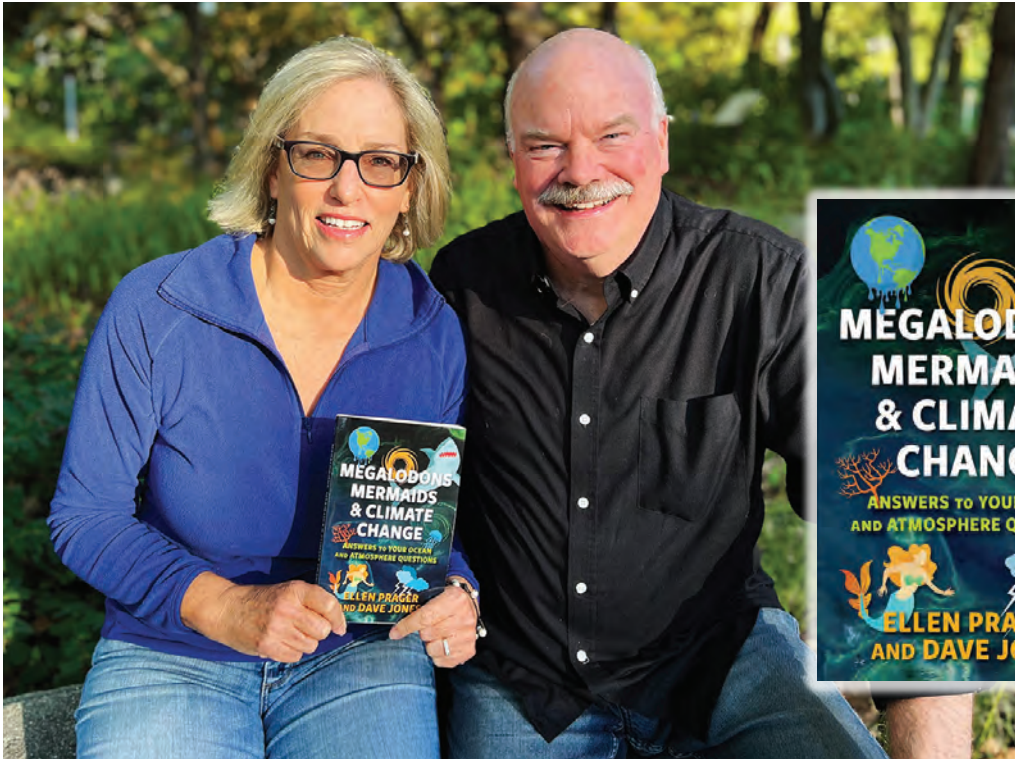


Photo by Judy Tacyn

Ellen Prager, StormCenter Communications CEO, and former broadcast meteorologist Dave Jones, have released “Megalodons, Mermaids and Climate Change: Answers to Your Ocean and Atmosphere Questions,” a book for curious readers of all ages.

By Judy Tacyn

The hope that one book on climate change can make an environmental perception impact is a literal and figurative drop in the ocean. But for marine scientist Ellen Prager and meteorologist Dave Jones, co-authors of “Megalodons, Mermaids and Climate Change: Answers to Your Ocean and Atmosphere Questions,” their goal is to start the scientific, evidence-based conversation needed to remove misinformation pollution and definitively declare climate change is real, but mermaids are not, and data proves it. “Our goal is to improve the public’s understanding of the world around them,” Prager said. “We know people have questions, and those questions have answers derived from data. We hope this book allows for a greater appreciation of science and how science can

explain the unknown.”

About 17 years ago, the stars aligned, and weather patterns converged to form not the perfect storm, but a perfect collaboration. Prager and Jones, then living in Florida and Severna Park, respectively, would frequently attend the same conferences or work on similar projects through their intertwined professions. Both prolific speakers, the two have colloquially “heard some stuff,” and as a scientist and meteorologist turned founder of StormCenter Communications, they have also “seen some stuff.”

“It didn’t matter if I was speaking to children in a classroom or professionals at a conference,” Jones said. “People are fascinated by the atmosphere, the weather, the ocean, all of which can be mysterious.”

And, from depths of the great unknown, questions and myths arise.

“We started sharing our own experiences and realized we have heard many of the same ques-

» Continued on page 43

## Former Severna Park High School Arts Educator Earns Annie Award

By Judy Tacyn

For the last 24 years, the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County has recognized county individuals for their contributions to the arts in their communities. This year’s roster of nine highly talented and passionate individuals includes a familiar name for anyone who had a child graduate from Severna Park High School in the last 40 years.

Angela Germanos, who retired from Severna Park High School (SPHS) in 2022 after more than four decades in art education, has earned top billing in the Arts Education category. She taught theater, Russian and French, first at Chesapeake High School, and then Severna Park High School, where she directed the tremendously popular “Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival,” now heading into its 36th year.



Germanos was nominated by longtime collaborator Nancy Almgren, who founded the Anne Arundel County Battle of the Bands in 1999, in which Germanos first entered the talented musicians from SPHS.

“Of course, I knew about the Annie Awards, but I never expected to receive such an honor,” Germanos said. “And to know that I was nominated by Nancy, who has made a

tremendous impact to the arts herself, makes the recognition extra special. I also found out that several of the team members of ‘Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival’ wrote letters of recommendation to the council, so that’s very nice, too.”

Germanos may not be teaching in the school system these days, but her impact on the arts and continued arts education for students of all ages now

» Continued on page 44

## Apache Storyteller Brings 21st-Century Native Culture Alive In Dynamic Library Presentation

By Judy Tacyn

World-renowned storyteller Dovie Thomason will visit Broadneck Library on November 26 from 10:30am—11:30am for “Stories of the Four Directions” to share stories from the diverse native cultures of North America.

Her melodic intonation with soothing, well-placed inflections in the detailed stories of her own life, and those of other indigenous people, is designed to draw in the audience, fill their minds with vivid imagery, and leave them with a richer understanding and a personal connection to American natives.

Verbal communication is considered the earliest form of human communication with the origins of speech dating to 100,000 BCE (before common era). The first recorded written communication didn’t appear until 2,000 BCE with the first indication of simple characters representing singular sounds. An in-utero human can recognize the sound of their mother’s voice before birth, and instinctively make sounds after birth to communicate the most basic human needs and emotions. Young children hear patterns of words, even inflections, from which they form their own voices and learn to speak long before they can write their name.

Verbal communication — storytelling — brings humans together. The spoken word



Photo courtesy of Farmington Public Library

Dovie Thomason’s passion is to share native traditions, achievements and stories, and make them contemporary.

predates science, and it’s stronger than any iPhone, artificial intelligence technology, robot or gadget humans can create. It will never be outdated or replaced. Storytelling ties us to our past and prepares us for our future.

» Continued on page 48





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# DreamWorks' Swan Song "The Wild Robot" Is A Triumph

By James Buxton

*It takes a village to raise a child.*

"The Wild Robot" is the 49th, and in many ways, the final movie to come from DreamWorks Animation, the studio behind such cultural behemoths as "Shrek," "Madagascar" and "Kung Fu Panda." With the recent announcement that the company will outsource most of its animation services to Sony Pictures Imageworks ("Hotel Transylvania," "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse"), this movie marks the last time a movie will be produced entirely in house at DreamWorks, marking the end of an era for the wider industry.

Touted as the most prolific rival of Disney and its partners, DreamWorks has always been prepared to push the boat out a little further than the more risk-averse Pixar; there's no chance "the mouse" could have made something as transgressive as "Shrek," for example. The DreamWorks team takes more risks, and while it may not always pay off, the result is always more interesting than the latest Disney princess outing.

It's fitting, then, that its symbolic swan song is its one of its most innovative and electric productions yet, as well as one of its absolute best.

"The Wild Robot" is a triumph of animation and storytelling that practices what it preaches. It's a story about raising children to be

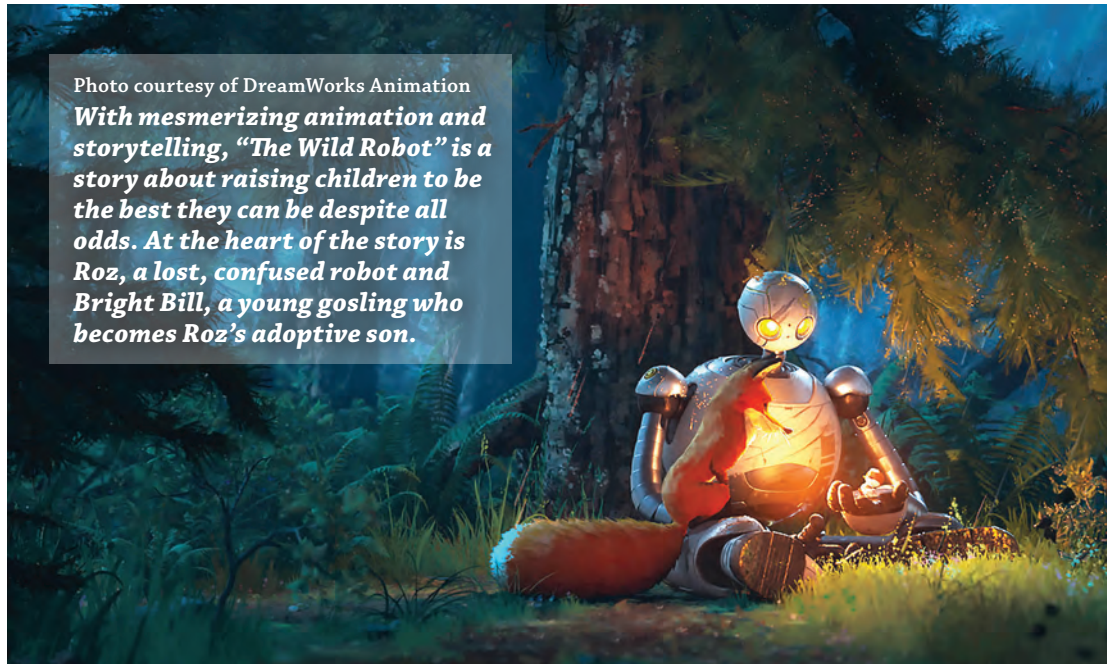


Photo courtesy of DreamWorks Animation  
**With mesmerizing animation and storytelling, "The Wild Robot" is a story about raising children to be the best they can be despite all odds. At the heart of the story is Roz, a lost, confused robot and Bright Bill, a young gosling who becomes Roz's adoptive son.**

the best they can be despite all odds — a perfect kids movie with nothing particularly traumatizing, but no opposing intention to coddle or patronize either. Nature can be cruel, but it doesn't need to be scary.

At the heart of the story is Roz, a lost, confused robot in the middle of a forest who only wants to help, and Bright Bill, a young gosling who, through pain and fortune, becomes Roz's adoptive son. Bright Bill is an awkward kid whose outcast status isn't helped by having a pragmatic, unsettling robot for a mother, and the driving force of the film is watching him grow and learn to get ready for winter and his first migration.

Equally, though, it's a tale of motherhood, and having to

constantly adapt as only a parent can when things go awry. Roz is a robot with a strict set of parameters and non-negotiable programming, and as every parent can confirm, that means very little when kids are involved.

It becomes clear early on that Roz, despite her best intentions, doesn't have the tools to raise Bright Bill as a living being, let alone a goose. Her heart's in the right place, but that's about it. Something the movie captures beautifully is how, even in the most dire circumstances, everyone has that inbuilt need to cooperate and help. Despite being feared and reviled by all, Roz receives all sorts of help and support as soon as a child is involved. As Bright Bill learns to swim, or find something to eat, Roz

learns a little more about what it means to be alive and to care for something.

It takes a village to raise a child.

"The Wild Robot" is excellent all around, and a huge part of that is in how it lifts from the last 20 or so years of animation. Roz is a little bit Baymax from "Big Hero 6," a little bit "WALL-E" and a whole lot of "The Iron Giant," but the blend is so smooth that she feels so unique despite her origins.

Its visuals also feel one of a kind — something of a trend for DreamWorks lately — offering up a gorgeous watercolor-inspired medley that makes Disney's house style look positively outdated by comparison. The colors pop like nothing you've ever seen,

taking a leaf from 2022's "Puss in Boots: The Last Wish" (also by DreamWorks) to deliver a wilderness that looks lush, inviting and alive.

Alone, it's an absolute triumph that cannot be recommended enough, but as a capstone to DreamWorks' in-studio productions, it's similarly perfect. It's easy to forget that "Shrek," the film that put the company on the map, is 23 years old. Many of the kids who enjoyed it so much at release are now in their 30s, juggling careers, lives and, in many cases, children of their own. How many parents with young kids who grew up on "Madagascar" and "Shark Tale" will take their families to see "The Wild Robot," one of the most profound films about parenthood of the last few years? It's a beautiful, full-circle movement that will resonate with audiences of all ages. It's bright and exciting for the kids, and just poignant enough to elicit tears from some of the older people in the room, myself included.

With so many of the annual top grossing movies consisting of sequels, remakes and franchises, it's also great to see such a fresh, original film taking the stage. Flush with stellar performances from Lupita Nyong'o, Mark Hamill and Pedro Pascal (reprising his role in "The Mandalorian" as a stoic outsider responsible for an unusual young ward), it's one of DreamWorks' strongest films and easily one of the best of the year so far.

## Book By Local Experts Aims To Slow Misinformation

» **Continued from page 40** tions," Prager added. "So, we reached out to professional colleagues and asked them, 'What are the wackiest things you've heard about our environment and atmosphere?'"

Richard Spinrad, administrator of NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Kenneth Graham, director of the National Weather Service and former director of the National Hurricane Center; and Eddie Widder, oceanographer, marine biologist and the co-founder, CEO and senior scientist at the Ocean Research & Conservation Association, are just a few of world's preeminent scientists whose input helped shape the contents of the book.

The co-authors compiled a collective list of those most frequently asked and downright zany questions about the ocean and atmosphere, grouped similar topics and started to write "Megalodons, Mermaids and Climate Change: Answers to Your Ocean and Atmosphere Questions," with easy-to-understand language,

the pair's trademark humor, fun illustrations, and photos from scientific organizations in an effort to combat the tidal wave of misinformation that's so easily accessible.

"This isn't an encyclopedia," Prager said. "We made sure that everyone (ages) 12 to 120 could understand this book. We present the data but also provide a lengthy resource section for people to do their own research."

The 200-page book includes 14 quick-read chapters: Deep Vast Sea; Dangerous Marine Life; Supernatural, Suspicious, or Science; Coral Reefs; Weather Forecasting and Extreme Events; and of course, Climate Change, just to name a few. There also is a 20-plus-page section just on resources. And, the authors unequivocally debunk Facebook, TikTok and most social media as evidence- or science-based.

Released in October, the book has good early reviews. Jones shared the book during the American Meteorological Society's (AMS) Conference for Broadcast Meteorologists' June meeting in Myrtle

Beach, South Carolina, where it got the attention of many people, including the society's president, at whose request the book will be shared at the AMS' annual January 2025 meeting in New Orleans.

"The plan is to form a community partnership where the books will be distributed to schools, libraries and community centers," said Jones, adding that the 5,000 society members, at the time of registration, will be able to purchase a discounted book to be given away.

Prager also noted that she is working on grant writing to cover the costs of getting the book into school libraries and classrooms, and she and Jones plan to speak at school assemblies and science classes, Earth Day events, community gatherings and more.

"How can we use this book as a stepping stone to do more?" Prager rhetorically asked. "We believe strongly that this book should be in the hands of every science teacher, because if we are hearing these questions, we know they are, too."

## Early Reviews For "Megalodons, Mermaids and Climate Change"

"The book is not just a collection of fascinating facts; it actively confronts misinformation and provides evidence-based answers to common misconceptions about the ocean and atmosphere. This promise of scientific accuracy empowers readers with accurate knowledge, encouraging critical thinking and promoting a more profound appreciation for the natural world." — **SevenSeas Media**

"The authors present information in a detailed, frank and conversational manner and clearly explain technical terms. The text doesn't sugarcoat the dire nature of climate change, but it is lightened and enlivened by a fair amount of humor, especially in the scattered cartoon spot art. The work lends itself to being read cover to cover or dipped into by those who wish to learn more about a specific area, enhancing its usefulness. A solid and engaging overview of a host of scientific concepts." — **Kirkus Reviews**

## Former Severna Park High School Arts Educator Earns Annie Award

» Continued from page 40

reaches well beyond the confines of the 21146 zip code.

In her retirement, she has been active with Annapolis ROCKS, through Encore Creativity for Older Adults (55 and older). Germanos is a cast member of the Pasadena Theatre Company's production of "A Christmas Carol" in which she plays Scrooge's maid, Mrs. Dibler. In 2023, she directed "Matilda" for 2nd Star Productions, a community theater in Bowie, Maryland.

She also acted in Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church's production of "Secret Garden," during which time she also oversaw props and filled the role of Mrs. Pierce for the Bowie-based St. Matthew's Musical Theatre Troupe's presentation of "My Fair Lady." She plans to audition for the "Hunchback of Notre Dame," an upcoming Woods production.

"I am now teaching drama for a ho-

meschool group, and they are preparing to present "Our Town," Germanos said proudly, with a beaming smile. "I'll be taking the group to New York City to see Jim Parsons and Katie Holmes in the revival of 'Our Town' in January. Many of the children have never seen live theater or been to New York (City), so I am very excited to expose them to that."

Germanos is active with the drama program at Severna Park Evangelical Presbyterian Church and led the 2024 vacation Bible school children's depiction of Joshua and the Battle of Jericho.

As busy as she is, Germanos makes sure to catch many live theater productions, including following as many talented former Severna Park students as she can, and watching audition calls to see what she might be interested in.

"I'm always going to shows because there are so many great options in our area," Germanos said. "I like to

keep up with former student musicians and actors, and people I've met during my own past shows. I support the people I know, and they support me. We have a wonderful community in this area."

Among all her accomplishments, Germanos fondly remembers many of her former students and thoroughly enjoys learning they are active in the arts or have even made the arts their full-time career.

While attending the Maryland Renaissance Festival, Germanos loves to watch performances by Sage Snider, a fiddler pirate in the cast. Germanos also follows the career of Snider's brother Solon, who after singing with Yale University Whiffenpoofs, is now an accomplished composer and director in New York City, recently featured in a Billy Joel video.

Other former Falcons include Ben Mallare, who owns Ben Mallare Events & Entertainment and recently opened for Kelly Clarkson in Los Angeles, and Matt Hutchinson, whose band Fools and Horses opened for Bon Jovi in Washington, D.C.

Germanos also attends local vocal performances of Parijita Bastola and Josee Molavi, just to name a few of her former students.

SPHS graduate and "Rock 'N' Roll Revival" alumni Colin Benedict recalled Germanos' leadership with great admiration.

"You never had to worry about the production, since you knew if Ms. Germanos was directing, it would always

turn into a smash hit," said Benedict of the highly anticipated annual SPHS production. "She knew when to criticize and when to praise. She has a calm and collected demeanor — an essential trait to have in a stressful time crunch. Above all, it was always fun to be a part of her production."

Germanos said, "I love sharing the love of theater and the arts. To know that former students are singing on cruise ships, dancing on Broadway, or active in or regularly attending any other form of live performance makes me very, very happy, and humbled, actually."

The joyful Severna Park resident has no intentions of stepping away from teaching. "I'll stay involved as long as there are kids that want to learn!" she said.

The Annie Awards were established in 2000 to recognize individuals for lasting, significant and inspiring contributions to an art form, an arts organization, and the wider community of Anne Arundel County. Nine 2024 winners were recently announced in the categories of Arts Education, Arts Leadership, Arts Maverick, Arts Patron, Historic Arts, Literary Arts, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, and Lifetime Achievement in the Arts.

Awards will be presented on November 11 at Maryland Hall in Annapolis. To learn more about the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County, the Annie Awards, including present and past winners, or to purchase tickets to the event, visit [www.acaac.org](http://www.acaac.org).

## Broadneck Library To Host Autumn-Themed Paint Night

Teens (ages 11 and up) and adults are invited to let their creativity shine at an autumn-themed paint night at the Broadneck Library on November 18 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm. Participants can "fall" in love with the season as they recreate an autumn

masterpiece with their own flair. All materials will be provided by the library. Advance registration is required and will be available on the library website from November 4-18. To learn more, go to [www.aacpl.net](http://www.aacpl.net). The Broadneck Library is located at 1275 Green Holly Drive in Annapolis.



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# Annapolis Symphony Orchestra Announces Erica Bondarev Rapach As Interim Executive Director



Photo courtesy of Nichole Haun

The Annapolis Symphony Orchestra (ASO) has appointed Erica Bondarev Rapach as its new interim executive director. With her background in arts management, brand innovation and change leadership, Bondarev Rapach brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the ASO, positioning the organization for continued success and sustainability.

Her leadership is defined by creativity and social responsibility. She has a proven track record of building strong, engaged communities. Bondarev Rapach has held key arts marketing and executive management positions at The Washington Ballet, Theater Alliance, The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and the .ART domain registry. She is an adjunct faculty in the graduate arts management program at American University, of which she is also an alum. Her career is deeply rooted in advocating for the arts and driving meaningful cultural change.

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Bondarev Rapach recently launched a startup that designs textiles using artificial intelligence (AI) and is a remake ambassador, advocating for fair wages and environmentally responsible practices in the fashion industry. She is authoring a book on personal brand

leadership and how everyone can leverage change for the greater good.

"I am honored to join the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra at this important moment in its more than 63-year history," Bondarev Rapach said. "I'm committed to working closely with the dedicated staff, the board, and the broader community to enhance our impact, build sustainability, and lay the groundwork for the new, permanent executive director."

A classically trained violinist, Bondarev Rapach served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Russia, where she played with the Volgograd Symphony Orchestra and organized the ensemble's first U.S. tour. This informed her deep understanding of the transformative power of the arts and launched her now 20-year arts management career.

"We are delighted to have Erica step into the role of interim executive director for the ASO," said Shelley Row, chair of the board of trustees. "Her insightful leadership, experience in the arts, and passion for innovation make her the ideal person to guide us. We are confident that she will help us strengthen our operational foundation while preparing the organization for its next chapter."

Bondarev Rapach will serve as interim executive director until at least February 2025. The ASO's board of directors has engaged Arts Consulting Group in the search for a permanent executive director.



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## Enjoy Fall Productions, Concerts And Performances At Anne Arundel Community College



Running Nov. 8-17, Anne Arundel Community College Theatre's fall 2024 mainstage production is William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night."

### Actors, Musicians And Dancers To Take The Stage November And December

Between now and the end of fall term, the Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) calendar is packed with performances by talented students and faculty. From Shakespeare to Tchaikovsky, there's something for every audience to enjoy.

#### Faculty Jazz Ensemble

**November 1, 7:30pm-9:30pm**  
Humanities 112

A group of AACC instructors comprising Ian Wardenski, Mercedes Beckman, Frank Russo, Shawn Simon and Anthony Pocetti will entertain the audience with a night of "skillful syncopation, complex chords and melodic measures." Tickets are available via Eventbrite.

#### Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night"

**November 8, 9, 15, 16 at 7:30pm;**  
**November 10, 17 at 2:00pm**  
Robert E. Kauffman Theater in the Pascal Center for Performing Arts

AACC Theatre's fall 2024 mainstage production is William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," described in a statement as an "entertaining, rollicking, slapstick comedy that navigates the themes of love, mistaken identity and the topsy-turvy nature of human relationships."

Under the direction of Madeline Austin, AACC Theatre students known as The Moonlight Troupers will take center stage. The centuries-old play by the famous bard follows Viola and Sebastian, twins separated in a shipwreck. Viola disguises herself as a man to enter the service of the duke and becomes the intermediary in the duke's pursuit of a countess, leading to "a series of comedic misunderstandings and romantic entanglements."

Six showings will be offered over two weekends, and tickets can be purchased via Eventbrite.

#### Orchestra Concert

**November 22, 7:30pm-9:30pm**  
Pascal Center for Performing Arts

The AACC Symphony Orchestra will take the stage and showcase a classical masterpiece, Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5. Additional information and tickets will be available soon.

#### Big Band Performance

**November 23, 7:30pm-9:30pm**  
Pascal Center for Performing Arts

Audience members can come ready to clap and tap along to compositions and arrangements that combine the sounds of swing, ragtime, blues and more at AACC's upcoming big band performance, directed by AACC instructor Mercedes Beckman. Tickets will be available soon.

#### Concert Band Performance

**November 24, 2:00pm-4:00pm**  
Pascal Center for Performing Arts

The AACC Concert Band will present a lineup of classic music pieces in a skillful blend of chimes, xylophones, percussion instruments and more during this late-November Sunday matinee. Ticket information to come.

#### Dance Company Fall Performance

**December 6 and 7, 7:30pm-9:30pm**  
Pascal Center for Performing Arts

Rounding out the school's robust fall entertainment lineup, the AACC Dance Company will captivate audiences the first weekend of December. Bold technique and elegant movement will converge in the performances, coordinated by Margaret Russell. Ticket information to come.

All events take place at AACC's Arnold campus. For tickets and more information about productions and performances at AACC, go to [www.aacc.edu/calendar](http://www.aacc.edu/calendar) or contact the school's box office at 410-777-2457 or [boxoffice@aacc.edu](mailto:boxoffice@aacc.edu).

## Musical Couple Plans Homecoming At 49 West

Severna Park natives and current Austin, Texas, residents Jim Patton and Sherry Brokus just released a new album and will return home for a concert at 49 West in Annapolis on November 29 from 8:00pm-10:00pm.

The event will serve as a CD release party and birthday show for Patton. The duo will also celebrate 30 years since moving from Severna Park to Austin. Their third album since the COVID-19 pandemic, "Harbortowne" represents the folk side of the duo's folk-rock, whereas 2023's "Big Red Gibson" was a return to the rock side of the equation.

"The working title for the album was 'Pattonville,' the result of a joke our friend and fellow musician Jeff Talmadge made," Patton explained. "The characters in these songs are all derived from a world I've created in song. I originally wanted the album to be like

Sherwood Anderson's 'Winesburg Ohio,' or Edgar Lee Masters' 'Spoon River Anthology' — a series of seemingly disconnected stories about a town where I resided with characters that could come and go from song to song. This isn't exactly that, though you can still see some of the remnants of that earlier idea."

"Harbortowne" marks a return of another sort — that is, to their sound as a folk duo. "Our first acoustic album was called 'Plans Gang Aft Agley,' and that's still what I'm writing about, plans going wrong," Patton said. "Although I think this album takes a lighter approach to that than I usually do."

Patton and Brokus take sketches of everyday life and transform them into songs that ring and resonate in ways that are both mindful and memorable.

Tickets to the show are \$15. To learn more, visit [www.49westcoffeehouse.com](http://www.49westcoffeehouse.com).

## Woods Church Events

Music and theater fans, get ready for these upcoming events at Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church.

#### Open Dance Classes

Every Sunday through December 15  
from 2:00pm-3:15pm

To bring the community together in a fun and movement-based way, the worship ministry is welcoming the community for a series of free dance classes this fall. Professional teachers are set to offer a variety of dance styles including jazz, musical theater, contemporary, tap, yoga and more. Classes are open to anyone ages 12 and over. All experience levels are welcome, though classes will be taught at an intermediate level with options for beginners and advanced students. For more information, email Alyssa Barlis at [alysabarlis@gmail.com](mailto:alysabarlis@gmail.com).

#### "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" Auditions

November 3-4, starting at 6:00pm, with callbacks November 8

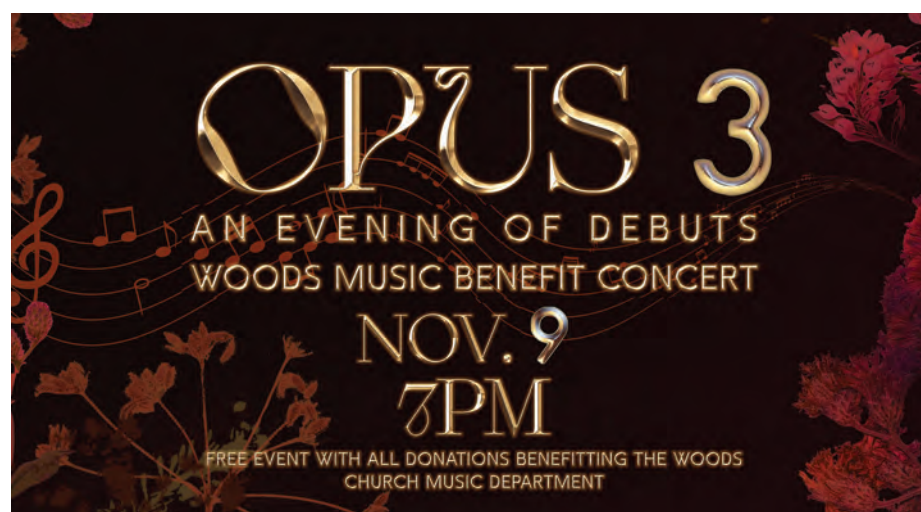
Woods Church will present the musical "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" from March 28-30 and April 4-6, and auditions are just around the corner. What makes a monster and what makes a man? Step into the heart of Paris and experience the powerful tale of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame."

This evocative musical, inspired by Victor Hugo's classic novel and the acclaimed Disney animated film, brings to life the story of love, acceptance and heroism set against the backdrop of the iconic Notre Dame cathedral. Join Woods Church as it follows Quasimodo, the gentle bell ringer of Notre Dame, and his journey to find acceptance and love in a world that shuns him. Alongside the courageous Esmeralda and the conflicted Claude Frolo, the story unfolds with themes of compassion, justice, the resilience of the human spirit and finding your sanctuary. Visit [www.wmpcauditions.com](http://www.wmpcauditions.com) for more information and to sign up for an audition.

#### Opus 3 Concert

November 9 at 7:00pm

Enjoy an evening of music and dance on November 9. The evening will feature newly composed works and performances by classical guitarist Alec Green, renowned pianists Jung-hoon Park and Roderick Demmings Jr., and original choreography by Elysian Dance Theater. This is a free concert with all donations going to support the Woods Church music department. For more information, email David Merrill at [dmerrill@woodschurch.org](mailto:dmerrill@woodschurch.org). This event will be available via livestream at [www.woodschurch.org](http://www.woodschurch.org).



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# Kinder Farm Park's 25th Anniversary Celebrated In Poster By Arnold Artist



Although a celebration planned for earlier this year had to be canceled due to weather, Kinder Farm Park's 25th anniversary was recognized last month in the form of a commemorative poster made available at the park's annual fall festival.

Designed by local artist Joe Barsin, a resident of Arnold, the 18-by-24-inch poster features a one-of-a-kind illustration of all that the beloved park has to offer: farm animals, athletic facilities, a playground, barn, farmhouse and more, all tied together by the iconic windmill.

Barsin, who teaches gaming and simulation at Anne Arundel County Public Schools' Center of Applied Technology South, shared that he has designed commemorative posters for other county parks including Quiet Waters Park and Downs Park, but the opportunity to create artwork for Kinder Farm Park was uniquely special.

"I love Kinder Farm Park ... I've been to all of (the county parks) with my kids, but this one is specifically the closest to my heart," he said. Barsin explained that he spent many days at Kinder Farm Park with his two sons, who are now in their 20s, at the playground, meeting the farm animals, and playing sports.

"It's been a joy to be a part of the park system because it's been such a big part of our life," he added.

Signed (\$25) and unsigned (\$10) copies of the poster can be purchased at Kinder Farm's pop-up hayride on November 16, at its Jingle Bell Hayride on December 7, or by emailing [contact@kinderfarmpark.org](mailto:contact@kinderfarmpark.org).

## Apache Storyteller Brings Native Culture Alive In Presentation

» Continued from page 40

To demonstrate the power of storytelling, Thomason has been known to ask the audience, "With a show of hands, how many people have attended a storytelling event?" Most have not. A few hands will go up. Then she will ask the audience if they learned of the event because someone told them about it. The number of hands in the air doubles or triples.

As a child, Thomason didn't live on a reservation or attend school with other natives. She often felt invisible, or as she described, "an artifact of history."

"As children, we learn about Pocahontas and Sitting Bull. We craft wigwams and study early maps of native tribes," Thomason said. "But those early lessons are separate from what we can learn about natives and their significant contributions to the modern world."

Through her favorite teacher, her best friend and the greatest storyteller she ever knew — her grandmother — Thomason's passion is to share native traditions, achievements and stories, and make them contemporary.

"Often in schools, I am asked about our material culture, our tribes, our dwellings, and that's fine, but I also want to share our place in literature, science, arts, medicine, politics and entertainment," Thomason said of the impact of indigenous Americans well beyond the colonization of America.

"We are a curious species," Thomason said. "The simple fact that I have been invited back to Anne Arundel County for 25 years shows the instinctual and long-lasting effect of storytelling. Someone heard my story, liked it enough to share it with someone, and so on."

Much like throwing a pebble into a pond and knowing the ripple will extend beyond what the eye can see, Thomason believes storytelling will never be in danger of disappearing.

"When we use our words, we serve our greater community. Our stories keep us together," Thomason said. "I enjoy and celebrate our coming together made possible with stories and shared words, especially in a library, a mighty fortress of shared words and stories. And besides, who doesn't love a good story?"

To learn more about this event and others sponsored by the Anne Arundel County Public Library, visit [www.aacpl.net](http://www.aacpl.net). To learn more about Dovie Thomason, visit [www.doviethomasonstoryteller.com](http://www.doviethomasonstoryteller.com).

## Ask Mr. Repair Person

By Ben Schwab  
Humor columnist

Need helping doing home repairs? Boy, have you come to the wrong place! But as long as you're here, you might as well get a few laughs.

You don't need a lot of sophisticated equipment to take care of most household projects. In fact, my toolbox contains only a hammer, pliers, a six-foot measuring tape, a Phillips screwdriver, a flat-head screwdriver, assorted nails, bandages, antibiotic ointment and hydrogen peroxide. The latter three items are absolute necessities for me, as I am the sort of person who could injure himself with a sponge. My ineptitude helps me remember which projects I've completed, however. For example, if I can't remember whether I've hung a picture yet, I have only to look at my swollen thumb.

Don't worry if you can't do advanced projects like those featured in magazines such as Family Handyman. They have articles about various home projects that are "easy to do," but when I read them, I just get confused. For example:

To repair a hardwood floor, just take a runge plouter and cut out a piece one metric foot wider than the damaged part. Drill 23/64 inch holes around the area with an impact drill. Then get a gangplank of Brazilian mahogany, cut with a miter saw to fit the hole, bevel the edges with a reciprocating lathe and fasten it to the floor with guar gum. Secure the area with Langerhan screws. Next, fill any cracks with a 2:1 mixture of wood cement and Silly Putty. After it dries, smooth it out with 167 grit sandpaper. Varnish to match existing floor color, and seal with Cranson's oil-based micturating polyurethane.

This type of literature is only for professionals and die-hard hobbyists, not idiots like us. The people who write it make numerous assumptions, such as that you own an arc

welder and an angle grinder, because, after all, who doesn't?

The easiest way to get anything done is to hire a professional contractor. Unfortunately, contractors are usually very busy, which is why most of them wouldn't even think of coming out to my home, except maybe to spit on it. But boy does their attitude change during the winter when business is slow. They hire telemarketers to call me in a shameless attempt to drum up business:

**Telemarketer:** "Hello, Mr. or Mrs. Schwab?"

**Me:** "Yes."

**Telemarketer:** "This is Florence Muckraker from Friggemall Services. We do any large job, from room additions to roof repair."

**Me:** "No thanks."

**Telemarketer:** "Perhaps there's a rusty pipe that needs replacement."

**Me:** "Nope."

**Telemarketer:** "How about some dirty dishes that need washing?"

I used to tackle major jobs myself, refusing to pay anyone for a job that surely someone like me with a college degree could handle. Invariably, I'd accidentally start a fire or lose a body part, and I'd end up paying a professional more than if I had just called him in the first place. So, being a mature individual who realizes his limitations, I have a more enlightened approach when it comes to tackling large household projects (defined as any project more complicated than changing flashlight batteries). For example, this is my method for fixing roof shingles:

1. Call local roofing contractor.
2. When he arrives, greet him and offer him a beverage.
3. Drink beer until he finishes repairing the roof.
4. Write him a check.

Oh sure, I could go up there myself with a hammer, roofing nails, tin snips, a putty knife and roofing cement, but if I did that, the next number I called would be 911.



# Children's Theatre Of Annapolis Launches Campaign To Build Community Arts Center

By Holly Brook

The word transformation often comes to mind when describing what transpires on the stage in live theater. It also depicts what is happening at Children's Theatre of Annapolis (CTA) this year.

Not only is CTA transforming the lives of the young people who enter its doors, but it is also transforming the theater's physical space and reach into the community.

April Forrer, executive director of CTA, explained that the Growing Our Reach public capital campaign aims to transform CTA into a vibrant arts center, enhancing its role as a cultural cornerstone in the community and positioning itself as a regional arts and culture leader in Maryland.

Forrer noted that the original annex building was once used as a military garage before it became a teaching, learning, performing hub and home to CTA. Now, CTA is adding to the theater's footprint and fostering more community involvement by building the first black box theater in the Annapolis area.

When Forrer arrived at CTA five years ago, the plan had been to renovate the current annex building. Instead, she and the board decided to work toward building a new structure that allowed CTA to prioritize its mission of creating a state-of-the-

art multipurpose arts center while building a stronger arts community, Forrer said.

Forrer stated that CTA has made a lot of progress behind the scenes toward its \$1.1 million fundraising goal, securing \$800,000. Members are now reaching out to the community and those who will benefit from the center to help raise the additional \$350,000 to cross the finish line.

"Your contribution will not only help us in the construction of this building but will also leave a lasting legacy for generations to come," Forrer wrote in the personal letters she sent to patrons.

The Growing Our Reach campaign logo depicts a deeply rooted tree with expanding branches and flowering leaves. Grounded in over 65 years of success, CTA is now reaching upward and outward, expanding its campus, abundance of opportunities and community impact.

Forrer said the reconfigurable black box theater will offer seating for over 75 people. The original theater will be maintained, and in November, 246 new seats — including fully accessible seats — will be installed.

The expanded campus will include two new classrooms, a new lobby where local artists can display their works, and a rain garden. The new classrooms will enable CTA to expand educational opportuni-

ties, Forrer noted. Students ages 5 through 18 will have a chance to learn dancing, acting and singing, and CTA hopes to support smaller productions and plays written by the kids, Forrer said.

"We also aspire to serve the many small theaters requiring space and companies that need a place to hold meetings by offering the black box theater for rental," she added.

"We are excited about the rain garden, which will help with water and land conversation," she said. "A local Boy Scout troop will help select the right plants from the Maryland area; we hope that schools will visit to learn about these native Maryland plants."

High on CTA's wishlist are solar panels to power the annex. Forrer is hopeful to secure corporate sponsors to help.

One of CTA's priorities is to share the theater with underserved groups, like the Boys & Girls Clubs and the Stanton Community Center in Annapolis.

CTA board member Ashley Gilbert currently offers classes in motivational speaking, self-development and self-confidence to these groups. CTA also recently invited girls from the Stanton Community Center to enjoy a night of theater, games and pizza.

"It was such a beautiful night," Forrer said. "We want to do more of that, to find ways to expose them to the joys of theater and show them what the

experience can do for them."

Many kids from the Severna Park area have been a part of the CTA family over the years, becoming involved in the theater, making friends, finding mentors, and developing skills and confidence.

Aislynn Hogue is a Severna Park resident and a cast member in "Tuck Everlasting: The Musical," which runs through November 3.

"CTA is a very welcoming community, and I am always excited to come to CTA and see everyone!" she said.

Forrer also spoke about the high importance of creating a safe space with zero tolerance for bullying. "One of our most important priorities is that everyone here feels safe and that they have a voice, that includes the children, staff and volunteers," Forrer said. "It is so important to us that people feel comfortable speaking out and know that they will be heard; we have a safe space here."

The message on CTA's fundraising page reads, "Together, we can help our students achieve extraordinary things and give them a safe space to learn, explore, create and express themselves. We invite you to join us in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity by making a generous gift to our Growing Our Reach campaign. Help us bring this facility and vision to life."

To learn more or donate, go to the Growing Our Reach tab at [www.childrenstheatreofannapolis.org/about-us](http://www.childrenstheatreofannapolis.org/about-us).

The CTA 2024-2025 season features performances of "Tuck Everlasting: the Musical," "Alice in Wonderland" and "Finding Nemo."

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## Retirement Factors: Health Care

**Jason LaBarge**  
Financial Advisor  
and President  
LaBarge Financial



You might have noticed that the advertisement I usually run in this paper is different this month. I donated the space to raise awareness of an issue that's particularly important to me: life-changing

medical events. This ad highlights breast cancer, which is the most diagnosed form of cancer in Maryland and the third leading cause of cancer deaths. Diagnoses like cancer, as you near or enter retirement, can be painful in two ways. The first and perhaps most obvious is that your retirement will now be filled with worries about your health, not to mention frequent doctor visits and potentially uncomfortable treatment regimens. But the second is in some ways equally unfortunate: being sick is expensive. And being sick for a long time can cause an otherwise solid retirement plan to fail.

Long-term care costs are rising rapidly. Assisted living facilities, which help residents with daily life activities such as dressing, hygiene and medication management, come at a median cost of \$6,650 per month. Nursing homes that provide more intensive care are even more expensive. These costs can be ruinous even

to well-funded retirement plans, so it's essential to include long-term care considerations in your retirement planning.

### Go-go

Retirement generally happens in three stages, which I call the go-go, slow-go and no-go years. The go-go years come early in retirement when you're enjoying traveling and other strenuous activities. I recently returned from a trip to Spain where I walked 13,000 steps in a day and spent 12 hours on an airplane to cross the ocean.

Most people will want to have experiences like that early in retirement, during the go-go years.

### Slow-go

Then come the slow-go years, in which the pace of your life decreases. Perhaps you take only one trip per year or invite your kids to visit you rather than traveling to see them over the holidays.

### No-go

Finally, as health becomes more of a factor, you begin curtailing travel and other activities even more. This is the stage of retirement in which costs typically increase — the median cost of a private nursing home room nationwide is nearly \$10,000 per month with an average stay of at least one year! Those costs are unsustainable for all retirees but those with the most meticulously-planned long-term care retirement funding.

» Continued on page 54

## Chamber Update

**Liz League**  
CEO  
GSPACC



and find them in our directory at [www.gspacc.com](http://www.gspacc.com).

### Be Our Guest Travel Company

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

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### Cottonwood

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

Owners DJ and Julie Antinucci's

vision for Cottonwood is to create a vibrant community hub that offers a comprehensive range of quilt shop inventory, engaging classes, exquisite antiques, vintage items, and art supplies. It will be a place where creativity flourishes, fostering a welcoming and inspiring environment for patrons passionate about quilting, antiques and the arts. They have 3,600 square feet of space for shopping, quilting, classes and more!

### Hewes Health Consulting LLC

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

Health care is becoming more complicated every day. Thankfully, there are always advancements to cure ills. With this landscape of medicine ever changing, it can be difficult to navigate. Owner Suzanne Hewes has been a physician assistant and a medical researcher, accumulating over 30 years of experience in medicine. Her care is compassionate and empathetic for all people.

### Junk Knights

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

Owner Emory Jernigan began Junk Knights LLC as a way to satiate his passion to make an impact and to be an entrepreneur. During his senior year of high school in 2022, he began

» Continued on page 54

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### Meet The Owner: Rick Miller, Park Hardware



Rick Miller grew up in Severna Park and now runs Zeskind's and Park Hardware, formerly known as Clement Hardware.

#### By Zach Sparks

Rick Miller Jr. grew up as an Eagle Scout, a Green Hornets athlete, a member of the Severna Park High School marching band and a fourth-generation heir to his family's business, Zeskind's Hardware & Millwork.

Now the owner of both Zeskind's and Park Hardware, which he acquired from Clement Hardware and expanded in April 2023, Miller spends his time serving the community and brainstorming ways to support Scouts, athletes, musicians and the local businesses that make the greater Severna Park area a tight-knit community.

#### Growing Up In Severna Park

Miller lived in the Riverdale neighborhood and then moved to Chartwell in 1984 as he attended kindergarten at Benfield Elementary School. As a member of Troop 855, he installed benches around a walkway at Sandy Point State Park for his Eagle Scout project.

"It was probably one of the first times I had to run a project, and it was the basis for my understanding of how to manage a project and manage people," Miller said. "I reached out to businesses and negotiated pricing. So, I take it seriously when a Scout asks for support, and any way I can help, I want to do that. But they have to come to me, not have their parents ask."

Miller played Green Hornets sports, especially soccer, and competed for the St. Andrews swim team.

"I kept waking up early during summer mornings for swim team and that helped with discipline," he said.

He particularly enjoyed one event in which sponsors donated to cystic fibrosis research. Swimmers raised 25 cents per lap and swam until they could no longer contribute. He also

participated in food drives.

"Every organization I was involved in, there was always a fundraising or community aspect," he said.

At Severna Park High School, Miller had a great experience with the marching band. An alto saxophone player, he became squad leader or section leader, and he was first chair by senior year.

R. Thomas Powell directed the band when Miller was a high school student.

"He was a very big, influential person in my life," Miller said. "He ran it like a military band. He pushed manners. You either loved or hated it, but he was beloved by many."

During high school, Miller also spent time at Zeskind's in Baltimore, learning how to repair windows and screens, cut keys, run the family business and help customers. His great-grandfather started the business — and his parents, Rick Sr. and Deborah, took it to the next level — but it remained a "tiny corner hardware store."

"There were no aisles and there was no ability to wander around," Miller said. "We had to walk up to every customer. They would have a problem, and we would help them come up with a solution."

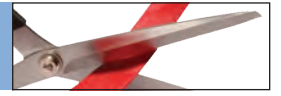
Miller's only stint living away from Anne Arundel County came during college. He attended Clemson University in South Carolina, changed his major to business, and then transferred to Salisbury University on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and completed a degree in finance.

After college, Miller worked in construction and homebuilding for Kaine Homes, and then worked in the China procurement program for Tenon, a New Zealand producer of wood products.

"It was a pretty serious job for me because they entrusted me with a lot of responsibility. We were responsible for whole shiploads of containers," Miller

» Continued on page 55

# RIBBON CUTTINGS



## Severna Park Taphouse Kicks Off 15th Anniversary Celebration

*In late October, Severna Park Taphouse owners Jessica and Mark Tinordi invited community members to enjoy food and drinks at a pre-anniversary party to kick off their 15th anniversary celebration. The Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce marked the occasion with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.*



## Park Tavern Turns 10

*In early October, Park Tavern celebrated serving the community for a decade with a 10-year anniversary party and a ribbon cutting hosted by the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce. The neighborhood tavern's anniversary festivities continued throughout the month, culminating with Pig in the Park, a ticketed event featuring barbecue and bourbon.*

## Cottonwood Offers Arts And Antiques

*DJ and Julie Antinuucci opened their new business, Cottonwood, to create a vibrant community hub that offers a comprehensive range of quilt shop inventory, engaging classes, exquisite antiques, vintage items and art supplies. The Antinuucci family was joined by the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce for an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony in October. Cottonwood is located at 548 Benfield Road in Severna Park.*



## "Yappy Hour" And Grand Opening Celebrates Woofie's

*Conrad and Amy Manlapaz, owners of Woofie's of Annapolis, highlighted their new business and its pet sitting, dog walking and grooming services during a "yappy hour" and grand opening on October 10. Not only was the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce part of the event, but the guest list also included dogs. The mobile business serves all of Anne Arundel County.*

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## Chamber Update

» Continued from page 51

the company as Jernigan Junk Removal. In August 2022, he put the business on break to serve God on a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints mission in Idaho. Upon his return in August 2024, he restarted Jernigan Junk Removal with a new name and new invigoration.

### Quinn Patton

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

From sole proprietorships to large corporations, Quinn Patton helps clients with their most complex corporate questions and legal matters. Offering services that span from the beginning of the business to retirement and succession planning, Quinn Patton advises clients on issues critical to business success. Contracts, employment and employee relationships, growth and investment, mergers and acquisitions, corporate governance, and routine everyday challenges could use a legal hand, and they are there to help. Flat fee services and payment plans are available.

### Tidy Nest

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

Tidy Nest is a home organizing business serving Anne Arundel County. The business helps their clients review what they have, choose what to keep, responsibly get rid of the rest, and decide how to organize what remains. Tidy Nest embraces each client's uniqueness and style, needs and requests. Simplifying and organizing looks different on

different people and this service will provide systems to match.

We held five ribbon-cutting celebrations this month. The first was in celebration of **Park Tavern's** 10-year anniversary. Next, we held a grand opening and yappy hour at **Severna Park Taphouse** for **Woo-fie's Mobile Pet Unit**. Then the doors were opened for **Cottonwood in Severna Park**. Hard to believe that the **Severna Park Taphouse** is turning 15, and we held a celebration there for the Tinordi family for many years of supporting the community with their great venue. Lastly, Sofi's Crepes was rebranded to **Crepes in the Park**, and we celebrated with owner Abby Larkin.

Many thanks to the **Health and Vitality Clinic** for hosting our monthly Successful Women in Business gathering at its location in Crofton. The clinic provides services including Botox treatments, IV drips and more.

Thank you, **Jing Ying Institute of Kung Fu & Tai Chi**, for hosting our Wellness Business Connections meeting in Arnold. Owners Nancy and Billy Greer do so much in the community to support our nonprofits and senior citizens, as well as the chamber.

Our annual **Shoptoberfest**, with a trick-or-treat twist, was held on October 19 at Park Plaza in Severna Park. We had more than 50 exhibitors participating in this fun and family-oriented event. This year's gold sponsors were the **Jing Ying Institute of Kung Fu & Tai Chi** and **SERVPRO Annapolis/**

**Severna Park**. The gold sponsors presented \$500 to their charities of choice, with Jing Ying donating to **Bello Machre** and SERVPRO donating to the **Chrysalis House**.

Our bronze event sponsors were **Griswold Home Care, St. Martin's in-the-Field Episcopal School, Park Hardware, Lean on Dee Senior Home Care, Fair Winds Travel, the Severna Park Community Center, LaToya Nkongolo for Board of Education, Neat Wall TV** and **Matador Mobile Advertising**.

Entertainment was provided by Jason Canaan of **Neat Wall TV**, musicians from **Priddy Music Academy, Kwon's Taekwondo** and **Jing Ying**. We held a fun costume contest for kids and dogs.

This year's **annual tree lighting** event will be held at the chamber on Friday, December 6. Don't miss this wonderful experience that kicks off the holiday season with Santa, the Grinch, performances, hot chocolate, ice cream and more.

Tickets are available for our fabulous **Taste and Sip** extravaganza, now in its 14th year. It will be held at the **Chartwell Golf and Country Club** on December 10 from 5:00pm-8:00pm, and features "tastes and sips" from our wonderful local restaurants, liquor stores and bakeries. Tickets can be found at [www.gspacc.com](http://www.gspacc.com).

As always, remember to shop local and give local to support your community! You can find out more about the chamber and membership at [www.gspacc.com](http://www.gspacc.com).

## Health Care

» Continued from page 51

There are options beyond expensive long-term care insurance or saving an extra \$100,000 on the chance that you will need nursing home care at some point.

It's important to sit down with your financial advisor to find a path that's right for you and your unique situation.

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## Meet The Owner: Rick Miller

» **Continued from page 51**  
said. "I think it was really rewarding, especially to take a pause from the family business for seven to eight years after college to see how other companies work."

### Growing Zeskind's And Park Hardware

Miller joined Zeskind's full-time in 2008. "I was selling, quoting, delivering and handling finances for my part of the business," Miller said.

He became full owner in 2019. One year later, Zeskind's acquired another long-standing business, the Landover-based Lamar & Wallace, which formed in 1935. Zeskind's will turn 100 years old in 2025.

Zeskind's and Park Hardware employ about 50 people total. Zeskind's has a retail and showroom as part of Park Hardware in Severna Park, and its Landover manufacturing facility hangs 200 doors a day and makes custom pieces by hand. "We're not a lumberyard," Miller said. "Our focus is on millwork, fine hardware and millwork hardware."

The business partners with Historic Annapolis, Maryland Historic Trust and other groups to complete tax credit projects for historic buildings, whether the job is matching the moulding on the interior of a house or removing a brass porthole and putting it on an old door.

Anne Arundel County residents will also recognize Zeskind's work from the entry doors at Park Tavern and Donnelly's Dockside, the custom glass entry door with a logo at Cantler's Riverside Inn, and from a tilt-and-turn window at Acme Bar and Grill.

Miller wants Anne Arundel County

residents to know the impact of supporting their local businesses. Park Hardware is a member of the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce and supports its events including Shoptoberfest, held in October, and the Fourth of July parade.

"Look around at where you are shopping," Miller said. "Have a mental checklist. Are they a chamber member? Are they supporting local groups?"

"I live four miles from the store, in Arnold. My kids go to school locally and my employees live here. We want Park Hardware to represent a local business that gives back to the community."

Park Hardware supports Scouts, schools and youth groups, and nonprofits including Stef Ripple and the Katherine's Light Foundation.

Miller and his wife, Joni, have a 14-year-old daughter, Chloe, and a 12-year-old son, Jax. It's surreal for Miller to live, work and contribute to the thriving community he always called home.

He plans to continue improving Park Hardware's services and product offerings while supporting other Severna Park and Arnold businesses.

"Our hardware store was a rowhouse in Baltimore. We would stop at Clement Hardware so we didn't have to drive to Baltimore when we needed a nut or bolt," Miller said. "It's like a dream come true to be able to run this store."

*Park Hardware is located at 500 Ritchie Highway, Suite A, in Severna Park. Hours are 7:00am-6:00pm Monday through Friday, 8:00am-6:00pm Saturday and 9:00am-5:00pm Sunday. Have questions? Call 410-647-4611 or visit [www.parkhardware.com](http://www.parkhardware.com).*

## Pugh & Tiller Earns Multiple Public Relations And Marketing Awards

**M**id-Atlantic-based public relations and integrated marketing firm Pugh & Tiller has been named Best PR Agency, Best Digital Marketing Firm and Best Web Design Firm in the Maryland Daily Record's 2024 Reader Rankings. The rankings recognize the best the region's business and legal communities have to offer.

Pugh & Tiller has also been named a finalist in the 2024 PRNEWS Platinum Awards, the world's largest and most prestigious recognition program for public relations and communications professionals.

This is Pugh & Tiller's fifth straight year as a Reader Rankings winner and its third accolade with PRNEWS.

"These awards are a testament to the great work we do and the results we achieve on behalf of our clients around the world," said Matthew Pugh, Pugh & Tiller co-founder and Severna Park resident. "To be able to partner with such extraordinary companies and individuals to help them succeed is an honor, and to be recognized by our peers and respected industry leaders for doing so is icing on the cake."

Founded in 2008 as a public relations firm, Pugh & Tiller recently expanded its services to include branding and identity, integrated marketing, website development and graphic design. Pugh & Tiller specializes in working with business-to-business companies from all industries with an emphasis on commercial real estate, health care, in-



*Matthew Pugh, a Severna Park resident and Pugh & Tiller co-founder, celebrated his firm's Maryland Daily Record awards on October 8.*

surance, employee benefits, professional services and technology.

This year, Pugh & Tiller has added several clients to its roster including Proficio, a cybersecurity managed detection and response service provider; BCR Cyber, a provider of comprehensive cybersecurity training and job placement services; Blue Ridge School, one of the only private all-boys, all-boarding schools in the U.S.; Granilux Solutions, a global security systems integrator; and a political data and analytics technology firm based in Northern Virginia.

For more information about Pugh & Tiller, visit [www.pughandtiller.com](http://www.pughandtiller.com).

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To the courageous women in our community, thank you for joining me in sharing our breast cancer journeys to raise awareness and inspire others to prioritize their annual mammograms.

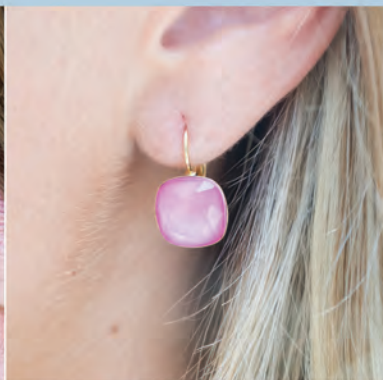
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