



Special Olympics  
Maryland Modifies  
Polar Bear Plunge  
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SPHS Athletes  
Commit To Play  
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# SEVERNA PARK VOICE

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SEVERNA PARK, MD

DECEMBER 2020

## Amal Awad Named County Police Chief



**By Zach Sparks**

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

County Executive Steuart Pittman and his team considered 40 applicants for the position of police chief, and after getting the approval of community leaders and the county council, Pittman chose Hyattsville Police Chief Amal Awad to take over the department on December 17.

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## Chartridge Lights Up The Holidays

**By Haley Weisgerber**

The Chartridge community is giving Clark Griswold a run for his money this holiday season. For years, Chartridge residents Ryan Scott, Jim Miller, Owen Cleary and Brian Ballard have decorated the community pool and surrounding areas to create a Winter Wonderland area for neighborhood children.

"We just want to make it fun for the kids," Scott said. We all have kids and we wanted to be like Clark Griswold, I guess."

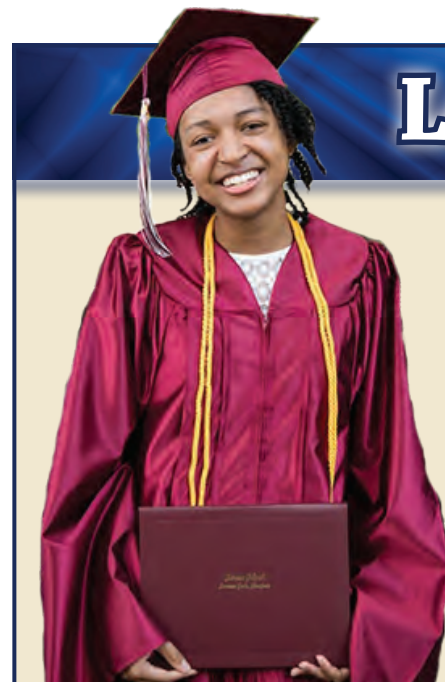
Scott estimated that 60,000 lights are strung up in the Winter Wonderland each year. The entire display takes months to put together. The group works for a few hours every night on the weekends to arrange the display. While the occasional strand of lights will go out, they have

**>> Continued on page 2**



*The Chartridge Winter Wonderland is made up of an estimated 60,000 lights and takes months to put together.*

## LOOKING BACK AT 2020



**By Zach Sparks**

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With the emergence of the novel coronavirus, 2020 became a year that many people would love to forget. Towns nationwide suffered from the tragic loss of lives, cancellation of events and competitions, and business closings. The year 2020 had some good moments, though, and several of those reminded us of how a strong community supports its neighbors when they're in need.

**Read the full story on page 6.**



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Margueritte Mills

## Volunteer Of The Month

## Teen Supports Food Pantries



High school senior Brice Persico was named the December Margueritte Mills Volunteer of the Month for his Pack-A-Pickup food drive.

By Haley Weisgerber

Between working two jobs at the Annapolis Harbormaster's Office and Smith's Marina, and being a senior at Archbishop Spalding High School, Brice Persico is a busy teenager. Now, he can add "community servant" to his resume.

After seeing how COVID-19 impacted the community and local pantries, Brice started Pack-A-Pickup, a community food drive with the goal of filling the bed of one or more pickup trucks with food for local pantries.

Pack-A-Pickup was originally an event for Brice's neighborhood, Lakeland, but after one successful drive, he knew his idea could do a lot of good. He advertised the event on the community Facebook page and parked his truck at the front of the neighborhood.

"Back in April of this year, I wanted to do something for the community, so I did a small drive in my neighborhood," said Brice. "There was an amazing turnout for that, so I started doing more and the turnout kept getting better."

The support from the community was overwhelming as word spread to other neighborhoods. Everyone was looking to support Pack-A-Pickup and Brice in any way that they could. A family friend, Rich Craft of Signs By Tomorrow, even donated 10 signs to Pack-A-Pickup for Brice to use during events.

After a friend approached him with the idea, Brice partnered with the Spalding senior class to host a Pack-A-Pickup event as the class' community service project. Brice had various meet-

ings with the class council, moderators and administration to get the event approved. On November 11, eight trucks were filled, which brought the Pack-A-Pickup grand total to 15 trucks. All of the food collected at Pack-A-Pickup events is donated to local pantries.

"I was working with [Ellen Kinsella] from SPAN for the first couple of drives, but recently we have expanded to include ACAN and Helping Hurting People," said Brice.

Brice said the organizations were grateful and excited to accept the donations. With the pandemic affecting so many people's employment, food pantries are struggling to keep up.

"They've had a huge amount of people coming in," said Brice. "Everyone is in need of food right now, so this was the perfect year to do this, especially with everything going on right now."

Brice found his inspiration from one of his favorite quotes from the Annapolis-based Travis Manion Foundation, "If not me, then who?" There were many adults capable of hosting a similar event, but Brice decided to take matters into his own hands. He said that while helping people has always been important to him, the pandemic gave him the push he needed to make a difference.

He credits the community's ongoing support and his mother, Marianne Persico, for helping him through the process. Marianne has been his support system through the entire process, assisting him in brainstorming, proof-reading important emails, getting the word out and much more.

Marianne said that the entire family is proud of Brice for channeling his energy into something to better the community.

"Brice is not one to sit idle, so when the quarantine started, he wanted to take action to help those in need," said Marianne. "We are extremely proud of his focus and dedication into making his initiative such a success and are grateful to the community for supporting him."

While there are no definitive plans, Brice is planning another Pack-A-Pickup event with Spalding near the end of the school year, and another community event closer to holidays when money is especially tight for many families.

To receive updates about Pack-A-Pickup and any future events, visit the Pack-A-Pickup Facebook page.

## Woods Church Discusses "The Normal Of Now"

Join Woods Church Counseling Center's Lou Applebaum for an upbeat Zoom seminar on mental health and wellness from 7:00pm to 8:00pm on December 15. Equip yourself with coping strategies for the short-term and hope for the long-term, learn tips and tricks on how to assess yourself and your loved ones for wellness, find out how to best support one another, and more at this free power-hour for everyone. To learn more, email [lou.applebaum@woodsgcc.org](mailto:lou.applebaum@woodsgcc.org).

## Chartridge Lights Up The Holidays

» Continued from page 1

been lucky for the most part.

"We haven't had any huge problems," Scott said. "If we have some that go out; we just change them out or find whatever bulb is broken."

The Winter Wonderland is the main display, but the group also brings Santa Claus through the neighborhood in a sleigh on December 23. Santa sets up a workshop to take photos with children and a mailbox for letters. There is also a house decorating contest throughout the neighborhood.

Scott said that Christmas isn't celebrated like it used to be, so the goal is to bring back the holiday spirit. The Winter Wonderland has definitely increased Christmas spirit in Chartridge.

"Each season we have a big event, and the community gets really involved," Scott said. "They used to do caroling in the winter and then we came up with this, and we thought we'd start doing something really cool. It is definitely the kids' favorite, and I think the parents like it too."

This year, Santa will still be available for photos on December 23, but time slots are required, and families will stand in front of Santa to remain socially distant. Though the festivities may be different year, the goal remains the same: to create a memorable experience for the neighborhood children.

The Winter Wonderland will be lit every night through the middle of January. Scott encourages people from around Severna Park to check out their hard work, especially this year when everyone could use a little extra cheer.

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## MSP Polar Bear Plunge Goes Virtual For Its 25th Year

Given the recent spikes in COVID-19 and anticipated escalation of COVID-19 cases in January, Special Olympics Maryland (SOMD) has decided to celebrate its 25th anniversary with a virtual plunge from December 8 through January 31. The event will give participants the opportunity to raise money for the athletes of SOMD and receive the iconic Polar Bear Plunge sweatshirt in the mail.

SOMD is encouraging all plungers to send in their virtual plunge videos for a two-month-long competition, with weekly prizes for Plungers of the Week, ultimately determining the Plunger of the Year.

For more information, visit [www.somd.org](http://www.somd.org) or follow Special Olympics Maryland on social media.

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## RELIVE THE YEAR'S BEST MOMENTS

By Zach Sparks

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### WINTER

While most people were watching the 2020 Pro Bowl from their couches on January 26, camerawoman Elaine Rom was documenting the game. Rom, who films “Monday Night Football” for Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN), was invited to work the Pro Bowl and capture all of the game-time action that took place on the right side of the field past the 35-yard line.

“I love that sports is unscripted and you don’t know what’s going to happen in a game,” Rom said. “We have to tell that story. Whatever happens, you have to be ready and prepared to cover it.”

Marylanders were eager to

cover themselves in blankets and scurry to warm tents following another successful Polar Bear Plunge, which raised more than \$3 million for Special Olympics Maryland athletes on January 25.

On January 21, dozens of Anne Arundel County residents gathered in Annapolis to support a different cause: getting better treatment and resources to prevent suicides. The county unanimously passed a resolution after hearing from parents like Celeste Anderson, who lost her son, Noah, to suicide in September 2019.

“Let me tell you, the system is broken,” she said. “I called psychiatrist after psychiatrist, office after office, and was told over and over, doctors were either not accepting new patients or Noah was going on a three-month waiting list for just an

initial appointment.”

The council’s dialogue about civilian safety was just getting started. On February 3, the seven-member council passed a school bus camera law. One supporter of the legislation was Severna Park resident Stefanie Johnson, whose daughter, Allie, was hit by a car after exiting her bus on Truck House Road in October 2019.

“My husband and I both felt complete terror,” Stefanie said. “No one thinks they will get a phone call about their child like that.”

Allie survived but was left with daily debilitating headaches. Stefanie hopes the law — which imposes a civil fine of \$250 — deters other drives from disregarding the safety of children.

“Our hope is if drivers that pass stopped school busses are heavily fined, it will make drivers think twice about that decision and have drivers take that decision more seriously,” Stefanie said.

New Donut Shack owners Ben Hilliard and Ali Matthews took their venture seriously, promising customers that they would study under original owners Bill and Stacey Prevezanos and bring back the beloved shop to its crowd-pleasing status. The community was invited to celebrate the occasion during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 29.

“Look, a donut is a donut,



albeit a delicious donut, but it is everything else they did,” Matthews said of the Prevezanos family. “There is so much more that goes into the Donut Shack experience. We know that, and we are completely committed to honoring the history and recipes that made the Donut Shack special. It’s a tremendous responsibility.”

A special artistic talent, Aaron Yealdhall, better known as Skribe, released the single “Birdwatching.” For the song, he went back to the basics of his earliest influences, which were “fuzz-heavy, angsty” ‘90s songs.

Winter was also a time of celebration for many student-athletes. The Severna Park girls indoor track and field team won the program’s fourth consecutive winter county

championship on January 21.

Two months after her field hockey team’s 4A state championship victory, Severna Park High School’s Lila Slattery was named National Senior Field Hockey Athlete of the Year by the National High School Coaches Association.

The Severna Park ice hockey team rallied from 1-0 down to defeat Easton 2-1 on February 12, winning the Maryland Student Hockey League Eastern Conference championship at Bowie Ice Arena.

On February 18, junior Carson Sloat became the latest in a string of Severna Park athletes to garner individual success in distance running when he won the 1600-meter title at the 4A state championship meet at Prince George’s Sports and



# Year in Review

Learning Complex in Landover.

Severna Park's Ty Broadway defeated Manchester Valley's Grant Warner on March 7 to win the 4A state wrestling championship and finish the season 43-0.

Dancers Faith Bender and Alexa Kasten earned All-State honors at the Maryland Public High School Dance Showcase event at Goucher College in January. Maggie Kubista earned Honorable Mention.

For her academic excellence, Severna Park High School senior Allison Chang won a National Merit Scholarship.

The Maryland Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) selected Benjamin Van Brunt of Severna Park as the 2020 Maryland SAR Eagle Scout of



the Year on February 15 during a ceremony in Phoenix, Maryland.

There were not many celebrations following the abrupt end of the 2020 legislative session, but it still yielded enough time for lawmakers to enact reforms that will impact Marylanders for years.

One of those bills was the Blueprint for Maryland's Future — an education plan that stems from the Kirwan Commission's recommendations — which will cost roughly \$4 billion per year over the next decade.

"The blueprint was a promise to Maryland; it was a promise that even after a crisis, we're committed to improving Maryland schools, that we're committed to finding solutions to a global education system, and that we're committed to seeing this out all the way through," said Delegate Heather Bagnall.

Winter ended with the news that schools would go virtual, a decision that extended to the remainder of the year and into the 2020-2021 school year.

## SPRING

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan closed all nonessential businesses on March 23. As coronavirus cases soared in April and May, Severna Park nurses fought to save lives. Round Bay resident Carol Stob thought she'd seen just about everything in her 45-year nursing career. With surgical procedures reduced or canceled, Stob was redeployed to the COVID-19-dedicated intensive care unit of AAMC.

"Egos have been checked at the door and we are one team," Stob said. "We are here to care for patients and we care for each other. Never in my long career have I seen a more supportive and pulled-together team."

Severna Park native Ellie Milleker was working at Mercy Medical Center and a nursing home when the pandemic response was taking shape. With just three years of nursing experience, the 25-year-old jumped at the chance to apply for a position in the Baltimore Convention Center's COVID-19 response center for critically ill patients.

"We've brought in books, TVs, games, even put decorations like pictures on the walls to make the environment less stressful," she said, noting that patients typically spend seven to 10 days inside the field hospital before going home or to another facility to continue to self-isolate. "We are here for them one-on-one for days at a time, and we form bonds with the patients."

At University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center (UM BWMC), respiratory therapists Gina DeGreenia and Tim George helped patients breathe.

"The constant barrage and influx of patients has been unrelenting," George said. "After going to see one patient and stabilizing them, you have to grab your gear and go stabilize another one. It is physically and mentally exhausting day after day."

Around Severna Park, residents sought to help. In Round Bay, Carrie Gruver and Margaret Podlich sewed hundreds of fabric masks. Julie Banks Antinucci, who lives near Glen Oban, also made masks, as did Jennifer Crisp, Leslie Coleman and Hannah Warzoha.

Tales of kindness spread across town. An anonymous neighborhood mom set up a table with bagged lunches every weekday by the traffic circle on Leelyn Drive. Julie Jensen started a card donation station at Severna Park Elementary, encouraging people to make cards, draw a picture or write a note to a health care worker.

Dr. Richard Garden of Chesapeake Oral Surgery Associates spearheaded an effort to collect medical supplies for UM BWMC. Garden and his peers collected more than 3,500 pairs of gloves, 100 gowns, 1,750 surgical masks and 100 N95 masks.

"The N95 masks are as precious as gold right now," Garden said. "These guys are selfless. I'm just the delivery guy."

Nonprofits also adapted to meet the needs of struggling families. SPAN focused on getting food and essential items to people. Ellen Kinsella, SPAN's director of development, and Jennifer Pumphrey, SPAN's director of operations, asked people to show their identification through a window to get food SPAN left on its porch behind Our Shepherd Lutheran Church.

SPAN relies on donations from the community to give back to families in need, and there has been no shortage of kindness despite the pandemic.

"Community members have been dropping off food just out of the kindness of their hearts. It's unbelievable," Kinsella said.

The number of households served by Asbury Church Assistance Network spiked from 93 in February to 234 in March and 406 in April. To meet growing demand, ACAN started a delivery service.

To keep morale high, Jennifer Lee Kraus persuaded her Whitehurst neighbors to participate in the Front Porch Project, which encouraged families to pose for photos depicting quarantine life.

With so many important rites of passage canceled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, two women rallied



to show high school seniors that they were not alone. Mother and daughter duo Georgette and Lauren Vetock started the "Anne Arundel County Adopt a Senior Class of 2020" group on Facebook in April to celebrate local seniors.

With support from friends and neighbors, Arnold residents Marina Anglim and Tracy Seybert launched NautiLife Wine, a planet-friendly alternative to heavy glass bottles.

Anne Arundel County was dealt a big blow on May 25 when Janet Pack, the executive director of Asbury Church Assistance Network (ACAN), died of a heart attack. Throughout her 58 years on earth, Pack routinely gave whatever she could to feed the hungry, clothe the cold, and to give respect and love to anyone who felt hopeless, regardless of their status or their condition.

"She was very selfless as a mother, as a cousin, as an auntie, as a friend," said her youngest son, 38-year-old Wesley Pack, who had a close relationship with his mom and would often talk to her six times a day.

Following the police-involved death of  
» **Continued on page 8**

# Year in Review



## » Continued from page 7

George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, two Severna Park moms wanted to show solidarity. Hundreds of people attended their silent vigil at Severna Park High School on May 31.

“There was a lot more attention from rioting and looting than the peaceful protests,” one of the organizers said, speaking anonymously to keep the focus on the cause instead of herself. “The vigil showed how long nine minutes is and how loud violence can be.”

Restaurants reopened for outdoor dining on May 29. Elsewhere, Shipley’s Choice and Cypress Creek were among the communities that hosted socially distanced high school graduation ceremonies.

## SUMMER

Trey Smack kicked off the summer, literally, by impressing coaches, scouts and instructors at Kohl’s Kicking Camps in Philadelphia in June and in Tennessee in July. Out of the approximately 550 best kickers and punters in America in all high school grade levels, the unofficial results in Tennessee placed Smack at No. 2 overall for kickoffs, tied for No. 4 overall for field goals and No. 20 for punts.

“I’d love to go to college for kicking,” said Smack, who is somewhat new to football but has played soccer since age 3 and lacrosse since age 8. “The goals right

now are to keep getting better and better. I’m just going to keep punting and kicking as much as I did before and keep up with everything. I don’t see myself stopping.”

Tim Altomare retired from his position as Anne Arundel County police chief on August 1, 2020, citing opposition to movements to defund the police.

“There is no group of people in this country in its history that have done more for poor communities of color across this nation than the American policemen. Take it to the bank,” Altomare said during a Back the Blue rally in Annapolis on July 23. “I have personally almost died five or six times saving another human life; every one was a person of color. To be called racist because I wear a uniform makes me sick to my stomach. I can’t do it anymore and be silent.”

Severna Park’s youth continued to show compassion beyond their years. Twins Tommy and Jack Castleberry filled two SUVs with donations for Sarah’s House on July 9, the first of many donation drive drop-offs. Stewart MacNaughton worked with Brooklyn Community United Methodist Church to identify homeless camps in need of tents.

Away from home, Severna Park natives Mike Hatcher and Steve Wagner ventured to Ocean City for the White Marlin Open. They won big, reeling in a 36-pound dolphin and a \$103,000 prize.

## FALL

Anne Arundel County Public Schools began the school year with virtual learning while some private schools had in-person learning. High school sports did not return, but youth sports were allowed to resume.

Marching bands enjoyed a limited season, without football games and competitions.

“It means a lot because I was pretty upset when the initial announcement came out that the season was going to be canceled,” said Severna Park High School senior Erik Binnix, the marching band’s drum major. “Hearing that we now get some sort of season is great for everyone in the marching band, but especially for me and the other seniors.”

Regan King gave good news to medical workers. She made a workshop in her basement, where she assembled and tested custom 3D printed adaptors to convert commonly used surgical helmets to be used for high-level infection protection.

On September 11, Severna Park residents gathered by the B&A Trail to celebrate a new gazebo and memorial in honor of Eric Kavanagh, William “Taylor” Wild IV, Eric Herzberg and Nathaniel McDavitt — four Severna Park heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice.

“Everybody chipped in and called friends, neighbors and businesses, and it took several thousand dollars to build this,” said Kevin Kavanaugh, the



father of Eric Kavanagh. “This is not a homebuilt wood structure. This is all pre-engineered steel. We meant it to last forever and it will.”

Anne Arundel County’s General Development Plan (GDP) won’t last forever, but it will guide land use decisions for the next 20 years. County Executive Stuart Pittman released a preliminary draft of the Plan2040 GDP on September 30 during a press conference at the Brooklyn Park Library. The county council will have final authority to adopt the plan in 2021.

Also subject to approval was Pittman’s long-term choice for a police chief to replace Tim Altomare. Hyattsville Police Chief Amal Awad took over for Acting Chief William Lowry, who oversaw the department following Altomare’s retirement.

“I had to be sure that our next chief had that rare combination of professional skill and heart,” Pittman said. “Heart for the people in our communities, heart for the officers that protect them, and even heart for the young people who are trying to find their way in these difficult times but sometimes make mistakes.”

Voters found their way to Severna Park High School, with others mailing in their ballots. Anne Arundel County’s early voting process included the county’s highest early voting day turnout ever on October 28 with 18,757 voters. The county’s early voting total was at 76,200 voters by October 30.

While voters looked to the country’s future, the next generation of Severna Park’s youth celebrated the brightness of their futures. One of those young residents was community activist Emma Buchman, who was recognized during the Fannie Lou Hamer Awards reception on October 6 for her dedication to fighting for human and civil rights in the community.

Thirteen athletes were recognized for their skills in November as they signed letters of intent to play collegiate sports.

We hope that 2021 is a bit brighter than 2020, but as this past year has reminded us, Severna Park is full of caring neighbors, active youth, hard-working nonprofit groups and local businesses that care deeply about making the community a great place to live.





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## Lauren's Law: Sports Edition

**Lauren Burke Meyer**



In addition to offering the obvious physical benefits, sports can foster confidence, leadership skills and long-lasting friendships. I'm fortunate to have many unforgettable athletic moments including winning championships, three stints as a captain, a Division I lacrosse scholarship and setting swim records. There's also my personal favorite of receiving an

award for being a "Four Square Force."

Along the way to these glory-filled moments, it's only fitting that there would be numerous goofy or awkward instances for me.

During my first basketball season, I was sick the day that jerseys were picked out. My older brother demonstrated his keen sense of humor when he selected the number zero and said, "This is for how many baskets you'll score this season." I would need to verify with our team statistician, however, I think my brother was accurate on that statement.

In high school, basketball proved to offer more embarrassment when I was nailed in the back of the head with a ball by one of my crushes in front of an entire gym full of Habitat for Humanity (better known as WoodsWork) volunteers. Preparing for bedtime after the incident, I had just put my retainers in before he came over to apologize profusely. Great timing.

Later, lacrosse would prove to be my best sport,

but it still included humiliating experiences. There was the time I was hit in the face with a lacrosse ball. Although I was wearing goggles, I still received double black eyes. My high school and college teammates also found it humorous that I'd narrate my falls, saying things like, "I'm OK!" before hitting the ground.

However, one of my most ridiculous lacrosse moments was when I was a senior in high school. My sister was featured in *Sports Illustrated* for her own college lacrosse success. On the same day, I was pictured on the cover of *The Capital*, attempting to scoop a lacrosse ball between an opponent's legs.

Here are two others for good measure:

1. On a rare occasion when I wore a dress for a field trip in fourth grade, my clog soared across the soccer field during my first kick.

2. Pretending I was an Olympic diver the next summer, I literally bit off more than I could chew. I belly-flopped while trying to do a flip off the high dive and chipped one of my front teeth. Several years later, my filling fell out the night before a college lacrosse road game, and there wasn't time to fix it until the following Monday. For any "Dumb and Dumber" movie fans, I looked like Lloyd Christmas' twin.

And finally, my husband keeps me grounded by holding onto an 11th-place ribbon from an invitational swim meet from my childhood and taking it out on random occasions.

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



Don't worry, Severna Park, because Santa Claus isn't going to let the pandemic stop him from bringing joy to kids. Thanks to Rockwell Fitness and Garry's Grill, Santa is coming to 551 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard on Wednesday, December 16, from 5:30pm to 8:00pm.

The socially distanced event will feature a drop box for letters to Santa, photos with Saint Nicholas in the background, free hot chocolate, and \$6 burgers and fries from Garry's Grill upon request.

For more information, call 410-432-6140 or email [santa@rw-fitness.com](mailto:santa@rw-fitness.com).

## Amal Awad Named Anne Arundel County Police Chief

» Continued from page 1

"I have dedicated more than half of my life to this noble profession, and I thank Mr. Pittman for selecting me to lead this professional police department during this pivotal moment in modern policing," Awad said.

Former Anne Arundel County police chief Tim Altomare resigned in August, a vacancy that was filled temporarily by William Lowry, who worked with Awad in 2013 and 2014 when she was the department's chief of staff.

"You're getting a leader on this police department who truly cares, not only cares about the future of policing and the enhancements that can be made for the positive — even though we have a great police department — but she truly, truly cares about people," Lowry said. "She's a great listener and she's an excellent communicator."

Awad started her 30-year law enforcement career as a patrol officer in Prince George's County. She ascended the ranks, holding positions as a district commander, shift commander, special assignment team supervisor, robbery suppression

team supervisor, and executive officer at headquarters.

Her extensive experience and familiarity with Anne Arundel County were appealing to Pittman and his staff.

"Chief Awad's experience in both large and small department policing, including right here in Anne Arundel County, makes her ideally suited to lead our department," Pittman said. "But for me, that wasn't enough. I had to be sure that our next chief had that rare combination of professional skill and heart. Heart for the people in our communities, heart for the officers that protect them, and even heart for the young people who are trying to find their way in these difficult times but sometimes make mistakes."

Awad understands that people make mistakes, and she's dedicated to building trust between the police department and the community. As one example, she supports civilian review boards that hold police accountable.

She also wants officers to have the support they need.

"It's important to invest in our officers, not only their equipment and resources,

but the intangibles: mental wellness, making sure our officers are OK as they go out on patrol about their duties," Awad said. "They see trauma on a daily basis, and it's important for us to talk to them about how they're feeling and making sure that they have every resource available to them to move through those challenging moments."

With the City of Hyattsville, Awad oversaw one of two departments in Maryland that participated in a curated tour of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. She wanted her officers to understand why some populations might harbor a resentment toward police.

"It goes beyond today, from the moments that African-American people set foot on this soil to the history of the slave trade, the history of Jim Crow, the history of modern-day policing," she said. "I just wanted our officers to have some semblance of why some members from the African-American community may either respond or feel the way that we do feel when engaged by the police."

Awad is Anne Arundel County's first

Black police chief and second female police chief.

"It's impactful, not just for me, but for other women aspiring to leadership positions whether or not within public safety or whatever their professional desires," she said. "I think it helps folks who may or may not have experienced an upbringing that would have afforded them opportunities that others have."

Awad was 9 years old when her father left her mother to raise seven kids alone.

"I admire her strength, her tenacity, her resilience," Awad said. "I carry a lot of that with me and I know that there are people like me who have been in similar situations with their upbringing with perhaps just one parent in the household and that parent sacrificing everything to make sure their children realize opportunities that are challenging to accomplish in some communities."

Under Awad's leadership, Pittman thinks Anne Arundel County residents will have opportunities to bridge divides.

"This is a person who can unite us," Pittman said. "She is a peacemaker and a consummate professional."

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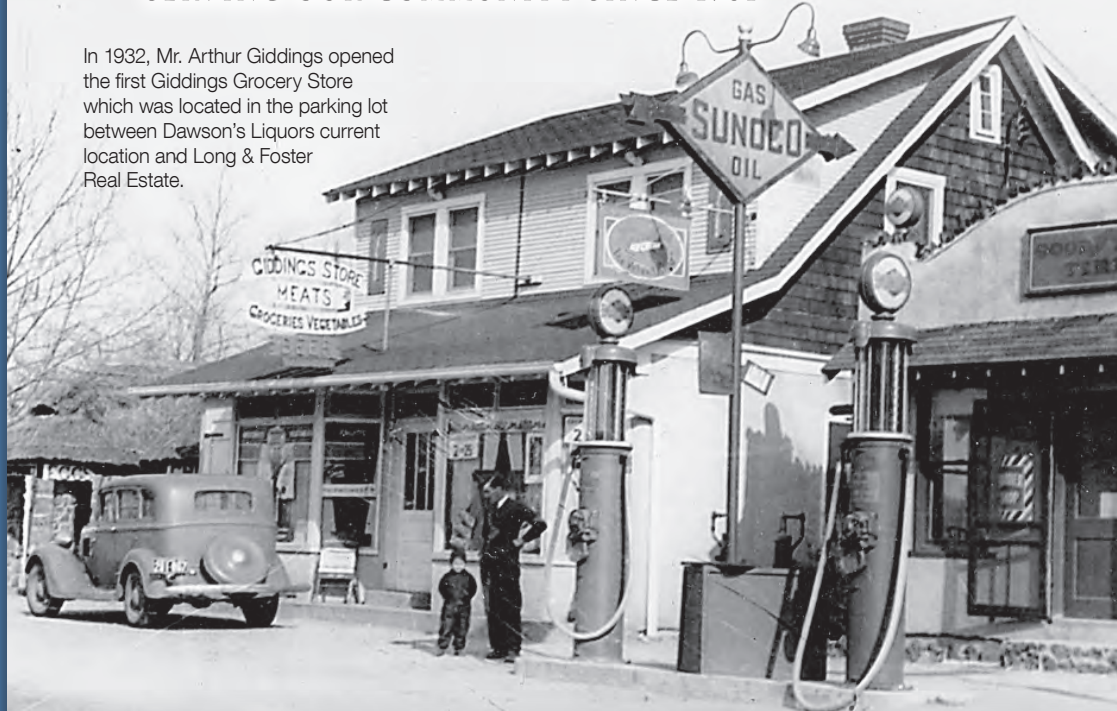
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# When It's Hard To Find Things To Be Grateful For

**Ellen Kinsella**  
 Director of  
 Development  
 SPAN Inc.



*Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.* – Melody Beattie

**G**ratITUDE unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.

Times are tough all around. The pandemic has taken jobs, lives and our ability to visit loved ones. But if you have a roof over your head and food in your kitchen, you are still doing better than some. We all pray for life to get back to normal, but some families in our community are having trouble. Utility shutoffs and eviction looms in the near future. For these families, buying gifts for their children takes a back seat to paying bills, and not everyone has enough to do both.

SPAN's Holiday Caring program focuses on these families, although this year we altered the program. Instead of having people sponsor families with meal baskets and personalized gifts, this year we request gift cards so our donors did not have

to go shopping during the pandemic. Our client families received grocery gift cards for holiday meals, and also store gift cards to purchase gifts. By all reports, donors and recipients feel like this was a good solution to an unusual situation. Thank you to all who donated gift cards. We were overwhelmed with generosity!

For local families who are not able to get enough food to eat, pay their utilities, or pay their rent or prescription costs, SPAN is here to help. We have a baby pantry for those in need of diapers or formula. Please call 410-647-0889 between 10:00am and 1:00pm Monday through Thursday to see if you are eligible for food or financial assistance. In some cases, SPAN can even give assistance

without you ever having to leave your home. SPAN (Serving People Across Neighborhoods) is an independent nonprofit food pantry and emergency services provider that has been helping local families with eviction prevention, utility turnoffs, medical/prescription bills, and food since 1990. SPAN serves 14 zip codes in Anne Arundel County. SPAN is located behind Our Shepherd Lutheran Church at 400 Benfield Road in Severna Park. Hours are Monday through Thursday from 10:00am-12:45pm. For more information, call 410-647-0889, email [spanhelps@yahoo.com](mailto:spanhelps@yahoo.com) or visit [www.spanhelps.org](http://www.spanhelps.org). Financial donations may be made through the website. Food donations may be dropped off using the storage bin behind SPAN's building. Please "like" SPAN on Facebook!

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## A Reading Tour: History Of 4 Riggs Avenue



*In the 1940s, 4 Riggs Avenue was occupied by Cliff Dawson's store.*

By Krista Latchaw

**Members of the Severna Park Museum Inc. are sharing their memories of historical landmarks around Severna Park in a limited six-part series.**

Thousands of cars travel down Evergreen Road every day and make a slight left onto Riggs Avenue. They pass Severna Park Elementary School on the left, Holly Avenue and the Chamber of Commerce on the right, and then head down to the heart of Severna Park.

While traveling on Riggs Avenue, did you ever notice the blue Antique Marketplace building with dozens of curiosities and pieces of furniture sitting outside? A separate, but connected, part of the building is currently an office space, adorned with brown stone on the bottom floor and white wooden siding on the top level. You may not know it, but this building has quite a history.

Julius Grotzky bought the property in 1908 and built a four-story structure on it. He opened a store on the lower level, selling groceries. Before moving to the railroad station across the street, this was also the location of the town's first post office.

Severna Park historian Scott Jay remembers the stories he was told. "Every morning, children from Severna Park Elementary School would walk down the street and bring two buckets to Grotzky's store," Jay said. "Mr. Grotzky would fill the buckets with water – one was for washing and one was for drinking. All of the students and even the teachers used the same buckets."

Around 1922, Dr. John Codd, a local pharmacist, started Boone Drug. "John was the go-to guy for most all ailments," Jay noted. "He would even pull a bad tooth for you if the situation called for it."

After Dr. Codd passed away in 1944, the business changed hands and Cliff Dawson started a variety store. Dawson's was the hub of Severna Park. Mr. Dawson sold ice cream, drugs and alcohol. After six years, Dawson moved his store down the hill to the corner of B&A Boulevard and McKinsey Road — where it stands today.

Several small shops would come and go during the 1950s and 1960s. "My mother leased a space in the building from 1958 through 1959," Jay said. "It was called the Terry Jay Country Store. The shops reflected what the town needed at the time."

In August 1973, the top floor of the building caught fire while tenants were living there. "The tenants said that they were awakened by their small white poodle named Sue Jay barking at the fire," Jay recalled. "Unfortunately, the dog died in the fire, but the owners made it out of the burning building safely. They were very lucky that night."

The building is currently occupied by an Antique Marketplace and several professional offices. As you head toward the center of Severna Park and you pass 4 Riggs Avenue, be reminded that this location has a rich history and is a cornerstone of our town.

**Severna Park Museum Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-stock corporation sponsored by the Winkelmeyer family. Donations are welcome at 528 Melrose Lane.**

# 'Tis The Season For Festive Displays

In the spirit of the holidays, the Voice staff is sharing spots where you can see the best lights around town.

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Participants were all smiles during the sixth annual Taylor Wild Golf Tournament, held on November 7 at Compass Pointe Golf Courses in Pasadena. The tournament keeps alive the memory of William “Taylor” Wild IV, a Severna Park resident who was just 21 years old when he was killed in a military training exercise before his third deployment in 2013. He was a best friend, a brother, a son and a Marine. All proceeds benefit the Herzberg-Taylor Scholarship. The scholarship has totaled \$10,000 for Anne Arundel County high school seniors over the last five years.



## GSPACC Welcomes All To Trick Or Tree

Due to limitations on gatherings, the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce is holding a Trick or Tree event at the chamber this year from 5:00pm to 6:30pm in place of the annual tree lighting. Holly Avenue will be closed to foot traffic, and visitors

will form a line to see the tree, meet the Grinch and get goodie bags. The chamber will have adult goodie bags, which will contain coupons from local businesses, and candy for the kids. People will also be able to enjoy music at the event. For more information, call 410-647-3900.

## Mark Gibson Left Lasting Imprint On Severna Park



By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Former Green Hornets football commissioner Mark Gibson always asked himself a simple but profound question: “Have I made a difference?”

Since Mark passed away from a heart attack on November 8 in his home in Lufkin, Texas, people who knew him throughout his life have answered that question with a resounding “yes.”

“He swore my daughter into the Marine Corps and my kids call him dad,” said Veronica Gibson, Mark’s wife since 2004. “He was the love of my life.”

A 59-year-old father, grandfather, husband, coach and mentor, Mark was born in Abington, Pennsylvania, and was a member of the United States Naval Academy class of 1987. He started as an assistant coach in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, and later coached in Virginia, Indiana and California upon relocating for work related to his duties in the Navy.

In 2015, Mark was recognized as a *Severna Park Voice* Volunteer of the Month, and he reflected on his military service.

“It was every bit of an adventure,” said Mark, who was a surface warfare officer in the Navy. “I did most of it while I was single. I deployed four times for six months or greater. And during that time, I got to go to about 35 different countries.”

Mark’s oldest daughter, Elizabeth, called him an “amazing, unbelievable, strong, loving man.”

He shared that love with Elizabeth and later with Veronica, who had three children — Victoria, Jessica and Ari — who became his own kids.

Mark and Veronica moved to Severna Park in 2003. They had a son, Nate. Around 2005-2006, Mark became a Green Hornets coach, and by 2010, he was the football commissioner.

Veronica said Mark wanted to teach kids the love of football and not just how to win, a sentiment he expressed to the *Voice* during a

2011 interview.

“We have some really good coaches in the Green Hornets’ football organization,” Mark said. “They are committed to teaching the players the game, they are committed to building successful teams — both on and off the field — and they keep the Green Hornets competitive without taking away the fun of the game for the players.”

Mark was recognized with many honors, including the Vince De Pasquale Youth Football Services Award by the Touchdown Club of Annapolis in 2015.

While Mark knew he was appreciated, he did not know how widespread the affection was for him, not only from former players but also from parents, former classmates and Navy brothers.

Robert Biever was Mark’s shipmate in the Navy for three years.

“Mark was a great man and great soul who always had a big smile and a story to tell,” Biever wrote in a Facebook post. “He used to brag about the large bank of miscellaneous trivia that he possessed, long before the Internet and Google and Wikipedia came along. He was a kind man and always willing to step in and help you.”

Karen Fox volunteered as a team mom during Mark’s tenure as Green Hornets commissioner, since all four of her sons played the sport. She partnered with Mark on fundraisers, equipment handouts and turn-ins, and whatever else the program needed.

“He was always so kind, and his commitment to his volunteer position was unparalleled,” Fox said. “It truly was a labor of love for him. The only thing he loved more than football was his family. He beamed whenever he would talk about his wife or children. He always called Veronica his ‘much better half.’”

“There are not many people in my history with the Hornets who did more or worked harder than Mark. I will miss him.”

Green Hornets football assistant coach Ryan Keegan said, “He would go out of his way to do anything for anybody. For someone to give that much of their time as commissioner and then to come and be our coach, the commitment was huge.”

Mark and Veronica moved to Texas two years ago, and Mark was in charge of grant-writing for the Lufkin Youth Football League.

Veronica said Mark went to see a cardiologist just two days before the “widowmaker” heart attack claimed his life. The family was stunned, but Veronica takes comfort in seeing the outpouring of love people have shared for Mark.

“I wish he knew how much of an impact he made on everybody,” Veronica said.



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# A New Child Support Law Is Effective

**David Diggs**  
The Law Office of  
David V. Diggs LLC



When I began practicing family law in 1987, child support awards were unpredictable and often varied from county to county and judge to judge. Early in my career, child support laws evolved with the introduction of

statutory guidelines. Child support guidelines were initially adopted in Maryland in 1989. A long-past-due update became effective on October 1, 2010. Now, 10 years since the last revision, we have the next installment of past-due statutory updates.

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

1. The mother of 12-year-old twins earns \$120,000 per year
2. She pays \$400 monthly for her children's health insurance coverage

3. The father earns \$60,000, while serving as the primary custodian

4. The mother has the children on alternating weekends, from Friday after school until Sunday evening, a dinner each week, shared holidays and three weeks in the summer

In this hypothetical scenario, the mother's child support payments will be \$1,766 per month or about \$408 per week. Child support obligations are greater when work-related child care, private school and extraordinary medical expenses are factored into the equation.

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

Prior to the change that took effect on

October 1, 2020, a different formula was used where the non-custodial or visiting spouse had the child for greater than 35% of the overnights in a given year. This formula results in a lower level of support, due to the presumption that the parent having "shared physical custody" will bear some of the burden for direct expenses. If the mother in the above scenario has shared physical custody, something that she would obtain if her weekends extended to Monday and if her Wednesday dinner visit extended overnight, then her child support obligation would be \$1,217 per month, a \$549 reduction.

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

A common misconception involves the notion that there is some connection between the obligation to pay child support and the right to visitation. A custodial parent may attempt to deny visitation to a former spouse who has fallen behind on child support. Conversely, a parent who

has been unreasonably denied access to her child may suspend payments. In either case, the court will apply its version of the old axiom "two wrongs do not make a right." The proper response by the party who has been wronged is to file a petition for contempt, whereby the offending party will be sanctioned by the court and warned against further nonpayment of support or interference with visitation privileges.

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

*If you need further information regarding this subject, contact the Law Office of David V. Diggs LLC at 8684 Veterans Highway, Suite 204, in Millersville, by calling 410-244-1189, or by email at david@diggslaw.com.*

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# Community Mourns Loss Of Legendary Coach

The community is mourning the loss of coach and trainer Brien “Mac” McMurray, who lost his battle with Parkinson’s disease on October 31. He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Jane Woodward McMurray; daughters Kathleen McMurray Dunn and Shannon Reich; and four grandchildren.

“My dad was one of the most dedicated, enthusiastic and intense people I’ve ever met,” Reich said in a video tribute to her father. “Whatever he did, he put 100 percent effort into. He was very passionate about his family and friends, his work, coaching, fitness, University of Maryland and all things sports related.”

Reich recalled her father’s strong work ethic and perseverance. She said that she will always remember her senior cross country season, when McMurray drove her to different cross country courses to practice before races. She is grateful to have a father who loved her so much and invested so much time into her childhood.

McMurray was a physical education teacher in Anne Arundel County for 31 years, and the weight room at Chesapeake Bay Middle School in Pasadena is

“*Whatever he did, he put 100 percent effort into. He was very passionate about his family and friends, his work, coaching, fitness, University of Maryland and all things sports related.*”

— SHANNON REICH

named for him. His students remember him for his intensity, passion and for the Bigger Faster Stronger Club, a before-school activity that McMurray was passionate about.

McMurray was a celebrated high school lacrosse coach. He worked as the assistant coach at Broadneck High School before moving onto Chesapeake High School. In 1997, he led Chesapeake High School to the county championship. Chris Collins, who played on that winning team, also had the unique opportunity to work under McMurray for 16 years.

“Losing coach Mac was a tough one for all of us,” Collins said. “It was a really tough one for me because I looked

up to him a lot. He was my mentor in so many ways.”

Collins recalled his intensity as a coach, but said McMurray was just “a guy that was trying to make us the best that he could.”

McMurray eventually ended his high school coaching career at Severna Park High School.

In his retirement from coaching and teaching, McMurray was not ready to give up on fitness. He began training at Sport Fit Severna Park and found his way to Park Fitness. There, McMurray ran Rock Steady Boxing. The non-contact training program is designed to improve balance, flexibility and inflammation in men and women suffering from Parkinson’s disease.

McMurray’s former coworker, Mandy Schultz, said she will remember McMurray as a true friend and good man.

“He wanted to help everyone, and he just valued people so much,” said Schultz. “He brought so much to this world.”

McMurray was a man of many talents and sports accolades, but he will be remembered most for his love of the University of Maryland and his character, passion, loyalty and humor.



McMurray was a high school lacrosse coach and physical education teacher.

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## COVID-19 Vaccine

**Michael Malone**  
Delegate  
District 33



Seventy years ago, my father had polio. In those days, polio outbreaks often caused quarantines, restricted travel, interrupted commerce, and kept children indoors much of the summer. Fortunately, my father emerged unscathed, but Franklin D. Roosevelt and some other 15,000 people every year did not. Thanks to vaccines and aggressive immunization programs, the U.S. has been polio-free since 1979, and charity organizations like Rotary (I am a past president of the West County Rotary Club) continue to work to eliminate it worldwide.

Happily, for us, vaccines for COVID-19 may become available any day now. In October, Governor Larry Hogan released a two-phase draft plan for distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, which can be viewed on the governor's website at [www.governor.maryland.gov](http://www.governor.maryland.gov). The plan is to distribute the vaccine first to those most at risk: frontline first responders and health care workers evaluating and caring for COVID-19 patients; staff and residents of nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and assisted living facilities; and essential workers, including public safety, education, and staff in congregate living facilities.

When the vaccine will be distributed in Phase Two depends on a number of factors, mostly the availability of the vaccine and how many Phase One individuals remain to be vaccinated, but it appears likely that vaccines will not be administered to everyone desirous of one until sometime in 2021.

Immunization protects an individual by prompting their immune system to fight a disease. Essentially, the immune system remembers the trigger — whether infection or vaccine — and launches a quick and effective response. Perhaps more importantly, vaccines protect the population at large by making it harder for the disease to spread. COVID-19, like many infectious diseases, is often spread by infected persons before they show symptoms.

If a vaccinated person can't catch the disease, they can't unwittingly pass it on. At some point, enough of a population is immune to a disease (whether by vaccine or infection) to make it unlikely for a disease to spread; this is called herd immunity. The threshold percentage for herd immunity varies from disease to disease based largely on how contagious it is. For highly contagious measles, it is 94 percent. In 2000, measles was considered eradicated in the U.S. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control, thanks largely to a spike in unvaccinated children in the U.S., herd immunity to that disease has been reduced. In 2019

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## Spreading Holiday Cheer

**Peter Franchot**  
Comptroller of  
Maryland



This holiday season is bringing a lot of financial challenges to many struggling Maryland families and businesses. From small mom-and-pop stores to national corporations, COVID-19 has taken a heavy toll on retailers, restaurants, manufacturers and nearly every type of business, causing some to permanently close and putting many others on the brink.

Family budgets also have been squeezed with Marylanders filing for unemployment in record numbers. Although some have regained their jobs, many more have not and are struggling to make ends meet.

With coronavirus cases exploding nationally and here in Maryland, uncertainty reigns during a time of year when we try to put our worries aside to focus on family and festive celebrations.

It's also typically a time of year when we are mindful of our vulnerable communities and those who are less fortunate. We may volunteer time at a local homeless shelter, donate to a food bank or contribute to a local nonprofit's wish

list for needy families. Direct donations may help with a car payment, a needed household repair or a utility bill.

The pandemic has made it more important than ever to help our fellow Marylanders. The demand for basic necessities is greater, and many families need a helping hand to receive holiday cheer.

We can all do our part — even something as simple as going through a closet to find coats, sweaters, socks and other warm garments that are most in need during the cold winter months.

At the Comptroller's Office, we try to lead by example. Each year, employees throughout the agency give monetary and other donations that are distributed to help families in need, people with disabilities and senior citizens living on fixed incomes. We also encourage staff to participate in the annual Maryland Charity Campaign and hold several fundraising events — virtually this year — to benefit the effort that supports numerous worthy nonprofits.

I have seen the generosity and goodwill of Marylanders on many occasions and am confident that giving spirit will occur again — even during a difficult year for many.

For those who do plan to give to charity this year, your donations may be tax deductible, thanks to the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

» Continued on page 22

## A New Board And Budget Season

**Dana Schallheim**  
Board of Education  
District 5



The AACPS Board of Education is fully elected for the first time in history. I heartily welcome Robert Silkworth, Corine Frank and Joanna Tobin of Districts 2, 3 and 6, respectively. Now, and for the first time, every county council district in Anne Arundel County has a duly elected member of the Board of Education and is beholden to the voters of their district. Thank

you to exiting members Terry Gilleland, Julie Hummer, Eric Grannon and Bob Leib for their service to our students and community.

The three newly elected members join Candace Antwine, Melissa Ellis, Michelle Corkadel, Drake Smith and me for the remainder of the 2020-2021 academic year until a new student member is seated in July — as has always occurred. One notable difference, however, is that moving forward, the Board of Education will be an eight-member board instead of a nine-member board. This change occurred because each member, except for the student member, now represents one of the seven Anne Arundel councilmanic districts as opposed to a state legislative district. Quorum will

remain at five members. I look forward to working with each of the new members on issues that matter to us, most notably being the reopening of schools once the county COVID-19 positivity and case rate falls to within the school reopening metrics set by the state and county.

The new members will be seated on December 7 at the AACPS Central Offices and their first Board of Education meeting will occur on December 16. The AACPS budget season also kicks off on December 16 when Dr. George Arlotto will present his recommended budget to the board.

Without a doubt, the board will have to make difficult decisions and carefully prioritize as both the state and the county face

budget shortfalls because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Long gone are the days of my first budget cycle, a banner budget year.

My goals for the Fiscal Year 2022 budget will include the following. First, we must not trample down the road we found ourselves on during the last economic downturn that left our veteran teachers several steps behind. We are still trying to dig ourselves out of that hole that has left our recruitment and retention strategies with much to be desired. Our educational system is only as good as our teachers, and so we must do all we can to retain our veteran teachers and to recruit the finest educators available. I will continue to support make-up steps for

» Continued on page 22

# Together We Can Cross The Finish Line

**Heather Bagnall**  
Delegate  
District 33



ble and steadfast, whose determination wins the day.

There is, however, a rarely discussed secondary lesson in this fable, a lesson that is far more common in our society, and that is the danger of giving up before crossing the finish line. The winner isn't the one most prepared, best qualified or even most deserving, but the one who finishes the race.

I think this is the lesson we need as we enter the holiday season, 11 months into a pandemic and facing a second surge we had hoped to avoid but predicted to be worse than the first.

Many years ago, at a particularly challenging moment, I found a pamphlet titled "Train to Run a Marathon in 6 Months." I was all in. I signed up and started training, and little by little, I grew stronger. Our coaches would tell us, "Find your pace and keep going." Each week we would add more distance, but the coaches never pushed us to go faster because, as they kept telling us, the goal was to finish.

Many lessons came from that training: supporting one another, learning to give what you have, little by little you will grow stronger. But the lesson that really stuck with me was the story behind the marathon. You see, 26.2 miles is the distance from Marathon to Athens. The distance legend tells that the messenger Pheidippides ran to notify Athens that the Athenians were victorious against the Persian army, after which he promptly dropped dead.

The lesson was that the human body is built to sustain only 20 miles, and the last six miles are a mental exercise. The reality is quite different given that Pheidippides was a professional messenger for the military and had likely run 300 miles prior to the Marathon-to-Athens run, but the analogy still holds, because the lesson of that last six miles is that once you stop, you cannot start again.

I saw this lesson come to fruition when

**W**e've all heard the moral, "Slow and steady wins the race," the lesson of arguably Aesop's most famous fable, which tells the story of the Hare, arrogant and fast but ultimately unsuccessful, and the Tortoise, hum-

I ran a marathon the following year. The organizers had a well-intentioned but ill-conceived victory lap and red-carpet run. When runners completed the victory lap and hit the red carpet, they didn't realize they hadn't reached the finish line. They would stop at the red carpet and that was it, they could go no further.

Our coaches, seeing what was happening, stationed themselves on either side of the red carpet and ran alongside the runners, telling them to keep going and, if necessary, grab them under the arms to carry them the last 100 meters across the finish line.

As we each finished, we joined them in cheering the runners to keep going. Anyone with anything left would join in running alongside the last 100 meters. As we recovered from the race, we would give what we had to the remaining runners, determined no one would fall short. Runner after runner, hour after hour, we watched, cheered, cried and helped when we could. Though some people were part of our group, many were strangers, but in that moment, we were all one team. We didn't go to the celebration. We didn't leave or do any of the usual post-marathon things. We stayed until the last runner crossed the finish line. I will never forget the combination of admiration, awe and fear I had for my coaches that day.

I tell this story because we are all in the last six miles, and we've been offered multiple victory laps and red-carpet runs, but the finish line is still 100 meters away. Right now our health providers and emergency services are standing at the red carpet, carrying our essential employees and law enforcement, teachers and support staff, our small businesses, hospitality, students, families and seniors across the finish line, but they are exhausted and they need help. I know how hard it is to keep going when you want to be done, but just like that day, we can stay in this moment, and what comes from us enduring this race together will be so much more meaningful than the ceremony and traditions to which we are accustomed.

This holiday season, let's stay in the race. It isn't about who wins, it's about getting everyone across the finish line, and it's going to take all of us helping, all of us giving what we can. Let's make this a holiday to remember not for those we lost but for those we saved. Thank you to everyone who continues to be in this race.

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## COVID-19 Vaccine

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alone, outbreaks in 31 states resulted in almost 1,300 cases of measles.

Even vaccine experts often acknowledge that vaccines aren't perfect, but they are the best defense we have. Some have side effects, most commonly fever and swelling. According to some reports, this is especially true of the coronavirus vaccines. Earlier reports that vaccines cause autism have been discredited, but public pressure over vaccine risks has led to safer vaccines. In fact, coronavirus vaccines are made not with weakened germs, like the measles vaccine, or dead germs like

the polio shot, but from messenger RNA, a first in the vaccine industry. According to the CDC, mRNA vaccines "teach our cells how to make a protein — or even just a piece of a protein — that triggers an immune response inside our bodies. That immune response, which produces antibodies, is what protects us from getting infected if the real virus enters our bodies." The coronavirus vaccine instructs our bodies to "make a harmless piece of what is called the 'spike protein.' The spike protein is found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19." The CDC further points out that such vac-

cines cannot give someone coronavirus, nor do they interact with our DNA.

There will be those who cannot take the coronavirus vaccine due to medical concerns, and those who refuse it due to religious conviction, personal beliefs, or concerns about vaccine safety. To achieve herd immunity and hopefully eradicate this disease or at least this pandemic, most of the population will need to be immunized. I am no doctor — I encourage you all to discuss the vaccine with your health care provider. In the meantime, in the words of Governor Hogan, "wear the damn mask."

## Spreading Holiday Cheer

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Previously, charitable contributions could only be deducted if taxpayers itemized their deductions. However, the CARES Act allows taxpayers who don't itemize to take a deduction of up to \$300 for cash donations made in 2020 to qualifying organizations. The CARES Act also suspends limits on charitable contributions and temporarily increases limits on contributions of food inventory.

So there is even more incentive to engage in philanthropy for those who can.

This holiday season may look and feel

different — less traveling, fewer people around the dinner table and virtual celebrations replacing in-person gatherings — but I encourage each of you to make the most of it in your own special way. Be safe, stay socially distanced, limit your interactions with those outside your household and, as Governor Hogan put it, "Wear the damn mask."

Doing all these things, along with promising developments in vaccine production and a better coordinated response from all levels of government, will help us move toward a

return to normal next year.

I have three grandchildren with whom I would love to spend the holidays, but I know the right thing to do, as hard as it may be, is to keep our festivities small in number and large in spirit. Making these small sacrifices now is the best gift we can give to our loved ones so that our future holiday celebrations can happen in person and without restrictions.

I wish all Marylanders a joyous, relaxing and meaningful holiday season. We deserve it.

## A New Board And Budget Season

» Continued from page 20

our teachers.

Second, our students have suffered immensely at all levels because of the pandemic, and additional mental health staff will be critical as we recover from this and the last school year. In addition to the need for additional mental health staff is the need for additional teachers to reduce class sizes. Now, more than ever, our students need as much individualized attention from our teachers to close achievement gaps made even wider by the pandemic. Finally, but never least, is directing as much of our finite resources as possible to meeting school needs at the school level and increasing efficiencies where possible in other areas.

Please reach out to me and my colleagues to voice your opinions and share your concerns. The new members' contact information will be posted on the AACPS website soon at [www.aacps.org/board](http://www.aacps.org/board). Two budget hearings are currently scheduled for early January. Given the current pandemic numbers, I am unsure if they will be virtual or in-person. Stay tuned for more details. As always, I can be reached at [dschallheim@aacps.org](mailto:dschallheim@aacps.org). Have a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.



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## SPHS Athletes Sign Letters Of Intent

Severna Park High School athletes pledged to play collegiate sports at universities across the country when they signed letters of intent in November. Get to meet the student-athletes who are taking their athletic skills to the next level.

### BASEBALL

#### Nick Carparelli III

Manhattan College

A senior at Severna Park High School, Nick Carparelli III is entering his fourth season on the Falcons basketball and baseball teams. As a pitcher, Carparelli expects to be a driving force for coach Eric Milton's team as they look to return to the state championship game for the first time in three years. Carparelli chose Manhattan College because of the confidence that head coach Mike Cole had in his ability to pitch at the Division 1 level and the plan he laid out for him to achieve that goal. The location of the school in New York City will also provide Carparelli with countless opportunities to help prepare him for his career after graduation. He will pursue a communications degree and minor in journalism. Carparelli plans to use this degree to cover sports and to bring attention to the many stories of social injustice in this world in an effort to bring about positive change in society.

#### Jackson Merrill

University of Kentucky

Jackson Merrill hopes to enjoy a fourth year playing shortstop for the Falcons. As a sophomore, Merrill batted .450 and was named First-Team All-County shortstop by the coaches and local publications. He has been named to postseason and preseason All-State teams by Prep Baseball Report and Maryland State Association of Baseball Coaches (MSABC). Over the past year, he has been named to all-tourney teams in national Perfect Game tournaments along with invitations to Pro Scout showcases. He

is ranked in the top 10 for the class of 2021 in Maryland by Prep Baseball Report and considered the top Maryland shortstop by Perfect Game. Merrill chose the University of Kentucky because of the coaching staff and the chance to compete against the best collegiate talent in the nation. He plans on pursuing a degree in sports medicine.

### GIRLS LACROSSE

#### Hailey Betch

St. Mary's College of Maryland

Hailey Betch spent four years as an attacker for the Falcons. She made the varsity team during her freshman year and started ever since. She was a part of the 2019 state championship team. St. Mary's was the best fit because of its great biology program and beautiful campus.

#### Reagan Clark

University of Maryland - Baltimore County

Reagan Clark spent three years as a midfielder/defender for the Falcons and was part of the state championship team in 2019. Clark chose UMBC because she wants to pursue the school's medical program and continue her lacrosse career in-state.

#### Emersyn Kelter

Stonehill College

Emersyn Kelter played lacrosse, basketball, unified tennis, and soccer for the Severna Park Falcons. She chose Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts, because of its rigorous biochemistry program, her desire to attend medical school, and because of the connection she made with coach Katie Conover and her future lacrosse teammates.

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**SEVERNA PARK — CAPE ARTHUR**

Welcome to this spacious & well maintained home located in the coveted water-privileged community of Cape Arthur. The main level features a generous eat-in kitchen with tile flooring. Imagine relaxing, or entertaining in the family room in front of the roaring raised brick fireplace. This level also



features a dining room & living room both with rich hardwood floors and a main level office. The main level laundry room is a huge convenience. The upper level - featuring 4 generous bedrooms, all with hardwood floors - includes the owner's suite with updated full bath. You'll love the large, level fenced yard and the play equipment convey! You'll have a clean slate in the unfinished lower level!

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# STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

## Mason Keegan

Green Hornets Football, Lacrosse

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Whether they were on offense or defense, it was tough for players on opposing teams to stop No. 5, Mason Keegan, this season. The 14U Green Hornets football standout played running back on most of his team's offensive snaps and outside linebacker on most defensive plays.

"I like running back because it gives me the opportunity to make plays and help my team the most," said Keegan, who idolizes Baltimore Ravens running back Mark Ingram, Carolina Panthers running back Christian McCaffrey, Hall of Fame linebacker Ray Lewis and rookie Ravens linebacker Patrick Queen. "I like them because they are hard hitters and playmakers."

Keegan has been a playmaker for



A running back and linebacker for the 14U Green Hornets, Mason Keegan earned this year's Buzz Platt Player Award for his excellence in play, character and sportsmanship.

his teams since he first joined Green Hornets at 70 pounds, but its his leadership that sets him apart. This

"I just want to have fun playing the game, make the varsity team and hopefully win a championship."

— MASON KEEGAN

year, he was honored with the Buzz Platt Player Award, which is named after the founder of the Anne Arundel Youth Football Association, in recognition of his excellence in play, character and sportsmanship.

"He's a tremendous leader who routinely puts his teammates before himself," said 14U head coach Scott MacRobbie. "He has seemingly played every position, on both sides of the ball, to help the team fill a need on any given day."

Keegan's encouragement to teammates doesn't often come in the form of yelling or fiery speeches, but as

MacRobbie said, "when he did speak, the others listened."

The 14U team went 7-2 this year before losing to the Pasadena Bucs, 14-8, in the championship game.

An eighth-grader, Keegan is excited to play his next season for Severna Park High School, but he will miss playing with his friends on Green Hornets and being coached by his dad, who served as a coach for four of the last five years.

"I just want to have fun playing the game, make the varsity team and hopefully win a championship," said Keegan, who also enjoys playing lacrosse.

Keegan's accomplishments aren't limited to the field. He made the honor roll during the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year, and his favorite subject is math.

He can't wait to get back to playing sports soon.

"I like being out in the open field and making plays," he said.

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

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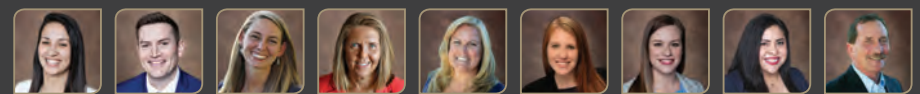
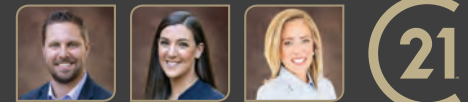
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## U11 2010 Girls Go Undeclared



During a season that spanned from September to November, the Panthers went 10-0.

Green Hornets' U11 girls select soccer team, the Panthers, went 10-0 during the regular fall 2020 season. The girls were led by head coach **Jared Calish**, assistant coaches **Heather Symons** and **Keith Cormier**, and team manager **Megan Cormier**.

The team scored 49 goals during 10 regular season games. The offensive unit included **Katelyn Cormier**, **Adelyn**

**Doss**, **Delaney Jones**, **Paige Klima**, **Tessa Patel**, **Allie Patrick** and **Rebecca Sullivan**. The defense was stellar this season as well. They had four shutouts. Goalies **Sabrina Calish**, **Katie Ewing** and **Claire Sweeney** held four additional opponents to only one goal. Their defensive support team included **Mary Beisler**, **Sophia Elfenbein**, **Edna McConkey** and **Olivia Strohecker**.

## Vipers Win Columbia Fall Classic

The Green Hornets U19 select boys soccer team, the Vipers, won the Columbia Fall Classic tournament in Howard County on the weekend of November 13-15.

The Vipers went undefeated in the tournament and finished 9-0 this fall, including a victory over Maryland's fourth-ranked team, SAC Baltimore Armour Pre-Academy. With the tournament win, the Vipers jumped to No. 9 in the state rankings.

"This has been a very special team," said head coach **Kory Barrett**. "I have coached it since their U8 season almost 10 years ago, and 10 of our players (now all seniors) and one assistant coach (**Jon Plummer**) have been with our program the entire time. It's very rare to have a team with the same coaches and so many players stick together for their entire select soccer experience. Along the way, we've added other tremendous players who have been with us a long time as well, and our team includes kids from four high schools —

Severna Park, Chesapeake, Broadneck and North County."

The Vipers are **Samuel Adams**, **Christian Angel**, **Gus Bachmann**, **Owen Barrett**, **Jack Collier**, **Brendan Fisher**, **James**

**Flanagan**, **Benjamin Hindman**, **John Kenny**, **Daniel Key**, **Benjamin McLay**, **Jack Muldoon**, **Michael O'Callaghan**, **Jay Pierce**, **Zachary Plummer**, **Jeremiah Rodriguez**, **Graham Snyder** and **Juan Von Bocker**.



On the coaching staff, Kory Barrett was joined by Jon Plummer and **Greg Adams**.

"Playing together for so long has developed countless memories and forged a bond that will be with the guys their entire lives," Kory Barrett said. "I'm very confident that there's not a team out there that has as much fun with each other as ours guys do, and their team chemistry and technical skills is what has really set them apart. It's been a privilege to coach them and joy of a lifetime to have been part of it."

## Severna Park High School Athletes Sign Letters Of Intent

» Continued from page 24

### Carson Shoop

Campbell University

Carson Shoop spent three years as a defender for the Falcons and was a part of the state championship team in 2019. Shoop played for M&D Lacrosse for five years as well as the Brine national team for three years and chose to continue her lacrosse career at Campbell University in North Carolina. Shoop plans on majoring in biology and minoring in chemistry.

### Kaila Stasulli

Jacksonville University

Kaila Stasulli spent four years as a defender/midfielder for the Falcons and was part of the 2019 state championship team. She also played four years of basketball for the Falcons as a point guard and was part of the 2020 regional championship team. She chose Jacksonville because of the great location, friendly atmosphere and competitive lacrosse program. Stasulli wants to study biology at JU and attend dentistry school after. She is currently an assistant coach for the Maryland United 2028 girls lacrosse team.

## BOYS LACROSSE

### Carson Barrett

Palm Beach Atlantic University

Barrett has been playing lacrosse since he was 5 years old. He is a two-way midfielder who prides himself on athleticism. Barrett chose Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida, because of the team culture, academia and weather. He will pursue a career in sports medicine.

### Charlie Evans

Lynchburg University

Charlie Evans is in his fourth year playing attack for the Falcons and was part of the state championship team in 2018, the same year he was the Coaches Award recipient. Evans chose Lynchburg due to the reputation of the program and coaching staff. He will pursue a business degree, and he was selected to receive the Founder's Scholarship because of his academic profile, and a positive involvement in service and leadership activities.

### Kyle Griffith

United States Air Force Academy

Kyle Griffith has been on the varsity lacrosse team all four years at Severna Park High School. He was a member of the state championship team in 2018 and a starter for the state championship team in 2019. He is hoping to have a chance to defend the state title in 2021. Griffith chose the United States Air Force Academy because he wanted the opportunity to go to a prestigious school while still being able to play lacrosse. He expects to study business.

### Jack Guerrisi

Flagler College

Jack Guerrisi has been playing competitive lacrosse since the sixth grade and is now a senior at Severna Park High School. He started playing with Green Hornets in fourth grade with Rockfish during middle school, and now has been playing with the Peninsula Lacrosse Club (PLC) since freshman year. Guerrisi is looking forward to taking his skills to St. Augustine, Florida, where he will be playing for Flagler College. Flagler is going Division II this year, and Guerrisi is excited to be part of its inaugural season.

### Colin Shadowens

United States Naval Academy

Colin Shadowens has started every game as the Falcon's faceoff specialist since freshman year. He earned back-to-back 4A state championship titles in 2018 and 2019, and he was named Capital Gazette First-Team All-County in 2019. Shadowens is also a standout football player and wrestler at SPHS. He chose Navy because he wants to serve his country as a commissioned officer and be part of the rich sports tradition of the Naval Academy. He is also excited about the opportunity to play in Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium, which is close to home. He hopes to become a Navy or Marine Corps pilot.

### Rory Sullivan

University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Rory Sullivan has spent the last three years as a defenseman for the varsity Falcons, including two years on the 4A state championship team. Sullivan also achieved several personal accolades, making the Freestate Top 22 team, the NXT Baltimore All-Star team, Inside Lacrosse All-Star team and Nike Invitational 2021 Baltimore team. His main reason for choosing UMBC is to play lacrosse at a high-level program and to study economics.



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# SCHOOL & YOUTH

## Lights, Camera, Answers: SP Teens Compete On “It’s Academic”

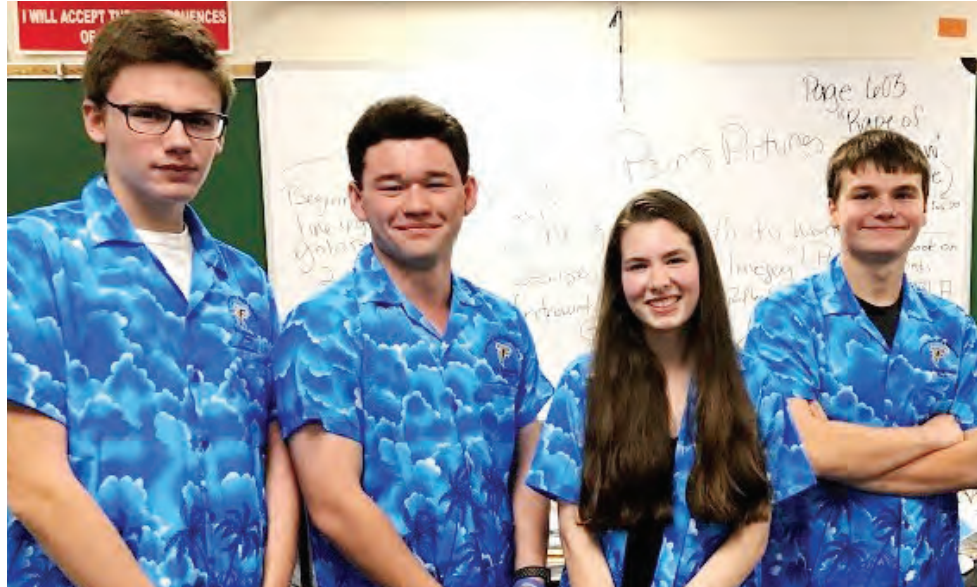
By Kevin Murnane

It was lights, camera and answers for Severna Park High School’s It’s Academic team as they competed with McDonogh and Parkville during the battle of the brains.

The three students from Severna Park — Kelly Smith, Adam Didouchevski and Zach McGrath — competed virtually on the iconic high school show, which is in its 60th season. The competition was held October 18 and aired on WJZ-TV on November 28.

“We all used Zoom from our homes, but we were able to have five to six seconds to confer if we needed to,” McGrath said.

Questions on the show ranged from American presidents and geography to math and literature. The students on the Severna Park’s It’s Academic team practice biweekly and there are 14 students in the club. History teacher and faculty advisor Theresa Goldberg chose these three students



The Severna Park High School It’s Academic team has great camaraderie and all members wore their Severna Park Hawaiian shirts on the show.

due to seniority and how well they answer questions during practice sessions. The alternate was Cecil-

ia Clanton.

McGrath, a sophomore, was excited before the show’s taping but became

more confident as the show began. “It seemed like the anxiety melted away as the first questions were asked,” said McGrath, who added that he had a great night’s sleep before the taping.

McGrath was an alternate last year and that also helped him prepare for this year’s competition. He admitted that he has always been eager to learn, he is a straight A student, and he has taken multiple advanced placement courses so far. His dad is a teacher at the Naval Academy and his grandfather was also a teacher.

The McGrath family moved to the Berrywood neighborhood six years ago when Zach was in elementary school. He has attended Folger McKinsey Elementary, Old Mill South for its STEM program and now is at Severna Park High School.

When asked about attending school virtually, McGrath noted that “the teachers have done a great job in

» Continued on page 32

## Teens, Health Experts Discuss Coping With Anxiety

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Social unrest, the COVID-19 pandemic and the start of the virtual school year have all contributed to debilitating depression for some youth. To support students, Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), the Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, the Anne Arundel County Department of Health, and the Office of the County Executive partnered in November for an online event called Coping With Anxiety — Youth In 2020.

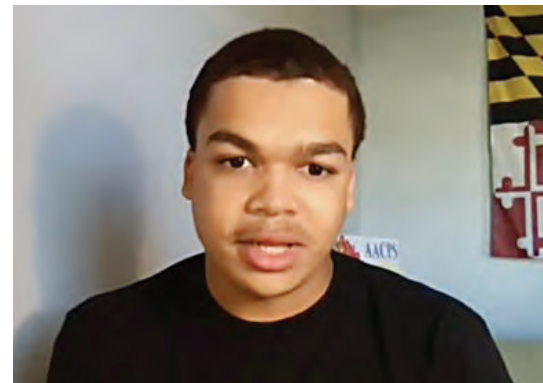
Event co-moderators Drake Smith and Amaya Madarang introduced panelists and asked questions posed by their student peers around the county. Smith is the student member on the Anne Arundel County Board of Education and a student at Meade High School. Madarang is a senior at Northeast High School and chairperson of Let’s Talk Justice, a forum for students to discuss racism and social justice in the wake of the murder of George Floyd.

During the November event, students asked about the misconception that mental illness is “all in someone’s head,” how coping mechanisms can reduce anxiety, and how to spot red flags when someone is contemplating suicide.

### Being Educated About Mental Illness

Dr. Catherine Gray, clinical director of the Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, addressed the misconception that mental illness is more of an imagined problem than a real medical issue.

“When you look at things like depression, sometimes your first symptoms are going to be that extreme fatigue, the lethargy; you just don’t have the energy to do anything,” she said. “With anxiety, you’re talking about things like your chest is racing, your heart is palpitating, you can have excessive sweating, so these are all things that are first warning signs.”



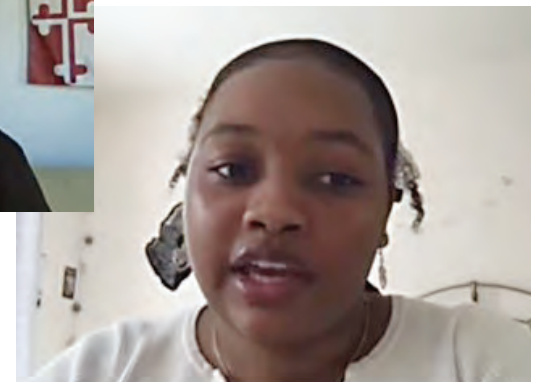
She also emphasized that someone’s mental illness does not define them as a person.

“They are a pianist, they are a runner, a whatever, but the mental health component can be a small part of their experience,” Gray said.

### Getting Help

Jennifer Corbin, director of the Anne Arundel Crisis Response System, talked about the ways students can reach out for help.

Board of Education member Drake Smith (left) and Severna Park High School student Jayna Monroe (below) were active in the video discussion.



“There are tons of resources in your school whether it’s your resource officer (your SRO), your guidance counselor, your nurse, your principal,” Corbin said. “Whoever it is you’re comfortable with, you can start the conversa-

» Continued on page 32

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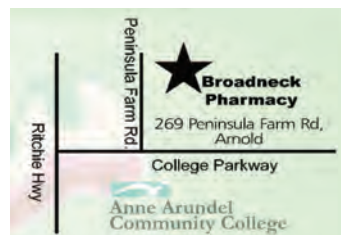
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## Not A Drill: WoodsWork Builds Tables



Photos by Kristen Murphy

WoodsWork, a volunteer group from Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church, gathered in November to build picnic tables.

## Teens Seek Support For Blood Drive At St. Martin's



Sofia Villagomez (left) and Grace Ferguson want to help hospitals in need of blood donations.

Severna Park High School juniors Grace Ferguson and Sofia Villagomez are organizing a blood drive at St. Martin's-in-the-Field, in Heck Hall, on December 15 from 12:30pm to 5:30pm.

"With the high demand for blood due to this pandemic, my partner and I decided to collaborate with the American Red Cross to help relieve efforts in local hospitals," Ferguson said. "As one blood donation can save up to three lives, we have set a goal to recruit 40 donors for our blood drive."

St. Martin's is located at 375 Benfield Road. To sign up, visit [www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=LSLFerguson](http://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=LSLFerguson).

"We appreciate St. Martin's-in-the-Field for working with us to help make this possible," Ferguson said.

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## Teens, Health Experts Discuss Coping With Anxiety

» Continued from page 29  
tion there.”

Severna Park High School sophomore Jayna Monroe said there are resources available, but more diversity among the staff would help her and other students to feel more comfortable.

“There’s not a lot of Black counselors or just administrators that I can talk to,” Jayna said. “I’m currently in the process of changing my pediatrician because I don’t really like how she talks to me, like her bedside manner, but we need to have more

diversity within the people that we talk to because not everyone is going to understand our situations, and back to the intergenerational trauma, not everyone is going to understand what we’re going through and what we’re talking about.”

### Coping Mechanisms

With less social interaction and in-person support because of COVID-19, Meade High School student Beckett Hummer found personal strategies that help her reduce anxiety, and she encouraged her peers to

do the same.

“I’ll have something in my hands to keep me busy so I can stay concentrated ... but I definitely think that a lot of students are struggling with [anxiety during the school day],” she said. “It’s not all completely normal, but it shouldn’t be shamed upon to feel these anxious feelings, because this is something new for all of us.”

Darin Ford, Anne Arundel County Department of Health family resource coordinator, suggested breathing exercises. “Another coping mechanism is going outside and getting fresh air,” he said.

Gray praised the power of positive thinking.

“If someone frowns down on you, even just shifting that thought pattern to, ‘Maybe they’re having a bad day, maybe they’re not understanding what’s going on in the classroom, maybe it doesn’t have anything to do with me,’” she said. “Visualize yourself being completely calm. You can create a mental picture maybe of you being around your friends when you are comfortable.”

Ryan Voegtlin, AACPS director of student services, said there are plenty of coping mechanisms.

“I think you have to figure out those coping mechanisms and strategies that work for you, whether it’s exercising, whether it’s journaling, or whether it’s gratitude, writing, kindness, meditation or mindfulness,” he said.

### Helping Others

It’s easy to miss the warning signs when someone is depressed or contemplating suicide, so students and educators must not only listen when someone talks but also engage and feel out the discussion, Corbin said.

“It takes more than asking someone if they’re OK once, because the first time you ask someone if they’re OK, they’re going to say yes,” she said. “But you have to remember to go back and ask again ... its validating that feeling to them and saying, ‘I really care about you. Maybe I can open up with these personal feelings I’m having.’”

Anne Arundel County health officer Dr. Niles Kalyanaraman closed out the virtual event with this message to youth: “Be kind to yourself. Be kind to others. Sometimes the best grace we can give is to give ourselves a break.”

*If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the Anne Arundel County warmline at 410-768-5522.*

## SP Teens Compete On “It’s Academic”

» Continued from page 29

creating lesson plans and keeping everyone enthused.” He added that the camaraderie amongst his fellow students is strong, noting that they all wore their Severna Park Hawaiian shirts on the show. McGrath feels that “everyone wants to get back to the classroom eventually and see each other in the hallway, lunch and after-school activities.”

Severna Park won the round of It’s Academic, as the final score was

Severna Park, 455; McDonough, 370; and Parkville, 290.

The It’s Academic team will continue competing in the next round, following the completion of the first round that ends January 30. If they finish as one of the final three teams for this year, they get rewarded with scholarship money for college.

McGrath hopes to further his education at Vanderbilt, Johns Hopkins or Yale, and he wants to follow his grandfather and father’s footsteps and teach.



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## Movies And Shows To Stream This Holiday Season

By Haley Weisgerber

**T**heaters may still be limited, but there is no shortage of new holiday movies thanks to streaming services. Here are just a few of the movies that are sure to make you smile this holiday season. *Photos courtesy of Netflix*

### DOLLY PARTON'S CHRISTMAS ON THE SQUARE

**T**his Netflix original musical is another take on Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" but with one important twist. This time, the angel is played by Dolly Parton, who spreads Christmas cheer with music. Christine Baranski plays a woman who is planning to sell and evict an entire small town on Christmas Eve. The movie features new music from Parton and is fun for the entire family.



### SUGAR RUSH CHRISTMAS



**S**eason two of the popular Christmas baking show is now streaming on Netflix. "Sugar Rush Christmas" puts a holiday spin on the competitive baking show "Sugar Rush." The new season features six episodes full of holiday desserts and guest judges like Olympic figure skater Adam Rippon, singer and actor Jordin Sparks, and NBA champion Chris Bosh. If you are looking for a good-natured Christmas show this season, this show is for you.

### HOLIDATE

**T**his Netflix original rom-com starring Emma Roberts and Luke Bracey follows two singles who agree to accompany each other to parties celebrating Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and pretty much any other holiday you can think of. In true rom-com fashion, the two singles fall in love. This is the perfect feel-good film for date night or girl's night, but keep in mind that this film is not recommended for children.



» Continued on page 38

## Dining Out

### If You Give A Girl A Donut



Photos by Mary Cobbler  
*Donut Shack offers original-recipe donuts and some great new offerings.*

By Mary Cobbler

**D**onut Shack immediately transports you to a gentler time. The 1970s décor — a long counter with colorful yellow, black and red vinyl stools, and the small tables with bright red plastic chairs — is an instant shot of nostalgia.

According to the restaurant's website, Donut Shack began in 1978. Ownership changed hands a few times before Bill and Stacey Prevezanos took over in 1985 and kept the business going for 34 years. After a brief transition when Donut Shack had new owners, a group of locals invested in the Severna Park mainstay. They wanted to restore it to its glory days, utilizing original recipes from the Prevezanos family. Glancing around, I thought of all the young people through

the years who stopped in after sports games or late at night after a dance. I wonder how many people fell in love while nibbling on a cream-filled donut and sipping hot cocoa.

The Donut Shack focuses on what it does best: donuts! It has the usual offerings — glazed, powdered, Boston cream, apple crumb, lemon and many other choices.

I ordered more than a dozen and happily sampled my way through a box, and I found it hard to find a favorite. If forced to choose, I'd say the strawberry shortcake was the best of the bunch. Stuffed with strawberry jelly on one side and sweet vanilla cream on the other, the mix was a taste of summer in November. The Bavarian cream donut was soft and light on the



» Continued on page 36

## Jazz At The Mezz Celebrates One-Year Anniversary



The November 15 concert featured the jazz group Unified Jazz Ensemble, known as UJE by fans throughout the region. The group toured for many years before making its auspicious debut appearance in the area at the Annapolis Jazz Festival.

On November 15, Unified Jazz Ensemble helped Jazz Beyond Borders celebrate the one-year anniversary of its supertime world music and jazz concerts held monthly at Café Mezzanotte in Severna Park.

Currently, the only live music series offered in mid-Anne Arundel County, Jazz at the Mezz has featured leading performing and recording artists since culture vultures Paulina Phillips and Theresa Sise from Jazz Beyond Borders began partnering with restaurant owner Kosmas “Tommie” Koukoulis last year. Coming from a Navy family, Sise had deep ties to the area. Originally from Winnipeg, Canada, Phillips grew up on the Magothy River and is a former county arts director.

The restaurant’s Mediterranean cuisine and 100-seat room were a perfect match for their diverse musical offerings performed by artists from Spain, Canada, United Kingdom, Russia, Brazil and the United States. After enjoying many sold-out concerts in early 2020, the series took a three-month

hiatus from April through June, resuming with summer outdoor concerts. Shows moved indoors in fall with social distancing, masks and seating at under 50% capacity for the health and safety of artists, staff and patrons.

The celebratory November 15 concert featured the region’s most popular and enduring jazz group, Unified Jazz Ensemble, known as UJE by fans throughout the region. The group toured for many years before making its auspicious debut appearance in the area at the Annapolis Jazz Festival (then headed by the late, legendary guitarist Charlie Byrd). UJE became known as the go-to band for solid, straight-ahead jazz with distinctive instrumentation.

Jazz at the Mezz has offered its last live performance for 2020, but music lovers can still enjoy virtual performances courtesy of Jazz Beyond Borders. Find upcoming performance dates by visiting [www.jazzbeyondborders.com](http://www.jazzbeyondborders.com) or by following Jazz Beyond Borders on Facebook.

## The Independent’s “51 Favorite Books Of 2020”

The nonprofit Washington Independent Review of Books, host of the annual Washington Writers Conference, has announced its 51 Favorite Books of 2020.

“We don’t possess the hubris to declare certain books ‘the best,’ but these titles are among our favorites of 2020, a year that can’t end fast enough,” said Editor-in-Chief Holly Smith. “We hope readers enjoy them as much as our reviewers did.”

Here are just some of the books that made the list. See the rest at [www.washingtonindependentreviewofbooks.com](http://www.washingtonindependentreviewofbooks.com).

### “Oligarchy: A Novel”

By Scarlett Thomas  
Reviewed by Josh Denslow

“What Thomas pulls off here is astounding. This is a truly funny book. It is acerbic. It is mean-spirited. It is heavy (and I don’t just mean weight gain). The characters are flawed and sometimes intensely unlikable, but they are also naive and susceptible to peer pressure and scared to be different and just so crazy-believable. I was rooting for all of them to survive.”

### “Half Broke: A Memoir”

By Ginger Gaffney  
Reviewed by Gretchen Lida

“The healing power of horses is not a new concept. It’s been explored across art forms. But narratives featuring equine therapy programs for veterans, autistic children, and others can often feel too sweet or tidy. This isn’t the case with ‘Half Broke.’ The healing here is hard-won, subtle and small. And that makes it all the more miraculous.”

### “Run Me to Earth: A Novel”

By Paul Yoon  
Reviewed by Alice Stephens

“Yoon’s mission is not to educate the reader on the history of Laos, and those unfamiliar with the country must stay alert to figure out what’s going on. Other than the author’s note and a few incidental details, there is little explication of that country’s political situation. Instead, his story is the human tragedy of war, with a leitmotif on the calamity of colonialism.”

### “The Boatman’s Daughter: A Novel”

By Andy Davidson  
Reviewed by Daniel Weaver

“Much like in Davidson’s debut, ‘In the Valley of the Sun,’ the gothic, magical horror elements of ‘The Boatman’s Daughter’ come second to, and build upon, a darker, realistic depiction of violence ... Because the truly fantastical horror elements take time to emerge and only ever involve a portion of Davidson’s cast, men like a corrupt constable, John Avery, and even Billy Cotton read like the darker characters from the first season of ‘True Detective,’ a show with which Davidson’s novel shares the humid, hazy, vine-draped setting of the American south.”

### “The Boston Massacre: A Family History”

By Serena Zabin  
Reviewed by Dean Jobb

“The Boston Massacre was a turning point in the

march toward the War of Independence. Britain’s military might and colonists’ demands for liberty collided on Boston’s streets, with deadly results. In ‘The Boston Massacre: A Family History,’ historian Serena Zabin takes a fresh look at this historic milestone by shifting the focus to the human story that lies beneath this tragic and momentous incident.”

### “Notes from an Apocalypse”

By Mark O’Connell  
Reviewed by Colin Asher

“Part jeremiad and part travelogue, the book reports on the subcultures of doomsday preppers, billionaire survivalists and Mars-colony advocates. O’Connell visits the Alladale Wilderness Reserve, a vast expanse of land denuded by industrial activity that is being rewilded, and the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. The book is full of wry humor, and O’Connell is an earnest, self-effacing narrator wise enough to employ filial love as recurrent theme to give his book emotional ballast. His greatest virtue, however, is his talent as a critic and interpreter.”

### “Interior Chinatown: A Novel”

By Charles Yu  
Reviewed by Josh Denslow

“If you read Charles Yu’s ‘Interior Chinatown’ (and I strongly suggest you do), you’ll find that it kind of looks like a script. Indented dialogue throughout. Rampant scene headings, one of which gives us our book’s title. But it’s in the action where things are different. In these blocks of prose, ‘Interior Chinatown’ reveals itself to be a stunning novel about identity, race, societal expectations, and crippling anxiety told with humor and affection and a deep understanding of human nature.”

### “The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change”

By Hope Jahren  
Reviewed by Gretchen Lida

“One book isn’t going to solve the slow-motion catastrophe of a warming planet. It will, however, help readers understand the problem without making them run to the bunkers of fear, shame, denial and tribalism.”

### “They Went Left”

By Monica Hesse  
Reviewed by Caroline Bock

“Some wouldn’t choose a book about a Holocaust survivor as an antidote to a pandemic. Still, I found myself engrossed in Monica Hesse’s third historical YA novel, ‘They Went Left,’ set in 1945 Poland and Germany. As I read this immersive story from within my shelter-in-place suburban home, I kept thinking in a wry, melancholic way: *Things could be worse*. However, as I emerged from reading, I was glad it was 2020, not 1945.

### “Anxious People: A Novel”

By Fredrik Backman  
Reviewed by Robert Allen Papinchak

“As equally idiosyncratic and iconoclastic as Backman’s debut, it is an outrageously hilarious, flawless novel about ‘how a bank robber failed to rob a bank but instead managed to spark a hostage drama.’ It is the most bizarre heist story since Sidney Lumet’s ‘Dog Day Afternoon,’ with narrative nods to Ann Patchett’s ‘Bel Canto’ and O. Henry’s ‘The Ransom of Red Chief.’”



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## Former Linstead Resident Publishes “Kisses On The Wind”

Losing a loved one can be a crushing blow, especially for a child. Meg Kappel hopes her new book, “Kisses on the Wind,” can provide some hope to anyone shouldering that loss.

“I believe 100 percent in the book’s promise: love can be shared through time and space and even after death,” Kappel said. “Love never dies.”

In the magical adventure, friends Sequoia and Mohee grow up together fishing, swimming and exploring nature in their village. When war threatens, Mohee must join the battle, leaving Sequoia behind.

A 1973 graduate of Severna Park High School and a former Linstead resident, Kappel said the story was inspired by her own experiences.

“My father died suddenly when I was 18,” she said. “My entire family was devastated. This unimaginable loss led me to a lifelong search for answers: where do we go when



we die? Is death final? Does love live on? I found my answers, and this story began to take shape in my mind.”

Kappel now lives in Georgetown, Delaware, where she spent eight years writing “Kisses on the Wind.” Through a nationwide search, she found illustrator Samantha Silvas of Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.

“Although originally intended for children or young teens, the story and its vivid illustrations can be enjoyed at many different levels,” Kappel said. “A senior friend of mine said that her book club enjoyed it so much they ordered the book for gifts for their grandchildren.”

“Kisses on the Wind” is available through most book retailers and Amazon.

“These are stressful times that need more beauty, love and hope,” Kappel said. “This little book provides those for children, parents and grandparents alike.”

## If You Give A Girl A Donut

» Continued from page 33

outside, with decadent, rich cream inside and peeking out on the ends. Moving right along to the coconut, I savored the slightly sweet, nutty taste with a hint of lemon, and the fresh coconut.

Those are all classic donuts with classic flavors. I also thoroughly enjoyed the leftovers the next morning. My dad and I especially like day-old (or older) donuts dipped in strong hot coffee!

Donut Shack also has muffins, cinnamon buns, and cookies. I ordered a giant chocolate muffin and found it fresh, with enough deep chocolate flavor to satisfy the most addicted chocoholic. Filled to the brim, I forced myself to taste the large sugar cookie and found it soft, with a strong buttery vanilla flavor — yum!

When asked about customer favorites, front-of-house manager Deirdre Messick said glazed and sprinkled donuts are always popular. Still, the one that sells out daily is the “chop suey” — an apple fritter you can order with or without raisins. I didn’t get to sample this one because it was sold out.

The Donut Shack currently has a “Donut Madness” contest, pitting two donuts of the week against each other. Various offerings have included “the tux,” a classy chocolate-covered donut with white frill; pecan pie; salted caramel; or for the more adventur-

ous eater, crab, peanut butter jelly, and chips; and maple bacon donuts.

Messick said favorites from the contest might become permanent on the menu.

What’s a donut without coffee? Donut Shack serves Annapolis-based Ceremony Coffee, hot or iced. And, if you’re hungry for more than donuts, get lunch with a grab-n-go sandwich or salad provided by Severna Park’s Park Deli.

Donut Shack also gives back to the community. In the evenings, students from Severna Park and Broadneck high schools take leftover goodies to local nursing homes and to Lighthouse Shelter in Annapolis.

The Donut Shack usually is open 24 hours; however, due to COVID-19, the current hours are 6:00am to 8:00pm. Delivery is available on weekends. Check out Donut Shack online at [www.theshackisback.com](http://www.theshackisback.com) and keep up with new donuts and offerings by checking the Facebook page.

Stop in “The Shack” for a sweet treat, or maybe to talk over life with a friend.

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# “Mank” Is A Stunning Film That Examines Hollywood’s Seedy Side

By Julian Reese

In the film industry, the year 2020 has been characterized by straight-to-video releases, delayed premieres, and cancellations, and yet “Mank,” the new film from director David Fincher, may be one of the year’s finest films.

Fincher first saw acclaim in the ‘90s with the physiological thriller “Se7en” in 1995, followed in close proximity by “The Game” and “Fight Club.” He has enjoyed success with the more recent “Zodiac,” “The Social Network” and “Gone Girl.” Fincher planned to make “Mank” in the late ‘90s, but until now, the project had been shelved, as studios were not in agreement with his insistence to shoot in black and white. Now, after Fincher joined the trend of directors who have been pairing with Netflix to create films, “Mank” has been fully realized, and the result is dazzling.

Working from a script by Fincher’s late father, Jack Fincher, “Mank” tells the biographical story of cynical, alcoholic screenwriter Herman J. Mankiewicz (Gary Oldman) as he rushes to complete the screenplay for “Citizen Kane,” a film that has gone on to be commonly referred to as one of the greatest ever made. The film weaves two layers: the tribulations of Mankiewicz to write the script, and his dealings with Marion Davies (Amanda Seyfried) and Wil-



Photo courtesy of Netflix

*“Mank” tells the biographical story of screenwriter Herman J. Mankiewicz (Gary Oldman) as he rushes to complete the screenplay for “Citizen Kane.”*

liam Randolph Hearst (Charles Dance), told through flashbacks.

Much of the film seems to take inspiration from an article by famous film critic Pauline Kael entitled “Raising Kane,” which proffered that Orson Welles, “Citizen Kane” actor, director and co-writer, did not actually deserve writing credits for the film. However, film historians have indicated that the evidence within the article is largely untrue,

and Welles is rightfully credited (in “Citizen Kane,” he is given second writing credit, after Mankiewicz). This historical inaccuracy does, at points, bleed into “Mank” — fans of Welles will be disappointed with a certain scene toward the end — but ultimately, the film’s achievements shine through.

As is to be expected from Fincher, “Mank” boasts a riveting technical prowess. The attention to detail, and textured, rich sound design

present in all his previous efforts is on full display. The crisp and consistently stunning black-and-white photography, the period-authentic score from Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross, its elaborate set and costume work, and mono audio all work to give the film the feeling of classic Hollywood filmmaking contemporaneous to the era it sets itself in.

Although some critics have deemed “Mank” a love letter to the movies, and the very act of creating, it is certainly not all glitz and glamor. We are given an in-depth look at the seedy underbelly of Hollywood. Betting, corruption, superficiality and general unhappiness are all rampant. Many of the film’s flashbacks detail Hollywood’s role in an effective smear campaign against author Upton Sinclair and his attempt to run for political office (Sinclair is played in a brief cameo role by Bill Nye the Science Guy).

“Mank” is a wild ride that crackles and shines. Oldman and Seyfried are particularly enthralling to watch onscreen, and the film is a feast for the eyes. Expect “Mank” to rake in lots of nominations come award season. One of its many pleasures is that you can enjoy it within the comfort of your own home, safe from the hazardous risks that come with going to the theater nowadays, as the film started streaming on Netflix December 4.

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## Movies And Shows To Stream

### HAPPIEST SEASON

» Continued from page 33

This Hulu rom-com follows a couple, played by Kristen Stewart and Mackenzie Davis, who are seeking their families' acceptance while simultaneously trying not to ruin Christmas. The film features proposals plotting, secret relationships and holiday shenanigans. "Happiest Season" captures the real-life struggles of awkward family dinners and coming home for the holidays.

### JINGLE JANGLE: A CHRISTMAS JOURNEY

"Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey" is another Netflix original musical made especially with children in mind, with original music by Grammy award winners John Legend and Philip Lawrence. Forest Whitaker plays a toymaker who was betrayed by his apprentice, played by Keegan-Michael Key. All hope is lost until his granddaughter, played by Madalen Mills, restores the toymaker's spirit.



### OPERATION CHRISTMAS DROP



Starring Kat Graham and Alexander Ludwig, "Operation Christmas Drop" follows a congressional aide who is tasked with deciding whether or not to close a U.S Air Force base on Guam and its special Christmas tradition, Operation Christmas Drop. While the Netflix original is mostly fictional, the film is based off of the longest-running humanitarian effort coordinated by the Department of Defense. Operation Christmas Drop is a real-life mission in

which a military base on Guam parachutes gifts to remote neighboring islands. This is a feel-good, romantic movie with a heartwarming theme.

## Home For The Holidays At Toby's

Toby's Dinner Theatre in Columbia is welcoming patrons to an uplifting celebration called "Home for the Holidays" now through January 3. The theater is decked out for non-stop holiday entertainment filled with great music, humor and heart for kids of all ages.

Toby's Dinner Theatre has followed state and county guidelines to assure the health and safety of their employees and patrons. Toby's will open to a reduced capacity audience of 90 or less guests

per performance, with socially distanced table seating and mask requirements. Toby's

dinner buffet will be temporarily replaced with plated menu dinner service. Seating throughout the theater has been adjusted to allow for recommended distancing between tables.

Visit [www.tobysdinnertheatre.com](http://www.tobysdinnertheatre.com) to see the complete COVID-19 procedures page. Tickets are available by calling the box office at 410-730-8311 or by visiting [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).



The Severna Park Voice will publish its Health, Beauty & Fitness magazine in January. This glossy magazine will feature insight from local experts on the latest in health, wellness fitness and beauty.

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## Karen Olscamp Finishes Rewarding Career At UM BWMC

By Zach Sparks

For nearly 34 years at University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center (UM BWMC), Karen Olscamp has worn many hats, including president and CEO since 2008. As she looks forward to retirement in January 2021 and reflects on her career, she cites her variety of roles as something that kept her so engaged for so long.

"A career in health care is really meaningful and it's interesting," said Olscamp, a native of Buffalo, New York, who joined the hospital in 1987 as an administrative resident. "It's meaningful just in the incredible privilege and opportunity to impact people's lives, to make a difference in the world. At the same time, it is intellectually interesting. It's such a unique blend of science and business and human skills, and it's certainly not dull."

Olscamp often marvels at the "explosion of knowledge and technology" she has witnessed over the last three decades, from cancer-treating drugs to the University of Maryland Proton Center, which delivers radiation to patients via proton beams.

She has also overseen UM BWMC's growth to an organization with more than 3,500 employees and nearly 1,000 providers on staff.

"We are now the largest hospital within the 13-hospital University of Maryland



**Karen Olscamp**

system. We're one of the largest hospitals in Central Maryland," she said. "But we also provide complex and sophisticated care here, so we're the only hospital in the county to do intracranial neurosurgeries. We do robotic surgeries here. We do endovascular aortic procedures here."

With advances in technology and growth within the organization, UM BWMC was able to help more patients. In 2009, it opened the Pascal Women's Center, which provided pregnancy and childbirth care to the community after a 41-year hiatus. That same year, the medical center opened a new patient tower with 111 additional private rooms. During the last several years, UM BWMC has completed a \$31 million surgical suite expansion, launched a new electronic medical record system, opened new nursing units, constructed a second state-of-the-art endovascular suite, and increased the number of inpatient beds to the behavioral health and labor and delivery units.

Last year, the medical center was approved to construct a new five-story medical office

“*It's meaningful just in the incredible privilege and opportunity to impact people's lives, to make a difference in the world.*” — KAREN OLS CAMP

building that will feature space for outpatient specialty care, a retail pharmacy and community wellness center. It is scheduled to open in late 2021.

As University of Maryland Medical System President and CEO Mohan Suntha noted, Olscamp's contributions to UM BWMC and the community have been immense.

"Karen will be greatly missed across the University of Maryland Medical System for her leadership, compassion and wisdom," Suntha said. "We offer our deepest thanks for her tireless efforts for almost 34 years."

During Olscamp's time as president and CEO, UM BWMC has been honored by the American Heart Association, US News & World Report, the Maryland Patient Safety Center and the Leapfrog Group for its delivery of safe, high-quality care. She gives all credit to the employees at UM BWMC.

"Some of the most important things we do as leaders is to set the culture and develop good people, and then that strong culture really attracts good people," she said. "They are the driving force behind our organizational success. I'm very grateful for the people at BWMC who

allow us to provide that care, and then the awards come."

Awards offer one form of satisfaction, but Olscamp has been especially grateful for the outpouring of support during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019 alone, UM BWMC provided \$23 million in health education, preventative services and in-kind support of public health programs to vulnerable and underserved populations in the community. During the pandemic, the community has shown its gratitude for that investment as well as the unwavering care offered by UM BWMC's staff.

"They have been amazing and strong in so many ways," Olscamp said. "As an organization anchored in our community, we really came together with key partners and to answer the call of our community at the time of their greatest need. To me, that collective response has been a tremendous source of pride and inspiration for our organization. I'm so very grateful for our community and all they have done to support us."

Once the pandemic ends, Olscamp plans to travel to Antarctica, South Africa and Australia. In the meantime, she will spend time with family and friends.

"Retirement is a tremendous opportunity to reinvent myself," she said. "I may be retiring as CEO, but I'm not retiring from life, so it's a great opportunity and I'm excited about creating a new future."

## Give The Gift Of A Parasite-Free Holiday This Season

By Dr. Meghan Kapilevich

Associate Veterinarian  
VCA Calvert Veterinary Center

When budgeting for all the holiday spending this year, one of the temptations may be to not pick up a refill of your pet's heartworm preventative this winter. You may be thinking to yourself, "Does my pet really need heartworm preventative in the winter in Maryland?"

The answer to that is a resounding yes!

It is important to protect pets from heartworm disease all year. Heartworms are parasites that live in the heart and major blood vessels. They are transmitted to your pet by mosquitoes, and one bite from one mosquito is all that it takes for a pet to get heartworm disease. Dogs are the primary host of heartworms, but several other species including cats, ferrets and other mammals have been shown to get heartworm disease as well. Un-

fortunately, heartworms are present in all 50 states, so pets in all states must be protected.

While mosquitoes are less common in the colder months, they are occasionally still present. Mosquitoes are known to be able to adapt to colder environments and can remain alive long into the winter by finding warmer microhabitats, including inside of your house. This means that it is almost impossible to know the first day mosquitoes will be present, or when the last mosquito will die. If heartworm preventatives are started too late, or if they are ended too soon, your pet could be at risk from growing these worms inside their bloodstream.

Pets with heartworms may not show signs of disease right away. However, the longer the heartworms are present, the worse the signs become. Signs may range from a mild cough to lethargy, exercise intolerance, and more. The worst cases can have pets devel-

op severe disease such as heart failure and blood clots, which are life-threatening. These severe infections are difficult and expensive to treat, and many pets are not able to survive. This is why it is so important to prevent disease before it happens.

There are several types of heartworm preventatives available for pets, including oral preventatives such as Heartgard or Simparica Trio (which also covers fleas and ticks), topical preventatives such as Advantage Multi or Revolution, or injectable preventatives such as Proheart 12, an injectable product that protects your pet from heartworms for a full year. Preventatives have been proven to be safe, affordable and successful in protecting your pet against heartworm disease. However, if a pet has been off of preventatives, acquired heartworm disease and then preventatives are restarted, your pet is at risk of having the worms die so quickly

that they can cause their host (your pet) to go into shock and pass away. This is why we should never stop preventatives, even in the cooler months.

Many preventatives also help to treat intestinal parasites, including roundworms, whipworms and hookworms. These parasites can be picked up by pets any time of the year, and can spread to humans, causing disease in the entire family.

Because of the year-round risk of heartworm disease, as well as the benefits of intestinal parasite protection, it is important to keep your pets on heartworm preventatives year-round. Talk to your veterinarian about which option best fits your pet's lifestyle, medical history and budget.

If you have any questions about parasite prevention, contact VCA Calvert Veterinary Center at 410-360-7297 or online at [www.vcahospitals.com/calvert](http://www.vcahospitals.com/calvert).



# Thank you, KAREN OLSCAMP



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## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### The Blended Essentials Strives To Bring Community Together

By Haley Weisgerber

The Blended Essentials is more than just a candle store. Shoppers can swing by for a quick gift, a treat for themselves, or spend an evening with that special someone while making their own customized products. From its beginning, The Blended Essentials' goal has been to connect and build relationships with the greater Severna Park community.

The Blended Essentials started in the garage of the Bowen family in Severna Park. In the beginning, it was their creative 14-year-old daughter, Ella, and her scientist father, Lance, experimenting and making custom gifts for family and friends. After sharing the experience with a few friends, Lance and his wife, Danielle, expanded the concept into a studio space providing opportunities for individuals, small groups, families and friends to be creative and take a moment to connect. The Blended Essentials has become the blending and bonding experience for all of the greater Severna Park area.

"We are grateful to be part of the Severna Park community," said the shop owner, Danielle. "Based on the many great experiences with our customers, they have shared the joys of having a place where they can connect with friends and families without electronics being the main focus in a place where you can relax and not worry about cleaning up any of the messes."

Danielle, who has a background in education and community advocacy, and her husband, whose background is in science, use their individual skills to create a unique product line and experience. At The Blended Essentials, customers can create their own product.

"We have over 150 fragrances to choose from, or you can even blend your own scent," said Danielle. "We say that we are exclusively unique, meaning we have a completely customizable product line that is controlled by the creator, you."

Customers can schedule studio times for individuals, small groups or bring their family and friends for classes and parties. The Blended Essentials offers something



*Ella Bowen is the creator and inspiration of The Blended Essentials. Ella creates all of the bath bombs and is considered to be the "backbone of the company," according to her mom, Danielle.*

for the entire family. Kids programs include science classes reinforcing concepts like mass and density.

"We offer a variety of hands-on experiences including educational classes and engaging activities for kids and youth," said Danielle. "All of our experiences with both children and adults have an educational tie."

The Blended Essentials studio space is limited, allowing for small group engagement.

"We provided small group instruction during each of our experiences," said Danielle. "This experience has allowed us the opportunity to personally connect and engage with our customers. In these uncertain times, this concept is crucial as many youth and adults need a space where they feel comfortable both socially and

» Continued on page 44

## Chamber Update

**Liz League**  
CEO, Greater  
Severna Park and  
Arnold Chamber  
of Commerce



Please give a warm welcome to our newest members of the chamber: **Victoria Underhill of Morgan Stanley, Health and Taxes LLC, Nurture Wellness and Massage, Second Alarm Brew-house and Harbor Holistic Healing.**

On November 12, we held a fun ribbon-cutting celebrating Pic-N-Paint Pottery's 15 years of business success. The event was held at its Pasadena location, which boasts an incredible array of pottery to paint. Pic-N-Paint has holiday pottery, which can be the perfect gift, personalized by you! Be sure to visit for a great family or girls' night out, or even time for you.

This month's topic for Learn and Lead was Time Blocking 101. The session was led by **Doris Williams of the Williams Home Team of Taylor Properties.** We learned how to prioritize tasks and allocate time to make each day productive, something especially important at this time of year. Note: our meetings are always open to the public, so please join us if you see a topic of interest.

Our general membership luncheon was to be held in-person at **Hellas Restaurant and Lounge in Millersville**, and we converted it to an online event due to the announcement the day before about the rise in cases. We did not want to cancel on the restaurant, so we switched to carryout, and it was wonderful. The meals were ample and delicious, with generous sides and dessert. Hellas did a fantastic job in accommodating this last-minute change and we thank the staff for their hard work.

Our restaurant community is really struggling due to the restrictions. If you have scheduled a banquet or catered affair, please consider the carryout option. Guests are more than willing to pick up their meals, and you are supporting our food service businesses. When you cancel at the last minute, you are leaving the restaurant with food that it has ordered specifically for you, food that may not be able to sell, and the restaurant stands to lose thousands of dollars.

Again, it is so important to emphasize Buy Local or Bye Local. We urge you to check out our local businesses first for products, services and gift ideas. You will be pleased with the wonderful and unique selections offered, and you are supporting your local businesses that give us so much! You can get gift cards from just about everywhere.

We are so fortunate to have great entertainment venues that are COVID safe. EscapeTime, The Axe House — Annapolis, Severna Park Lanes, Severna Park Golf Center, The Blended Essentials, and Pic-N-Paint Pottery are all family friendly and fun! Please visit them as they are taking the utmost precautions to sanitize and ensure that their venues are safe.

We are very excited to announce our Trick or Tree at the Chamber event, to be held on Friday, December 11, from 5:00pm to 6:30pm at the chamber. The address is 1 Holly Avenue, Severna Park. We will have resource officers helping at the crosswalks, and people are urged to park and walk over to Holly Avenue. Instead of a tree lighting and performances where people gather, the tree will be lit already.

Our Grinch will provide the tricks, and Santa and the elves will provide the treats. Adults will get goodie bags filled with coupons and promotional items from our local businesses, and the kids will get candy. Many thanks to our sponsors; Chick-fil-A of Severna Park, Steak 'n Shake of Millersville, Minuteman Press of Crofton, Mathnasium, and Citizens for Heather Bagnall, and the businesses that donated the great items.

As we anticipate the end of this challenging year, we want the community to know that our businesses are working in overdrive with very little to sustain them. In true entrepreneurial spirit, they have quickly adjusted to new ways of doing business, implementing technology in a matter of days as opposed to months. Their creativity is astounding, and they are persevering as best as possible. Amid all their losses, they continue to support local nonprofits, raising money for food banks and homeless shelters. Please support them by shopping local, eating local and giving local! We would love to have you join us, even as a member of the community. You can find out more at [www.gspacc.com](http://www.gspacc.com) or email me at [ceo@gspacc.com](mailto:ceo@gspacc.com) and call 410-647-3900.

# Severna Park CEO Leads World's Second-Fastest-Growing Company

By Zach Sparks

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

When Fortune magazine released its annual list of fastest-growing companies at the end of October, health and wellness company Medifast ranked ahead of Netflix, Amazon and other



**Dan Chard**  
CEO Medifast

popular businesses. When he saw the report, Dan Chard smiled. In the middle of a pandemic, the world's second-fastest-growing company was based in Baltimore, with a CEO from Severna Park.

Dan and his wife, Allyson, moved to Linstead from New York City four years ago. Since then, they have become immersed in the community, with Dan taking over as bishop of the 450-member congregation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The family found a home in Severna Park after Dan finished his previous job working for an affiliate of The Carlyle Group, which tasked him with taking a company from public to private and growing it. With Medifast, he would have to grow a company that was enduring "a challenging time," but it was

a mission that captured his enthusiasm.

"The space, which is health and wellness, specifically focused on re-educating people on how to live a healthy lifestyle, which was very much on trend, if you will," Dan said. "Depending what you use to measure the size of the opportunity, two-thirds of Americans are overweight or obese. People don't exercise as much as they need to. They're not getting enough sleep. They don't know the basics about how to take care of their bodies from a hydration standpoint. So all of those things have been heading the wrong way despite the science continuing to show us those are really important elements for long-term health."

Medifast teaches people how to build healthy habits. They do this by working with Optavia coaches. Optavia, Dan explained, is the brand for Medifast's community of coaches.

"The people are part of a like-minded community who are all on this health journey together," Dan said. "It's not easy. Changing habits is one of the most difficult things we do. So being able to be linked with that community across the country is another important part."

"Four years ago, we looked at ourselves as a manufacturer and distributor of products," Dan said. "Now we look at ourselves as a

provider of this coaching system structure and supported byproducts."

Medifast also made Fortune's list of fastest-growing companies in 2019, ranking 36th, after seeing 42 percent growth. Fortune ranked companies in 2020 using three metrics: revenue growth rate, earnings-per-share growth rate, and three-year annualized total return for the period ending June 30.

Long term, Medifast executives aspire to take their model and expand it beyond their current markets in the U.S. and Asia-Pacific (Hong Kong and Singapore). They also want to surpass \$1 billion in revenue and grow from the current 42,000 Optavia coaches to 50,000.

The best part of that growth, Dan said, is having the opportunity to help more people, one healthy habit at a time. That's why 90 percent of the Optavia coaches are former clients.

"A typical client is someone who has failed on this health journey before, either because they tried to go on a diet and maybe they lost some weight and gained it back, or because they tried to get on a consistent exercise regiment, or they were trying to eat healthier and didn't know how," Dan said. "When they discovered a different way of doing it through these coaches, they have this im-

mense gratitude and engagement, and part of that engagement and the desire to keep themselves accountable often translates into wanting to pay it forward and helping other people discover what they discovered. They receive compensation for doing it, but they largely are doing it because they believe in the mission of the company and they want to help other people."

Dan has met people all over the world through his work, but the Chard family has lived all over the globe, too. After graduating from Brigham Young University, Dan and Allyson moved to Hong Kong, eventually moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, and later lived in Frankfurt, Germany. Now, Dan and Allyson are empty nesters, with one daughter living in New York, one living in Boston and one finishing her senior year at Brigham Young.

"We all love to ski. We don't do that as much in Maryland, but we have developed a love for the Chesapeake Bay and the water life around Annapolis," Dan said. "We found there is something almost equally engaging about the water as there is about the mountains. So we enjoy both sides of the country, but for now we're extremely grateful to be having this experience in Maryland, particularly in the Annapolis-Severna Park area."

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# Consider These Year-End Financial Moves



**Brian M. Conrad**  
Financial Advisor

**W**e're nearing the end of 2020, and for many of us, it will be a relief to turn the calendar page on this challenging year. However, we still have a few weeks left, which means you have time to make some year-end financial moves that may work in your favor.

## Add to your IRA

For the 2020 tax year, you can deposit up to \$6,000 to your traditional or Roth IRA, or \$7,000 if you're 50 or older. If you haven't reached this limit, consider adding some money. You actually have until April 15, 2021, to contribute to your IRA for 2020, but the sooner you put the money in, the quicker it can go to work for you. Plus, if you have to pay taxes in April, you'll be less likely to contribute to your IRA then.

## Make an extra 401(k) payment

If it's allowed by your employer, put in a little extra to your 401(k) or similar retire-

ment plan. And if your salary goes up next year, increase your regular contributions.

## See your tax advisor

It's possible that you could improve your tax situation by making some investment-related moves. For example, if you sold some investments whose value has increased, you could incur capital gains taxes. To offset these gains, you could sell other investments that have lost value, assuming these investments are no longer essential to your financial strategy. Your tax advisor can evaluate this type of move, along with others, to determine those that may be appropriate for your situation.

## Review your investment mix

As you consider your portfolio, think about the events of these past 12 months and how you responded to them. When COVID-19 hit early in the year, and the financial markets plunged, did you find yourself worrying constantly about the losses you were taking, even though they were just on "paper" at that point? Did you even sell investments to "cut your losses" without waiting for a market recovery? If so, you might want to consult a financial professional to determine if your investment mix is still

appropriate for your goals and risk tolerance, or if you need to make some changes.

## Evaluate your need for retirement plan withdrawals

If you are 72 or older, you must start taking withdrawals — technically called required minimum distributions, or RMDs — from your traditional IRA and your 401(k) or similar retirement plan. Typically, you must take these RMDs by December 31 every year. However, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act suspended, or waived, all RMDs due in 2020. If you're in this age group, but you don't need the money, you can let your retirement accounts continue growing on a tax-deferred basis.

## Think about the future

Are you saving enough for your children's college education? Are you still on track toward the retirement lifestyle you've envisioned? Or have your retirement plans changed because of the pandemic? All of these issues can affect your investment strategies, so you'll want to think carefully about what decisions you may need to make.

Looking back — and ahead — can help you make the moves to end 2020 on a positive note and start 2021 on the right foot.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.*

*Edward Jones, Member SIPC*

## The Blended Essentials

» Continued from page 42  
emotionally."

Danielle and Lance provide ongoing professional development and training for their staff. Each staff member is assigned a task that utilizes their individual talents and strengths. Some are in charge of creating products, working parties and even running entire programs. Ella is even involved as the shop's youngest employee.

Ella Bowen, who Danielle refers to as the "backbone of the company," comes up with creative products, like Play-Doh bubble bath, and makes all of the bath bombs for The Blended Essentials.

The Bowen family has strived to collaborate with many local businesses in the area. They have created exclusive, signature candles for The Big Bean, hosted events with Annapolis Home Brew, taught cooking lessons with The Kids Table, hosted a Yoga & Candles event with Mantra Fit, provided education on the use of essential oils with the Natural Healing Project, and even partnered with its neighbors at Gallery 564 and local artist Christalene Karaiskakis to both decorate the shop and give customers the opportunity to purchase their art.

"The community is what makes our shop," said Danielle. "If we don't have a community supporting us, we wouldn't exist. We want the community to enjoy, and have them be a part of what we do. We look forward to many new adventures in 2021."

One of the more popular and recent examples of The Blended Essentials' community involvement is the shower blast program. When a customer buys two shower blasts, one will be donated to a health care worker. The shower blasts are a small gesture of gratitude to those working on the frontline of the pandemic.

"The way it started was a doctor who purchased shower blasts at the beginning of the pandemic who stated she was purchasing them for herself because her shifts were so long," said Danielle. "She said it was like a 15-minute reprieve."

As of November, The Blended Essentials has supplied almost 200 shower blasts to health care workers all over the country. As COVID-19 cases begin to rise again, Danielle said the purchases have increased.

The pandemic has taught Danielle the importance of flexibility, and one of the ways that The Blended Essentials has achieved that is by regularly updating the online store. The team has begun to offer take-home party kits, candle and bath bomb kits, and a variety of other products on the website for people who are not comfortable coming into the shop.

"A lot of people are making candles or soaps at home during quarantine," said Danielle. "We have a lot of people coming here because this is one of the local places where you can find fragrances with this much variety."

The staff at The Blended Essentials has worked hard to create an environment that makes customers and staff comfortable and safe. Parties are limited beyond county and state guidelines, and strict sanitizing routines have been implemented on all surfaces, materials and tools.

There will be a variety of great deals this holiday season. The online store will be updated regularly, and The Blended Essentials offers curbside pickup or delivery for a small fee.

The Blended Essentials is located at 562 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard in the Severna Park Village shopping center. To learn more, visit [www.theblendedessentials.com](http://www.theblendedessentials.com) or call 410-544-2050.

## Homestead Gardens Launches Native Habitat Center

**R**ecognizing the importance of using sustainable plant materials to ensure a healthy habitat to support our ecoregional biodiversity, Homestead Gardens has established The Native Habitat Center. Dr. Doug Tallamy, professor of wildlife ecology and world-renowned author of several books on the subject, announced the opening of the center this fall on the "Katie Dubow Live" garden show.

The goal of the center is to improve the immediate environment in the critical area of the Chesapeake Bay watershed by educating and advocating for the use of native plant material sourced within a 50-mile radius. Over the last three decades of increased development, disturbed and compacted soil, and the increase of residential lawns, have contributed to an incredible loss to habitat and reduction in the biodiversity of plants, animals and insects that are necessary for a healthy environment.

It is also important to note that Anne Arundel County is in the known migratory path of many birds, butterflies and other pollinators that use this environment as a habitat during their travels along the mid-Atlantic. The Native Habitat Center will

provide education and native plant material to help the community preserve and restore the fragmented habitat of migratory and indigenous species. Even in the backyard, it has been proven that native plants are effective in providing security for the biodiversity that maintains a healthy environment.

At the core of The Native Habitat Center is education and invoking an awareness in the community. Through workshops and online guest speakers, video engagements on Homestead Gardens' social media pages, and the addition of four in-house native plant ambassadors located in The Native Habitat Center in Homestead's nursery, the public will have a source for accurate information on what true natives are, what is included in our ecoregion as well as what beneficial biodiversity can mean for the immediate environment through building up native plant communities. Homestead is pleased to offer the top 40 trees shrubs, and perennials that promote immediate restoration to the environment. Each season, Homestead Gardens will offer more native plant materials that are necessary to build plant communities that will promote extended benefits to the environment.

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## RIBBON CUTTINGS

### Pic-N-Paint Pottery Turns 15

*Pic-N-Paint Pottery celebrated 15 years in business on November 12. Owner Mary Orzano marked the milestone with a ribbon-cutting ceremony organized by Liz League of the Greater Severna Park & Arnold Chamber of Commerce. The studio is located at 3020 Mountain Road in Pasadena.*



### Buon Compleanno: Capri Pizza & Sub Express Turns 30

*Karen and Giuseppe "Joe" Misuraca, along with their four children, celebrated Capri Pizza's 30th anniversary on November 19 by giving free food to customers.*

**K**aren Misuraca likes to say that she has five children, and her first was Capri Pizza & Sub Express, the Glen Burnie restaurant she and Sicilian-born husband Guiseppe "Joe" Misuraca opened in 1990. The Severna Park residents celebrated the milestone on November 19 during a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce.

"I feel so humbled to grow up with the community, not only to serve and make them food and do what we love to do, but it's like our whole community is our family," Karen said. "People came in when they were young,

and now they're parents or grandparents, and they look at our pictures. It's like a Cheers kind of place. It's just feels comfortable here, you feel like home, and I'm really proud of the place."

When Karen and Joe migrated from Queens, New York, to Maryland, they were engaged but without children. Starting a business was hard work then and it is hard work now, Karen said.

"Back in the day, we were here around the clock," Karen recalled. "I was making a cheesesteak while I was in labor with Rosalia, so I actually had to be like, 'Hon, I have to get to

the hospital now. I have to drop this cheesesteak.' So that was a funny story, but now we have it down to a science. Our staff is great, and the children are always helping when we need them. Our daughter, Regina, runs the place with us, and she has been wonderful."

Karen and Joe hope that Regina will take over the business when they eventually step away, although she has several other interests. In the immediate future, they look forward to celebrating another milestone in June: the birth of their grandchild, courtesy of their son, Sal, and his wife, Maddy.

As Karen, Joe and their children — Rosalia, Regina, Sal and Katie — joked with longtime customers and friends on November 19, the attendees praised the family for their remarkable service. Councilman Andrew Pruski shared that the family delivered food to his home when he got COVID-19 earlier this year.

Asked about the secret recipe to success, Karen said, "You have to be here all the time and watch your product and make sure it's consistent. You can't just come in and smile and leave for a couple of days. There's been a lot of blood, sweat and tears but also a lot of love."

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