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SEVERNA PARK, MD

MARCH 2021

Welcome Back, Students



At Benfield Elementary, students were excited to see their teachers and friends on March 1.

Teachers and administrators from Anne Arundel County Public Schools cheerfully welcomed the return of elementary school students on March 1 and students from grades 6, 9 and 12 on March 8. All other students who chose to return will do so » Continued on page 2



As valued members of the school community, SROs are welcomed to school-sponsored events like concerts, football games, graduations and theatrical performances. Severna Park High SRO Alex Swartz attended an event for the 2019 SPHS homecoming dance and Rock 'N' Roll Revival.



Legislature To Defund Police In Public Schools?

By John Singleton

Selected representatives from Montgomery, Charles and Prince George's counties have drafted legislation that could affect the safety and security of all Maryland children.

Led by Montgomery County Democrats Gabriel Acevero and Jheanelle Wilkins, House Bill 1089, known as the Police Free Schools Act, is designed to prohibit school districts from contracting with local law enforcement agencies to employ school resource officers (SROs) in public schools.

The idea may be popular in Montgomery County but not in Severna Park.

"We've been operating in a COVID-related state of emergency for a year," said Elizabeth Werner, wife of school resource officer Alex Swartz, who is assigned to Severna Park High School (SPHS). "Making drastic decisions before we get public health and student safety under control is not a good idea. SROs are trained in crisis management, including comprehensive COVID-related support and intervention."

Severna Park resident Linda DeMoss agrees. "Removing school resource officers from Anne Arundel County is a terrible idea," DeMoss said. "This is a program

that has been working successfully for 20 years. It integrates trained law enforcement officers into the school environment, embracing them as a natural part of the community."

A trial run for this new legislation was launched in November 2020 by Montgomery County councilmembers William Jawando and Hans Riemer when they introduced a bill to remove school resource officers from their county's public schools, redirecting the dollars to mental health and restorative justice programs.

"There's a flood of legislation being » Continued on page 8

Maryland Lawmakers Discuss Virtual Schools As Permanent Option

Delegate Kathy Szeliga, a Republican representing Harford and Baltimore counties, has introduced House Bill 1170, Primary and Secondary Education - Virtual Schools, a bill that would provide Maryland families with access to a tuition-free, full-time online public school option for their children. The

bill was cross-filed in the Senate by Senator Ed Reilly, who represents District 33 in Anne Arundel County.

If passed, the bills will authorize the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), a county board of education, or a public institution of higher education to establish a statewide virtual school. Students

may enroll in any virtual school in the state, regardless of where they live.

Under current law, the MSDE or a local board can establish a virtual school that is not statewide.

The House of Delegates' Ways and Means Committee held a hearing for » Continued on page 2

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Margueritte Mills
**Volunteer
 Of The Month**

Woods Church Volunteer Dedicates Retirement To Youth

By Haley Weisgerber

Many people spend their retirements golfing or taking trips to Florida while others, like Victor Marone, spend their retirement building houses and inspiring the youth at Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church. Marone, a former engineer, has been an important part of the youth ministry at Woods for over a decade.

"Some people would say, 'Gee, you're retired, you could be playing golf,'" Marone said. "I play golf and I'm a big sailor. I just enjoy working with the youth. So that becomes a priority in my retirement."

Marone started volunteering so he could spend more time with his grandchildren going through the programs at Woods.

"My grandchildren got me into this youth activity stuff," Marone said, "and they have since graduated, and I'm still there."

Marone said he never thought about whether he would leave the program after his grandchildren; it just happened. Now, he is more dedicated than ever.

"He has devoted so much of his time to young people, but more importantly, he shows unconditional love to them," said Nancy Jackson, who nominated Marone for Volunteer of the Month. "He is truly a role model for all who are fortunate enough to be with him."

Marone and his wife teach Sunday school from September through May,



Victor Marone was named the March Volunteer of the Month for his work with the youth ministry program at Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church.

and he is on the leadership team for the high school youth ministry. The classes have switched to the virtual format during the pandemic, but Marone has stayed active. His biggest project, however, is the annual WoodsWork trip.

WoodsWork is a mission trip with Habitat for Humanity. A group of over 100 students and a team of adults work through 10 days to build multiple houses for families in need. The trip is student-led, but Marone acts as an advisor, recruiting and assisting students along the way. A committee of five adults and 12 or 13 students plan the trip from September to July. They plan orientations and construction demonstrations.

Marone oversees all of this planning, and he is present on the job site each day of the trip.

"It is quite an undertaking," Marone explained. "We do three houses in basically five work days. We take the house from bare foundation to totally framed in with roof windows, doors, interior walls, and sometimes we get the siding on the house. It is hard to believe that you could do that in five days of work."

Marone has been on many other mission trips with the youth ministry at Woods. He has spent countless nights sleeping on air mattresses or cots, and has traveled as far north as Ohio and as far south as Georgia for building trips or fun trips. He has gotten to know many students from all over Anne Arundel County, and even from other churches, who have joined him on a trip or for Sunday school.

"They are such a joy to work with," Marone said. "I get so much satisfaction out of working with them and seeing what they're willing to do at this young age, that it's energized me to keep doing it."

Marone said he keeps in touch with many of the students who have moved on and he values those lasting relationships. For him, dedicating his free time to students and teaching them valuable life lessons is what retirement is all about.

"What is the fate of the next generation worth?" Marone said. "It's worth everything. And so that's what motivates me."

Lawmakers Discuss Virtual Schools

» Continued from page 1

the House bill on March 3.

"COVID's been terrible in so many ways, but one way that we can see some positive things is that we now know some students actually really thrive in this environment," Szeliga said. "...I think this would allow that to continue happening for the students and families across our state."

Testimony came mostly from supporters of the bill. Christie Jackson gave her perspective as a special educator.

"Over my 19 years of experience as a special educator, I have been privileged to work with students of all walks of life, but mostly students with disabilities," she said. "I have watched students try to fit into the public brick and mortar traditional school system, which works for most students, however, over my years, I can think of so many students who would have benefited from an online virtual school option had it been available to them."

Dayana Bergman opposed the bill, saying that even prior to COVID-19, her home of Baltimore County has provided students with access to eLearning and Home and Hospital options

(for students with certified physical illnesses, emotional conditions or pregnancy conditions).

Under this legislation, the virtual school would be exempt from state policies or regulations relating to attendance, curriculum, class size, instruction, staffing ratios, professional development, and textbooks.

"I don't understand how we could have state dollars with no oversight," Bergman said.

Only up to 1 percent of school-aged children from any county (or Baltimore City) can enroll in any particular statewide virtual public school.

Szeliga admitted the virtual option is just that, a choice, and that it would not be best for everyone.

"I know that full-time online public school isn't for everyone, but I also know that it's the right fit for a growing number of families," Szeliga said. "Now is the time to enable Maryland's public schools to give students the option to thrive in virtual learning."

Both bills have not yet reached a vote by the full House of Delegates or Senate. To stay updated on their progress, search for HB1170 or SB941 at www.mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite.

Welcome Back



» Continued from page 1
 on March 22.

Students at all three levels will attend class in school buildings on either Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday each week. All learning takes place virtually on Wednesday, when schools undergo a thorough cleaning.

Approximately 39 percent of elementary school students will return in a hybrid format. For middle school, the families of 36 percent of children chose to return, and for high school, about 34 percent will return.

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Publishers

Dianna Lancione
 Lonnie Lancione

V.P., Operations

Brian Lancione

V.P., Business Development

Jonathan Katz

Account Executives

Petra Roche
 Larry Sells

Editor

Zach Sparks

Editorial Assistant

Haley Weisgerber

Reporters

Molly Beirsto
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 Desirae Martins
 Kevin Murnane
 Alex Murphy
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Heather Bagnall
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 Ellen Kinsella
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 Lauren Burke Meyer
 Sid Saab
 Dana Schallheim

Contributors

Joe Bocek
 Dr. Christine Calvert
 Brian Conrad
 David Diggs
 Jason LaBarge
 Krista Latchaw
 Beth Nolan
 Kristen Mase

Student Intern

Logan Hill

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spvnews@severnaparkvoice.com

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Officer, Sergeant, Detective Earn Police Awards

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Working for a police department might often seem like a thankless job, but three members of Anne Arundel County Police Department's Eastern District were recognized by the Police-Community Relations Council (PCRC) on February 17.

The PCRC from each district chooses an Officer of the Year, Sergeant of the Year and Detective of the Year annually after reviewing nominations from supervisors. Here are this year's honorees.:

Officer Of The Year Nicolas Conforti

When crime gets bad in areas of Anne Arundel County, officer Nicolas Conforti is frequently called upon to identify and arrest people driving the crime rates. As the leader for Platoon 4, the largest of all the patrol platoons, he frequently leads the department in overall traffic enforcement and consistently leads the platoon in numbers of arrests each month.

When nominating Conforti for the Officer of the Year award, Lieutenant Glenn Shanahan noted that during 2020, Conforti averaged a combined 159 citations, safety equipment repair orders, warnings and/or parking tickets each month.

"He had a total of five [controlled dangerous substances] distribution arrests and a total of six recovered loaded handgun arrests for the year 2020," Shanahan said. "In the collective memories of platoon supervision, we cannot recall anyone with as many handgun arrests during a calendar year. The quality of his work product has been nothing short of phenomenal."

Conforti joined the department in March 2019 with a goal of listening to other people in the police department and learning from their experiences.

"I'm a relatively new and young officer, so I'm always trying to learn as much as I can to assist me with doing this job, and the other half of it is to then go out there and start applying what I've learned," he said. "I'm always learning new ways to look for criminal activity, and by then applying techniques I've learned, it works to turn a simple traffic stop into much more than just a vehicle violation."

Conforti said his goal every day is to come home feeling like he did something important.



(L-R) Detective Michael Mulford, Chief Amal Awad, Sergeant Matthew Ploor, Officer Nicolas Conforti and Captain Jeffrey Silverman celebrated during this year's Eastern District police awards event.

"I think lots of the time, it's easy to get caught up and think that you aren't changing anything or doing much good," he said. "For me, getting this award and seeing the citizens that are responding positively to the work I'm doing just reassures me that I am doing good for the community."

Sergeant of the Year Matthew Ploor

A 15-year veteran of the Anne Arundel County Police Department, Matthew Ploor was chosen as Sergeant of the Year because of his work ethic and dedication to the concept of community policing. In his written nomination of Ploor, Lieutenant Michael Ashburn commended the sergeant's investigative and operational abilities, "sound decision making" and crime-fighting techniques.

"This year, Sergeant Ploor not only handled his area of responsibilities within the district but also was made aware of and researched a residence within Eastern District that became known as a nuisance house," Ashburn wrote. "...In doing so, since then, we have received a significant decrease in the calls for service on that street and are rarely related to that residence."

Communication and common sense are vital skills needed for the job, Ploor said.

"One skill without the other leads to misinformation, indecision and a lack of transparency within any subject matter," he said. "I'm very fortunate to currently work for commanders who fully support my efforts in the continuance of community relations in the Eastern District."

Ploor said he is most proud of the relationships he has built with communities while working in the patrol division. He is humbled to be named Sergeant of the Year.

"Winning this award is a great career accomplishment that, quite frankly, I didn't believe was attainable," Ploor said. "I'd like to thank all of the citizens of Anne Arundel County, the PCRC board, Eastern District officers and commanders, and Chief Amal Awad for their continued support."

Detective of the Year Michael Mulford

Described as a "constant team player" by his supervisor, Sergeant Bryan Isaac, Michael Mulford was named Detective of the Year.

"I know that I can count on him to investigate all cases to the fullest, gather all pertinent information, and complete a clear and concise report," Isaac said. "He constantly portrays a professional image as a detective with the Anne Arundel County Police Department. Sad-

ly, he is retiring in May 2021 after almost 35 years as a law enforcement officer."

Mulford said those 35 years of combined service to Baltimore City and Anne Arundel County would not have been possible without the support of his wife and son as he missed many holidays, birthdays and family outings.

"This 'job' is a profession and takes a dedicated person and very supporting cast to navigate," he said. "Luckily, our family survived the bumpy roads, and we look forward to my last working day with no regrets. There were several cases, including homicide, sex offense, and burglary cases that were investigated to a satisfying conclusion, but they take a back seat to family."

Mulford was also a mentor to younger detectives.

"Being an officer on the street can be overwhelming, especially if you don't have a good role model or mentor as a young officer," Mulford added. "Officers have to wear many 'hats' and are expected to be perfect in every action we take."

Mulford said it feels great to be recognized.

"I've always put my heart and soul into this job and the cases I have been assigned, and I really don't need an award to validate that fact, but again, it's great to be acknowledged," he said. "I told my wife that they were just throwing a bone to the old guy on the way out."

Preschool Founder And Former Director Pat Miller Dies

Patricia "Pat" Woodall Miller, 86, died peacefully on February 8, 2021. She joined family members previously called home: her parents, C.G. and Edythe Porter Woodall, and her son, James Douglas Miller.

Born and raised in Kentucky, she graduated from Lafayette High School in Lexington. She attended the University of Kentucky, where she studied home economics and was a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority. She met the love of her life, Ted, a professor of mechanical engineering, and after a



Pat Miller

whirlwind courtship, Pat married Ted at Calvary Baptist Church. The couple moved to Los Angeles, where Ted worked for Hughes Aircraft and Pat worked for the Frito Lay Company.

In 1965, the family moved to Severna Park, where Pat founded and directed a preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds at Severna Park United

Methodist Church. The school became known as the "Snoopy School" and served a community need as the school filled to capacity quickly and expanded to a staff of six teachers and aides. Pat loved her students and would regale her family with stories of the children every night at dinner.

In 1993, Pat joined Ted in retirement. They moved to Williamsburg, Virginia, where they designed and commissioned their dream home in Ford's Colony and had an active social life with friends. Not being one to

"retire-retire," Pat became active in community affairs and served as a chair of Caring Neighbors, a group providing support and assistance to local residents in need. She also started a gift-giving program for children at Sentara Hospital, where she and Ted worked as volunteers. Pat is survived by Ted, her daughter Lisa Lynne Miller, brother Thomas Woodall of Frederick, Maryland, and granddaughter Bethany Ruth Miller of Lake Worth, Florida. Remembrances may be directed to a charitable cause of one's choice.

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We want to give a huge shout-out to Julie Shay and the Good Neighbors Group, and also to the local communities in the greater Severna Park area for a record-breaking S(ou)per Bowl Neighborhood Food Drive. SPAN's pantries have never been so full, thanks to the generosity of our local neighborhoods who — in a friendly competition — vied for the championship title! With over 44 neighborhoods competing, and over 20,500 items donated, the winners were Cape McKinsey, Round Bay and West Severna Park. To celebrate, Cafe Mezzanotte came to these neighborhoods with a free delivery! SPAN was a drop-off point for the food drive, but its bounty was also shared with the Tyler Heights Pop-up Pantry, the West Annapolis Pop-up Pantry, ACAN and the Lighthouse Shelter. We are deeply grateful to Nancy Stow, Bob Nutter, Linda Murphy, Lori Pagnanelli, Ken Jacobs, Pat Blanchfield and the numerous other pantry volunteers who worked (and are still working) many long hours to date, sort and store all the donations.

We are also thankful for our member churches for their faithful support with their financial pledges, and all the other donors who give what they can. SPAN uses financial

donations to help local families in need with utilities, eviction prevention, prescription medication, medical costs and more. We have seen donors give \$5 and apologize because it wasn't more. Believe us when we tell you that your \$5 donation is just as important as your neighbor's \$100 donation! In fact, our finances are built up of many \$5 and \$10 donations. And all are equally appreciated!

Please take a moment to go to the *Severna Park Voice's* website and fill out the ballot for the Best of Severna Park for 2021. We hope you'll vote for SPAN for Best Nonprofit. SPAN has been serving local families in need for 31 years, and all of your donations to SPAN will stay in Anne Arundel County. With your help, we are hoping to get this honor for the third year in a row!

SPAN (Serving People Across Neighborhoods) is an independent nonprofit food pantry and emergency services provider that has been helping local families with eviction prevention, utility turnoffs, medical/prescription bills, and food since 1990. SPAN serves 14 zip codes in Anne Arundel County. SPAN is located behind Our Shepherd Lutheran Church at 400 Benfield Road in Severna Park. Hours are Monday through Thursday from 10:00am-12:45pm. For more information, call 410-647-0889, email spanhelps@yahoo.com or visit www.spanhelps.org. Financial donations may be made through the website. Food donations may be dropped off anytime using the storage bin behind SPAN's building. Please "like" SPAN on Facebook!

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Beyond Numbers: Remembering Coach Shelton

Lauren Burke Meyer



By now, everyone has heard that former Severna Park High School field hockey coach Lillian "Lil" Shelton — who passed away on January 24 at the age of 90 — won 31 county titles, 29 regional titles and 20 state championships. However, Shelton was so much more than the winningest high school coach in Maryland's history. Here are some of the behind-the-scenes stories from two of her former players, who, like hundreds of other players, were profoundly impacted by coach Shelton.

My story begins with my older sister, Kristen, who was also a Falcon field hockey player. At 6-foot-3, Kristen owned the longest field hockey stick made. I went to all her games and quickly knew I hoped to follow in her footsteps and play too. I'm 5-foot-10. The Burke sisters were better built for basketball or volleyball instead of the backbreaking sport, but we couldn't resist joining the incredible program and culture that Shelton built.

"Coach Shelton had an incredible amount of energy and stamina at her age when I played for her," said Kristen Burke. "It's remarkable to think that she was in her early 70s and spending additional time with her players outside of practice and games with ski trips, team dinners and sleepovers. Her spirit was contagious, and she created so many positive memories that I cherish to this day."

I loved going to Kristen's end-of-year banquets and seeing the thoughtful gifts that Shelton gave to every player. Players who scored three goals in a game would receive a literal and physical hat trick. A mini straw hat with blue puff paint that read, "Hat trick." Coach Shelton also used to put soda cans in each corner of the goal. Then, everyone would line up along the circle and aim shots at the cans. At the banquet, girls were rewarded a soda of their choosing for every can knocked down. Watching teenage girls lugging home cases of Cherry Coke or Mountain Dew certainly caught my attention.

When my banquet time came, Shelton gave me a beautiful wooden butterfly in honor of my "social butterfly" moments. She took the time to get to know all of her players. We were a bunch of adolescents trying to figure it out, but sometimes I think she knew us better than we knew ourselves.

Another fond memory my sister and I love to laugh about was how Shelton opened her home to her players for an annual sleepover. However, she had more guests stop by than she bargained for and definitely not enough snacks for the uninvited.

On the night of her sleepovers, high school boys would dance in their underwear outside of Shelton's house. They'd do the "On the Line" cheer that involved a can-can complete with high kicks. This was one of many cheers all field hockey players sang, and it was sung by junior varsity players during halftime of varsity games and vice versa. Yes, a can-can was also done at halftimes. Those masked gentlemen and guilty party can breathe a sigh of relief that you will remain anonymous, for now. I can see Shelton's backyard from my own home and can't help but smile thinking about this silliness.

One of my favorite traditions was creating "buttons" once a season. These were construction paper creations with candy and a slogan to inspire teammates on game day. For instance, "Roll over the competition" with Rolo candies. I'm proud of my slogan, "We could beat you now or later" with the complementary Now & Laters. I enjoyed getting my feet wet with an early career interest in advertising.

I could go on and on about my cherished memories. However, it's not until looking back now that I realize the most valuable lesson Shelton instilled in her players: discipline — on and off the field. Shelton always said, "Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect." The three-hour practices were a result of that, and when game time arrived, her players were prepared. Outside of practices and games, it took a lot of responsibility and planning to participate in the team dinners, bagel breakfasts and making sister bags filled with snacks (or mostly junk food).

These lessons of discipline have served me well in my life and in my sister's life, as well as Shelton's other players, several of whom went on to play sports in college. I like thinking about Shelton's ripple effect too. How her memory will live on in her players who go on to coach or inspire their daughters to play sports too. I know it certainly has for me.

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."

Defunding Police

» Continued from page 1

generated by the political leadership right now that is not always well known to the public and it's aimed at removing security personnel from our schools," said Delegate Sid Saab, a Republican who represents Severna Park in District 33. "I wholeheartedly support keeping SROs in schools. Defunding them is a huge mistake."

Additional legislation includes the Counselors Not Cops Act, House Bill 496, which reassigns \$10 million away from the Maryland Safe Schools Fund into counseling services.

During a hearing on February 3, Wilkins explained why she sees a need for the legislation. About 70 percent of school-based arrests, she said, are for minor offenses like disruption, disrespect, trespassing and property destruction, and altercations that don't involve weapons.

"It's not just about the arrests though; it's also use of force with students where we've seen students kicked, slapped, punched, taken to the ground," Wilkins said. "We've seen handcuffing and restraint. And oftentimes, students might not be arrested, but they are referred to the justice system for minor violations, and it's the trauma of armed police patrolling our schools."

Another bill, House Bill 245, limits the entry of an SRO into a school building and prevents the SRO from participating in routine school discipline.

"The presence of SROs is primarily preventative," said Severna Park resident Michelle Monroe, whose son is a 2020 graduate of SPHS. "It supports a non-bullying environment. Students form relationships and feel supported by these officers. And it's been working very well."

The multifaceted approach to dismantling the SRO program includes a fourth bill (House Bill 522) that prevents security personnel from enforcing certain discipline-related policies. That bill's sponsor, Delegate Alonzo Washington (Democrat—Prince George's County), said enforcement of discipline should originate with administrators or teachers, not school resource officers.

Although SROs in Anne Arundel County don't intervene in disciplinary matters, the new legislation, opponents argue, would impede an SRO's ability to de-escalate potentially volatile situations.

"Feedback on our SRO program has been nothing but positive from parents, students and citizens," said Lieutenant Dan Johnson, commander of the School Safety Section, which operates under the Anne Arundel County Police Department. "SROs are sworn law enforcement, hand-picked, part of the Anne Arundel County Police Department and specifically trained to work with the students of our county."

In March 2018, following an increase in school-related violence, state Senator Katherine Klausmeier (Democrat-Baltimore County), introduced a bill to increase security at all state public schools. After Klausmeier's bill became law, all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland were mandated to have "adequate local law enforcement coverage" or a school resource officer assigned to each public school campus.

Three years later, defunding local law enforcement may be popular in some counties, but according to State Senator Ed Reilly, it's not right for Anne Arundel County.

"This legislation might be appropriate as a local bill for another county, but in my opinion, it is not legislation that should be law for the entire state of Maryland," Reilly said. "The school resource officers in Anne Arundel County do an extremely good job, and our citizens are comfortable with them being in our high schools. In addition to this, the Anne Arundel County school board has indicated that they do not want to change the current system."

Good Neighbors Group Sees Record-Breaking Event

Good Neighbors Group's (GNG) fourth annual 2021 S(o)uper Bowl saw record-breaking success, distributing over 20,500 items to local food pantries. This milestone is a testament to the neighborhood captain volunteers who rallied their communities to drop off food and supplies February 4-7 leading up to the Super Bowl. The number of communities stretched from Pasadena to Broadneck to Severna Park and also surpassed last year's participants. This year, 46 neighborhoods were involved.

"The contrast between this year's conflict and suffering and the huge outpouring of neighbors working together to help the community while actually having fun is really inspiring," said Julie Shay, executive director of GNG. "It's deepened our commitment to the mission of Good Neighbors Group. This level of engagement of people of all ages is what we've been working to build."

Additionally, the food drive produced these results:

- Four times as many contributions as last year
- Four neighborhoods collected over 1,000 items
- Four neighborhoods donated 10 or more items per home
- Six pantries were stocked including SPAN Inc., ACAN, My Brother's Pantry, Laurel Advocacy and Referral Services, and two pop-up pantries.

"We at SPAN were overwhelmed by the outpouring of generosity at this year's S(o)uper Bowl food drive," said Ellen Kinsella,



Jace Kerley, age 8, sorted food before it was dropped off at SPAN Inc.

Donations By The Numbers

4 times as many contributions as 2020

4 neighborhoods collected over 1,000 items

4 neighborhoods donated 10 or more items per home

6 pantries were stocked: SPAN, ACAN, My Brother's Pantry, Laurel Advocacy and Referral Services, and two pop-up pantries



SPAN's director of development. "Despite the coronavirus and the terrible weather, our community came through for their neighbors in need like never before, shattering all previous records. Because of the generosity of our donors, we were able to stock our entire pantry, as well as share with other local pantries. Special thanks to Julie Shay for organizing this event, and also to the neighborhood team captains for their hard work, as well as everyone else who donated."

Communities engage in a friendly competition to see who can collect the most items per home. This year, the winners are Cape McKinsey, whose community members donated more than 12 items per home, and Round Bay and West Severna Park, with each community donating more than 1,500 items.

In years past, GNG has hosted a celebration at Cafe Mezzanotte with a night of good food and camaraderie. Due to COVID-19 precautions, this year, Cafe Mezzanotte will come to their neighborhood with a free delivery and dessert. Next year's S(o)uper Bowl food drive will be from February 3-6, 2022. The group hopes to expand into Broadneck and Pasadena to serve even more county residents in need.

To join GNG's communication list, go to www.goodneighborsgroup.org/jointhe-neighborhood. Good Neighbors Group strengthens communities by sharing opportunities that have a positive social and environmental impact. To learn more about Good Neighbors Group, visit www.goodneighborsgroup.org or find the organization on Facebook.

County Libraries Go Fine-Free For All Customers

More Than \$361,000 In
Old Fines Forgiven For
28,000 Customers



Officials from the Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) announced on March 2 that all system materials are now fine-free. Additionally, the library also waived \$361,425 in old fines for customers. More than 28,000 people received the surprise savings.

The announcement, made at an event outside the Brooklyn Park Library, featured County Executive Stuart Pittman, who has pledged any necessary funding to supplement the library's loss in revenue. Fine revenue has continued to decrease year over year with only \$112,827 collected in Fiscal Year 2020 and about half that amount expected this year. The library went fine-free for children's materials in January 2020.

"Fines are a barrier that disproportionately impact people without the means to pay," said AACPL CEO Skip Auld. "As a public institution, we have a responsibility to make our items available to as many people as possible. Removing these fines (while still requiring the items to be returned) will allow more people to enjoy our materials for education, enrichment



Making the fine-free accouchement at the Brooklyn Park Library on March 2 were AACPL CEO Skip Auld (front), County Executive Stuart Pittman and Mizetta Wilson (right) from the Partnership for Children, Youth and Families.

and inspiration."

Pittman agreed, saying, "While everyone must be held accountable for returning what they borrow, fines are an unnecessary form of punishment that falls disproportionately on lower-income households," Pittman said. "We have a fantastic library system in this county and we want it to be accessible to everyone."

William Shorter, chair of the AACPL board of trustees, said public libraries are about leveling the playing field, but fines create obstacles to success.

"As the library moves into its second century of service to the people

of Anne Arundel County, the board of trustees is proud to support the elimination of fines for all customers and get back to its foundation of breaking down barriers," Shorter said.

In addition to the removal of fines on most items, the library has instituted a new auto renewal system where most materials without holds are automatically renewed up to five times. Items waiting to be borrowed by other customers will not be automatically renewed. Materials borrowed from other public library systems in Maryland will be automatically renewed two times. Historic London Town and Gardens Museum



passes, seven-day express materials and interlibrary loan items (OCLC orange band) will not be automatically renewed.

Items must be returned to the library in a timely fashion and replacement costs will be charged after 21 days past due. Damaged materials will also be assessed a replacement charge. Library accounts can be referred to collections and an additional fee will be assessed. Items borrowed from other library systems are still subject to late fees.

For more information on the new initiative, visit the library's website at www.aacpl.net/finesfaq.



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State Of The Magothy Set For March 17

The Magothy River Association will hold its annual State of the Magothy presentation virtually this year on March 17 at 7:00pm. The river's health declined in 2020, and the MRA is working to locate pollution sources in the river and target resources to improve the water quality. Follow the MRA on Facebook for updates as they become available.

Anne Arundel Sheriff's Office Starts Safe Surrender Program

Anne Arundel County Sheriff Jim Fredericks is implementing a new warrant initiative to make warrant service safer, improve transparency through public access to information, and ultimately reduce the number of outstanding warrants in Anne Arundel County. The new program is called Safe Surrender, and it combines online availability of warrant information with a safe way to serve those warrants.

"This program has been in the works for close to a year and it could not come at a better time," Fredericks said. "With recent shootings and deaths involv-

ing the service of criminal warrants, increasing information to the public and creating a safer warrant service environment can potentially save the lives of citizens and law enforcement officers."

The program works by providing online access to about 9,000 county warrants, with information to arrange for warrant service, and offering additional resource information about the warrant process. The warrants range from simple traffic warrants to certain felonies.

The online warrant database is available through the Safe Surrender link at www.aacounty.org/sheriff.

SPRWC Now Accepting Scholarship Essays

In honor of Congresswoman Marjorie S. Holt (1920-2018), the first Republican woman elected to Congress from Maryland and a founding member of the Severna Park Republican Women's Club, each year the organization sponsors a \$500 scholarship to a young woman who is a high school senior.

some say its usefulness is outdated. Give historical arguments for its formation vs. current concerns of Democrats. Explain the difference between a democracy and a republic as it relates to the Electoral College.

Specifics

- 750 words or less
- Font size 12, double spaced
- Microsoft Word documents only
- Please include name, address, phone number, current high school (or home schooled) and college to attend
- Deadline: April 15 - submit to sprepublicansmd@gmail.com

Scholarship Essay Criteria

Using the quote by James Madison, "The purpose of the Constitution is to restrict the majority's ability to harm a minority," tell us why, in an essay of 750 words or less, is it wise to keep the Electoral College or discard it, given that

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A Reading Tour: The Original Severna Park High School



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.

Severna Park High School (SPHS) has been a fixture in town since its opening in 1959. Over the years, the establishment has become a place where students have not only received a top-notch education, but where residents also flock to for the arts, music, sports and cultural events. The original high school was replaced in 2017 with a new facility; however, the history set forth by the first classes to graduate from SPHS remains in many of the traditions that students still follow today.

The property for the high school and surrounding woods was owned by the Robinson family, one of the principal landowners in Severna Park dating back to the 1800s. The original building was completed in 1959 for approximately \$7 million. The school was built for a total capacity of 2,000 students. The campus included the school building along with a track and football field.

Prior to opening, all students were bussed to Annapolis for their education. The first year of students included seventh through 11th grade, so seniors did not have to change schools for their final year. The second year SPHS was open, students in grades eight through 12 filled the halls and then it became a true senior high in 1961 with ninth through 12th grades.

Scott Jay remembers being in one of the first graduating classes in SPHS history. "It was very exciting because we decided on the school colors, song, Falcon mascot, and even named the yearbook, 'Embers,'" he said. Many of these class traditions have continued until this day.

During those first few years, Bill Griffith was the principal and Joe Mirenzi was the vice principal and disciplinarian. "One day, a bunch of girls skipped school and went to Yantz Cove," Jay recalled. "On their way home, they stopped at Dawson's Soda Fountain. That day, Mr. Mirenzi just happened to be sitting at the end of the counter at Dawson's and told the ladies he missed them at school today."

Furthermore, Mirenzi told the ladies that he would like a chance to give them a ride home and meet their parents. "There was not a lot of skipping school after that!" Jay said.

Jim Sakers was also part of the graduating class of 1962. He recalled, "We used to have sock hops in the gym and a senior play. There was also a homecoming parade that started at St. Martin's-in-the-Field Church and ended at Dawson's."

On Fridays and Saturdays, students would go "downtown" to Lee's Pharmacy or Frankie & Johnnie's where they would hang out, eat and play pinball.

"It was a great town to grow up in. Everyone knew everyone else and their families," Sakers remarked.

Sakers also noted that Severna Park's biggest rival in football was Annapolis High. "The last game of the year was on Thanksgiving day in the Naval Academy Stadium in Annapolis," Sakers said. "It was such a big thing that my mom had to move Thanksgiving dinner to another day because everyone went to the football game on Thursday."

Another thing that brought the students together were the winter activities on the rivers. "In 1961, the Severn and the Magothy rivers froze over; students from our high school and Severn School went ice skating," Sakers added. "We had kids driving cars out on the ice and skating to the Chesapeake Bay."

Sakers and Jay both participate in a reunion every five years for the graduating classes of 1961-1963. Their 60th reunion is coming up in October 2022. "We love getting together and seeing each other and reliving the good old days. Jimmy plans everything and we come!" Jay said, laughing. "People come from California and Colorado — they are just amazing people."

Both Jay and Sakers speak fondly of their time at the old Severna Park High School. Now that the school has been replaced, they hope it serves the same purpose. It wasn't just a place where they went to class, or a football game, or a sock hop, or signed each other's yearbooks. It was a place that went beyond the walls of that old school — it was a place where they both grew up and found a sense of community. It's the reason why they keep coming back to reunions. It's the friends that they met and the experiences that they had together.

Severna Park Museum Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-stock corporation sponsored by the Winkelmeyer family. Monetary donations are welcome at 528 Melrose Lane, Severna Park, MD 21146.

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The McDonald's Coffee Case And "Tort Reform"

David Diggs
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As an attorney who represents those injured by the carelessness and intentional misconduct of others, I find myself too often on the defensive when discussing our tort system and how we compensate the victims of negligence. I enjoy pursuing justice on behalf of injured folks, but powerful interests have been conspiring for many years to deprive access to the courts. The right to a jury trial is found in the Seventh Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, after all.

I have found solace and ammunition in Stephanie Mencimer's 2006 book "Blocking the Courthouse Door: How the Republican Party and Its Corporate Allies Are Taking Away Your Right to Sue," published by Free Press. It's a worthy read, and I like to revisit it now and then. The lessons gleaned from her work are particularly noteworthy now, as those potent forces aligned against the injured advocate for COVID-19 immunity.

The No. 1 favorite whipping post for the "tort reformers" is the "The McDonald's coffee" case. Mencimer recounts the case, stripped bare of outrage and talking points. Septuagenarian Stella Liebeck was from a family of conservative New Mexico Republicans and did not initially

intend to file suit for the third-degree burns she suffered to her upper thighs and genitals. Rather, she attempted to contact McDonald's directly to alert them to the danger and to request payment for medical bills, which had mounted to \$20,000. McDonald's representatives replied that the company had no intention to change its coffee policy, but McDonald's offered Ms. Liebeck \$800 for her trouble. She hired a lawyer.

The facts presented at trial demonstrated it was the fast-food behemoth's policy to serve coffee at 195 to 205 degrees, "liquid temperatures hot enough to peel skin off the bone in about seven seconds or less." Jurors also heard about more than 700 complaints concerning serious burns caused by McDonald's coffee. McDonald's executives were forced to admit that despite their knowledge that numerous customers had been burned to the bone, they did nothing to change the policy.

The jury awarded \$200,000 for economic damages, but this was reduced 20% for Ms. Liebeck's comparative negligence. They also awarded \$2.7 million in punitive damages, "about two days profits from McDonald's coffee sales." The trial judge reduced the punitive damage award to three times the actual damages or \$480,000. The case eventually settled for an undisclosed amount, presumably for less than \$540,000, which had survived post-trial motions, and certainly for less than the original and much ballyhooed verdict of \$2.9 million.

Mencimer notes that the "myth that Stella Liebeck actually received \$3 million

for her coffee spill has proved highly resistant to correction." It was simply too good a story to let the facts get in the way. "The Liebeck case was a goldmine for tort reformers looking to support legislation (limiting products liability actions) and they used it repeatedly in advertising and testimony." The U.S. Chamber of Commerce bought radio ads complaining about the "ridiculous" verdict. Unhindered by the evidence, the chamber was but one of numerous groups, which reduced this complex piece of litigation to politically compelling soundbites. Now you know the real story.

The latest round of political football challenging the right to jury trial involves those who would limit the right to sue for COVID-19 related illnesses. So far, these attempts have been thwarted at the federal level and kept out of the stimulus measures that have supported struggling Americans. This is a continuing struggle, however.

If you or a loved one are the victim of reckless conduct leading to injury, you are entitled to be compensated for your injuries. You should consult with an attorney who is familiar with this area of the law and who will assist you in making informed decisions. David Diggs is experienced in all facets of personal injury law.

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@diggsllaw.com.

It's Not Too Late: Vote For The Best Of Severna Park

The Best Of Severna Park contest got underway in February, but there's still time to make your opinions count. We want to know which businesses and organizations you consider the best of your community. The ballot ran in the February edition of the *Severna Park Voice*, and we're still collecting votes through Friday, March 26.

If you have not yet cast your vote, visit www.severnaparkvoice.com/bestofsevernapark to vote online. Please note that all ballots, whether digital or print, must have your name and contact information and should be filled out with at least 10 categories. Print ballots can be mailed directly to Severna Park Voice, P.O. Box 608, Severna Park, Maryland, 21146.

To find out the winners for this year's Best Of Severna Park, check out the April edition, due in homes and businesses on April 8.

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POLITICS & OPINION

Report Cards Can Create Slippery Slopes

Amanda Fiedler
Councilwoman
District 5



to complete the task or assessment. Parameters are set in advance so that students may know what standards they will be graded on.

It works a bit differently when you are in an elected roll. Or a recent report card from the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) would suggest it does.

Earlier this month, a constituent (we will call her Ms. Smith) reached out to me to share her disappointment in me over my recently received mid-term grade of D by LCV. In my reply, I expressed that I too was disappointed and did not agree with this barely passing grade.

The non-partisan environmental group based their grades on “voting record, public comments on conservation issues and responding to concerns of the environmental community, and the views of environmental leaders and organizations in the county.”

As someone elected by the people of District 5, I take the commitments I have made seriously. Legislation can, at times, create conflicting priorities that legislators must wade

Good grades are important — most would agree with that. In an education setting, grades can reflect understanding of a topic, and/or the amount of time and work put forth

through, and determine where they fall on behalf of those they represent. I have overwhelmingly supported legislation that benefits the environment, while balancing fiscal responsibility. It is a slippery slope for one to become persuaded by grading systems of special interest groups. Imagine the outcome if elected leaders voted on legislation to receive a passing grade from organized groups, even if it meant abandoning the commitments made to voters. Principles are important.

I went on to share with this constituent the details of my voting record.

In the past two years, I have voted in favor of prohibitions to variances in resource conservation areas (Bill 5-20), updated stormwater management (Bill 67-20), moving the county’s vehicle fleet from gas to hybrid vehicles (Bill 106-20) and improving the process for sanitary sewer connection that could greatly reduce the levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the Chesapeake Bay (Bills 79-20 and 80-20). I have supported bills on land preservation through agricultural diversification (Bill 14-19), the clean energy loan program (Bill 80-19), and legislation that incentivizes the revitalization of developed areas (Bill 64-20). I was also a co-sponsor of a resolution calling for a tree planting incentive program in the county (Resolution 48-19) and the land acquisition at Quiet Waters Park, land that was ripe for development but will now be part of our county parks (Resolution 38-19). Unfortunately, the majority of these bills were related to our zoning code, an area of legislation that LCV

» Continued on page 16

Mr. County Executive, Policy Shapes Behavior

Sid Saab
Delegate
District 33



more residents and retirees to leave the county.

House Bill 933 would allow the Anne Arundel County Council to impose an increase on the rate of the transfer tax imposed on residential and commercial properties sold in the county.

In comparison to other Maryland counties, Anne Arundel’s low tax rates are an incentive for people to want to move here and stay here. Instead, our county executive looks at our low tax rates as the opposite, as an opportunity to overtax all of us, and in particular, our residents who contribute a large portion to our tax revenue. Renters will eventually absorb the tax increase.

Residents of Anne Arundel County already pay numerous fees and taxes including a recording fee, a state property tax, a county property tax, a Chesapeake Bay restoration fund fee, and a stormwater management fee. Additional fees may be added atop these universal charges as well depending on the nature of the property.

The current transfer and recordation taxes generated over \$300 million

Recently, the Democratic members of the Anne Arundel County delegation put forward another tax and spending bill that will again encourage

for the county from Fiscal Year 2019 through Fiscal Year 2021. Revenue from real estate will contribute close to \$1 billion to annual county coffers.

Though I am against tax increases normally, now is especially not the time for any tax increase. Unprecedented times is an understatement. COVID revealed to us that lower income and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities are systematically disenfranchised in many areas, and yet, our progressive county executive would put forth a financial obstacle for BIPOC communities to obtain equity.

This bill is opposed by the Maryland Building Industry Association, the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington, Anne Arundel County Association of Realtors, and Maryland Realtors.

These taxes would drive up housing costs and Maryland currently has a housing affordability crisis. Imposing additional costs on Anne Arundel County real estate transactions would drive up the price of residential units, making it difficult for those units to be priced low enough that low-income buyers could afford them. This bill has no cap on how high the special transfer tax could get, which means who knows the damage it could do to the affordable housing market going forward.

Additionally, the commercial real estate market is in tatters. Small businesses, restaurants, and retail and office buildings are empty. Increasing the costs on real estate transactions

» Continued on page 16

Combating Damaging Misinformation

Heather Bagnall
Delegate
District 33



legislation not only reactive to the pandemic but proactive to the future of Maryland all while working in a hybrid system — means that we have to be intentional and strategic.

There are advantages such as advanced notice of testimony so that we can address concerns and amendment requests in the hearings, and access to hearings from anywhere, without the need for transportation or child care. Constituents wishing to testify on a

It is hard to believe we are already past the midpoint of a legislative session unlike any other. Working within the constraints of COVID — yet trying to effectively pass meaningful

bill need not spend hours in Annapolis but can log into the website or onto a Zoom. However, as we have so clearly seen throughout the pandemic, technology also brings with it disadvantages for those dealing with a digital divide, lack of technological access or proficiency. Where in years past, those struggling to upload testimony could swing by our office or email our team, many staffers are also working remotely so we are having to find new ways of doing business.

One of the biggest challenges to the session comes in the form of misinformation, something that we are having to combat and reconcile at the local, state and national levels. Anyone who has asked me about my experience in the legislature has heard me say, “Public service is gratifying, and politics is gross.” I have never had to explain that statement. There are times it feels as though the name of the game is “He who is the most inflammatory and misleading wins.”

As an educator and a playwright, this poses a huge challenge because I love to inform, to engage, to help draw the through line for folks struggling to see the cause and effect of policy decisions, to have meaningful debate through an equity lens, but like any kind of foundational work, that takes time and opportunity; an opportunity that is thwarted when the loudest voice is the only one heard.

In years past, I wrote about the legislative process; the difference between first, second and third reader; the committee and subcommittee processes; how to advocate for a bill — things that were not covered in great detail by either our civics classes or Saturday morning cartoons — though “I’m Just a Bill” still holds up pretty well.

We saw that kind of damaging misinformation weaponized regarding the digital ad tax, where countless dollars were spent on ads on television and social media to convince

Marylanders that this wasn’t a tax on corporations making over \$100 million; the self-same corporations launched the ads and recently filed a federal lawsuit. A lawsuit not designed in any way to protect working families or small brick and mortar businesses.

A more insidious and alarming version of this is manifesting as we work on policies that impact marginalized people — prejudicial rhetoric, false equivalence, “othering” and additional dehumanizing tactics. When we’re in person, we can respond quickly to these attacks and set the record straight, but with remote access, controlled media, tightly timed floor debates, and time and testimony limits on bill hearings, the challenge falls to our constituents to vet and interpret the information as it comes.

I have said since day one that as elected officials, we have a greater responsibility to choose our words care-

» Continued on page 16

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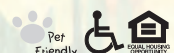
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Report Cards Can Create Slippery Slopes

» Continued from page 14 would not consider.

I pointed out to Ms. Smith that the grading scale seemed to be dependent on two bills: the Styrofoam ban bill (Bill 5-19) and the forest conservation bill (Bill 68-19).

I encouraged Ms. Smith to review the discussion that took place during deliberations over the Styrofoam bill. She would learn that I inquired about how the school system was going to pay for the annual increase of more than \$500,000 to change from Styrofoam to other products for school meal trays. The answer was that there was no answer. It was stated from bill sponsors that the

goal was not to increase school meal prices (cost to families), or to increase the school budget to cover the cost, but that the increased expense would be absorbed in other ways. Spending without knowing where the money was coming from. It was an unfunded mandate.

Environmental issues are important ones and so are the decisions on spending your tax dollars.

I ultimately voted against the bill for this reason. I acknowledged Styrofoam was a product that should be eliminated from use; however, the unknown fiscal impact was not something I could support. Ultimately the increased cost became an increase in

the school system budget. My concern became the reality.

When discussing the forest conservation bill with Ms. Smith, she shared her agreement with the League of Conservation Voters on the amendments that the council introduced, amendments that "weakened" the legislation. In response, I shared that most bills require four votes to pass, some require five. In this case, it was those amendments that helped the council unanimously pass what is one of the strongest forest conservation laws in Maryland. Having spent dozens of hours on this piece of legislation, I take great pride in knowing that Anne Arundel County was the first jurisdiction in the state to increase forest protections. Context and perspective are important.

I valued this communication with Ms. Smith. Given background and history, I believe she understood my disappointment over the grading scale and report card. Reasonable and informed dialogue can really change the trajectory of a conversation, and it is something I welcome as your councilwoman.

In the coming months, the county council will discuss legislation regarding littering fines; the Revenue Reserve Fund; the General Development Plan, otherwise known as Plan2040; and other bills. You can see a full list by visiting www.aacounty.org/departments/county-council/legislation, and as always, you can reach me at amanda.fiedler@aacounty.org.

Mr. County Executive

» Continued from page 14

not only disenfranchises new people coming into the market, but it will also add another financial burden on our vulnerable residents.

The county executive has no interest in cutting costs. He has verbally made it known that he wants to increase revenues by raising taxes.

If the county executive wants to start a Housing Trust Special Revenue Fund, then he should explain why he hasn't used funds already available to him to do so. The real estate industry is generating millions in revenue, yet very little of those monies are going toward affordable housing initiatives. He is simply using this idea as a way to interject emotion into a basic supply and demand issue caused by the overregulation he has implemented. He is once again trying to pull the wool over the public's eyes in order to raise taxes dramatically. This bill has no way of actually producing affordable housing but instead has the ability to limit it.

I want you to keep as much of your hard-earned money as possible. I want my constituents and others within the county to recognize how policy can change consumer behavior. Understand that taxpayers will bite the bullet, one way or another, if the government does not learn to live within its means. I encourage you to call every Anne Arundel County legislator to reconsider their position on this bill.

Combating Misinformation

» Continued from page 14

fully, to speak precisely and to legislate transparently. Our words have weight, and that weight is being tested in this moment as we rely on each other to speak to and consider thoughtfully what we want for our communities, and how our elected officials speak of the work they do and the people they represent.

I have been grateful not only for the willingness of this community to engage with me in these complicated, uncomfortable, necessary conversations calling out injustice, but also that when something seems amiss, I get a call or an email to address that concern or bring a different perspec-

tive for consideration. That is a form of "calling in." It's harder, it's more intentional, it's foundational, and it is one of the most effective tools for change. This is a community which, by and large, does not simply accept rhetoric as fact, and for that, the community should be commended.

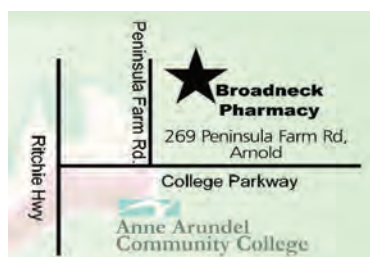
I know we are all tired and we want to be past the pandemic. We are not made for this level of sustained grief, however, I'm asking that we continue to have patience with each other and take the extra time to question, call out systemic racism and false information, but "call in" each other, because that is how we grow together and build a better Maryland.

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Let's End GerryMaryland And Draw Better Boundaries

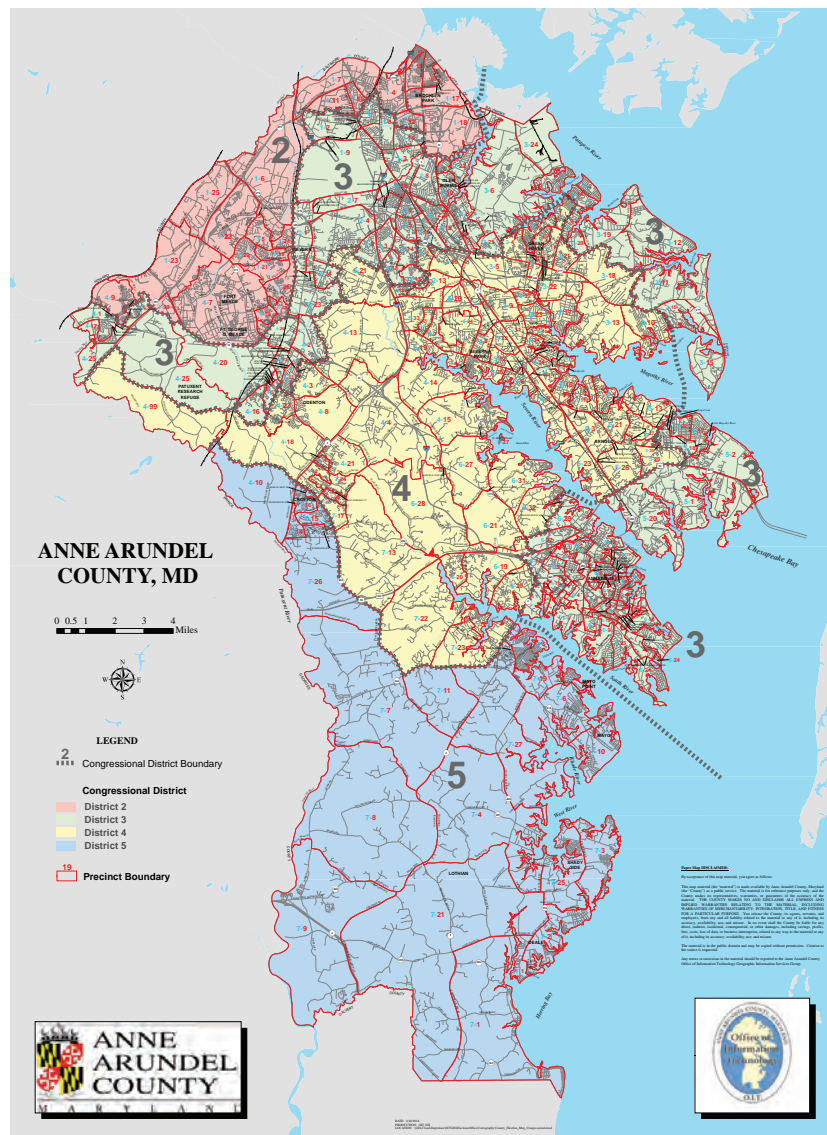
Michael Malone
Delegate
District 33



Rorschach blots were developed a hundred years ago to test for mental illness, schizophrenia in particular, and long ago were supplanted by more effective assessments. They live on, unfortunately, as the image of gerrymandered congressional districts. Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream even has a "Gerrymandered District or Inkblot Test" on its website — with Maryland's 3rd congressional district, colloquially known as the "broken-winged pterodactyl," as question number one.

Redistricting — redrawing congressional and state legislative lines — occurs every 10 years to accommodate shifts in population documented by the U.S. Census. Gerrymandering is redrawing those lines for political advantage, whether to elect more members of a political party or protect political incumbents. Either way, your vote matters less.

Maryland has eight congressmen spread across its 23 counties; Anne Arundel County is, in the words of Governor Larry Hogan, carved up like a Thanksgiving turkey among four of those eight districts. Anne Arundel is represented by Dutch Ruppersberger from Baltimore County in District 2, John Sarbanes from Baltimore County in District 3, Anthony Brown from Prince George's County for District 4, which includes Severna Park, and Steny Hoyer from St. Mary's County in District 5. In short, decidedly two-party Anne Arundel County, Maryland's fourth most populous county, is represented in Congress exclusively by Democrats from other jurisdictions. Anne Arundel County is turkey, and Republi-



cans aren't welcome at the table.

In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled in *Benisek v. Lamone*, a case from Maryland seeking to bar enforcement of the gerrymandered congressional map, that redistricting reform is a matter left to the states. Therefore, to combat gerrymandered districts in Maryland at both

the state and congressional levels, I have again introduced several bills into the House of Delegates.

House Bill 339 addresses state legislative districts, and would require that redistricting maps be drawn without regard to political affiliation or voting patterns. This language is derived from

the federal district court opinion in *Benisek v. Lamone*, which had ruled that Maryland's congressional district maps violated Marylanders' constitutional rights. House Bill 1260 would require that Maryland's congressional districts be drawn according to the same standards as its legislative districts: they would have to be drawn compactly and with regard to natural and community boundaries. Like House Bill 1260, House Bill 410 also would require that Maryland's congressional districts be drawn according to the same standards as its legislative districts, but it adds the requirement that the lines be drawn without regard for voting patterns and political affiliation.

All three of these bills are being heard by the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, chaired by Democrat Anne Healey. Testimony on two of the bills — HB 339 and HB 410 — was heard on February 22; a hearing date on HB 1260 has not been scheduled. A committee vote has yet to occur. If you wish to testify on HB 1260 or any other bill, you must sign up at www.mgaleg.maryland.gov between 8:00am and 3:00pm two business days in advance of the hearing (please call my office at 410-841-3510 if you need assistance in witness sign-up).

The General Assembly has been dragging its feet on redistricting reform. Other states are adopting independent, partisan-balanced commissions similar to that proposed by Governor Hogan and are adopting or expanded language like that in our state constitution to restrict partisan gerrymandering. Nonetheless, redistricting reform legislation has routinely been killed without even being submitted to the entire General Assembly for a vote.

Let's end the schizophrenia — the withdrawal from reality — of Rorschach inkblot legislative districts. Let's end GerryMaryland.

Welcome Back Students!

Dana Schallheim
Board of Education
District 5



Welcome back to buildings, students! It is mind-blowing that COVID-19 has robbed us all of a full year of in-person instruction. A year ago, jargon such as "social distancing," "hybrid," and "glitchy Google Meets" were not part of our lexicon. Finally, we have turned a corner on the long, winding road back to a normal school week for all students.

I would not say, however, that we are out of the woods. In-person instruction is only sustainable if we remain vigilant. How all of us conduct ourselves both during the school day and outside of schools will determine whether in-person classes will continue.

The return of school also means the return of student bus transportation. I have received a many emails inquiring about early high school pickup times and long

waits outside of closed schools before the school day begins. I was also disappointed to see that 23 of Severna Park High School's (SPHS's) 33 buses (70%) arrive more than 20 minutes before school begins — before the doors are open. Equally troubling is that at least one bus serving SPHS begins picking up students in the 5:00 hour and several start picking up students an hour before school begins. I will continue to encourage our transportation department to immediately re-evaluate morning pickup and drop-off times to ensure that students are not getting up unnecessarily early or waiting outside buildings before school doors open, especially while we still have them start school an hour before the American Academy of Pediatrics (amongst many others) recommended time of 8:30 or later.

Once again, our teachers are being asked to teach in a completely new way. Last spring, our wonderful educators provided our students with distance instruction for the first time, and we are now asking them to teach simultaneously to students in buildings and at home. Please be patient in the first days of in-person instruction as our teachers get used to

this new model.


Some have asked why we must simultaneously teach both groups of students on most days of the school week. This is due to a Maryland State Department of Education mandate that all public Maryland prekindergarten through grade 12 schools offer an average of 3.5 hours of live, synchronous instruction per day. This rule was established last fall and remains in effect during hybrid instruction.

Similarly, I have received many complaints about the upcoming mandated state testing. I have stated repeatedly, and maintain, that any mandated state testing this year is a mistake. Many of our students are traumatized by the ongoing pandemic and related crises. State testing preparation and administration squanders valuable instruction time with only 22 in-person school days for some students. Instead, we must focus on our students' mental health and educational recovery. These tests, while also not standardized because all students will not be in buildings, will only exacerbate student stress.

When I initially penned this column, the state was on track to test all students

in grades three through eight in both English language arts and math this spring, however, they changed course during a special session held on March 4. In lieu of state-mandated tests this spring, relatively short diagnostic exams will be administered in the fall. I commend the Maryland State Board of Education and state superintendent of schools, Dr. Karen Salmon, for listening to the AACPS Board of Education as well as other school boards, students, parents and teachers statewide who made their opposition to mandated state testing this spring known.

Nevertheless, I encourage you to continue voice your opinion regarding the number of mandated synchronous instruction hours and state testing. Please reach out to the Maryland State Board of Education as well as to your local, state, and federal officials and voice your concerns. The State Board of Education can be reached by emailing their assistant at charlene.necessary@maryland.gov or state-board.msde@maryland.gov and asking that your comments be shared with the entire board. Dr. Karen Salmon, Maryland superintendent of schools, can be reached at karen.salmon@maryland.gov.



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THE DAVID ORSO TEAM OF COMPASS REAL ESTATE Page 8
In addition to buying and selling homes, David Orso and his team serve as guides who introduce people to the area's best restaurants, service providers and outdoor activities.

DAVID ORSO
TEAM OF COMPASS REAL ESTATE

FINANCING Page 3
Mortgage rates are at an all-time low. Take advantage.

MOVING Page 11
Consider these factors when timing your next move.

THE MARKET Page 15
Anne Arundel County home prices have increased again.

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Letter To The Editor

The Danger Of Canceling Each Other Out: A Christian Response To Cancel Culture

Remember when the internet was still a new thing? I will never forget coming home from school in the late '90s every afternoon, heading into my parents' bedroom where our family computer was and getting online. The internet seemed to be this cool place where geographical — or even philosophical and ideological or demographical or economic — barriers would no longer separate us from being able to have dialogue, to communicate with people and to exchange views. Unfortunately, over two decades later, instead of the internet and culture fostering dialogue bridge-building and the world becoming a smaller place, today it seems the chasm between us has widened and the internet has become a glorified echo chamber that fosters tribalism rather than bridge-building.

A recent article in the New York Times called "The Internet is Splintering," talks about how the utopian idea of the internet was that it would tear down boundaries around the world, but technology watchers have in fact been warning for quite some time that it could do just the opposite, it could make our barriers even higher, and what has particularly made it complicated has been various national regulations for free speech and expression online. This past year has been what I would call a cultural inflection point between the pandemic, the issue of race in America, and polarizing politics all colliding with a mess of conspiracy theories, misinformation and fears over incitement to violence being propagated on social media.

Let me be clear that I understand there needs to be reasonable boundaries and rules of conduct for social media platforms and that I respect the right of private companies like Amazon, Facebook, Twitter and others to regulate as they see fit. And certain behaviors from individuals do warrant societal consequences. Yet, as an evangelical Christian, I have become increasingly concerned for the overall direction our society seems to be taking that I fear will only further deepen our divisions, erode the fabric of what makes America a free society and will squelch the dialogue that could help us learn to love and respect each other, even with us having vastly different views on everything under the sun.

Our response to this cultural inflection point must not merely be to "cancel" whoever or whatever we disagree with; it should be to seek an understanding of where they come from, why they believe what they believe and seek common ground if it can be found. We should not be tuning each other out, we should be tuning in. Our

response to the ugly and horrific aspects of our history and of those who helped make our history should not merely be to seek to erase their names or their legacies, but rather we should encourage learning about our history, the good, bad and ugly parts of it. Ignoring history sets us up to repeat it. We should not seek to avoid discussing or hearing difficult things that we fundamentally disagree with; we should be willing to listen to each other and hear out each other's perspective. What has always concerned me about "cancel culture" is who decides what is worthy of canceling? It is one thing for social media big tech to feel as though misinformation that is dangerous needs canceling, but what about canceling out those who hold views that are against the mainstream culture on societal issues?

The Bible gives us advice that I find particularly relevant for the time we find ourselves in as a society: "Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19). The definition of listening is to "hear something with thoughtful consideration and to give consideration." It is becoming clear that we are not willing to listen to those who have different political, religious or cultural views than we do, and I see society guilty of that as well as many of my fellow Christians.

We need to be intentional about building bridges, not burning them, and not be afraid to have our beliefs challenged, because if we surround ourselves only with voices who reinforce our views, we will be building our belief system on a house of cards.

As the culture around us becomes increasingly hostile to our beliefs, we have a choice. We can choose silence over speaking up, hiding our faith rather than letting it shine, and compromising our convictions rather than standing by them. Let us face this time we live in with courage and compassion.

"The further a society drifts from truth, the more it will hate those who speak it."
- George Orwell.

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

This letter was shortened due to space limitations. Read the full letter online.

Stephen Mitchell
Pastor, Trinity
Bible Church

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SPHS Runners Excel At Adidas Indoor Championships



The team of James Glebocki, Tyler Canaday, Eddie Sullivan and Carson Sloat placed fourth in the distance medley championship at the Adidas Indoor Track and Field National Championships in Virginia Beach during the weekend of February 26-28. Sloat finished sixth in the 800-meter championship, making him an Indoor Nationals All-American.

“I’ve been training really hard for the 800 over the last month or two, so I decided that would be my best go-to. All-American is top six, and that’s what I was really going for, so I knew to get that, I needed to run fast and needed to start out fast.”

— CARSON SLOAT
SPHS INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

By Logan Hill

For many high school kids, track and field is the sport they use to stay in shape for their main sports. For Severna Park High School senior Carson Sloat, track is his main sport.

Sloat, a member of the track and field and cross country teams at Severna Park, enjoyed a career weekend at the Adidas Indoor Track and Field National Championships in Virginia Beach, Virginia Beach. At the event, which spanned from February 26-28, Sloat ran in the 800-meter championship, where he

finished with a time of 1:54.48 and placed sixth overall.

“I’ve been training really hard for the 800 over the last month or two, so I decided that would be my best go-to,” Sloat said. “All-American is top six, and that’s what I was really going for, so I knew to get that, I needed to run fast and needed to start out fast.”

Racing in the slowest heat of three, Sloat wasn’t sure how the race was going to go without faster competition to really push him. After falling into second place with just over 100 meters to go, he passed his competitors with about 20 meters left to win the heat and earn the All-American bid.

“That’s what got me the All-American spot, sixth place,” Sloat said. “From the slow heat, [that] was huge for me. I didn’t know if I would be able to do that and it was also a two-second [personal record].”

Facing off against some of the best runners in the nation, Sloat held his own and saw his hard work pay off. He also set a new school record with his time.

“I tried to go into the race as confident as possible,” Sloat said. “When you’re racing with any doubt, your body immediately shuts down, that’s what I’ve

» Continued on page 26

Severna Park Ice Hockey Loses 3-2 In MSHL Eastern Conference Championship



The Severna Park ice hockey team came up just short of the Maryland Student Hockey League Eastern Conference championship after falling to South River, 3-2, at Piney Orchard Ice Arena on March 5. The Falcons lead 2-1 after two periods, but the Seahawks rallied to claim the title.

Severna Park’s goals were scored by **Josh Testerman** and **Johnny Clements**. Goalie **Alex Auchincloss** registered 39 saves while opposing Seahawks goalie Jake Miller finished with 17.

Led by head coach Eric St. Lawrence, the Falcons finished 5-3 in the COVID-shortened season.



Photos by Molly Beirsto

Top Left: Johnny Clements scored one of Severna Park’s two goals, but the Falcons came up just short in a 3-2 loss to the South River Seahawks during the Maryland Student Hockey League Eastern Conference championship on March 5. **Top Middle:** Thomas Kondracki looked to score on a breakaway during the title game. **Top Right:** The Falcons led early and their defense gave a solid effort, but the Seahawks were able to rally and escape with a narrow victory. **Bottom:** Durham Butcher and the Falcons finished the season with a 5-3 record.

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STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

Nick Carparelli

Severna Park Baseball,
Basketball

By Logan Hill

Severna Park High School student-athlete Nick Carparelli III hasn't enjoyed the typical senior year, but he has still been able to make an impact on both his team and his community.

Carparelli, a member of both the varsity basketball and baseball teams at Severna Park, has found ways to build and maintain relationships through leadership and activism. Finding ways to maintain team chemistry, as well as supporting the Black Lives Matter movement this summer, he was able to use his leadership ability to make a difference in the lives of those around him.

"A lot of people will do what is asked, but [Nick] is comfortable taking initiative," said Paul Pellicani, the varsity head coach of boys basketball at Severna Park High School. "He will come to the coaching staff with ideas or thoughts as opposed to just what the coaches want him to do. For example, he came to us and said, 'Coach, how are we going to approach Black Lives Matter?' The concept, not the group. Here's a high school kid, in the summer, reaching out to us with mature thoughts." A member of the Young Democrats



File Photo by Colin Murphy

Nick Carparelli pitches for the Severna Park High School baseball team and also plays basketball.

club at Severna Park, Carparelli and others were able to arrange a handful of marches. The marches took place throughout the Severna Park community, with a call for change and social justice in mind.

"The only way things change is to seek out the problem at hand and tackle the problem head on," Carparelli said. "Racism has no place in our society. I feel that if I do my part, then people

will follow."

His activism in social justice hasn't been the only way Carparelli has been able to be a leader in his community. With winter sports in jeopardy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Carparelli and teammates faced the threat of having their basketball seasons taken away. With a desire to still play, Carparelli and others put together a team for a fall league.

"That alone brought the anticipation toward the [winter] season," Carparelli said. "It was fun and very different. You're on a team with kids that maybe you don't get along with just because of differences outside of the sport. Coming together with a common goal, it was very cool. We all made it fun for each other."

Carparelli's father, Nick Carparelli II, served as the coach of this fall team. Even as the coach's son, Carparelli III was still able to find different ways to be a leader.

"We had weekly practices at the Severna Park Community Center and [Nick] played a big role in coordinating that, communicating with all of his teammates," said Carparelli II. "Even going so far as to pick some of them up and bring them to practice when their parents weren't able to because of work. It was really important to him that his team was able to have some sort of

group experience this year."

While the winter season was ultimately canceled, Carparelli and others were still able to have memorable moments during that fall season.

With games taking place on the weekends, Carparelli and the rest of the team had a couple of team dinners, one of the biggest ways high school teams look to build chemistry off the court or field.

"My dad makes pizza every Friday, he's pretty big on that," Carparelli said. "My brother was [also] on the team, so he'd invite some of his friends, I'd invite some of my friends, and we'd have a good time. That team bonding, outside of basketball, brought better play on the court. When the food is good, that helps too."

Whether on the court, off the court or in the community, Carparelli has used his leadership skills to make a difference and help bring change where he sees fit. For him, it is also about taking action rather than just talking about change.

Although basketball season has now come and gone, Carparelli is still looking forward to his senior year baseball season, in whatever capacity it takes place in. He also plans to continue his baseball career in college, having committed to Manhattan College in October.

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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With Winter Sports Canceled, Athletes Make Lemons Into Lemonade

By Alex Murphy

When the sports world shut down in March 2020, high school winter sports in Maryland were ending.

Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) state tournaments were canceled as a precautionary measure due to the rise of the COVID-19 virus, but the off-season preparations had begun and the expectation was that the virus would be a problem for a few weeks.

Weeks turned into months and those preparing for the 2020-21 Maryland high school winter sports season now had to face the possibility of entire seasons being canceled.

"If you told me last March that we would have missed our season, then I would have been very, very shocked," Broadneck High School varsity boys basketball coach John Williams said.

Severna Park and the surrounding areas were in the middle of the COVID crossfire, as winter seasons for Anne Arundel County public schools started virtually in early December 2020.

In what turned into a winter sports season with no sports as the season was canceled outright in late January, coaches and players made lemonade out of lemons.

"I just kept my girls engaged, being optimistic," Broadneck High School girls basketball head coach Juan McKinney said. "I said, 'We're gonna play. Just keep your mind ready.' They were

already upset, so I stayed positive and kept them ready if there was going to be a season."

Emersyn Kelter, a senior on the Severna Park High School girls basketball team, was among the athletes who were devastated. Kelter worked all summer and fall to improve her skills only to learn that her hard work would not be "put to use," as she explained.

The loss of winter sports affected her not only athletically but socially and academically, she said, as she lost her drive and determination that often transfers from athletics to the classroom.

"Seeing my teammates every day last year made us create a bond that was different from any other team that I have ever experienced," Kelter said. "This year, we saw each other twice a week over Zoom. The bond just isn't that same. I look back on pictures and memories from last season and think about how good of a team we could have been this year if we were just given the chance."

It took time for players to fully understand the severity of the pandemic as other states across the country were playing in empty gyms with masks on and proper health and safety protocols in place.

"Some of them couldn't wrap their heads around it," McKinney said. "That was another reason why my coaching staff and I continued to keep the team optimistic about the situa-

tion. We couldn't worry about why we weren't playing. We could only worry about what we could control."

McKinney and Williams were relegated to Zoom for team meetings during the virtual season period, but both found ways to incorporate live basketball into the mix.

When summer turned to fall, Williams turned to his assistant coaches, who helped organize a team to participate in an outdoor league and attend showcases in the region, stretching from Virginia to Pennsylvania.

Through the virtual season, the Zoom meeting didn't consist as much of hard-nosed basketball talk as it did talking about life and checking in on players.

"My role was to be there for my players if need be and to check in with the guys that they're doing OK mentally and academically," Williams said.

When conversation did turn to basketball, workouts were much more individualized than ever before.

Without in-person practice, the players had to take it upon themselves to try to improve on their own time, a concept that took longer for some to grasp, but it worked in the end.

"I saw [the virtual season] as an opportunity to get better," Williams said. "I'm a big proponent of individualized workouts in the offseason, so it was a challenge for some, but largely beneficial for all."

It was a roller coaster of emotions for all involved, but even for those

who couldn't truly accept the fact that a season was taken away, they did all they could to normalize the situation.

"During our last virtual session, the girls talked about all the things they learned throughout the entire process," McKinney said. "That was more gratifying to the coaching staff because they were engaged. That's all you can ask for."

As for the seniors, with their final season stripped from them, coaches made sure to make it as worthwhile of a virtual season as they could, all things considered.

"I felt the need to have conversations with them periodically just to make sure that they recognized the reality and just to support them," Williams said. "I didn't want them to dwell. I wanted them to focus on the positives."

Now, preparations have begun for the 2021-2022 high school winter sports season and there is a newfound sense of hope among coaches and players.

Millions of COVID-19 vaccines have been distributed to Americans across the country and signs are pointing toward the green light once November and December come around.

"As a coaching staff, we're going about business as if we had a full season," McKinney said. "We're just focused on next year and preparing these girls for the summer. We're going to get the girls playing as much basketball as we can."

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Baseball Will Soon Be Back

By Alex Murphy

Play ball!

High school baseball players and fans in the Severna Park area have been waiting to hear those two words for almost a year. On April 17, they will as the spring sports calendar will officially begin in Anne Arundel County.

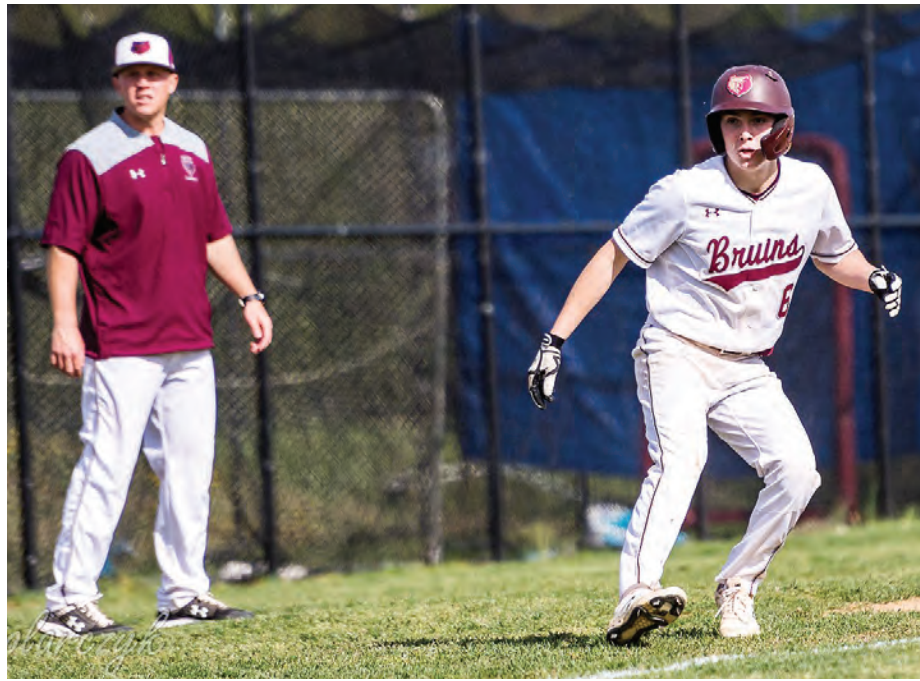
Baseball programs and winter sports have been one in the same in recent months, holding team meetings over Zoom and encouraging individual workouts and practicing at home.

At Broadneck High School, head coach Matt Skrenchuk and his coaching staff have been holding 45-minute team meetings two days a week at 7:30am since just before Thanksgiving last year.

So far, the meetings have been well-received from both the coaching staff and players.

“Our guys got into it and our assistant coaches were very supportive of the idea,” Skrenchuk said. “I’m very appreciative to my coaching staff.”

At Severna Park High School, head coach and 11-year Major League



Baseball veteran pitcher Eric Milton brought on a few former teammates to talk baseball and give his players a chance to pick the brains of some of the greatest to ever do it.

“I was very fortunate to do what I did in my career and have some close friends that were very, very accomplished baseball players, and they were more than willing to come on and talk to the kids,” Milton said.

His first two guest speakers? MLB Hall of Fame slugger and member of

the 600 home run club Jim Thome and 12-year MLB veteran and three-time All-Star first baseman Sean Casey.

Thome and Casey are not only current co-workers as MLB Network analysts, but the two combined for over 700 career home runs and 2,400 career RBI over 34 total years in MLB.

“It was a basic idea that I had,” Milton said. “Often, my message to the kids is the same thing they’re saying, but my voice might get old. To have them hear it from those guys, maybe

Broadneck High School’s baseball team is ready to get back on the field this April.

they sit up a bit straighter in their chair to hear what they’re saying than just coach Milton.”

Despite the challenges that have come with this new virtual setting and most having their heads in their computer screens, coaches and players both have stayed engaged and hopeful for a season.

Now that the start of this season is nearly here, things are kicking into high gear and the final preparations before tryouts and the first practices of the season are being put in place.

“We’re shifting our goals now that we’re down to the last few weeks,” Skrenchuk said. “We’ve accomplished some winter goals and now we’ve been discussing with our guys some short-term goals that they can achieve on their own in this period.”

There have already been many highs and lows experienced by players and coaches. However, through the emotional roller coaster that the offseason has been, there’s finally something to look forward to: baseball.

“The recent schedule changes have put some fire in their belly,” Skrenchuk said. “They got wide-eyed and right now, they’re very excited to start.”

“I was very fortunate to do what I did in my career and have some close friends that were very accomplished baseball players, and they were more than willing to come on and talk to the kids.” — ERIC MILTON, HEAD COACH, SEVERNA PARK HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAM

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Two Severna Park Stingrays Earn Outstanding Swimmer Award



Photo courtesy of James Kegley Photography

Court Barrett was named Maryland Swimming 11-year-old Male Outstanding Swimmer in the long course, and Mary Feliz won Maryland Swimming 14-year-old Female Outstanding Swimmer in the short course category.

By Desirae Martins

Despite an unusual swim season due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Severna Park Stingrays veteran swimmers Court Barrett, 12, and Mary Feliz, 15, earned Maryland Swimming's Outstanding Swimmer award for the 2020 season. The performance-based award recognizes Maryland's most well-rounded young swimmers who record the fastest swim times across multiple events, and it is presented to the top point-scoring swimmer by gender and age group per season.

Barrett was named Maryland Swimming 11-year-old Male Outstanding Swimmer in the long course, and Feliz won Maryland Swimming 14-year-old Female Outstanding Swimmer in the short course category.

Stingrays head coach Jim Hutcheson said he was not surprised the two earned the award, as Barrett and Feliz have been dominating the sport for years and continue to improve and evolve their skills to compete with top swimmers in the state.

"Court has been a top swimmer since he joined our club four years ago, and Mary is our team leader," Hutcheson said. "At practice, Mary is the first one in the pool and the last one out, and she demonstrates true leadership and team spirit. At the same time, Court challenges himself by practicing with the club's senior training group where swimmers are sometimes two years older and physically stronger."

Over the past year, Barrett and Feliz have both worked hard to expand their race repertoire, adding more and different strokes to their skillset. According to Hutcheson, both swimmers "swim and think strategically and tactically" in order to remain at the forefront of their age groups and become more well-rounded swimmers.

Barrett, a seventh-grade student at Severn School, has been a focused and competitive swimmer for years, and has

a long-term goal of swimming at a major university. Currently, he has the University of Texas at Austin in his sights. Additionally, Barrett is encouraged and mentored by prior United States (U.S.) Olympic swimmers and hopes to qualify one day to compete at the Olympic trials. In the near-term, however, he plans to improve his swimming and compete at national meets.

Feliz also has long-term goals in competitive swimming. As the third of four kids to swim with the Stingrays, Feliz hopes to follow in the footsteps of her older brothers and swim at a military service academy, specifically the U.S. Naval Academy. According to Hutcheson, "Mary and her family have a passion for national service," and she would like to follow that passion into college. "Her hard work, discipline, determination, and grind will get her there," Hutcheson noted.

Following their stellar performance last season, Barrett, Feliz, and their team are looking forward to getting back in the pool and competing in the 2021 season.

Seniors Seek Seasoned Softball Players



Starting May 20, the senior softball league will play doubleheaders on Tuesday nights at 6:00pm at the Bachman Sports Complex in Glen Burnie.

By Kevin Murnane

"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."

— George Bernard Shaw
Irish playwright

For nearly 80 senior softball players in Anne Arundel County, this has become their motto when it comes to their passion for playing softball. No matter how old you become, you still get on the diamond, compete, have fun and play the game you have enjoyed since you were a child.

Mike West, one of the league organizers, is seeking more senior softball players for this year. Starting May 20, the league will play doubleheaders on Tuesday nights at 6:00pm at the Bachman Sports Complex in Glen Burnie. Players must turn 60 or older this year to be eligible.

"The philosophy of the league is to have fun but also to compete," West said. "There's a lot of brotherhood and we have four guys who are over 80 who still play."

The league has special rules like double bases at first base and two home plates, so there are no collisions, lowering injuries.

"We had very few injuries last year, and the guys know how to take care of their bodies and everyone hydrates before, during and after the games," West said.

They also adhered to the COVID restrictions and made sure they had social distancing throughout games.

The teams have tryouts and then the players are evaluated on their skill level

and given a rating of one, two or three by the coaches. The coaches then hold a draft, based on those skill numbers, so all the teams have equal talent. Then the coaches pick a number out of a hat and that is the team they have, so no one has an advantage.

"We are looking for players who can still run, field, throw and hit," West said. "Many times when we hold tryouts, we get many players who want to catch or play first base, but we need infielders and outfielders."

Anne Arundel County has had a senior softball league for nearly 30 years and there is also a Senior Softball Beltway League that plays during the day in cities around the Baltimore/Washington area.

"The county always wants to offer lifetime sports so you can stay active as you get older," said Jeff Porter, one of the county's sports supervisors and past supervisor at the Bachman Sports Complex. "It's also a good way for these guys to continue their friendships as they are still good players."

The players continue their friendships after the games.

"My wife will always say that you play one hour of softball and then you go to the bar for two hours and tell everyone what you should have done during the game," West said.

If you are interested in playing this year, contact Mike West at 410-271-2446 or through email at westarnld@verizon.net. The first tryout is set for March 30.

SPHS Runners Excel At Adidas Indoor Championships

» Continued from page 20

found. Your mind is so much stronger than your body."

While Sloat set a new personal best in the 800-meter, it wasn't the only event he competed in. Sloat was also a member of a team that placed fourth in the distance medley championship and broke another school record, finishing with a time of 10:20.91. He raced alongside teammates Eddie Sullivan, Tyler Canaday and James Glebocki, all juniors at Severna Park.

"We pretty much do all the same workouts, which really helps," Sloat said. "They push me a lot. They're always just right on my shoulder in workouts and they're all huge team camaraderie guys, putting the hard work in together.

Having those guys to push me, I push them, it helps a lot. I love having those guys by my side."

The team-first mentality is something the track and cross country teams at Severna Park stress, and it has allowed them to see success across the board. Pushing each other while having a common goal in mind has become a blueprint for success for runners like Sloat.

"Our whole program is about the team," Severna Park cross country head coach Joshua Alcombright said. "We is greater than me. That's something we try to preach throughout our program."

Sloat credited the team mentality in pushing him to improve on his times and reach the goals he intended. While having a good supporting cast

around him helped, he also pointed out one more person that pushed him during the race.

"[For this last meet], my dad was right by the finish line, and he has one of the loudest voices I've ever heard," Sloat said. "At just about any point on the track, if he yelled and I heard him, it was like a little boost."

While the Adidas championships were a club meet and not a school sanctioned event, it was still big for the Severna Park runners as they gear up for the 2020 spring season.

"They've been really dedicated during the whole pandemic," Alcombright said. "It's good to be back with the kids. To see them accomplish their goals, it makes me proud, it makes it all worth it."

SPMS Student Named Maryland's Top Youth Volunteer

For her work with oyster restoration in the Magothy River and Chesapeake Bay, Lily McCallister was named Maryland's Top Youth Volunteer at the middle level. The eighth-grader recruited her Girl Scout troop and National Junior Honor Society members to help her shake oysters cages located on the Magothy River.

By Haley Weisgerber

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is one of America's largest youth recognition programs based on volunteer service. Two students are selected at the high and middle level, for high school and middle school students, from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. In 2021, 102 state honorees were named the Top Youth Volunteers, including one Severna Park student.

Lily McCallister, an eighth-grader at Severna Park Middle School, was named Top Youth Volunteer at the middle level for her work with oyster restoration in the Magothy River and Chesapeake Bay. She is an active member of the environmental club and National Junior Honor Society at Severna Park Middle School.

Lily began working on the oyster restoration project in the sixth grade as part of her Girl Scout Silver Award. In school, she learned about pollutants in the Chesapeake Bay and wanted to make a change. She got in touch with



the Oyster Recovery Program and the Magothy River Association (MRA) and set up cages with oyster shells and spat (babies) at two marinas on the Magothy River. Once a week, Lily visited



the marinas in the rain, snow or shine to shake the cages, which prevents the young oysters from being smothered in the muck. The cages are heavy, so Lily invited her Girl Scout troop and

National Junior Honor Society members to assist in shaking the cages. At the end of the season, MRA member Brad Knoff assisted Lily with dumping the now mature oysters to a protected reef in the Chesapeake Bay, where they will continue to grow and filter pollutants. During the next oyster season, Lily started the process again with a new group of spat.

"My favorite part of my journey was when me and my best friend got to go out and dump the oysters on the protective reef," Lily said. "It really felt like all my hard work actually served the bay's health."

Lily has also conducted research to learn more about oyster filtration. Her award-winning Oyster Versus Mussels project tested whether oysters, mussels, or oysters and mussels together filtered the water at a faster rate. She set up four fish tanks in her kitchen and tested the water once an hour for 19 hours. She learned that the two species worked better as a team.

"She is a very hard worker," said Lily's mother, Christine McCallister. "Even in the ice, she's out there shaking those cages. She is a go-getter and I'm very proud."

Many people supported Lily along the way, but nobody more than Chris-
» **Continued on page 34**

Severna Park Scholars Set Sights Across The Pond

By Molly Beirsto



Photo courtesy of Emily Paine/Bucknell University

William Snyder plans to focus on autistic studies and neuroscience at the University of Cambridge in England.



Vareej Shah initially studied biomedical engineering, but his major is now public health and policy.

When Vareej Shah and William Snyder left high school to embark on furthering their educations at the University of Maryland and Bucknell University, respectively, it was unlikely they would be bound together by school any longer. However, their brilliance has them connected once again, as they were two of 24 scholars chosen to attend the University of Cambridge in England as graduates through the Gates Cambridge Scholarship. To them, it seems as unreal as it looks on paper.

The Gates Cambridge Scholarship is one of the most competitive of its kind. To have two people who attended the same high school receive it is unheard of.

"I think that that's crazy — 24 people are chosen across the United States and two of them being from the same high school," Shah said. "I wouldn't be surprised if this is the first time it's happened."

Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the scholarship covers the cost of postgraduate fees, including tuition, accommodation, airfare and visa costs — all important benefits and a key reason the scholarship is so selective.

To Snyder and Shah, it all began in the same place: home. Severna Park has offered students a platform for success, however, the achievements aren't what's important. As Snyder said, "Severna Park is a very high-achieving school, very high-achieving area, but I think the important message isn't that we're achieving these high-level things,"
» **Continued on page 34**

Three Steps For Preparing For Your Next IEP Meeting

Beth Nolan
Education
Team Allies



Getting ready for an individual education program (IEP) meeting can be extremely overwhelming and create a high amount of anxiety for many parents.

We want to do the best for our children, but most parents do not know the process, and everyone else at the table seems to bring so much more knowledge. Remember that you are the expert on your child. How do you leverage your expertise and put your potential anxieties at bay to make sure you have a productive IEP meeting for you and your child? There are many steps you can take, but here are three we suggest starting with:

1. BE PREPARED

Review the reports and data that you have been given from the school prior to the meeting. Write down any questions you have or things you do not understand. Make two lists as you review the information you've received — one for areas in which your child is strong and an-

other for areas of challenge for your child. Layer into these lists your own insights — remember, you have information that the school does not have from your perspective as the parent. It may get overwhelming if your child is having a lot of struggles, but note the areas of strength as well.

Pull from your experience seeing your child interact with the work they have brought home — the reports might not reflect this perspective. Pull from data about what happens at home if your child is learning in a virtual or hybrid model. Both academic and non-academic information is important for the team. Again, keep adding to those strengths and challenges. Bring this information with you to make sure that the team has the full picture. We also suggest reaching out to your team in advance with any questions you have so that you can collaborate.

2. SET YOUR OWN GOALS FOR THE MEETING

Establish three goals you want to make sure happen at the meeting. They can be simple, like making
» **Continued on page 34**

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Q.

Question of the month

Each month, the *Severna Park Voice* poses a question to a local fifth-grade class. This month, students from Jones Elementary answered the question:

What is the luckiest thing that ever happened to you?

The luckiest thing that ever happened to me actually happens every day. I feel so grateful that every day I wake up and know that I'm still safe and have my friends and family to comfort me.

Ella Allen

The luckiest thing to happen to me was getting my dogs because they make me happy.

Addy Anger

I think moving here is the luckiest thing that's happened to me because I got to go to Jones, meet all my new friends and live on the water.

Reese Bergman

Meeting my new friends because I just got out of a really toxic friendship that hurt my ego, so them coming up to me meant a lot and they helped me be the person I am today.

Molly Billings

Stumbling upon Nirvana.

Nicko Blanco

The luckiest thing that ever happened to me was winning first place for bronze level in the pink gymnastics meet.

Sally Bodkin

The luckiest thing that has happened to me is I got two electric scooters. Now I play with them every day.

Teagan Breen

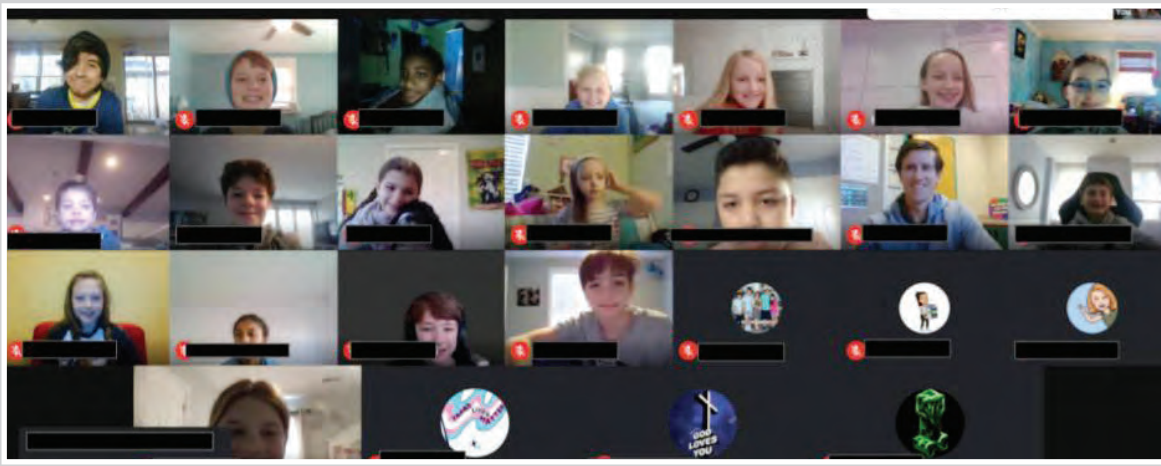
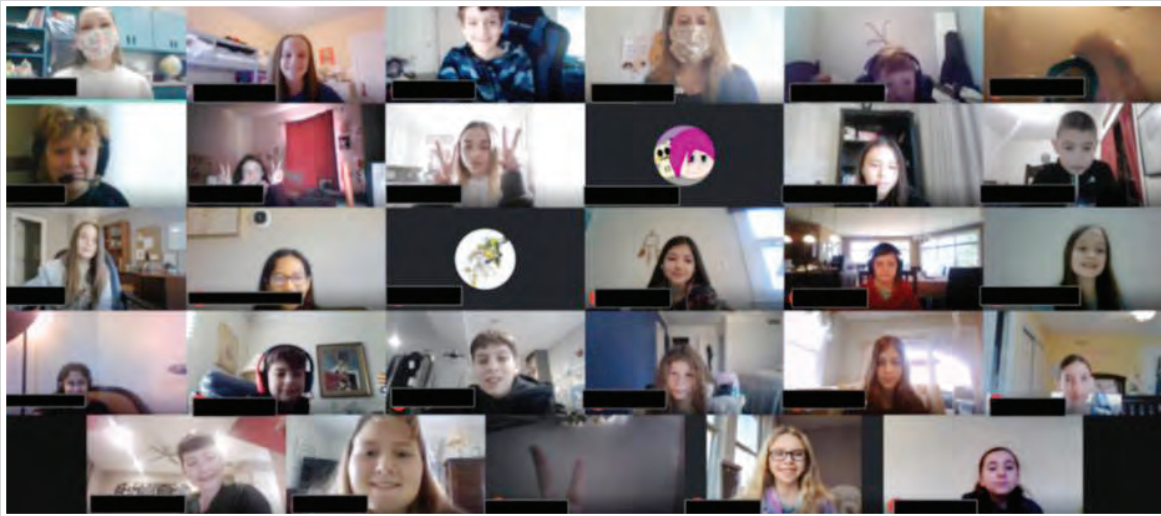
The luckiest thing that has happened to me is that I have a wonderful family that is so supportive and kind after all this stress of my Pop Pop passing.

Gabby Centineo

Having my family still together and none of us getting COVID.

Avery Davis

Jones Elementary School



I found a cat at a hotel and my father said we could take him home with us if he was still there tomorrow. I came back the next day and he was still there! His name is Nacho and he is my best friend!

Elliott Davis

The luckiest thing that has ever happened to me was meeting my best friends because they are the funniest and kindest people I have ever met and they really made a change in my life.

Natalie DiCamillo

The luckiest thing that happened to me was probably getting the opportunity to go to sleepaway camp. Most kids don't realize how amazing camp is, but it is an amazing opportunity to learn a lot about life.

Grady Dickstein

Probably that I have four other siblings that love me deeply. My parents have also made all my dreams come true no matter if there is a pandemic going on or not.

Olivia Gilligan

The luckiest thing that ever happened to me was when I bought a lucky coin. After I got it, nothing bad happened on that day.

Avery Girton

The luckiest thing that ever happened to me was when I went to a new school and

made friends right away. It was awesome having people wanting to be my friends because it made me feel like I fit in.

Natalie Glesmann

When I was hurt, luckily my friend's mom was there and called 911. This is the luckiest thing that has happened to me because I didn't need stitches or staples.

Riley Goodman

My best friend moved across the street. It is lucky because he is a great friend.

Caden Gruver

I was playing basketball on a blacktop and I fell, and I was holding the ball, and at the last second I used the ball to prevent it from scratching my hands and face.

Christopher Jenkins

The luckiest thing that ever happened to me was when I went to Disney World.

Isabella John

I got my grades up really quickly by staying after class and redoing my work and I did it because I really wanted to play my Xbox.

Maxwell Johnson

The luckiest thing that has ever happened to me is when my parents surprised me with my new Golden Retriever puppy. I felt lucky because I have always

wanted a dog!

Annabel Johnson

Once, my mom went to the store and it took her very long, and when she got back, my dad told us to go out and help her take the bags inside. But instead of stuff from the shop, she actually went to a breeder and got a dog.

Noah Keefer

Once I got lost in a parking lot and I was able to find my way back to my parents.

Karina Lam

The luckiest thing that has ever happened to me is having my sister born. She is the best thing that ever happened to me.

Miles McGuinness

The luckiest thing that has ever happened in my life was when my family got chickens. Honestly, I don't know what life would be without them — probably really boring.

Sage McGuire

When I realized my cousins got a dog. Because when I see them, I get to play with the dog!

Anaya Moghees

The luckiest thing that has ever happened to me is when I was playing "Fortnite" with my friend Parker. We were playing the limited time mode, and the last people were taken

out by a boss, which got us the win!

Rex Much

The luckiest thing that has happened to me is when I won a game with my family and friends.

Geselia Padilla

The luckiest thing that ever happened to me is being safe and healthy during COVID. It's lucky because other people have not been healthy, so I am very lucky to be safe.

Hadley Patton

It was that I survived from my appendix bursting.

Judith Pineda

Finding Jesus in my heart and getting a chance to share my faith on this newspaper.

Parker Rabinovitz

Honestly, that is a tough question. I have had a lot of good things happen to me, but at this moment I would say when me and my brothers got my parents to agree to getting a dog.

Grace Redmond

The luckiest thing that happened to me was getting \$100 whenever I see my uncle. My uncle gives me money because he loves me, and I have been working hard for everything.

Justin Rodriguez

My luckiest thing is being born into a great and loving family. This is my luck-

iest thing to ever happen to me because all my needs and wants are met.

Taylor Roventini

Getting my computer, so I could play better games.

Maxwell Schell

One time at a carnival there was a shoot-a-bottle game, and my sister had not gotten a shot, so I thought I wouldn't either (because I'm usually not too lucky). But I shot the bottle and the bullet bounced off one and hit both and I won something for me and my sister.

Parker Scott

I have a family to be with during COVID. I am not alone during COVID and I still have food, water and a house.

Leighann Self

The luckiest thing that ever happened to me was probably to get into the lottery of the PVA program.

Savannah Smart

Being on Severna Park Soccer B team with a lot of people I know because a lot of them were better than me at the start and I knew them on the C team before.

Thomas Sobocinski

When I got my dog, I love dogs and I couldn't live without one.

Victor Szabo

When I was 4, I cracked my head on a table leg. When I went to the hospital, I had staples in my head. They said if my head was cracked a bit more, it could have messed up my brain.

Benjamin Tocco

The luckiest thing that happened to me was on my birthday when my mom did not invite any of my friends over, but my friends came over still.

Maxwell Umana

When it was my first lacrosse games and we won all of them. It's lucky because we were playing a team that we never beat, and we beat them and they are a really good team.

Leela Vernugopal

The luckiest thing that has ever happened to me is winning five soccer games in a row! The games start at 8:30 in the morning.

Zachary Waugh

My luckiest thing that happened is when I almost fell off the edge skiing. I was lucky because there was one tree, and that tree was near me.

Stuart Werner

I moved to a different country when I was 7. I would never have met the friend I have today or have the relationship that I have with my Memaw and Pop Pop.

Karys Weymes

Kinder Park 4-H Club Member Builds Rabbit House

By Kristine Mase
Farm Education
Livestock Club Member

During the summer of 2020, members of Kinder Farm Park's farm education small animal team decided they needed to move the rabbit house because the current location was difficult to keep cool and the bunnies were digging out.

Mid-summer, ranger Helen Overman asked the small animal team to meet Aneka Velthuis, a Kinder Farm 4-H Club member who sought to complete the requirements for the 4-H Diamond Clover Award. She proposed to build a new rabbit house because it is a "great way to educate the public about rabbits and also to get kids involved in raising and caring for these animals." The small animal team was at the ready to assist Aneka in the accomplishment of her goal.

The planning phase started in August and the team met and emailed throughout September and October, drawing plans and making a materials list. Aneka submitted a proposal to park management for approval. The rabbit house was moved in November by the hardworking Kinder Farm maintenance department.

Work on the new run attached to the Rabbit House began Thanksgiving weekend and ended mid-December. Throughout the process, Aneka's



The small animal team has a plaque being made to recognize and thank Aneka Velthuis' 4-H Diamond Clover Project for making a better rabbit house for the Kinder Farm community.

commitment and kind spirit inspired the team members to give Aneka the opportunity to lead and learn from an all-adult construction team. Aneka managed the planning and directed the development, execution and validation processes required by the park superintendent.

Bassist Bianca Wilson Selected For National Youth Orchestra Program

Broadneck High School junior Bianca Wilson has been honing her skills as a member of the Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra (CYSO) since 2015, and she will soon perform alongside musicians from across the country as a member of Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra program in New York.

Wilson will join talented musicians ages 14-19 during a month-long residency this summer. Over the years, she has played in several school ensembles such as the orchestra, marching band, marimba band and chamber orchestra. Additionally, Wilson has played with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO) in the Anne Arundel County Public Schools/BSO side-by-side orchestra, and she has been accepted into the Maryland All-State orchestra twice. Wilson currently enjoys leading digital tutoring sessions in music theory and violin.

Her favorite memory in CYSO was traveling to Carnegie Hall in 2019 and playing Christmas music alongside the stars of Tim Janis' Christmas concert. Outside of music, she enjoys riding her bike, playing chess and learning how to code in



Bianca Wilson will join talented musicians ages 14-19 during a month-long residency in New York this summer.

JavaScript.

Although she initially chose bass because it was big and looked fun to play, Wilson now enjoys the instrument because she loves that it has a wide range and it can be played in a variety of musical genres.

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Celebrating National History Day At St. Martin's-In-The-Field

By Kevin Murnane

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” — Marcus Garvey, international journalist/publisher.

For 14 eighth-graders at St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal School, those words came to fruition as they dug into the roots of past events and did months of research to celebrate National History Day on February 9.

The project, which was presented to the students in September, became one of their classes. The theme for all of these projects was “Communication in History: The Key to Understanding.”

The team of eighth-grade history teacher Tracy Alexander and the school's librarian and lower school technology teacher, Penny Murnane, attended a webinar in August with the National Education Association, which outlined what's involved with National History Day. They believed this would be a great project for the students to be involved with as they were preparing to go to high school.

“They did the research in class and at home, and I was impressed by how dedicated they were to the project,” Murnane said. “The students met for class every Thursday to continue their research and to share progress updates.”

The 14 students chose subjects that had topics as far-reaching as Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad to John F. Kennedy's assassination. The students chose to create a website, documentary, write a paper, perform or make an exhibit.

“They all had great enthusiasm for this project, and I was a resource for

them,” Murnane said. “Some even used the Library of Congress as well as used all of the other avenues for research including interviewing their parents and grandparents.”

St. Martin's is using this historical project to boost their students' high school resumes as they finalize plans on what high school to go to next year. St. Martin's is a prekindergarten to eighth grade facility that has met five days a week this year. There are 185 students at the Benfield Road school.

“One of the great aspects of the project is how the students accomplished independent research and to learn primary and secondary sources in their research,” Murnane said. “They also learned how to make an annotated bibliography, which will be crucial in their high school career.”

The students presented their projects to a team of independent judges via Zoom, and the students who were selected to earn first and second place were eligible to compete with other students from across the county. Students who received first, second and third place were provided ribbons, and everyone received a certificate for their accomplishments.

Students **Isabella Stees** (first place in Individual Documentary), **Nick Melfi** (second place in Individual Documentary) and **Helena Tawil** (first place in Individual Performance) have since qualified for the regional competition, allowing them to participate virtually in the statewide Maryland History Day competition along with students from homeschool and other private and public schools from around the state.



Eighth-graders (l-r, back row) Helena Tawil, Harper Reagoso, Teddy Mosher and (l-r, front row) Isabella Stees, Emery Hein and Nick Melfi advanced to the Anne Arundel County history day competition.

Individual Exhibit

Emery Hein – *Passing on Peace* (first place)

Teddy Mosher – *Agriculture: Communication through Collaboration* (second place)

Aidan Treff – *Ancient Greek Communication* (third place)

Blake Austin – *Communication with Morse Code*

Jay Donyinah – *The Maryland State Building*

Nora Tegeler – *Anne Boleyn*

Marie Van Wie – *LGBT Milestones in Protests*

Individual Performance

Helena Tawil – *Walking with Harriet Tubman*

Individual Documentary

Isabella Stees – *The Assassination of JFK* (first place)

Nicholas Melfi – *Communicating on the Underground Railroad* (second place)

Ryan Hunsicker – *How Miscommunication Led to Pearl Harbor* (third place)

Cooper Pasko – *How the Navajo Code Talkers Changed WWII*

Drew Synder – *9-11: The Communications and miscommunications*

Individual Website

Harper Reagoso – *The Women's Rights Movement*

CTA Returns With “She Kills Monsters”

Children's Theatre of Annapolis presents



Children's Theatre of Annapolis (CTA) opened its production of “She Kills Monsters, Young Adventurers Edition” on March 6 for both live and virtual performances. In conjunction with the performance, CTA is holding a fundraising raffle for a gift basket worth \$150 from Annapolis' Third Eye Comics.

“She Kills Monsters” is the first live show at CTA (located at 1661 Bay Head Road in Annapolis) since the facility closed on March 13, 2020. The play tells the story of high-schooler Agnes Evans as she deals with the death of her younger sister, Tilly. When Agnes stumbles upon Tilly's “Dungeons & Dragons” notebook, she finds herself catapulted into a journey of discovery



Photo courtesy of Andrew Wilson/Children's Theatre of Annapolis

The cast of “She Kills Monsters” rehearsed at Children's Theatre of Annapolis.

and action-packed adventure in the imaginary world that was her sister's refuge. In this high-octane dramatic comedy laden with homicidal fairies, nasty ogres and '90s pop culture, acclaimed playwright Qui Nguyen offers a heart-pounding homage to the geek and warrior within us all.

CTA's production features nine local

youth performers and is directed by Sim Rivers, who last helmed CTA's Teen Traveling Acting Group (TAG).

“We're so excited here at CTA to be returning to live theater and educational programming after what's been a devastating year for local performing arts organizations,” said CTA President Kelsey Casselbury. “While the

board of directors has been committed to remaining closed for the safety for its staff, performers, volunteers and patrons, this small production is sure to be a phenomenal way to welcome the public back to our theater.”

“She Kills Monsters” was performed live on March 6 and March 7. It will be streamed virtually at 7:00pm on Saturday, March 13, and Sunday, March 14. **Note:** This production is recommended for ages 12 and older due to mild language and middle/high school themes.

Tickets for the live show, which are \$15 for adults and \$12 for youth, senior and active military, can be purchased through TicketLeap. Tickets for the virtual show are \$10 per household/device and can be purchased through ShowTix4U. Tickets for the Third Eye Comics' gift basket raffle are \$5 for one and \$20 for five and can be purchased online.

COVID safety protocols include assigned seating to ensure social distancing between groups, face mask requirements for everyone, available hand-sanitizing stations and thorough sanitizing of the facility between shows. CTA is currently seating audiences at 50% capacity in accordance with the county regulations.

SPMS Student Named Maryland's Top Youth Volunteer

» Continued from page 27

tine. Lily said her mom is the inspiration behind the entire project.

"My mom is a seventh-grade science teacher [at Magothy River Middle School] and she's also my Girl Scout leader," Lily said. "She always had an impact on me with everything science-related and that got me interested."

The Prudential Spirit of Community Award, which is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, awards a \$2,500 scholarship and a silver medal. In April, 10 of the 102 students honored will be named America's Top Youth Volunteers. These students will receive an additional \$5,000 scholarship, a gold medal and \$5,000 to donate to a charitable organization.

Although she is not sure if she will move on to the next round, Lily said she is just grateful to have been recognized at all and will continue to do her part in making Maryland's waterways healthier.

"I plan to keep on doing this as long as I can," Lily said. "I really enjoy going out there. I don't think I could stop."

Three Steps For Preparing For Your Next IEP Meeting

» Continued from page 27

sure to speak in the first few minutes. Or a goal can be that the team first hears your vision for your child's educational journey before any data is discussed. It could be that the team builds into the plan a strong system for homeschool communication. It could also be that the goals in the IEP are written to build on your child's strength. Whatever the three goals are, make sure you write them down before the meeting and keep them present in your materials so you can loop back to them.

Having your goals can help keep structure to the meeting. Goals will also help you ensure that at the end of the meeting, you know if you

have accomplished the items that are important to you for your child.

3. CENTER YOURSELF

Take a deep breath. Get outside for a walk. Take time to meditate. Get in a workout. Take some time to get yourself emotionally and mentally ready. IEP meetings can be tiring and emotional. Whatever works for you, clear your head and find space for the conversation that is going to be had at the IEP table.

Why do we start with these three steps? We believe the best way to get to a good outcome for your meeting is to know where you want the meeting to head. Keep centered on the strengths and challenges your child

is experiencing and have goals for the support plan that you want in place. Collaboration with the school team is important and making sure to establish some key elements that you think will help your child prior to the meeting will be essential to a productive and constructive conversation.

Every voice is important around the table, and your voice should be heard. Reach out to Education Team Allies — which can help you prepare and reduce some of the anxiety — and make sure all voices are both heard and respected.

Learn more about Education Team Allies at www.educationteamallies.com or email info@educationteamallies.com.

Severna Park Scholars Set Sights Across The Pond

» Continued from page 27

but the importance of having that balance in your life to do what you love."

Shah agrees. Even the opportunity to go abroad and study amongst some of the most prestigious people and facilities comes along with the acknowledgement of the bigger picture.

"I'll have that to carry the balance with me to Cambridge — everyone around you is just brilliant - but also opening my eyes to see a new country and culture outside of the work I will be doing," Shah said.

As for their personal goals, Snyder

plans to focus on autistic studies involving treatments using brain mapping, from his major, neuroscience. Shah took multiple changes to his major to get to this point today, from starting with biomedical engineering, and eventually finding his way to public health and policy. That, he said, can be traced back to a Severna Park teacher.

"I remember one of my mentors at Severna Park was Mrs. [Theresa] Goldberg," Shah said, "and when I was leaving for college as a biological engineering major, she said that I would excel with my skill set in public health and policy, and what

do you know, three and a half years later, that is what I'm doing."

The Gates Cambridge Scholarship provides a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The suspense, hard work, and dedication both Shah and Snyder exhibited in their education paid off to allow them to perfect their studies. They will continue their schooling this fall, across the pond.

As Shah said, "I was born in Maryland, I grew up in Maryland, and I go to college in Maryland, so I was excited to be able to go somewhere else and explore a different culture."

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Trees, Hammers And Your Health - It Must Be Spring

Joe Bocek
Park Fitness



I was taking our family's dog for a long walk the other day. It was the first glimpse of a new season of promise. The rays of sunlight piercing through the clouds added a warmth we

hadn't seen since last year. It was the best kind of reminder that March is here.

With March comes spring, which reminds us of new beginnings and rebirths. It also serves as a reminder that it's time to take care of regular tasks and chores we might have put off.

At our household, it's time for the tree guy to come out. Now, I've had this conversation many times with friends about doing it yourself versus having a profes-

sional do the tree work. And aside from the fact that I hate ladders, you cannot overlook the benefits of working with a professional and having it done right the first time.

It's much like this story a friend shared with me some time ago. One day, this friend of mine could not get his car to start. Rather than take it to a professional mechanic to have it serviced, he called a few friends to get some ideas on what the problem could be.

He got some advice he was willing to try on his own: locate the car's starter and hit it with a hammer. Then try starting it again.

Well, my friend tried this multiple times to no avail. He worked quite hard, in fact, at using this hammer with tons of effort and good intentions. His car was still a stuck immovable object.

Finally, he gave up and got it to a mechanic. Upon arriving at the shop, he

opened the hood and told the mechanic that he had done exactly what should have worked but the car still would not start.

The mechanic replied, "Yeah, you definitely took that hammer and beat the crap out of your windshield washer motor. That's why it still won't start."

You see, my friend had the best intentions. And he worked exceptionally hard. He was just doing the wrong thing with lots of time and energy. Unfortunately, all that time and energy was wasted with no result.

Rather than find the mechanic first and use the expert approach, he now had to replace something else on his vehicle.

Working in health and fitness is similar at times. We have folks come to us all the time, confident that they were doing the right things, certain that just doing more of this thing or working harder at this one item is all they needed.

At times, this one thing might be something that used to work for them years ago, or something a friend did that worked, or even the shiny new thing that just popped up. And that is where working with a professional — in our industry a fitness mechanic — can save you a lot of time, effort and mental anguish.

Working with a pro can also save you from decision fatigue (not knowing what to do or where to begin). It can even help you do the things you need to do when you really don't want to do them.

Plus, it might even save you from pulverizing another entirely different area, separate from where the problem is.

So whether your trees need trimming, your car won't start or you need to work on your health and fitness goals, try that professional first. You'll be happy you did.

Lilies: Lovely But Lethal

Dr. Christine Calvert

Medical Director,
VCA Calvert
Veterinary Center



As we look forward to the warmer weather and the spring season coming our way, we see beautiful plants start to make their way to the supermarket and floral shops in anticipation of the Easter holiday. While

many of these flowers are beautiful to the eye, potentially lethal dangers can lurk within their captivating colors.

Some of the main offenders I am referencing are the flowers belonging in the genera *Lilium* and *hemerocallis*, as these flowers can cause severe and sometimes fatal problems for our feline patients. Although our canine patients can experience some gastrointestinal upset from ingestion of these flowers, our focal point today is our feline companion.

During this time of year, we hear many questions from owners regarding *Lilium longiflorum* (the Easter lily), however, it is important to note that several lilies in this genus are considered toxic — including but not limited to the oriental lily, Asiatic lilies, Turk's cap lily, Asiatic hybrid lily, tiger lily, stargazer lily, rubrum lily, red lily, western lily and wood lily. The *Hemerocallis* spp also pose a significant problem and include the day lily, orange day lily and early day lily. It is important to note that although the flower portion of the lily is considered to be the most toxic, all parts of the plant are considered poisonous.

Ingestion of even a small portion of lilies in cats requires emergency intervention. Initial signs of toxicity may manifest as vomiting, lethargy



and inappetence within hours of exposure. Owners may also note hypersalivation/drooling, stumbling gait, increased thirst/urination, tremoring, weakness and potentially seizures.

Acute kidney failure can develop within eight to 12 hours in cats with death occurring within days of ingestion. Cats who have ingested multiple lilies may succumb to toxicity within a matter of hours. Although studies have shown mortality rates can be 50% to 100% for this toxicity, recent studies have shown a survival rate of 90% to 100% in cats that received early intervention and intensive supportive care resulting in minimal long-term kidney damage.

In summary, if your cat does ingest a lily plant, please take the cat to a veterinarian immediately and be prepared that hospitalization, overnight care, and several days of treatment may be recommended.

If you're an avid plant enthusiast, I strongly recommend checking out the following resources that provide information on lilies and many other

plants that can be problematic for both cats and dogs.

Poisonous Plants for Cats and Dogs

- www.veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&id=6047984

Poisonous Plants – Toxic and Non-Toxic Plants from ASPCA Animal Poison Control

- www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants
- *This website is great because it also has photographs of each of the plants of concern*

No Lilies for Cats

- www.noliliesforcats.com/faq1.pml

Safe Gardening for Dogs and Cats

- www.veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&id=4951757

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

- 1-888-426-4435

The best way to protect your cat from the dangers of lily and plant toxicity is to stay informed and prevent opportunities for exposure. The safest option is to avoid introduction of lilies into the home and to avoid using these in outdoor gardens that cannot be completely secluded from opportunities for ingestion. Even if your cat is indoor only, Maryland does have a large feral/outdoor cat population, and having lilies in an easily accessed part of the garden may also pose a potential threat to outdoor cats. Talk to the members in your community as having indoor/outdoor cats is a common practice in some areas, and educate your neighbors about their cat's risk for potential exposure with the spring season on its way.

The veterinarians and staff at VCA Calvert Veterinary Center are available if you have further questions and we thank you for helping to create a safe environment for our feline friends in your community.

News From Chesapeake Life Center

In-Person Grief Support Groups For Children And Teens Meeting In Spring

Chesapeake Life Center's grief support programs for children and teens are meeting in person in a limited capacity on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, located at 90 Ritchie Highway in Pasadena.

The cost for each group is \$10 per participant, with a maximum of \$20 per family. Preregistration is required for all these programs and must be completed before attending by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org. For information about the spring schedule and other programs, including summer events for children and teens, visit www.chesapeakelifecenter.org.

Chesapeake Life Center Announces Virtual Grief Support Schedule For Spring

Chesapeake Life Center offers a variety of grief support programs and workshops in person and via telehealth platforms.

Registration is required for all groups and can be completed by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org. For details on telehealth bereavement services, visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/clc-covid-19. Visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/events for a complete listing of in-person and virtual groups and workshops for adults and children.



Alexandra Cohl

SP Native Runs Women's Podcasting Platform

By Jane Seiss

Alexandra Cohl has found her voice, and she is using it and her unique online platform to highlight and celebrate other women's work in podcasting.

A graduate of Severna Park High School and the University of Delaware, Cohl moved to New York City in 2014 to teach creative writing with Writopia Lab, a nonprofit that provides extracurricular enrichment and writing support for students. She later earned a master's degree in English literature from The City College of New York, began freelance writing, and became an avid listener of podcasts — the award-winning “Serial” was her introduction to the digital audio phenomenon.

As her life in New York took root and her work in freelance gained steam, Cohl began listening to women-hosted podcasts. Purposely seeking women's voices, perspectives and career advice, Cohl became a fan.

In summer 2019, her interest in women-led podcasts inspired her to launch
» Continued on page 41



“The Pod Broads” is an interview-style show where women in podcasting talk about their life experiences and work. The artwork was designed by Elsa Bermudez.

March Movie Releases



Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures and Legendary Pictures

In the upcoming film *Godzilla vs. Kong*, which is scheduled for release in theaters on March 31, the two iconic monsters will face off in a battle for the ages.

Whether you are eager to return to the movie theater or you prefer to watch a film from the comfort of your couch, several options are coming to a screen near you in March.

Moxie

Release: March 3 on Netflix

Genre: Comedy

Inspired by her mom's rebellious past and a confident new friend, a shy 16-year-old publishes an anonymous zine calling out sexism at her school.

The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run

Release: March 4 on Apple TV,

Amazon Prime

Video, and Vudu

Genre: Comedy/Family

When his best friend Gary is suddenly snatched away, SpongeBob takes Patrick on a madcap mission far beyond Bikini Bottom to save their pink-shelled pal.

» Continued on page 40

Dining Out Around The Park

Craving Chinese Food? Check Out China Garden

By Mary Cobbler

Sometimes you just got to have some Chinese food. It's one of those cravings that hits you either out of the blue or when someone mentions it. Like now, aren't you thinking about Chinese food?

China Garden is one local option to get your fix. Due to COVID, the restaurant only offers a pick-up option, but the restaurant makes it easy. Within a half hour of tapping out my family's order, the feast was ready to go — packaged and stacked neatly.

As usual with a late lunch, my little family was “starving,” and quickly disassembled the packages of General Tso's chicken, shrimp in hot sauce, hot and sour soup, and a “flaming appetizer platter.”

“Where are the sauces?” one of my younger fellow critics exclaimed? Alas, none were in the bags, a disappointment to a few. I was OK with the soy sauce I had in the fridge and doused it liberally. So, if you go, be sure to ask for sauces.

The flaming appetizer was a good mix and included spring rolls, tri-corner hat-shaped shrimp toast, shrimp tempura, speared barbecue spare ribs and beef sticks. Overall, this had good reviews with high marks for the spring rolls, declared some of the best in the area. The
» Continued on page 40



Photos by Mary Cobbler

Clockwise from Left: The “flaming appetizer” featured a variety of offerings including spring rolls, shrimp toast, shrimp tempura and speared meat. The shrimp in hot sauce with rice was tasty but not as spicy as its name suggests. The General Tso's chicken was accompanied by savory lo mein.

The Art Of The Mind Unleashed

Psychologist Paints Prolifically During Pandemic



By Conor Doherty

Since the pandemic started over a year ago, it has had an immense impact on jobs and people's livelihoods. While some people have been able to adjust to working from home, many have been left without jobs, frustrated that they are unable to provide for their families.

But one man is glad that he now has so much free time. Dr. William N. Collins, a psychologist for over 40 years, hasn't seen one patient since the pandemic began. At the age of 83, it was too much of a risk for him. But it doesn't bother him as that means he's had more time to pursue and work on his true passion, art.

Primarily an abstract artist whose career dates back to the 1960s, when he started painting to combat a severe case of depression, Collins has been painting prolifically during the pandemic. Currently, over 120 paintings sit scattered throughout his house. Any free space, even unused closets, is used as storage. The lack of space has served as his biggest challenge during the pandemic, but that doesn't sway Collins as art has so



Photo by Conor Doherty

William N. Collins, a psychologist for more than 40 years, has filled his home with more than 120 paintings since the pandemic started.

completely taken over his life that if asked, he wouldn't even identify himself as a psychologist.

"You identify yourself with who you believe you are so that

others may see you as one thing, doing what you do," he explained. "If asked, I would identify less as a psychologist and more as an artist now."

Collins believes that the arts might see a surge whenever the pandemic ends and things return to normal. "I think when this is over, you're going to see a barrage of paintings and music and books, plays," he stated. "All of these are going to come out because your writers, artists and musicians have not been able to perform and so they've spent their time doing all of this."

His plan, once his office opens again, is to work one to two days a week, while spending the rest of his time focused on his artwork. Collins needs all the time he can get as some of his paintings can take up to two or three weeks to complete.

"Sometimes, I work for two weeks on about a 12-inch area," he said. "That's exactly what happens in painting, when you're doing abstract. You have to know when to stop. You have to look at it and know it's finished."

"Whenever you do anything, even if it's just putting your hands together, it's an expression of yourself and that's the same thing with anything in writing, painting or the theatrical arts. It doesn't bother me if someone perceives a different meaning from my paintings than what I intended."

To see the paintings Collins has finished, visit www.wncollins.com where over 100 of his paintings are on display and for sale.

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AMFM Accepting Applications For \$5,000 Scholarship

Annapolis Musicians Fund for Musicians Inc. (AMFM), a non-profit organization that supports professional Annapolis-area musicians and music programs for youth, is accepting applications for its fourth annual Tim King Music Performance Scholarship.

Candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Be a current high school student attending school in Anne Arundel County and scheduled to graduate in May/June 2021
- Be a musician who was active in high school chorus, band, orchestra, jazz band, or other school-sponsored performance group prior to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0
- Intend to pursue a bachelor's degree in music performance in fall 2021

Candidates will be evaluated using a system that awards points for (1) active membership in a school band, orchestra, choir, chorus, or other school-sponsored musical performance group prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) volunteer music participation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; (3) participation in special school performances prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (and presently, if the school sponsors such opportunities); (4) selection in All County/All State/regional performance groups prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; and (5) participation in private music

lessons. Candidates must also submit and will be evaluated on a performance video of up to three minutes in length and either a three-minute narrative video or a 350- to 500-word written essay to support their application. The narrative video or essay should address these questions: "What role has music played in my life, and how will it shape and influence my future?" and "How will the scholarship assist me?" Candidates must also include one letter of recommendation from a music teacher, music coach or music mentor, and are encouraged to submit a second performance video that reflects their diverse musical styles or interests.

The scholarship application deadline is April 15, 2021, and the awardee will be chosen on or about May 15, 2021. To apply, and for details, visit www.am-fm.org/music-performance-scholarship.

Tim King was a beloved Annapolis musician, actor and writer, and a gifted guitar teacher. This \$5,000 scholarship honors his legacy by providing support to future musicians.

AMFM provides financial relief to professional Annapolis musicians who cannot work due to circumstances that leave them unable to perform. It also fosters the next generation of Annapolis-area musicians through scholarship programs and by funding private lessons for underserved youth. AMFM raises funds through donations and music events showcasing local professional talent. For more information, go to www.am-fm.org.



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» Continued
from page 36

March Movie Releases

Chaos Walking

Release: March 5 in theaters
Genre: Science Fiction
/Adventure

Two unlikely companions embark on a perilous adventure through the badlands of an unexplored planet as they try to escape a dangerous and disorienting reality, where all inner thoughts are seen and heard by everyone.

Coming 2 America

Release: March 5 on Amazon
Prime Video
Genre: Comedy

Prince Akeem Joffer (Eddie Murphy) is set to become King of Zamunda when he discovers he has a son he never knew about in America: a street-savvy Queens native named Lavelle. Honoring his royal father's dying wish to groom this son as the crown prince, Akeem and Semmi set off to America once again.



Photo courtesy of Amazon Studios

Eddie Murphy is reprising his role as Akeem Joffer in "Coming 2 America."

Raya and the Last Dragon

Release: March 5 in theaters
and on Disney+
Genre: Animation

Long ago, in the fantasy world of Kumandra, humans and dragons lived together in harmony. But when sinister monsters known as the Druun threatened the land, the dragons sacrificed themselves to save humanity. Now, 500 years later, those same monsters have returned and it's up to a lone warrior, Raya, to track down the last dragon in order to finally stop the Druun for good.

Zack Snyder's Justice League

Release: March 18 on HBO Max
Genre: Action/Adventure

Determined to ensure Superman's ultimate sacrifice was not in vain, Bruce Wayne (Ben Affleck) aligns forces with Diana Prince (Gal Gadot) with plans to recruit a team of metahumans to protect the world from an approaching threat of catastrophic proportions. This version of the film is from Zack Snyder, the original director who was later replaced by Joss Whedon.

Nobody

Release: March 26 in theaters
Genre: Action/Drama

Hutch Mansell (Bob Odenkirk) is a suburban dad, overlooked husband, nothing neighbor — a "nobody." When two thieves break into his home one night, Hutch's unknown long-simmering rage is ignited and propels him on a brutal path that will uncover dark secrets he fought to leave behind.

Godzilla vs. Kong

Release: March 31 in theaters
and on HBO Max
Genre: Action/Science Fiction

In a time when monsters walk the Earth, humanity's fight for its future sets Godzilla and Kong on a collision course that will see the two most powerful forces of nature on the planet collide in a spectacular battle for the ages.

Check Out China Garden

» Continued from page 36

rolls had a flaky, crispy crunch on the outside, with tender vegetables and pork inside. The shrimp toast was a good comfort food for a cold evening — with thick, tasty, warm breading absorbing some of tender shrimp on the inside. The tempura was deep-fried and crisp — all dippable. The ribs were dry and didn't have much taste, but the beef was tender and spicy.

Warm and full-flavored, the hot and sour soup was a winner with tofu and large pieces of mushrooms. The crunchy noodles, to me, are always a treat in hot and sour soup! If I had just this, I would have been satisfied.

Unfortunately, the shrimp in hot sauce was a disappointment because it wasn't hot — no spice at all. The mix of shrimp, onions and bamboo shoots was slightly sweet, with a bit of a peppery taste. I'm not sure what I got, or if someone left the hot sauce off. It wasn't a bad dish, especially when I added crunchy noodles and soy sauce. I ate most of it.

But some like it hot — and I do.

The General Tso's chicken with lo mein noodles was the best of all, and some of the best I've ever tasted. There was a generous amount of tender, lightly battered all-white chicken meat. The sauce was spicy with a tang and a little heat. The lo mein noodles were perfectly cooked and hit the spot on a cold afternoon.

And my fortune cookie said I would always have success. That's a great way to end a meal.

China Garden's menu is extensive, and prices are reasonable. Find the restaurant online at www.chinagardenarnold.com.

Where To Find CHINA GARDEN

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Key School Hosts 18th Annapolis Book Festival Virtually

Many distinguished speakers are scheduled to join the virtual Annapolis Book Festival on Saturday, April 24, and Sunday, April 25. Those include beloved best-selling children's author Kate DiCamillo; Emmy Award-winning journalist Sharyl Attkisson; Pen/Faulkner Award-winning novelist Ann Patchett; writer and activist Wes Moore; best-selling mystery writer Charles Finch; advocate and recipient of the Helen Keller Achievement Award Haben Girma; award-winning investigative journalist Ben Westhoff; best-selling memoirist, speaker and media producer Austin Channing Brown; the chair of Color of Change, Heather McGhee; best-selling author, journalist and historian Garrett M. Graff; award-winning short story writer Sergio Troncoso; satirist and Thurber Prize finalist Annabelle Gurwitch; senior fellow at the Council of Foreign Relations Gayle Tzemach Lemmon; and historical fiction writer and novelist Erika Robuck.

Now in its 18th year, the Annapolis Book Festival is an interactive, multi-generational event that has something for book lovers of all ages. Evolving into a two-day virtual festival in 2021, this free community event attracts nationally and internationally renowned authors who discuss their books and the craft of writing. This year, the festival will partner with Anne Arundel County public libraries to provide these virtual programs for children: school readiness skills, tree songs puppet show, and a take and make activity. Combining entertainment with compelling author panels and educational opportunities, the festival appeals to a wide audience and has historically attracted more than 3,000 attendees annually in addition to coverage on C-SPAN BookTV.

The virtual Annapolis Book Festival will be held on Saturday, April 24, and Sunday, April 25, from 10:00am to 8:00pm.

Columbia Center For Theatrical Arts Adapts



By Dave Topp

In many ways, last year, stricken by the coronavirus pandemic, played out like a drama onstage. The curtain fell on so many parts of daily life including the live performances by the students of the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts (CCTA).

"It's been difficult for sure," said Gerald Jordan, deputy director of operations and programming at CCTA. "We essentially reinvented ourselves over the past year."

In March 2020, all programs, such as Broadway Prep and the Young Columbians, were shut down, with many of them in the middle of rehearsal at the time.

"We took time to actually figure out what we can do and how we can do things effectively," Jordan said. "We try to teach things that transcend the stage."

Several virtual programs were formed to allow students to continue their development as actors and performers. Broadway guests were brought in to offer online workshops and camps were created for the younger students as well.

One of the guests returning to work with the kids was Brynn Williams, a former student at CCTA. "We told the kids we're all learning this together, so we love your feedback and having you be a part of helping us make this new experience as positive and fulfilling as possible," she said.

Williams made her Broadway debut at the age of 12, performing in "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," and has since had roles in "13: The Musical," the revival of "Bye Bye Birdie" and "Lazarus."

"CCTA gave me that stage to perform on and also gave me friends and mentors that I value and cherish today," Williams said.

Students have enjoyed the opportunity to learn from Williams and other alumni.

"She's been very helpful, just having

Transcending The Stage

Gerald Jordan, the deputy director of operations and programming at CCTA, instructed an after-school program at Pointers Run Elementary in Clarksville.



someone who has been through it, for people who want to do it professionally," said Dulcey Comeau, 15. "Her stories and how she did are all very interesting. It's more personal because she's there and you can talk to her."

CCTA works with students ages 5 to 18. Several students who have graduated and moved on to college have now returned to assist with different programs.

"They always want to get involved. They want to come back. They want to be on the other side and help us," said Jordan of the alumni. "They really enjoyed the experience, and they don't want to leave it behind."

"We really do try to create a community at CCTA, where if you're a student, whether you've been in one production or 15 to 20, you're a part of that family here," Jordan added.

CCTA is currently holding virtual spring classes but will transition to a

hybrid model this summer. Jordan said that CCTA reached out to the community for feedback in preparing for a return to in-person classes.

"We are very much looking forward to our camp season," Jordan said. "We are still clinging to that performance aspect. It will just look different this year."

Despite the group not being to meet in person for close to a year, Jordan believes that the virtual model has allowed CCTA to broaden its reach for students.

"They've always been about bringing the arts education to the kids," Williams said.

CCTA also offers scholarship opportunities for students. For more information about upcoming camps, classes or the scholarship application process, visit www.cctarts.org.

"We really want to help the kids not only develop as actors but develop as people," Jordan said.

SP Native Runs Women's Podcasting Platform

» Continued from page 36

POD.DRALAND. She described its origins as "the very beginnings of a blog." She was writing about women-hosted podcasts back then and never stopped.

Today, POD.DRALAND offers three main features: The Tuesday Pod — where Cohl lists podcast recommendations, Pod.Radar — a place to read short interviews with independent women podcasters, and The Pod List — where podcasts of interest are organized by topic. The platform offers a newsletter subscription and branded merchandise, and it profiles Cohl's public relations and social media strategy services. Cohl built the online presence herself, creates most of its graphics and images, and even designed her logo. POD.DRALAND also highlights "The Pod Broads" — Cohl's podcast.

"The Pod Broads" is an interview-style show with women in podcasting — hosts, producers and editors — who talk about their life experiences and work. Cohl launched it in February and has already released four episodes. "It's been received really well," she said. Since debuting, "The Pod Broads" has been downloaded more than 500 times, and people are sharing it.

Cohl has enjoyed honing her skills as a producer, host and editor. "Anna Sale — host of "Death, Sex & Money"

— has definitely impacted the way I approach interviews," Cohl said. "Another podcaster that really got me into podcasting and whose work I still follow and appreciate is Tracy Clayton, host of 'Another Round' and 'Back Issue.'"

Cohl is pleased to be fulfilling her mission of getting women heard. New episodes are released weekly on Wednesday mornings, and "The Pod Broads" is available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify and other podcasting apps.

POD.DRALAND has been rewarding work. "It has put me in community with so many women in not only the United States but the world," Cohl explained.

She has found connection and community with a mix of women from different backgrounds working on varied projects. "We are coming together to support each other," she noted.

Cohl acknowledged that through POD.DRALAND, she has gained confidence. "I can tap into my own voice and have power in it," she said. "I can say what I want to say, unfiltered, and speak up for others if they can't or aren't ready to."

Cohl offers this advice for young women: "Make sure you give yourself the time and space to explore what you like and feel you could spend hours and days

spending your time with. Surround yourself with people who believe in and support you. You have an important perspective and voice in this world, and someone somewhere needs or wants to hear or see or read it."

A self-described multi-hyphenate creative, Cohl plans to continue podcasting, writing and uplifting. On her website, she points out that only one-third of podcast hosts on major networks are women. Cohl aims to help change that reality. Explore her podcast recommendations, interviews and perspectives at POD.DRALAND. See her brand come to life on Instagram @pod.draland. Find out more about "The Pod Broads" at www.poddraland.com/the-pod-broads-a-podcast-about-women-in-podcasting.

Try These Links

Website: www.poddraland.com

Instagram: www.instagram.com/pod.draland

The Tuesday Pod: www.poddraland.com/blog

The Pod List: www.poddraland.com/the-podcast-list

Pod.Radar: www.poddraland.com/podradar-1

The Pod Broads: www.poddraland.com/the-pod-broads-a-podcast-about-women-in-podcasting

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

RASA Juice Offers Personalized Wellness



“Our shop is a sustainable lifestyle hub for wellness. That means that we offer health coaching, we know the nutritional background of things that we sell and we’re integrative nutrition based.”

— LISA CONSIGLIO RYAN
CEO AND FOUNDER,
RASA JUICE SHOP

RASA Juice Shop — founded by Lisa Consiglio Ryan in 2018 — features a variety of juices with specific health benefits designed to make customers feel their best.

By Haley Weisgerber

RASA Juice Shop is not your average juice store. The juices at RASA Juice are carefully designed for specific health benefits and to promote an anti-inflammatory lifestyle, but the shop’s main goal is to promote wellness.

“Our shop is a sustainable lifestyle hub for wellness,” said RASA Juice Shop CEO and founder Lisa Consiglio Ryan. “That means that we offer health coaching, we know the nutritional background of things that we sell and we’re integrative nutrition based.”

A self-proclaimed former dieter with a troubled relationship with food, Consiglio Ryan left her job as a teacher in Prince George’s County and took up holistic healing and nutrition. She started Whole Health Design to share her knowledge and passion for the anti-inflammatory lifestyle with others. After being in business for a decade, Consiglio Ryan opened the RASA Juice Shop in 2018 as an extension of that mission.

“We’re still niche and we’re still different,” said Consiglio Ryan. “This isn’t like New York or California, where they’re used to juice shops on every corner.”

RASA Juice is known for using organic and locally grown produce and for prioritizing taste. Each of the ingredients in the juices has a purpose.

“We’re very into personalized wellness,” said Consiglio Ryan. “That is the cutting edge of what’s going on and the trends in wellness. Epigenetics is huge and knowing what your body does is powerful instead of someone else’s body or following a diet.”

Many people come to RASA Juice for its personalized cleanses. Consiglio Ryan has perfected her recipes and she fine-tunes the experiences based on each customer’s specific goals. She has juices to target bloating, promote digestion and even help the client sleep at night.

“So the first thing that you decide on is what your health goal is,” said Consiglio Ryan. “If someone has weight loss and they want to lose 10 pounds, I suggest a three-day cleanse or a five-day cleanse, and then we go from there.”

Consiglio Ryan’s favorite juices are Power Green and Refresh, but she said her customers have a clear favorite.

“Bliss Out has been the No. 1 top seller for the past eight years,” said Consiglio Ryan. “Babies and toddlers drink it, kids drink it and grandparents drink it. That is everyone’s favorite pretty much.”

RASA Juice also offers catering services. The company has catered everything from conferences and meetings to intimate weddings and baby showers. Consiglio Ryan, who has published a cookbook, “Go Clean, Sexy You,” with over 100 recipes, works with clients to customize a menu for their event. RASA Juice’s juice bar has become popular with bridal showers and bachelorette parties.

The shop also features sustain-
» Continued on page 47

Market Breakdown: Reddit Vs. Wall Street

Jason LaBarge
Financial Advisor
and Managing
Partner at Premier
Planning Group



What a crazy last month. Jeff Bezos is stepping down from one of the country’s largest companies and there was a significant story regarding short sellers in a certain video game retailer. Due to industry regulations, I cannot disclose the specific company name. Hopefully, you know who I am referring to. I am fascinated by this story and wanted to further discuss what happened and what it all means and the outcomes.

To understand the full story, we need a bit of background. This video game chain store had been hit hard in the last few years and the coronavirus pandemic certainly did not help. This environment would normally interest short sellers along with potentially normal investors. What is a short seller? A short seller is betting that a stock is going to go down. When most of us think about buying a stock, we do so with the hopes that it goes up. When the stock goes up, we make money. A short seller makes money when the

stock goes down. Short sellers do play a significant and important role within the Wall Street ecosystem. The profit motive of making money when a stock goes down historically has helped uncover fraudulent companies. Short sellers are good at uncovering bad balance sheets or bad bets by companies.

Why do we mention short sellers? Short sellers play an important character in this story. The other important characters in this story are the hedge funds. A hedge fund can be thought of as exceptionally large investors. If you invest money in the market, you can think of yourself as a “hedge fund.” Investopedia defines a hedge fund as “alternative investments using pooled funds that employ different strategies to earn active returns.” This is opposite to an individual investor. An individual investor is you and I investing our money in ways that we think are going to make money. We have seen the individual market proliferate dramatically in the last several years, and in particular since COVID-19, with the growth of commission-free trading platforms where investors can easily buy and sell stocks. These forces came together in a unique way to create the story.

The hedge fund took a large short position on this video game retailer and it was discovered by some individ-
» Continued on page 44

Chamber Update

Liz League
CEO
GSPACC



Please give a warm welcome to our newest members: **The Pup Camp in Severna Park, Whoof on the Wharf, Light-house Insurance Agency, ZenBusiness, Cose Bella Collections, Annapolis Home Brew, Jennifer Harrison Design/Consulting, Constellation K-9 Training, Momentum Physical Therapy, Park Books and Literacy Lab, Soloday Marketing and Development LLC, and Melissa Dunkelberger of Keller Williams Flagship of Maryland.** We also want to send a huge thank you to all our renewing members! We truly are Chamber Strong!

Our Successful Women in Business committee held a virtual lunch meeting on February 10 with the topic “Care and Housing Options for our Elders.” Presenters were **Jennifer McAndrews of Synergy Home Care and Donna Butman of Assisted Living Locators.** The speakers discussed the myriad of options available, from in-home support to residential living

arrangements. Our community is so fortunate to have the many alternatives for our loved ones when it is time for living assistance.

In celebration of Women’s History Month, our March Successful Women in Business virtual luncheon will feature community “pioneer” **Pat Troy**, owner of the **Next Wave Group LLC** and founder of the **Chesapeake Academy.** Please join us on Wednesday, March 10, and meet this dynamic lady who has owned many businesses and created several nonprofit organizations to make our community a better place! The event is sponsored by **Valerie McLaughlin of Emerald Financial Partners**, another impressive woman business owner. The event is free and open to the public, and for more details, you may visit our website at www.gspacc.com.

On February 16, we launched our new Learn and Lead committee for nonprofits. Committee chairs are **Jenn Triplett of Treebranch Group** and **Larry Sells of Larry Sells Consulting.** Larry led a discussion to help participants identify their “why” of the nonprofit so they can craft a solid marketing and fundraising strategy. The conversation will continue at the next Learn and Lead meeting, which will be held on March 16 at 8:30am.
» Continued on page 46

St. John Properties Earns LEED Gold Certification At 231 Najoles Road

Since Initiating LEED Program In 2009, More Than 5 Million Square Feet Of Space Now Certified



(L-R) St. John Properties senior property manager Robert Cancelliere Jr., director of sustainability Ryan Schwabenbauer, sustainability coordinator Sean Harkins, and U.S. Green Building Council director of market transformation and development Ryan Snow were on hand to celebrate the Gold certification.

St. John Properties Inc. has earned Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification for 231 Najoles Road from the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), for satisfying green and sustainable requirements in the construction of the building's core and shell.

The five-story, 126,500-square-foot Class "A" office building is located within I-97 Business Park, a 67-acre mixed-use business community in the Millersville section of Anne Arundel County, Maryland. This represents one of the 82 certifications received by St. John Properties from the USGBC, encompassing more than 5 million square feet of Gold, Silver or LEED-certified space since St. John Properties initiated its LEED corporate program in 2009.

LEED is the most widely used green building rating system in the world. According to the United States Green Building Council, projects earn LEED ratings according to national standards that relate to the "performance, health, durability, affordability and creation of environmentally-sound buildings." The system examines and rates key building areas including interior space layout, interior finishes, lighting and mechanical distribution. The process further encourages "future tenants to capitalize on green strategies implemented by the developer" to ensure the consistency of this LEED rating.

The site at 231 Najoles Road consists of a brick and glass exterior and expansive 25,000-square-foot floor plates. The project property has been designed and constructed to achieve over 40% in potable water use reduction and over 38% in

energy savings, and remove at least 80% of the total suspended solids that are present in stormwater runoff located at the property. In addition, numerous sustainable strategies including enhanced occupant daylight and views as well as low VOC building materials were implemented at the property to help promote the health and well-being of tenants.

Building tenants include Anne Arundel Dermatology, Comcast, District Lighting Group, First Home Mortgage, Keller Williams Flagship of Maryland, and Tower Federal Credit Union.

"Our clients are attuned to the significance and value of reducing operating costs, conserving natural resources and utilizing sustainable practices in the day-to-day operation of their businesses, and establishing a presence in a LEED-certified building is a necessary first step," explained Sean Doordan, senior vice president of leasing and acquisitions for St. John Properties. "Since implementing our LEED strategy nearly 10 years ago, we are considered a leader in the green and sustainability movement, and set the bar in the achievement of LEED-certified buildings. Each building we develop is designed to earn certification."

St. John Properties Inc., founded in 1971, owns and has developed more than 20 million square feet of flex/R&D, office, retail and warehouse space in Maryland, Colorado, Louisiana, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Utah and Wisconsin. The company was named 2018 Developer of the Year for the nation by NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association. For more information about the company and its green initiatives, visit www.sjpi.com/company/green.

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RIBBON CUTTING



Severna Park Welcomes Harbor Holistic Healing



Harbor Holistic Healing owner Lydia Wainwright was joined by the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce on February 15 for a grand opening at 692B Ritchie Highway, Suite 104, in Severna Park.

Market Breakdown: Reddit Vs. Wall Street

» Continued from page 42

ual investors. The individual investors used a social media platform called Reddit to notify other individual investors of this hedge fund's short position. As a result, many other individual investors took a long position, preventing the hedge fund from gaining on their large investment. All hell broke loose thereafter. The shares had risen over 3,000 percent in just a few weeks, according to Forbes.

Most Americans who follow the market even passively understand this part of the story. Most Americans believe that it was the "little guy" who won in this frenzy. The truth is, like the old adage goes, the rich get richer. The four largest asset managers own almost 40 percent of this company's shares according to regulatory filings. Having the stock increase 3,000 percent would obviously generate returns even with the short sale investment. According to the Washington Post, these funds gained roughly \$1 billion in value since the beginning of 2021! When you have hundreds of millions of shares trading at almost \$300 per share, the little guy has a hard time competing or paying for that.

Technology has changed in a way that not only allows individuals to trade, but it also makes things easier for Wall Street. There have been programs developed to monitor sites like Reddit to find what stocks people

are looking into and capitalize off of that information. It has become much harder for the "little guy" to get ahead of the hedge funds when they have already bought and sold a share before the rest of us can get in. The individual investors and Wall Street are more alike than we think; they're all trying to make money.

The average stock is held for four seconds. Four seconds!

This illustrates that an overwhelming number of trades are bought and immediately sold. They are not being purchased to be held for long term, rather they are being purchased in order to resell to an individual investor at a larger price or they are being sold to capitalize on profit, which is what was happening in this case. The ultimate winner here in the big picture is the small investor as it has caused people to start thinking more about the market and where they should put their money. Current market conditions have also contributed to this. The S&P 500 was up 16 percent in 2020. That large of an increase is bound to attract new investors. New investors need to be careful about how they proceed; if this case illustrates anything, it illustrates that Wall Street knows how to make money.

These platforms have introduced millions of new investors to Wall Street and many of those investors will lose. This is particularly true if they are investing just to make money. War-

ren Buffet always talked about using the market as a tool to achieve your objectives. My recommendation is to do just that. Use the market as a tool to achieve your long-term retirement goals and avoid any "get rich quick" opportunities that seem too good to be true or are too risky. In my experience, they usually are.

Call me at 443-837-2542 and schedule an appointment to have me think through this process for you.

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Investors cannot invest directly in indexes. The performance of any index is not indicative of the performance of any investment and does not take into account the effects of inflation and the fees and expenses associated with investing.

PERSICO Asset Management Celebrates 20 Years In Business

PERSICO Asset Management celebrated its 20th anniversary in February by launching a new website and marketing campaign.

J. Christopher Persico, president and chief investment officer of PERSICO Asset Management, has over 30 years of experience as a finance and investment professional. Prior to establishing his own wealth management and investment advisory firm in 2001, he earned progressive positions with MNC Financial, Alex Brown & Sons, and Morgan Stanley. He holds the professional accreditations of the Series 7, 63 and 65 securities registrations.

His passion lies within the intricate relationships that develop while working in partnership with families and businesses toward their financial success.

He takes pride in his philanthropic and charitable endeavors and has dedicated many years of service to local and national organizations, providing his time and financial expertise. He is a board member emeritus of the Alzheimer's Association, following years of dedicated service on local and national initiatives. He served as president, treasurer and director of finance for the Chartwell Golf and Country Club, where he was also a founding member of The Chartwell Foundation, an organization that provides grants to various organizations in the local community.

Chris is a native Marylander and a long-term resident of Severna Park. He enjoys sharing free time with family and friends boating on the Chesapeake Bay, playing golf, or traveling to new destinations. He graduated from Calvert Hall College High School and attended Roanoke College in Virginia where he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and served as chairman of both the academic integrity and judicial board of directors.

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Chamber Update

» Continued from page 42

Our health and wellness committee held a brainstorming session to plan for our March panel discussion focusing on nutrition and the body/mind connection. The meeting will be held on Thursday, March 18, at 8:30. Speakers will be announced later, and please check our website and Facebook page for updates.

On February 11, we held a ribbon cutting celebrating **Harbor Holistic Healing's** new location in Severna Park. Owner **Lydia Wainwright** brings decades of experience to her practice of acupuncture in managing pain and stress, and her new office is beautiful and serene.

Landmark Roofing was the recipient of the chamber's **2020 Harmony Award**. The award is presented to a business that strives for excellence in

its practices and supports the community. Landmark Roofing has helped, at no charge, with so many construction projects including the SPAN building. Each year, the Landmark team selects a family in need and provides them with a new roof. I was happy to present the award in person to hardworking and philanthropic owners **Artie Hendricks and Rob Calhan** and thank them for all that they do.

We held our chamber networking eClub meeting on February 25 in the morning. This was a great opportunity to meet new chamber members and others who are interested in chamber membership. The event was sponsored by **Andy Morsberger of Minuteman Press of Crofton**.

On the same day, we teamed with another county chamber to hold a

COVID-19 vaccine information session for members and the community. The event was hosted by the **University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center**. We learned about the common myths and concerns about the vaccine, and the audience members were able to get their questions answered.

I was honored to speak at the **Lake Shore Rotary Club's** monthly meeting, held virtually. They are an impressive group of volunteers who do so much work to support nonprofit organizations and provide scholarship money to students. Rotary International celebrated its 116th anniversary in February, and they are one of the original groups to focus on giving back. It was announced at the meeting that this Rotary Club has awarded

over \$300,000 in scholarships over the years to support students who are college bound. Their mission is to provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill and peace through our fellowship of business, professional and community leaders. If you would like to join them, please contact **John Clark, president**, at johnclarklakeshorerotary@gmail.com.

To learn more about the chamber, please email me at ceo@gspacc.com, call 410-647-3900, and visit our website at www.gspacc.com. You are welcome to join our mailing list at www.gspacc.com and receive our weekly newsletter.

As always, we urge you to support our small businesses in every way you can. Shop local, eat local, give local and support local to create a better community.

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RASA Juice Offers Personalized Wellness

» Continued from page 42

able and locally made products such as candles, soaps, beauty items and more. Consiglio Ryan also hosts yoga, meditation and other wellness classes, which have been on hold due to the pandemic but will return in the future.

The team at RASA Juice is invested in making the community a healthier place.

“They already are interested in health,” Consiglio Ryan said of her staff. “They understand nutrition. They’re able to help with personalized wellness, and they’re really excited to be here because it’s a fun job.”

Consiglio Ryan would love to eventually see this community on the list of the healthiest communities in the country. She would also eventually like to open additional locations, own a food truck, open a wellness retreat center and help those in the “food desert” by working with local legislators.

To experience the joys of the RASA Juice Shop, find the store at 90 Maryland Avenue in downtown Annapolis. RASA Juice also delivers to Severna Park for free. For more information, visit www.rasajuiceshop.com or call 410-570-4597.

What Can Investors Learn From 2020?

Brian Conrad
Financial Advisor



Now that we’re a few weeks removed from 2020, it’s a good time to reflect on such a momentous year. We can think about developments in the social and political spheres, but we also learned — or perhaps relearned — some valuable lessons about investing.

Here are four of them:

A Long-Term Perspective Is Essential

Volatility in the financial markets is nothing new, but, even so, 2020 was one for the books. Of course, the COVID-19 outbreak was the driving force behind most of the wild price swings. Soon after the pandemic’s effects were first felt, the S&P 500, a common index of U.S. large-cap stocks, fell 34% but gained 67% by the end of the year. Consequently, investors who stuck with their investment portfolios and kept their eyes on their long-term goals, rather than on shocking headlines, ended up doing well. And while 2020 was obviously an unusual year, the long-term approach will always be valuable to investors.

Investment Opportunities Are Always Available

The pandemic drove down the prices of many stocks — but it didn’t necessarily harm the long-term fundamentals of these companies. In other words, they may still have had strong management, still produced desirable products and services, and still had good prospects for growth. In short, they may still have been good investment opportunities — and when their prices were depressed, they may also have been “bargains” for smart investors. And this is the case with virtually any market downturn — some high-quality stocks will be available at favorable prices.

Diversification Pays Off

Bond prices often move in a different direction from stocks. So, during a period of volatility when stock prices are falling, such as we saw in the weeks after the pandemic hit in March, the presence of bonds in your portfolio can lessen the impact of the downturn and stabilize your overall returns. And this, in essence, is the value of maintaining a balanced and diversified portfolio (keep in mind, though, that diversification can’t guarantee profits or prevent all losses).

The Market Looks Ahead

The pandemic-driven market plunge may have been stunning, but it made a kind of intrinsic sense — after all, the sudden arrival of a pandemic that threatened lives, closed businesses and cost millions of jobs doesn’t sound like a positive event for the financial markets. But the strong rally that followed the initial drop and continued into 2021 has surprised many people. After all, the pandemic’s effects were felt throughout the rest of 2020, and are still being felt now, so why did stock prices rise? The answer is pretty straightforward: The financial markets always look ahead, not behind. And for a variety of reasons — including widespread vaccinations, anticipated economic stimulus measures from Congress and the Biden administration, and the Federal Reserve’s continued steps to keep interest rates low — the markets are anticipating much stronger economic growth, possibly starting in the second half of 2021.

All of us are probably glad to have 2020 behind us. Yet, the year taught us some investment lessons that we can put to work in 2021 — and beyond.

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

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Premier Planning Group

115 West Street, Suite 400 Annapolis, MD 21401

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