



Falcons, Bruins
Basketball
Updates

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Children's Theatre Of
Annapolis Gearing
Up For "Holes"

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SEVERNA PARK, MD

JANUARY 2026

Severna Park
Voice Launches
"Nonprofit Of
The Year" As
New Initiative
To Give Back



By **Meredith Winter**

As the Severna Park Voice newspaper celebrates its 45th anniversary in 2026, our staff members are investing time and resources in an exciting new program that will enable the Voice, its readers and its clients to support the nonprofits that give back to our community in even greater ways.

Throughout 2026, the Voice will partner with its first company-chosen Nonprofit of the Year, establishing a concerted annual effort to support a charity that helps our neighbors in need in a more formal way than ever before.

"We find giving back to the community in which we live and work to be extremely important," said Voice Publisher Dianna Lancione. "We've had successful charitable programs in the past and find that most of our readers and clients genuinely like to give back as well, so this year we decided to select one nonprofit that would be the beneficiary of all of our philanthropy for 2026."

Lancione cited a special-edition
►► **Continued on page 6**

Developer Plans Townhome Community On Golf Center Property. What's Next?



Image courtesy of Morris & Ritchie Associates

The proposed development at the Severna Park Golf Center property could include 135 townhome units.

Planning and Zoning — not the Anne Arundel County Council — is set to review the townhome plan in the coming months. District 5 Councilwoman Amanda Fiedler is not waiting on that decision.

Fiedler has introduced Bill 5-26 to place a temporary moratorium on the approval of any development with MPDUs and any bonus density within a five-mile radius of the intersection of Ritchie Highway and College Parkway.

"I'm the third generation of my family to live here," Fiedler said. "I want my grandkids to grow up here. It's a wonderful place, but it is incredibly expensive. But I also know that we can't just plop down this amount of units anywhere to get affordable housing units in the county."

Her bill is scheduled for a public hearing on February 2, but Severna Park and Arnold residents have already expressed their concerns. Before

►► **Continued on page 5**

By **Zach Sparks**

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Two possibilities are on the table to turn the Severna Park Golf Center property in Arnold into a townhome or single-family community.

Developer D.R. Horton has drafted plans for a townhome community of 130-135 units on 19.2 acres of land. D.R. Horton originally wanted to build 74 single-family detached homes, but its team pivoted after the Anne Arundel

County Council passed the Housing Attainability Act (HAA) in 2024. That legislation requires new residential developments to offer a percentage of moderately priced dwelling units, or MPDUs, at an "affordable" rate based on income. In return, the developer can increase the density, or number of units per unit of land, to offset the anticipated revenue loss for lowering the price on those units.

The Anne Arundel County Office of

"Best Of Severna Park" Returns Next Month

The holidays may be over, but we are not done celebrating. To recognize all the great people, organizations and amenities that make the greater Severna Park area such a special place, we are holding our annual Best Of Severna Park contest again this February and March.

The best of the best will be chosen by you, our readers, and not by the Voice staff. How does it work? We will share a list of categories, and you can enter eligible nominees to cast your votes. Our team

encourages everyone to support their favorites in Severna Park, Arnold and Millersville, whether that is restaurants, nonprofits, grocery stores or their preferred accountant.

After more than 15 years of doing the survey, we will have some changes. **The voting will be online only, which means no paper ballots this year.**

The February edition of the Voice will include a reminder about the 2026 Best Of Severna Park contest with instructions and rules, with results to be announced in the April edition of the paper and online. In the meantime, if you would like to suggest a category not included on last year's ballot, email spvnews@severnaparkvoice.com. If your organization is up for an award, we wish you all the best!



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2026 Legislative Session Preview

By **Meredith Winter**

The 449th session of the Maryland General Assembly will be convened on Wednesday, January 14, and is slated to wrap up on Monday, April 13. During the 90-day legislative session, state senators and delegates will introduce and deliberate on thousands of bills, passing on average about one-third of them in both chambers before they go on to the governor to be signed into law or vetoed.

As the 2026 session approached, senators and delegates who represent Voice readers in districts 31 and 33 shared about the bills on which they are working and issues facing Maryland residents this year.

►► **Continued on page 10**



Margueritte Mills - Volunteer Of The Month

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

Linda Link Serves Neighbors In Need Through My Brother's Pantry

By Judy Tacyn

Arnold resident Linda Link has volunteered with My Brother's Pantry through her faith community for nearly 20 years. She recalls asking, "What more can I do?" Shortly after Link retired in 2018, her question was answered when My Brother's Pantry needed a database manager.

Since 2019, she has been responsible for client membership records. She holds a board position and is onsite at least once each month to welcome pantry clients.

My Brother's Pantry, a food relief organization, was founded in 1986 as a consortium of 12 congregations on the Broadneck peninsula, and it is located on the campus of College Parkway Baptist Church in Arnold. Each month, one of the 12 congregations is responsible for collecting, ordering, delivering and stocking supplies for the food pantry, which is supplemented by the Anne Arundel County Food Bank. At least 11 volunteers are needed when the pantry is operating, which takes place the last Thursday, Friday and Saturday of each month.

Link is there to welcome visitors, help check them in, and generally do whatever needs to be done.

"I probably know at least 80% of the clients by name," Link said. On a blustery Thursday before Christmas, Link was ready to welcome the more than 100 families expected to need assistance.

"Clients come and based on the



Photo by Judy Tacyn

Linda Link, a 20-year volunteer at My Brother's Pantry, welcomes families and individuals facing food insecurity each month at the Arnold-based pantry.

number of people in their family are given a card letting them know how many items in each category they can shop for," Link said. "Our 'family choice' model ensures that families can choose from the foods they like, not simply be given a bag of items."

Asbury United Methodist, Broadneck Baptist, Broadneck Evangelical Presbyterian, Cape St. Claire United Methodist, Christ Our Anchor Presbyterian, College Parkway Baptist, Gloria Dei! Lutheran, Mariners', St. Andrew by the Bay Roman Catholic, St. Margaret's Episcopal and Unity by the Bay churches, along with Temple Beth Shalom, are the 12 congregations

that manage My Brother's Pantry.

"I think what really makes My Brother's Pantry special is that we are made up of different congregations who really want to be a part of it and really want to help," Link said, noting that about one-third of pantry clients are elderly, while others are struggling families from the congregations or peninsula communities.

Brianne, a mother of three, was the first in a growing line of clients gathering well before the pantry opened shortly before Christmas. Her partner is currently on disability, so she's the sole provider for her family of five, with children ages 2-13.

"I live less than a mile from here, so knowing the pantry is here means that my family can actually eat," Brianne said. "I just lost my SNAP benefits, so being able to come to the food pantry really helps me make ends meet."

Link said that My Brother's Pantry is looking to see how they can expand and serve more people.

"There is so much need in this area and more that can be done," she said. "But the good news is that people really care in this community."

In addition to the collection sites at the affiliated churches and temple, food donations can be left at Graul's in Cape St. Claire and the Broadneck Library.

To learn more about My Brother's Pantry, make a donation, or to volunteer, visit www.mybrotherspantry.org or call 410-757-5190.



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Katherine's Light Foundation Donates \$100,000 In 2025



On December 17, Katherine's Light Foundation co-founder Larry Sells (left) presented a \$5,000 donation to Michele Sabeau (center) and Maia Grabau (right) of SPAN.

In December, Katherine's Light Foundation (KLF) co-founder Larry Sells presented a \$5,000 donation to SPAN, or Serving People Across Neighborhoods. The gift rounded out \$100,000 in donations disbursed by KLF in 2025 to area nonprofits that help with cancer education, research and awareness, and that assist individuals facing a cancer diagnosis. Last year, the nonprofit raised funds and made donations to the following organizations:

- **\$20,000** to Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center to the DeCesaris Cancer Institute Cancer Patient Care & Comfort Fund
- **\$10,000** to the Neuroendocrine Tumor Research Foundation
- **\$16,000** to the Wellness House of Annapolis

- **\$10,000** to the Baltimore Washington Medical Center Foundation for the Cancer Patient Care & Comfort Fund
- **\$15,000** to Anne Arundel Community College for the Katherine Mueller Nursing Scholarship
- **\$23,000** to the Mercy Hospital NET Cancer Patient Fund
- **\$6,000** to SPAN for helping those most in need

Since the inception of Katherine's Light Foundation and the organization's first fundraising event in December 2023, KLF has donated over \$210,000. The nonprofit is preparing for its annual all-day music festival on June 13, a fundraiser held at Severna Park Taphouse to honor the memory of Robin and Larry Sells' daughter, Katherine Mueller.

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Annual PRO Vision Memorial Race Generates \$25,000 For Local Charities



The third annual PRO Vision Memorial Foundation 5K/10K event was held this past fall in memory of Severna Park resident Paul R. Overton. With record attendance, the foundation was able to donate \$25,000 to four local charities: Orphan Grain Train, Chaney Cares, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, and Chrysalis House. The foundation is grateful to the Severna Park community and surrounding areas for their continued support and generosity. For more information about the PRO Vision Memorial Foundation, go to www.paulrovertonvision.org.

Developer Plans Townhome Community On Golf Center Property. What's Next?

» Continued from page 1
developers submit their initial sketch plans to the county for review, they are required to hold a community meeting. Representatives from D.R. Horton and a civil engineering and architecture firm, Morris & Ritchie Associates, spoke about the project in December at the Severna Park Library.

Frustrated attendees cited issues with traffic, the environment and school overcrowding. If the new development is built, the community's students will attend Arnold Elementary, Severn River Middle School and Broadneck High School. "It just doesn't show good faith as a partner when we just redistricted Belvedere to Arnold (Elementary School) and moved a bunch of families there, making that school at 98% capacity," said Dana Schallheim, who represents District 5 on the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County. "I'm pretty sure those folks in this room agree with me wholeheartedly that it is unacceptable in terms of lack of communication."

Arnold resident Lauren Ebersberger noted problems with traffic and infrastructure, and she also offered her perspective as a mom of two boys and as an Anne Arundel County Public Schools teacher.

"The schools are overcrowded," she said. "Walk the hallways. Stand in the lunch line. Come do a lap with 35 middle-schoolers in a small classroom. Join a 38-student Spanish class. I hope you find a desk. Take a gym class with 39 other eight-graders."

"The reality is our classrooms are overcrowded," she said. "It's not fair to students. It's not fair

to teachers. This is the most students that I've had in my 22 years of teaching."

Having spent nearly 10 years as a plan reviewer for the City of Annapolis, Matt Waters focused on the environmental impact.

"I have dealt with developments like this, and I have dealt with the community being upset about them," he said. "Going from 74 units to 135, that's doubling your site. You could work with the regulations to make smaller lot sizes or smaller units within that footprint. It's just way too dense."

"It just doesn't show good faith as a partner when we just redistricted Belvedere to Arnold (Elementary School) and moved a bunch of families there, making that school at 98% capacity."

— **DANA SCHALLHEIM**
BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 5

Two people spoke in favor of the development. An unidentified housing policy lobbyist said he thought many people in the room had valid concerns about traffic and the environment but "it seems they're also very much underestimating how severe the housing shortage in Anne Arundel County is, particularly with this type of housing, this size of housing."

"There is a lot of hostility in the room," he said. "That's not going to solve our housing crisis. It's not going to solve our traffic problem. It's not going to solve our environmental problems. It's not going to solve our infrastructure."

Other residents questioned who would benefit from the housing. Woodfield Village

resident Ken Sabel asked how many teachers and firefighters can afford the affordable rate — currently estimated at a \$374,000 price tag.

"How many entry-level teachers and entry-level police officers, people that we desperately need in our community, how many of those will be able to afford one of these 'affordable housing' units?" he said, posing the question to the crowd. "So, affordable to who? Affordable is a very relative term."

D.R. Horton expects to submit a sketch plan to the county for review within the next few months. Next, more detailed engineering plans will follow. The development team is required to hold a second community meeting after submitting a final plan. A grading permit application rounds out the process. In total, the process can take two to three years if the development is approved.

That hinges on the outcome of Fiedler's proposed Bill 5-26. Anyone can submit written testimony for or against the legislation, or they can attend in person on February 2 at 7:00pm in the council chambers at 44 Calvert Street in Annapolis. For more information, visit www.aacounty.org/county-council/meetings and select "Meeting Participation" from the left sidebar.

"If the councilwoman is successful on whatever endeavor she had ... then (it will) certainly cause (us) to relook at the design of the project, but we have to operate within that confine," said Jeff Otenasek of D.R. Horton.

To read Councilwoman Amanda Fiedler's column about the golf center property, flip to page 12.

How To Get And Stay Healthy In 2026



Dr. Kimberly Carrette
Luminis Health
Primary Care

The excitement of a new year brings the opportunity to reset and prioritize your well-being. While many of us make New Year's resolutions, it can be tough to stay on track long-term, even with plenty of motivation in January.

At Luminis Health, our vision is "Living Healthier Together," and a big part of that is partnering with our community to support healthy habits

year-round. Sharing practical advice to help you keep your resolutions and feel your best throughout 2026 and beyond is essential.

You Don't Have To Be A Gym Rat

Exercise is key to a healthy lifestyle, but you don't have to run a half-marathon, spend hours at the gym or lift more than 100 pounds. Aim for 20 to 30 minutes of exercise or moderate activity each day. Even a short walk, especially after a meal, has been shown to offer major health benefits.

Try finding activities you enjoy. The best exercise is the one you will keep doing.

Eating Healthier Doesn't Have To Be Complicated

If one of your goals is to lose weight, you might use a popular weight loss drug or the latest fad diet. But remember the old adage — eat your fruits and vegetables? It's 100% true.

If you are hungry, eat. Remember to be mindful of what you're putting into your body. Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, and aim for a variety of colors throughout the week. And don't forget to stay hydrated; sometimes your body can confuse thirst with hunger.

Spend Less Time On Your Devices

You know that old saying — there are never enough hours in the day? It's no secret that our phones take up a lot of time. According to recent studies, Americans now spend an average of more than five hours a day on their phones. Here are some "smart" ways to cut back in 2026:

- **Create "no phone" zones:** Let your family know devices are not allowed at the dining table or at bedtime.
- **Set limits on social media:** Use built-in phone settings to track screen time and set daily limits.
- **Replace scrolling with movement:** When you feel the urge to check your phone, take a short walk, stretch or chat with a friend instead.
- **Be aware of AI:** Artificial intelligence is becoming a bigger part of our daily lives. It can be a great tool when used wisely. But don't rely on it too much or let it replace real human connection. Talk with your children about using AI responsibly and help them understand both its benefits and its risks.

See Your Primary Care Provider

Haven't been to the doctor in a while? Now's the perfect time to book an annual wellness visit. Having a primary care provider helps you prevent future illness and manage existing chronic conditions.

Find a provider at www.luminis.health/primarycare. Dr. Kimberly Carrette is a primary care provider at Luminis Health Primary Care.

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HOMETOWN HEROES

From Severna Park To The Heartland, Sailor Supports U.S. Navy's "Take Charge And Move Out" Mission

By Alvin Plexico

Navy Office of Community Outreach

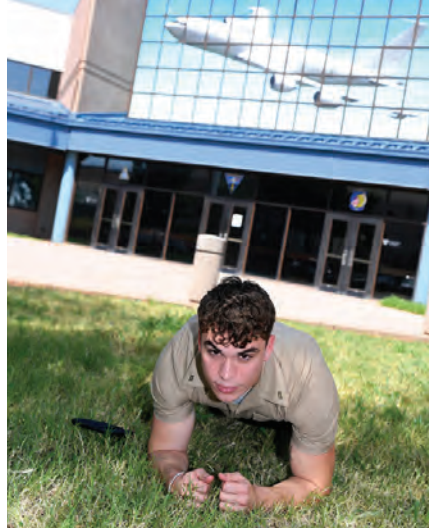
Every sailor's story of naval service is unique. For Airman Thai Sachs, this story began in Severna Park, where skills and values learned there would be foundational to success in the Navy.

"Growing up, I learned the importance of respecting each other," Sachs said. "When people are nice to one another, we can get a lot more done. My aunt and uncle also taught me the importance of following instructions."

Sachs graduated from Severna Park High School in 2023. He joined the Navy one year ago.

"While I was in college, I decided I wanted something different," Sachs said. "I've always thought about joining the military, and that seemed like the right time in my life to do it."

Today, Sachs serves as an aviation structural mechanic (safety equipment) assigned to Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron Three (VQ-3) in Oklahoma City. Sachs supports the nation's nuclear deterrence



mission at Strategic Communications Wing One (STRATCOM-MWING ONE). Its "Take Charge and Move Out" (TACAMO) mission provides airborne communication links to nuclear missile units of U.S. Strategic Command.

Photo courtesy of Mass Communication Specialist First Class Justin Johndro

Thai Sachs graduated from Severna Park High School in 2023 and serves as an aviation structural mechanic in the Navy.

The TACAMO mission originated in 1961 when a Marine Corps aircraft was used to test the feasibility of an airborne very low frequency (VLF) communications system. Once the test was successful, funding for the program was granted, and it has continued to grow ever since.

The U.S. Navy's presence on an Air Force base in a landlocked state may seem strange, but the position is strategic, allowing squadrons to quickly deploy around the world in support of the TACAMO mission.

The U.S. Navy is celebrating its 250th birthday this year.

According to Navy officials, "America is a maritime nation, and for 250 years, 'America's Warfighting Navy' has sailed the globe in defense of freedom."

With 90% of global commerce traveling by sea and

access to the internet relying on the security of undersea fiber-optic cables, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity of the United States is directly linked to recruiting and retaining talented people from across the rich fabric of America.

Sachs has many opportunities to achieve accomplishments during military service.

"I'm proud that I speak several languages, including French, Italian and Portuguese," Sachs said.

Sachs serves a Navy that operates far forward, around the world and around the clock, promoting the nation's prosperity and security.

"I'm thankful for all this country has given me, and I feel patriotic about my service in the Navy," Sachs said.

Sachs is grateful to others for helping make a Navy career possible.

"I want to thank my aunt and uncle, Sonia and James McCarthy, for adopting me and supporting my decision to join the Navy," Sachs added. "I'm grateful for everything they did for me. I wouldn't be where I am today without them."



Hometown Heroes is proudly sponsored by LaBarge Financial.

Severna Park Voice Launches "Nonprofit Of The Year" To Give Back

» Continued from page 1

magazine that supported the Baltimore Washington Medical Center Foundation and annual Art in the Park music and arts festival beneficiaries including Bello Machre and Partners In Care as examples of recent charitable efforts of the Voice.

In mid-2025, the Voice staff established criteria for a charity to be selected as Nonprofit of the Year, including whether its impact is local, demonstration of good financial stewardship, the amount of support the nonprofit already receives, and how much good could be done for the community via the nonprofit through a partnership with the Voice.

"Hopefully, in elevating one nonprofit to cover, create awareness for, give donations to, and benefit from our events, we will help move the needle forward for the people they serve," Lancione explained.

For the inaugural year of the initiative, the Voice has selected the Walk the Walk Foundation (WTWF) to be its first Nonprofit of the Year.

Based in Millersville, WTWF celebrated its 20th anniversary in September. It was founded by longtime Severna Park residents David and Kim Mitchell and is now led by Executive Director Nicole Dolan.

The nonprofit serves people in Anne Arundel County through three programs: Diapers for Babies, Backpacks for Kids, and Christmas for Children. Last summer, WTWF shared that in the five years leading up to

its 20th anniversary party, over 6,000 county students received backpacks filled with school supplies; nearly 2,000 children experienced the joy of opening gifts on Christmas morning; and over 1.4 million diapers were distributed to banks around the county.

"I'm honored (for WTWF) to be recognized and to be selected, but I also think it's really neat the way that the Voice is for the community, and Walk the Walk exists to serve the community, so I think it is just a wonderful parallel," Dolan said of WTWF being chosen as the first Nonprofit of the Year.

Dolan shared that she hopes community members will become more aware of the great need for dia-

pers in the county, something she believes is often overlooked.

"You can't take action on what you don't know about," she said, adding that partnering with the Voice will expose people to all that WTWF does and provide opportunities for them to participate in ways that are most meaningful to them.

Throughout 2026, the Voice will partner with WTWF to increase awareness about its three programs and ways community members can get involved. WTWF will be the beneficiary of Art in the Park, hosted annually in conjunction with Cafe Mezzanotte. The nonprofit will be an integral part of the Voice's first-ever "Best of Severna Park" celebration later this year — look for more information about that event in upcoming editions. And, the Voice is considering additional opportunities for the newspaper, its readers and its clients to support WTWF.

"This is not the only thing we will do to give back to the community this year," Lancione noted, adding, "We will continue to give coverage to other nonprofits and raise awareness, not only because they are newsworthy, but also because we believe doing so is a critical part of our role as the local newspaper."

More information about how to join the Severna Park Voice in supporting the Walk the Walk Foundation throughout the year will be available in upcoming editions. To learn more about the organization, go to www.wtwf.org.



Left: Prior to distribution, volunteers helped put finishing touches on gifts during the Walk the Walk Foundation's annual Christmas for Children drive in December. **Right:** (L-R) Emelynn and Josh Swan were among many volunteers who prepared the gifts for pickup.





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Swedish Death Cleaning And The Gift Of An Organized Legacy

Rachel Muñoz, Esq.
Muñoz Estates & Trusts



Swedish death cleaning, known as *döstädning*, is a practical and thoughtful practice that encourages people to organize and reduce their belongings later in life with the goal of simplifying their home and life and easing the burden on loved ones. Despite its name, the concept is not about death itself. It is about responsibility, care and the desire to live — and leave

— intentionally, with clarity rather than chaos.

At its core, Swedish death cleaning is about taking control while you are able. It is about making decisions for yourself, instead of leaving them to others during a moment of stress or grief. That principle is also at the heart of thoughtful estate planning.

This idea has felt especially meaningful to us recently.

After three years in our first law office — an office we truly loved — we recently moved into a larger and more welcoming space designed to better serve our clients and support our growing team. Like any move, it forced us to slow down, take inventory, and make deliberate decisions about what to keep, what no longer served us, and what needed to be thoughtfully let go.

The process was eye-opening. File cabinets held reminders of where we started. Shelves reflected seasons of growth. Some items carried history; others simply took up space. And just like a home move, there were moments of nostalgia mixed with relief — relief that comes from stepping into a space that better fits who you are now and where you are going.

What stood out most was how much lighter and more focused everything felt once the clutter — both physical and mental — was cleared away. The result was not just a better office. It was a more functional, calm, and intentional environment that allows us to serve clients



more effectively now, not someday in the future.

At its simplest, Swedish death cleaning involves taking inventory of what one owns and making intentional choices about what to keep, give away or discard. But it rarely stays just a physical exercise. As people sort through belongings, they begin to reflect on what truly matters, what holds meaning, and how their possessions — and responsibilities — fit into the larger picture of their lives.

These reflections naturally lead to estate planning questions, often earlier than people expect. Who should receive certain items? Are important documents easy to locate? Are assets titled correctly? If something happened tomorrow, would loved ones know what to do or where to start?

Estate planning helps answer those questions while you are living, not just after you are gone.

Families often struggle not only with emotional loss but also with confusion and stress when legal and financial arrangements are unclear. Unlabeled heirlooms, multiple accounts, outdated beneficiary designations, and missing documents can turn an already difficult time into an overwhelming administrative burden. Swedish death cleaning addresses the physical side of this challenge, while estate planning provides the legal structure that gives those decisions lasting effect.

When practiced together, these two approaches reinforce each other. Decluttering often prompts people to update their wills, review trusts, consolidate accounts, and ensure that their plans reflect their current values and relationships. Wills provide clarity and direction. Trusts can offer efficiency, privacy and protection — not just for beneficiaries, but for the person creating them, by reducing stress and uncertainty during life.

Estate planning also extends well beyond the distribution of assets. Powers of attorney and health care directives ensure that trusted individuals can step in if decision-making becomes difficult or impossible. Reviewing these documents while organizing and simplifying life allows people to choose who will act for them and how, rather than leaving those decisions to courts or circumstances.

Our recent move reminded us that growth — whether personal, professional or familial — requires intention. Creating space, improving systems, and planning ahead allows life to function more smoothly and with less friction. The same is true for estate planning. When your affairs are organized, decisions are documented, and your wishes are clear, you gain peace of mind and the freedom to focus on living fully in the present.

Swedish death cleaning is an act of consideration. Estate planning is an act of protection. Together, they represent a proactive and compassionate approach to legacy planning — one that benefits not only your loved ones in the future, but you today. By addressing both belongings and legal arrangements in advance, you create clarity, reduce stress, and leave a legacy defined not by confusion or urgency but by intention, care and peace of mind.

For more information, schedule a complimentary consultation with Rachel Muñoz at www.trustmunoz.com or by calling 410-541-0269.

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The Voice is happy to announce the union of our Editor, Zach Sparks and his wife Kim with their recent wedding. Wishing you both a lifetime of joy and love!



S(o)uper Bowl Food Drive Returns

Since 2018, the Severna Park-based nonprofit Good Neighbors Group has brought neighborhoods together for a friendly competition that benefits the community during the weekend of the Super Bowl. From the Thursday before the game to Super Bowl Sunday, S(o)uper Bowl participants gather as much food as they can to stock local food pantries, competing to see which neighborhood can donate the most. This year's donations will be dropped off at the end of the competition, from 11:00am-1:00pm on February 8.

Each donated item is worth one point except for diapers, formula and Enfamil drinks, which are worth five. Because participating neighborhoods can vary in size from communities with four homes to communities with over 1,000, neighborhoods compete in categories including "Most Items Per House" and "Most Improved" in addition to the most total points.

During the first S(o)uper Bowl eight years ago, 12 neighborhoods participated. The event has grown a lot since then. Last year, participants in 55 neighborhoods donated over 18,500 items.

"It's easy to make this an immediate success because every little bit adds up to a victory for the hardworking pantries," said Kathie Hamlett, who organizes the S(o)uper Bowl.

This year, Good Neighbors Group

hopes to exceed 70 participating neighborhoods. Many of the neighborhoods that collected a high total of goods last year — including Round Bay, West Severna Park, Bay Hills and Ulmstead Estates — have already confirmed their participation again. Hamlett hopes that neighborhoods that have never competed will join the event as well.

"Many new neighborhoods have been established in Severna Park, Pasadena and Arnold and we would love to include everyone," Hamlett said.

The S(o)uper Bowl helps restock food pantries after shelves have been depleted during the winter holidays. Six food pantries have already confirmed their involvement: Anne Arundel County Food Bank, Asbury Community Assistance Network (ACAN), Open Hands of Maryland, SPAN (Serving People Across Neighborhoods), The Caring Cupboard and St. Luke's Episcopal Church pantry.

"This is a great way to meet new neighbors and help the community at large," Hamlett said.

Each neighborhood must have a captain who can publicize the event and establish a neighborhood collection spot. Participants are also encouraged to take fun photos and send them to Good Neighbors Group. To get your neighborhood involved, email souperbowl@good-neighborsgroup.org.

Loving One Another In The New Year

Michele Sabean
Director of
Development
SPAN Inc.



"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you make."

— Jane Goodall, primatologist and conservationist

On these cold, dark and shortest days of the year, small acts of kindness make me smile — someone holding a door, a genuine "thank you," a moment of patience instead of frustration. It might be a stranger letting me merge in traffic, a cashier who takes time to ask how my day is, or a thoughtful message from a friend. As we work, run errands, and complete other responsibilities, just think what these chilly busy days would be like if most of our interactions with others were met with grumpy looks or people absorbed in their own worlds.

Some of the bright spots in my days are interactions with other people, whether it's time spent with friends and family or the simple smiles and positive words exchanged with people around me.

When Jane Goodall died last fall, the above quote of hers resonated with me. Every action and interaction throughout our days are opportunities to make an impact, ranging from the simple choices of our tone and word choice to larger decisions and actions we take.

How we choose to use those opportunities is up to us. The beautiful part is not only do we have the power to make someone's day brighter, but we also have multiple opportunities every day to make a positive impact on those around us. If we are stressed, angry or rushed and our words don't come out the way we would like, the good news is we can try again. We can choose to make our world better or worse.

The holiday season is always an incredible time at SPAN and has been overflowing with examples of people bringing joy to others. The generosity of those in the community is amazing and helps SPAN assist

so many neighbors in need. This year, SPAN's Holiday Caring program helped make the holidays brighter with food for Thanksgiving dinner and Christmas gifts for over 200 families and over 500 children.

On the day of the gift distribution, many of our clients took time to share their gratitude. One mother wrote how blessed she was to receive the gifts after a difficult year. Many people shared with us how these gifts are the only things their children will receive. Several of us were struck when a little girl immediately tried to comfort her mother who started to cry. She had no transportation to get the gifts, and SPAN gave her money for the ride.

The Christmas season is a time each year to focus and remind us of the importance of loving one another. As we start the new year, let's take Christ's message of love with us. Let's continue to be bright moments, making a positive impact for all.

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. For more information, call 410-647-0889, email spanhelps@yahoo.com or visit www.spanhelps.org.



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Legislative Preview

» Continued from page 1



Bryan Simonaire
Senator, District 31

"My centerpiece legislation is focused on helping our military and their families when they are deployed to Maryland. Anne Arundel County is home to thousands of service members, veterans and their spouses," Simonaire shared.

He explained that his 118-page bill required coordination with numerous departments, organizations and military advocates, and if passed, will allow active-duty service members and their spouses who are deployed to Maryland to work under their current home state occupational license as long as they are in good standing.

"This legislation will allow deployed service members and their spouses to seamlessly transition into our state and align with federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act requirements," Simonaire added, noting that he has many other bills in the works to help the military community. He has also been working on bills aimed at helping Maryland families, teachers, seniors and others.

Three of Simonaire's bills could have hyperlocal impact as well. Two of them pertain to helping uniformed service members receive additional benefits when it comes to deferring their property taxes with 0% interest and expanding their benefits in business. The third bill addresses transparency when the port authority wants to pursue a project in Anne Arundel County by requiring the entity to give advance notice to the General Assembly's county membership about plans to acquire or develop county land.



Brian Chisholm
Delegate, District 31

"My whole focus this session is going to be on energy and affordability, and they go hand-in-hand," Chisholm said. He elaborated on three of the bills he plans to introduce.

"One is I want to repeal portions of what's considered Senate Bill 1 from 2024 ... what it essentially does is allow consumer choice back into the state of Maryland," he shared. "So, we had 289 different what they consider retail energy companies in the state of Maryland prior to SB 1 being filed. When SB 1 passed and went into effect, we now have zero retail choice; they're all gone."

Chisholm's second bill involves removing Maryland from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), intended to reduce carbon emissions from the power sector. Ten northeastern states are participants. Chisholm contends that all RGGI states are now emitting more carbon, and that the initiative is a "tax and trade" that is passed on to ratepayers and is driving energy prices up even more.

Lastly, Chisholm hopes to end the EmPOWER Maryland program. "I think we can halt that program completely because it is no longer being used for what it was intended," he said. "I think it's wasteful and I think people are smart enough to keep their own money to figure out how to live more efficiently, because that's how that program was initially rolled out. It was going to be a program to help people become more efficient with their energy use, and it has not become that at all. It has become a complete initiative to stop production and use of natural gas."

Chisholm anticipates the legislature will address Maryland SNAP and Medicaid processes as well during the session.



Nic Kipke
Delegate, District 31

"I think the most important thing that needs to be addressed this session is the outrageous increase in the cost of electricity in our state," Kipke stated.

He shared that he believes the

growing costs are due to energy policy that has been too heavily weighted toward wind and solar, resulting in the closure of numerous power plants without replacements. He added that artificial intelligence (AI) has become a major drain on the grid as well. Referencing legislation from last session, Kipke believes investments in natural gas and nuclear power as new energy sources is the right solution.

"Legislation will be introduced by the House Republican Caucus, which I am co-sponsoring, that will help, but the majority party who controls energy policy in the state needs to make right by ratepayers and not just make right by environmental groups pushing for wind and solar," he said.

Another priority for Kipke this session is reform for Maryland's foster care system. He referenced a 2025 audit that exposed serious issues including children staying in lightly supervised hotel rooms for long periods of time, registered sex offenders living at addresses approved as guardianship homes, kids missing required medical and dental exams, and more.

Kipke will co-sponsor legislation introduced by Delegate Mike Griffith, who represents District 35A, aimed to prohibit placement of foster children in homeless shelters or unlicensed settings such as hotels; and to require training, licensing and ongoing criminal background checks for some individuals involved in the foster care system. Kipke is also the lead sponsor of a resolution to educate the leaders of the legislature on the failures of the foster care system.



LaToya Nkongolo
Delegate, District 31

Nkongolo shared that her legislation for this session is largely constituent-focused, addressing things brought to her attention by community members.

She will again bring forth a bill that she introduced last session that would require insurance companies to pay for scalp cooling treatment, which helps prevent hair loss for individuals undergoing chemotherapy.

"The reason why we weren't successful last session is because Maryland requires a cost analysis for anything that would increase the cost of health insurance," Nkongolo explained. "We believe that it is going to be successful because it's little to no cost to insurance carriers for this treatment to be included."

She is also introducing two bills related to protecting children online.

"One is the Safe Kids Act, which will allow parents or caregivers of minors to file civil lawsuits against any adult website that has their child's image or any video of their child online that they are now monetizing because that's been a growing concern," Nkongolo said.

The second is the App Accountability Act, which would add an additional layer of authority for parents to give permission before their child downloads any app. "That came about because of my mental health background," Nkongolo said. "I'm starting to see a growing trend in adolescent boys becoming more addicted to pornography and online sports betting, so we really want to make sure the parents know what apps they are downloading."

Nkongolo is also working with Senator Simonaire on bills regarding property taxes for disabled veterans and ensuring that unclaimed homeless veterans receive proper burials.



Dawn Gile
Senator, District 33

Constituent concerns are also the focus of the bills Gile will introduce, including rising costs, student safety in schools, and access to health care and community supports.

Gile shared that one of her bills involves energy costs and the effects of Senate Bill 1, noting that it was intended to be a consumer protection measure but resulted in all retail energy suppliers leaving the Maryland market.

"Another priority that I've been working on is related to when abuse allegations happen in our public schools," Gile said. "I've been working on a bill regarding crisis support and requiring our local school systems to have clear crisis response protocols in place that give transparency, communication, and accountability to the schools ... Not to place the blame certainly on schools, but instead to make sure that the parents get accurate, timely information when serious incidents occur in schools."

Gile also has been working with Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, who represents District 32, on a bill related to grooming behaviors, particularly in public schools. "Sometimes warning signs are often unaddressed until after harm occurs, so it's intended to close that loophole," she said.

Women's health care is at the top of Gile's priority list as well, including a bill related to insurance coverage for menopause treatment. Another of Gile's bills aims to address perinatal mental health and support for parents during pregnancy and after birth.



Heather Bagnall
Delegate, District 33C

Bagnall also is working on legislation related to women's health care. She referenced a study conducted roughly 20 years ago that she said was flawed and resulted in a lack

of proper public education and clinician training regarding menopause and perimenopause.

"So, we are working on a bill that has a management component to ensure access to a full range of management care, a training component for providers and clinicians, and an education component for the public," Bagnall said. "That's probably my biggest effort this year, because we have an entire generation of women who are in the workforce who are going into perimenopause and menopause with very few resources (and) little information."

Bagnall is also working on protections for adolescents regarding AI and social media, fueled by concerns over deteriorating mental health and suicidal ideation among youth. "We do have telemedicine now, but there are a lot of mental health platforms and apps that are being created and there's not a lot of transparency around who is on the other side of these apps, whether it's a person, whether it's a clinician, whether it's an algorithm," she explained. "So those are the consumer protections that I'm looking at."

Other top priorities for Bagnall this session include potentially establishing an ombudsman for youth and families; reforms for advance directives and emergency petitions process; and crisis response legislation cross-filed with Senator Gile.

Despite Looming Challenges, Optimism Remains

Although Maryland faces rising energy costs, a budget deficit and other challenges, officials expressed optimism about the upcoming 90-day session.

"As challenging as I think this session is going to be, and last session was pretty challenging, I am still incredibly optimistic about the expertise and the dedication of the people that are sitting in these seats," Bagnall said. "I continue to be incredibly proud of the work that we're doing to forward the future of Maryland in a time when I think it would be easy to go backwards or to feel very defeated."

Nkongolo said, "We're facing a deficit. We're facing the Key Bridge rebuild that's costing us more than double what we had anticipated. So (I'm) definitely concerned about affordability."

She added, "I think that we're going to have to come together, Republicans and Democrats alike, and just listen to the needs of people. It doesn't have to be where we're finger-pointing or fighting each other; it shouldn't be about party. It really should be about our community and our constituents. So, I look forward to working with my colleagues across the aisle to get things done for the good of the people."



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Development On The Golf Course Property

**Amanda
Fiedler**

County Council
District 5



I will always fight for our district and the challenges we face. I will always work for common-sense solutions. It isn't always easy, but it is my commitment to you, and it is one that I take seriously.

Days before Thanksgiving, I opened my email to see notification of a community meeting for a proposed townhome development where the Severna Park Golf Center is now located. I was shocked, frustrated and downright angry.

There is a long history for this property. So many families in our area love having a neighborhood golf center so close to home. Longtime residents have fond memories there, going back decades. I remember going there as a kid with my parents and brother. My kids attended birthday parties there and enjoyed the driving range as they got older. But as the industry has evolved, it has not been easy for this small business golf center to compete with larger and more technologically advanced driving ranges, and the cost to keep up a putt-putt course is not cheap.

I know this because I have communicated with the owner for the entirety of my term in office, as upgrades have been made to ensure the viability of the beloved business. I was thrilled to see technology added to a handful of the driving bays, and so were area golfers. Then, all of the bays had ball-tracking technology added.

Business was picking up again, and you could see its success just by driving by. A liquor license was established for a non-permanent adult beverage trailer, and there were plans to enclose the open patio to add event space and really improve the putt-putt course, but it was going to take an additional financial investment.

With that in mind, the property received a zoning change to R5 during the comprehensive rezoning process in 2024, in order to leverage the property financially for the anticipated improvements. That change was supported by the stakeholder advisory council, the planning advisory board and the county council. There was a path forward for this beloved business to be competitive long-term.

I don't know the business decisions

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A Way Forward: County Executive Steuart Pittman's State Of The County Address

Editor's Note: In December, County Executive Steuart Pittman presented his State of the County address via a video and shared a transcript of his message with constituents in his weekly e-newsletter. Due to space limitations, a shortened version of the address is below; the full address can be viewed at www.aacounty.org/state-of-the-county.

People across America are losing faith in government. We feel some of that locally, and it's a threat to the state of our county. But it's real.

My work with an extraordinary group of public servants and a 600,000-person community that is a microcosm of America has shown me a way forward. We can heal — from our anger and even from our trauma — by doing two things.

One, we must demonstrate, over and over again, that government is capable of delivering solutions — that it's efficient and it is effective. And two, we must engage our residents in our work. We must be inclusive.

The state of our county depends on our progress on these fronts, and I believe that the state of our county is strong.

Delivering Services

We knew when I took office that it would take money to deliver the quality of government that we'd need.

Politicians who had led our county in recent decades got elected by promising tax cuts over and over again, so our property and income tax rates were the lowest in the region by far.

When we raised our income and property tax rates, nobody was surprised. We kept them the lowest in the region, but we created enough revenue to pay for the things that people had asked for.

State law wouldn't let us target those increases to high-income earners or to protect the folks earning less, so we went to the General Assembly, got the law changed, and made our taxes more progressive. Today, only our highest earners pay the income tax rates of our neighbors. The rest of us pay less.

Our county's newfound fiscal strength earned us three Triple A bond ratings for the first time in our history, a trusted sign that our government is efficient and our economy is strong.

We'd asked a lot from our residents, and we needed to show them results, so we created OpenArundel, a system whereby the public can monitor progress on every agency's performance metrics.

We also expanded constituent services to include a community engagement function, and we moved our land use permitting to an online platform so that residents, builders and regulators can hold one another accountable.

The key to the efficiency and effectiveness of Anne Arundel County government today is the fact that we have been able to hire, train and keep good people.

Community Engagement

But that's not enough. Regardless of how efficient a local government becomes, its operations will always be under attack at election time.

So we ask our public servants not only to do their work more efficiently but to take the time to engage with residents, even when those residents are not trained in the subject matter. And they do it, because they know that they work for the people.

It's town halls, public hearings, educational programming, social media, tabling at events, and regular meetings with advocacy groups.

We've got EngageArundel, the Nonprofit Center, Arundel TV, the Budget BUDDE, OpenArundel, 70 advisory committees, and a completely reworked aacounty.org with entry portals to match every issue and concern that we can think of.

All we need to make it succeed, and to ensure that it continues beyond my time in office, is for you and your neighbors to participate.

Public Safety

Folks want an ambulance to arrive in an emergency and a police officer to arrive when there is violence. They want laws enforced and dangerous lawbreakers kept in custody.

We've invested heavily in Anne Arundel County, increasing our overall budget for police, fire, sheriff and detention by 69% since I took office, and we have professionally trained and well-managed agencies doing the work.

We've improved facilities, we have better compensation, more personnel, and new technologies that allow us to deliver more protection for our residents than ever before.

Demand for more of our tax dollars to be spent on public safety will continue to grow unless we effectively address the social determinants of violence — things like poverty, hate and mental health.

I believe that our new violence interruption programs, our efforts to house and employ residents returning from incarceration, our addiction prevention and recovery work, and our youth engagement work are the key to long-term public safety. And those will only work with economic policies that grow our economy and leave no one behind.

Education

When I ran for office in 2018, the Anne Arundel County Council was chaired by a man who believed that public education was a communist plot, so he refused to vote for any budget that funded our schools.

But the people of our county, particularly our teachers, parents, grandparents and students saw things differently.

They mobilized to remove elected leaders who had neglected our schools, and we all got to work — our county council, our Board of Education, and our advocates.

We made good on unpaid back step increases and expedited a minimum starting teacher salary of \$60,000. Today, our teacher vacancies are below pre-pandemic levels and among the lowest in our state.

We built or renovated three high schools, one middle school, and 11 elementary schools. We've also completed major additions on 11 more schools, and the final three in our Old Mill Master Plan are funded and in design.

We fully embraced the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, and now have 47 community schools, a robust career coaching program, and a top national educator as our superintendent.

Student achievement is up in our highest poverty schools and across the board, more students are enrolled in AP classes, and AP scores are up.

Finishing What We Started

I'm running out of time. One year left, and they're telling me to wrap up this speech. Time for "Finishing what we started — rapid fire." You ready?

Affordable housing is finally happening, with the new Housing Trust Fund, a half-dozen major bills to incentivize production, and quadrupling the pipeline of affordable units.

Progress is underway on all aspects of our MOVE Anne Arundel multimodal transportation plan — in fact, we just set a transit ridership record in October — but we got to get the Broadneck, South Shore, and Annapolis connection trails done; got to get shovels in the ground on Route 2, 3, 214, 170, and I-97; and we got to grow our transit offerings.

We've accelerated land preservation and park improvement projects, but we've got to close on the Saltworks property north of Annapolis Mall and Glebe Heights on the South River. And we need to break ground on the Edgewater Rec Center, Brooklyn Park Community Center, Millersville Park, Odenton Park, and South Shore Park.

We've created the best Resilience Authority in the country and secured a lot of outside funding, but we must be

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Development On The Golf Course

» Continued from page 12

that have happened since 2024. I don't know why the future of the golf course changed so drastically after all the work that was put in to sustain it, but I do know the owner has the right to make those changes. I can think of a variety of personal and professional reasons why anyone's plans may change at any given time. In this case, it doesn't make it easier to digest, and I can't help but feel misled and maybe even deceived.

What I do know is that 135 townhouses are now being proposed because of the Housing Attainability Act (HAA), which passed just months after comprehensive rezoning was completed. The HAA requires a certain portion of all new major residential developments to have a certain portion sold or rented at an "affordable" rate based on income, and the HAA provides discounts to the developer to help offset the affordable unit requirement.

I support affordable housing and homeownership. As the mother of three kids, I want our county to be affordable for them and their peers — the next generation. But we have to balance the need for affordable housing with the infrastructure challenges faced by existing communities.

My job is to read legislation carefully and understand the details that will impact our district. The HAA proposal sounded like the solution to affordability, but I was concerned that the incentives (increased density) would overlook the impacts to an existing area, and for that reason, I couldn't support it. This

townhouse proposal is a prime example of what I worried would happen because this property is not the location to achieve affordable housing goals.

Our families are burdened with crippling traffic delays because of failing infrastructure that cannot accommodate volume. I have fought for investments in long-term solutions, but improving major roadways takes time and a lot of money. That is why it is so critically important that we work to solve the affordability challenges we face by incentivizing affordable housing in locations that can absorb the impacts.

I will not have a seat at the table to approve or deny this development proposal; that responsibility lies solely with the Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning. However, I have introduced legislation that will greatly reduce the impact of development at this location. That legislation, Bill 5-26, will have a public hearing on Monday, February 2, at 7:00pm in county council chambers located at 44 Calvert Street in Annapolis.

As with most legislation, it will take four votes to pass and five votes to be veto-proof. Your participation in the public hearing process will be important. You can write letters to the entire council, send emails, and testify in person. I will do all that I can to affect change to the plans and reduce the scope of the proposed development. I will continue to be your voice.

For information on the legislation and public hearing dates, please contact me at amanda.fiedler@aacounty.org.

A Way Forward: State Of The County Address

» Continued from page 12

laser-focused on projects like Annapolis City Dock and Welcome Center, and implementing our Crownsville Master Plan.

It's thrilling that we're doing so much to improve our environment and quality of life, but none of it happens without community engagement and the efficient operation of government itself.

That's why we've got to confront the excessive regulatory requirements that have piled up from decades of legislative action. We've removed some of that red tape and have bills coming to cut more of it, but like I said, I'm running out of time.

Economy

And I haven't yet talked about the biggest threat we face. Even if government is efficient and people are engaged, all of us will suffer if our economy falters.

People need incomes that allow them to afford housing, health care, food and transportation at the very least. The economy that supports those things is knitted together by government programs, global trade, research, immigration, manufacturing, essential services and taxes.

Unemployment, foreclosure, eviction, hunger, deportation and denial of health services are already on the rise. When the harshest cuts in Congress's

One Big Beautiful Bill Act take effect after the 2026 midterm elections, those things will accelerate.

Our Office of Emergency Management has launched what I believe is the first-in-the-nation Federal Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Workgroup, an interagency effort to monitor impacts and protect residents, just as we did during COVID.

That effort has \$10 million to invest this year, and its first funds were released to supplement food distribution during the suspension of SNAP benefits.

As we gather our residents for budget town halls during January and February, I expect to hear more about the hardship being faced by our neighbors, and I suspect that our next budget will reflect those pleas for help.

Conclusion

That is ultimately why local governments exist — to protect our people, to improve the health and wellness of our communities, and to ensure that opportunity is available to all.

So, despite all the angry rhetoric encouraging us to blame our public institutions for the challenges we face, we in local government persist.

We persist because our values demand it of us. We serve our neighbors. And that will never change. And that is why I am able to say on this day that the state of our county is strong.

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College Report

The fall college sports season signaled a new experience for incoming freshmen from Severna Park, Broadneck and other Anne Arundel County high schools while several returning players continued their playing journeys.

CROSS COUNTRY – MEN

Charlie Butler

Mount Saint Joseph – Lehigh

A sophomore, Butler competed in six events for the Mountain Hawks, qualifying for the NCAA Division I Mid-Atlantic regional meet.

CROSS COUNTRY – WOMEN

Avery Arizzi

Broadneck – St. Mary's (Maryland)

A junior, Arizzi posted a personal record in the 4K run at the Spider Alumni Open on August 30. She also placed 16th in the United East preview meet in September.



Charlotte Crabtree

Broadneck – St. Mary's (Maryland)

A freshman, Crabtree posted two results for the Seahawks, qualifying for the NCAA Division III regional meet.

Natalie Bowman

Severna Park – Flagler

A freshman, Bowman ran three events for the Saints, posting a best result of second place at the VSU Cross Country Border Clash in September.

Mollie Fenn

Broadneck – Richmond

A senior, Fenn ran several races for the Spiders, finishing 16th in the Atlantic 10 championship race and qualifying for the NCAA Division I Southeast Regional meet.

FIELD HOCKEY

Zoe Bjelac

Broadneck – Quinnipiac

A sophomore defender, Bjelac played in three games for the Bobcats.

Shannon Curtis

Archbishop Spalding – Meredith

A freshman midfielder, Curtis appeared in 12 games for the Avenging Angels.

Sydney Day

Severna Park – Vassar

A freshman forward, Day appeared in 11 games for the Brewers.

Faith Everett

Broadneck – Maryland

A freshman forward, Everett appeared in two games for the Terrapins.

Maya Everett

Broadneck – Maryland

A junior midfielder, Everett appeared in 15 games with one start for the Terrapins, scoring her lone goal of the season on November 2 against Northeastern.

Grace Figueroa

Broadneck – York

A freshman midfielder, Figueroa appeared in three games for the Spartans.

Arden Huntman

Broadneck – Towson

After transferring from Salisbury, the junior forward started 13 of her 18 appearances for the Tigers, scoring three goals and adding a team-high four assists.

Katelyn Kearns

Broadneck – Massachusetts

A freshman midfielder, Kearns appeared in three games for the Minutemen.

Raleigh Kerst

Broadneck – Ohio State

A freshman forward, Kerst started seven of her 18 appearances for the Buckeyes, scoring four goals and adding one assist.



Charley Kramer

Severna Park – Boston College

A junior goalkeeper, Kramer started 13 of the Eagles' 16 games. She made 35 saves, including a season-high nine against North Carolina on September 28, and allowed 13 goals on the season.

Jess Kopernick

Broadneck – Stevens

Institute of Technology

A junior forward, Kopernick started all 21 games for the Ducks, who won their third straight MAC Freedom conference title. Kopernick scored eight times, including twice against Arcadia on October 19, and added seven assists.

Madeline Lancione

Archbishop Spalding

– Washington & Lee

A freshman forward, Lancione started all 19 of her

appearances for the Generals. She found the net 10 times, including two against Shenandoah on October 15 and three game-winners, and added four assists.

Camryn Lowman

Severna Park – Catholic

A freshman goalkeeper, Lowman made her only appearance this season for the Cardinals in an October 11 game against Wilkes.

Chloe Page

Broadneck – Syracuse

A freshman defender for the Orange, Page did not appear in game action this fall.

Gabrielle Prentice

Archbishop Spalding – Delaware

A freshman goalkeeper for the Blue Hens, Prentice started in four of her six appearances. She backstopped a 2-0 shutout of Kent State on September 12.

» Continued on page 22

SPORTS

Missy Meharg Has Masterminded Maryland's Field Hockey Team For Four Decades



Photo courtesy of the University of Maryland

Maryland field hockey head coach Missy Meharg (right) talked to goaltender Alyssa Klebasko during a game at College Park's Field Hockey and Lacrosse Complex.

Severna Park Resident Has Amassed Nearly 700 Victories, Seven Championships

By Kevin Murnane

The University of Maryland has had some legendary coaches including **Gary Williams, Lefty Driesell, Brenda Frese and Cathy Reese**. However, Severna Park resident and field hockey head coach **Missy Meharg** has totaled more victories than any other coach in Maryland's athletic history.

Meharg began as an assistant coach in 1985 and was named head coach in 1988. Since then, she has amassed nearly 700 victories, seven national championships and 28 conference championships.

Maryland field hockey's longtime leader has also been named NCAA National Coach of the Year nine times and has been inducted into four halls of fame.

To achieve this status, Meharg has recruited talented players internationally, nationally and regionally, including numerous athletes from Anne Arundel County. Currently, Meharg has players from Broadneck, Archbishop Spalding and Crofton high schools on the roster.

"Coaching takes a lot of dedication and energy to the role, which is well beyond the X's and O's of the game," said Broadneck field hockey coach **Shannon Hanratty**. "Missy's enthusiasm for the world of field hockey hasn't ever missed a beat, which, I feel, contributes to her longevity and success as the leader of the Terps."

Before leading Maryland's field hockey program, Meharg was a four-year standout at the University

of Delaware, where she was named All-American in both field hockey and lacrosse. She was also a co-captain in each sport as well as being a two-time conference player of the year in field hockey.

After graduating from Delaware, Meharg was hired as Maryland's assistant coach and became the Terps' head coach at the age of 24.

Since then, Meharg has had 73 All-American field hockey players and 12 players compete on the United States Olympic team.

Meharg's oasis from the rigors of coaching and battling the Capital Beltway is coming home to Severna Park and enjoying its iconic scenery.

"Severna Park is a great, great town," Meharg said with a smile. "I have lived in Severna Park for 22 years and love the river and its calming and peaceful feeling it provides."

In addition to being a sanctuary of stress relief for Meharg, Severna Park allows her to stay connected to area coaches and club teams in the region.

"The field hockey played in Anne Arundel County is exceedingly strong, and in addition to the high school programs, the area's club teams are great as well," Meharg said.

Recruiting new players from the central Maryland region is paramount to Meharg's success as she promotes the advantages of representing a university that enables family and friends to watch the players' collegiate careers.

Held every summer, field hockey

» Continued on page 22

With Start Of New Season, Falcon Boys Basketball Is Soaring



By David Bashore

Pete Young happily admits his charges in the Severna Park boys basketball team are putting up more points than he's used to. Maybe even more than he would normally be comfortable with — especially from beyond the 3-point line.

Importantly for Young, it's not the "Seven Seconds or Less" approach the Phoenix Suns implemented nearly 20 years ago that revolutionized basketball. More importantly, it's clearly working.

The high-flying Falcons appear well on their way to their fifth straight winning season, sitting at 8-1 just short of the midway point. Their lowest point output of the season has been 49 points, in both of their Christmas break tournament games, a total they failed to hit five times last season. They've already cracked 60 points five times, which they did twice last season, and the 73 points they put on the Bard School was the most in nearly two years.

"It's getting the kids to understand and buy into the idea that to put up that many points, you don't have to play super fast all night long," Young said. "It's moving the ball and exploring every possession to get the best shot possible, that while we're getting fewer shots, we're getting better shots and more productive shots, and that's kind of where we're at. As long as they're within the flow of the offense, everyone's playing unselfishly, and they're good shots, I'm good with it."

In addition to that 73-71 win over Bard, the Falcons have beaten Annapolis (63-57), Westlake (61-48), Chesa-

apeake Science Point (51-38), Hammond (49-40), Calvert (49-20), Glen Burnie (63-38) and North County (71-51). Their only loss came at Broadneck, 59-53.

The recipe for success has been pretty simple: ball movement, running offense, and a variety of chefs night to night.

Point guard **Garrett Moden** has played facilitator and run the offense well. He has had double-digit assist nights and nearly cracked 10 on others.

"One of the things that's helping us the last two weeks is we've reconnected with Garrett. Garrett is arguably one of the best point guards in the county when he's doing the things that put us in a place to get stuff done," Young said. "The last three games he's turning into a little bit of a quarterback, talking about what he's seeing and the things that we need to be doing better. His leadership and finding the open guys is really important."

Sophomore **Blake Coard** pops up in double figures most nights while junior **Xavier Marshall** and senior **Dash Havens** are bolstering both the scoring and rebounding columns. Junior forward **John Batty** dropped 23 against Glen Burnie, proving that the Falcon offense is rapidly evolving into a pick-your-poison proposition for opposing defenses.

That could bode well with interesting battles against Southern, Crofton, and Old Mill looming in January, and a tough five-game stretch to close the regular season hanging on the horizon in mid-February.

"There are nights when we look like we're trying to figure out, and there are nights where we almost have it figured out. The best-case scenario for us night after night, to keep people off balance," Young said. "One of the things I'm proud of most is that our offense puts us in a position where it's hard to determine 'a guy.' If we're doing it the right way, we don't have one guy; we have a bunch of different guys where you have to figure out where they are and what's going on. When you've got guys who are playing well, three guys who are firing on all cylinders, it's fun to be around."

Photos by Dennis McGinley

Top: Garrett Moden drove into the paint for a layup. Moden has also played facilitator for the Falcons offense with several double-digit assist games. **Bottom:** Coach Pete Young has Severna Park moving the ball and exploring every possession to get the best shot possible.

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SPHS Girls Hoops Looking for Consistency, Experience

By David Bashore

It's been tough sledding for the Severna Park girls basketball team as the calendar turned to 2026, but head coach **Kris-tofer Dean** is convinced the team is in for better days ahead.

Nearing the midway point of the regular season, the Falcons are sitting 2-8, but they have cautious optimism about where they're headed.

Severna Park has tasted victory just twice, an early-season 32-25 slugfest over Broadneck and a 51-26 win over North County on January 9, but they have come close on a few other occasions. They had Severn School on the ropes before falling 38-37 on December 16, gave Oakdale a game before succumbing by 10 on December 10, and also had single-digit losses to Riverdale Baptist and Glen Burnie. Allegany,



Left: Riley Buck launched a 3-pointer in Severna Park's 32-25 win over Broadneck. **Right:** Starting senior guard Maria Bragg missed the first part of the season. When healthy, she has facilitated the Falcons' offense.



Photos by Dennis McGinley

Annapolis, Maryvale Prep and St. Timothy's rounded out the early slate.

With starting senior guard **Maria Bragg** out for the first part of the season

and junior point guard **Izzy Burleson** suffering an injury, running the offense has come a little early to three young players: freshman **Annmarie Mitzel**,

that's just time and experience," Dean said. "If we can get where I think we can get to by the end of the year, we're going to be in pretty good shape."

Bruin Girls Basketball Riding Roller Coaster Early In Season

By David Bashore

After Broadneck's 45-37 win over Old Mill on January 9, head coach **Juan McKinney** called the season thus far "a roller coaster."

Given the record, and the roster turnover, one can understand that. Broadneck, having just one senior on the roster, has posted a 6-4 mark as it settles in for the grind of Anne Arundel County play.

Anchored by senior center **Makayla Kropfelder**, who averages nearly a double-double a night (9.8 points and 11.2 rebounds), the Bruins have a steady post presence that gives them an opportunity to be in most games.

"She's doing an excellent job of carrying us while we get our young guards into better positions," McKinney said. "Eventually we'd like to play inside-out, but she's active and hard to move, so she's getting a lot of rebounds and good shots for us."

Junior **Jillian Gross** has emerged as a second option, while the three-headed guard monster of junior **Nora Sprague**, sophomore **Carmen Hubbard**, and freshman **Kileigh Perkins** are working the backcourt. Those three have huge shoes to fill, replacing multi-year starter **London Best**, and that has been the team's biggest challenge so far.

"There are moments where it looks good, but they're learning what to do in that position, and it's a new experience for them," McKinney said. "We are hoping to get Kileigh going (off-ball) and that will open up our offense. It's more about basketball IQ at this point. They don't (fully) understand time and possession yet ... and we have to play inside-out."

Bruins have only truly been out of two games this season: a 67-44 loss to St. Mary's on December 17 and a 56-23 defeat by Annapolis on January 6. In both games, McKinney said the Bruins looked nothing like themselves. The other two losses came in a 32-25, classic meat-grinder game against Severna Park, and a 51-47 overtime defeat by Severn School.

Their wins have come in all kinds of fashions: they slipped past Old Mill and Sherwood (47-40 on December 26) and had more convincing wins over Indian Creek (53-39 on December 27), Severn Run (73-39 on December 18), Cambridge-South Dorchester (59-12 on December 8) and Northeast (44-25 on December 5).

The rest of the season affords plenty of opportunities for Broadneck to test themselves. There's a matchup with perennial county contender South River and currently undefeated Chesapeake, as well as rematches against Severna Park and Annapolis.

"We have to just keep working and getting better as the year goes, and when playoff time rolls around, we'll be there," McKinney said.

Photos by Dennis McGinley

Top Left: Senior center Makayla Kropfelder has contributed a steady post presence for the Bruins by averaging 9.8 points and 11.2 rebounds through her team's first 10 games. **Top Right:** Guard Kileigh Perkins attempted to power a shot through the Severna Park defense. So far, she has emerged as a part of a strong backcourt for Broadneck. **Bottom:** Nora Sprague dribbled around the Severna Park defense as she looked for a scoring opportunity.



STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

NAOMI BATTY

Severna Park High School
Girls Basketball, Lacrosse

By David Bashore

Naomi Batty doesn't snag a ton of headlines. Regardless of whether it's in school, during her outside activities, or with the Severna Park girls basketball or lacrosse teams, Batty prefers the unassuming leadership role. Her experience and steady presence, complementing athleticism and perimeter skill, has paid dividends and earned multiple coaches' trust. "It's really about taking on what the coaches give you," Batty said. "I'm more of a center, so a lot of my scoring comes on putbacks and rebounds rather than shooting 3s or making steals. My job is to keep everything together, so that's what I do." With a 3.8 unweighted and 4.3 weighted GPA, and involvement in multiple extracurricular ventures, the Severna Park senior has shown much more than just a scoring presence. One of the major clubs Batty is involved with at Severna Park High is One Love, a high school chapter of a foundation dedicated to helping prevent intimate partner violence, especially in athletics. The One Love Foundation is named in honor of **Yeardley Love**, a Notre Dame Prep and University of Virginia (UVA) lacrosse standout who was killed by her ex-boyfriend, a UVA men's lacrosse athlete, in 2010. During Batty's time in the club, it has grown from a focus on girls lacrosse athletes to SPHS ath-



letes regardless of sport or gender, and ultimately to the student body at large. "Not a lot of people think about that side of the relationship until there's a problem, and by then it's sometimes too late," Batty said. "It's one of the

Photo by Fincham Photography
Naomi Batty has been a steady presence for Severna Park's girls basketball and lacrosse teams, and she is involved in One Love, a high school chapter of a foundation dedicated to helping prevent intimate partner violence.

“It's really about taking on what the coaches give you. I'm more of a center, so a lot of my scoring comes on putbacks and rebounds rather than shooting 3s or making steals. My job is to keep everything together, so that's what I do.”
— **NAOMI BATTY**

biggest clubs at Severna Park, and I'm really proud of helping turn it into what it's become." Beyond One Love, Batty is part of the athletic leadership council at Severna Park, has helped raise more than \$1,500 in clothing donations for an Edgewater church, and is interning at an architecture firm in Silver Spring called Studio105. Architecture is the one certain in Batty's future — she is undecided about her college destination. She also knows varsity sports are in the rearview mirror, but other than that, the future is open. Wherever she goes, the leadership skills she's gleaned at Severna Park will suit her well. "It's really important to be consistent and ... keep everyone with the same mindset," she said.



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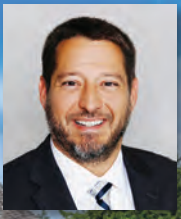
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Nearly Through Tough Start, Broadneck Boys Still Above .500

By David Bashore

Don't let the Broadneck boys basketball team's near-.500 record fool you: not all 5-4 marks are created equal.

Three of those four losses were within two possessions, including a 69-63 setback against Old Mill, in which the Bruins trailed by 22 late in the third quarter. Two of the wins came against reigning state champions, a 49-48 win at 2025 1A champ Cambridge-South Dorchester and a 71-67 win at 4A champ Laurel. A third came in a 59-53 win over Severna Park that, to date, is the Falcons' only loss of the season.

The Bruins opened the season with a 68-51 loss to Northeast, and they added wins over Early College (Delaware) 58-42 and Annapolis 65-55.

"There have been no days off in any of our games this season. From Northeast, when we made cuts the night before and then had to go play, to tonight (against Old Mill), the guys have fought and battled," said Broadneck coach **Jeff Starr**, who picked up his 200th career coaching win in the victory over Annapolis.

The Bruins had to do much of that heavy lifting without senior point guard **Kamari Williams**, who returned from an injury just after Christmas break.

His return has brought another key piece to the rotation, which has been pretty short but growing in options. The Bruins lean heavily on their five seniors — Williams, **Ashton Sellman**, **Ben Adkins**, **Alijah Hawkins** and **Kemarri Collison** — but sophomore **Liam Sabo** has been the most consistent scorer and rebounder for the team.

That, in turn, has forced the seniors to step up even more as they lead the team one last time.

"I think (especially) Ashton has become a better basketball player and stronger leader the last few weeks," Starr said. "He is starting to feel the urgency and the clock ticking, and he wants to make the most of this."

Sabo, Collison, and Sellman have led the team in both scoring and rebounding over the early stages of the season.

Broadneck's gauntlet wraps up with successive games against Meade and South River, broadly considered the two top teams in the county. Then there's a match-up with upstart Southern, a rematch with Severna Park, and a tussle with region rival Crofton in the regular season finale.

"We just need to continue to fight and continue to put consistent games together," Starr said.

Photos by Dennis McGinley

Top: Broadneck senior point guard Kamari Williams launched a deep shot against the Falcons. Williams missed time due to injury but is back to give the Bruins another passer and shot creator.

Middle: Sophomore Liam Sabo cut through the Severna Park defense and attempted a layup. Sabo has been the most consistent scorer and rebounder for the Bruins. **Bottom:** Kemarri Collison showed that he was willing to take contact as he surged through the paint.



Green Hornets' Charlie Becker Inducted Into Anne Arundel County Sports Hall Of Fame

Becker Has Served As Green Hornets' President For 28 Years

By Kevin Murnane

The Oxford Dictionary defines a selfless person as someone who prioritizes the needs, wants and well-being of others above their own.

The Green Hornets' **Charlie Becker** is a shining example of being selfless.

Becker was inducted into the Anne Arundel County Sports Hall of Fame at the end of the 2025 fall sports season as he received the prestigious Bernie Walter Memorial Award for his volunteerism with the Green Hornets organization as well as Severna Park High School's (SPHS) baseball program.

"Coach Becker has meant the world to all Severna Park's Green Hornet youth baseball players as well as Severna Park High School baseball players who he has coached," said former player and current Severna Park High School assistant baseball coach **Pete Buck**. "He has been helping to run the Greater Severna Park Athletic Association (GSPAA) for decades. As a coach, he was always available for us any time we wanted help to make us better players. Coach Becker and **Jim McCandless** were like Batman and Robin who held us to a standard and taught us how to play the game correctly. They made all of us better players as well as athletes."

Becker began coaching a Green Hornets' select baseball team in 1985 and started the Severna Park American Legion team in 1990, and he coached those teams until 2000. Becker also was an SPHS junior varsity assistant coach in 2001, and from 2002 through 2012, Becker was the assistant coach on the Falcons' varsity baseball team.

"Coach Becker always wanted to get the best out of everyone," said former Falcons pitcher **Josh Banks**, who played in the major leagues with Toronto, San Diego and Houston. "He was also very helpful to me when I became the Green Hornets' executive director. You don't realize how much he does for the Green Hornets until you spend time with him riding through the facility. He does everything for the kids."

In addition to coaching hundreds of area residents, Becker has served as the Green Hornets' president since 1997. Over those 28 years, Becker has spent thousands of hours improving Kinder Farm Park (KFP) for the over 10,000 young athletes who use its amenities annually.

In that time, KFP has grown from three multipurpose fields to six; three baseball fields to four; and irrigation was installed on the six multipurpose fields and one baseball field. Becker was also instrumental



Charlie Becker

in arranging lighting that was added and/or improved for four multipurpose fields and three baseball fields.

"The Kinder family was so gracious to sell their land to Anne Arundel County on the condition it would be used for a public park, and through the help of hundreds of dedicated area residents who spent days, nights and weekends designing the facility for the community, we have an outstanding complex that is one of the best in the region," Becker said.

During his acceptance speech at the DoubleTree hotel's banquet facility in Annapolis, Becker thanked the countless volunteers, coaches, umpires, referees, snack-shack helpers and maintenance workers who make the Green Hornets one of most respected organizations in the area.

"Charlie's induction into the Anne Arundel County Hall of Fame is well deserved after volunteering as the Green Hornets' president for 28 years," said Green Hornets registrar **Charlotte Souder**. "He's not only proud of our program but all the kids who we are able to serve year after year, as well as those he has personally coached. It was great to see former players come out and attend his induction ceremony."

Green Hornets Executive Director **John Mayer** has known Becker for nearly 20 years, including being one of Becker's players with the Green Hornets and at SPHS.

"What I remember most about him as a coach was how detail-oriented he was and how much time he spent individually working with all of us every day at practice," Mayer said. "I returned to work with the Green Hornets in 2024, and since then, Charlie has been a constant support for me."

A humble man, Becker is rewarded by simple gestures like former players coming up to him and thanking him for his time, knowledge and sharing great memories.

"It's great when you can stand at Kinder Park and look at all the fields being used and see all the kids playing and having fun and know you had something to do with it," Becker said.

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College Report

» Continued from page 15

FIELD HOCKEY

Mady Quigley

Broadneck – Susquehanna

A sophomore midfielder, Quigley started in all 21 games for the River Hawks, scoring three times and adding eight assists.

Kelsey Rowe

Severna Park – La Salle

A freshman midfielder, Rowe made 18 appearances for the Explorers, scoring her lone goal of the season on October 10 against Lock Haven.

Ainslee Shrout

Severna Park – Simmons University

A senior defender, Shrout started in seven of her 15 appearances for the Sharks, highlighted by a two-goal and one-assist performance against Albertus Magnus on September 24.

Safiya Stimely

Broadneck – St. Mary's (Maryland)

A junior defender, Stimely started in all 19 of her appearances for the Seahawks, scoring her lone goal against Lancaster Bible on November 1.

Emma Weber

Severna Park

– Christopher Newport

A freshman defender, Weber played in 10 games for the Captains, scoring her only two goals of the season August 29 against Bridgewater.

Ava Zimmerman

Severna Park – Johns Hopkins

A freshman forward, Zimmerman appeared in 22 games for the Blue Jays, who won the Centennial Conference championship and reached the NCAA Division III championship game, where they fell in overtime. Zimmerman scored her lone goal of the season against Muhlenberg on November 1.

FOOTBALL

Tyrin Chinn-Thompson

Broadneck – Shepherd

A freshman defensive back, Chinn-Thompson appeared in 11 games for the Rams, totaling 27 tackles (19 solo), one pass defended, and one interception.

Josh Ehrlich

Broadneck – Susquehanna

A redshirt junior quarterback, Ehrlich was the Landmark Conference's Offensive Player of the Year for the second straight season in leading the River Hawks to the NCAA Division III quarterfinals. In 14 games, Ehrlich threw for 2,826 yards and 32 touchdowns against just two interceptions, and he also ran for 969 yards and seven scores.

Machi Evans

Broadneck – Washington and Jefferson

A junior wide receiver, Evans appeared in six games for the Presidents, catching nine passes for 124 yards and logging one defensive tackle.

Anthony Hawkins

Broadneck – Villanova

A redshirt freshman defensive back, Hawkins piled up the stats as the Wildcats reached the Division I FCS national semifinals. In 15 games, Hawkins had 59 tackles (41 solo), nine pass defenses, two interceptions and one forced fumble.

De'Marien Hayes

Broadneck – Wilkes

A freshman wide receiver, Hayes did not see game action for the Colonels this fall.

Jayden Joyce

Broadneck – Holy Cross

A junior offensive lineman, Joyce appeared in 10 of the Crusaders' 12 games this season.

Evan Lawhorn

Severna Park – McDaniel

A sophomore offensive lineman, Lawhorn appeared in eight games for the Green Terror.

Nathan Levicki

Broadneck – Presbyterian

A senior tight end and short yardage runner, Levicki amassed 486 yards and nine touchdowns on 39 touches for the Blue Hose.

Liam Lynch

Archbishop Spalding – Holy Cross

A sophomore offensive lineman, Lynch appeared in all 12 games for the Crusaders.

Ian Mauldin

Broadneck – Shepherd

A freshman running back, Mauldin played primarily on special teams for the Rams, logging one tackle and one kick return attempt.

Declan Miller

Broadneck – McDaniel

A freshman offensive lineman, Miller did not see game action this season for the Green Terror.

Tristan Newhouse

Severna Park – Fairleigh

Dickinson-Florham

A junior punter, Newhouse saw action in 10 games for the Devils, punting 41 times for an average of 36.3 yards per attempt. He boomed four punts of more than 50 yards and pinned opponents inside the 20 nine times.

Vince Nguyen

Severna Park – Wagner

A freshman quarterback, Nguyen redshirted this season.

Trey Smack

Severna Park – Florida

A senior placekicker, Smack hit on 18 of his 22 field goal tries and 27 of 28 extra point attempts for the Gators, playing in all 12 games. He took the Florida program record for most field goals from 50-plus yards with 10, including a career-long 56-yarder against Long Island. Smack was a semifinalist for the Lou Groza Award and has been selected to participate in the 100th East-West Shrine Bowl on January 27 in Frisco, Texas.

Tucker Smack

Severna Park – Salisbury

A junior placekicker, Smack appeared in 12 games for the Sea Gulls. He made 61 of 66 extra point attempts and converted five of his six field goal tries.

Joey Smargissi

Broadneck – Washington & Lee

A freshman wide receiver, Smargissi appeared in nine games for the Generals this season. He caught one pass, an 82-yard touchdown against Averett on November 1.

Branden Stahl

Broadneck – Ursinus

A sophomore offensive lineman, Stahl appeared in two games this season for the Bears.

James Stahl

Broadneck – Ursinus

A sophomore offensive lineman, Stahl appeared in one game this season for the Bears.

Joey Tramontana

Severna Park – Kenyon

A freshman wide receiver, Tramontana appeared in six games for the Owls, logging one special teams tackle.

Jake Wanner

Broadneck – Wilkes

A junior linebacker, Wanner appeared in three games for the Colonels, logging one tackle.

C.J. Watkins

Broadneck – West Virginia Wesleyan

A freshman quarterback, Watkins appeared in one game for the Bobcats, logging no statistics.

Delmar White

Archbishop Spalding – Maryland

A freshman defensive lineman, White did not see game action for the Terrapins this fall.

DaQuann Woodall

Broadneck – Eastern

A sophomore tight end, Woodall played in six games for the Eagles, logging three special teams tackles.

VOLLEYBALL – WOMEN

Mya Durham

Broadneck – Susquehanna

A sophomore middle hitter, Durham appeared in eight matches for the River Hawks, posting 16 kills in 18 sets played.

Bella Hadden

Broadneck – Anne Arundel

Community College

A sophomore setter, Hadden appeared in 12 matches for the Riverhawks, posting an average of 2.8 assists per set.

Natalie Luscomb

Broadneck – Lehigh

A senior outside hitter, Luscomb played in 26 matches for the Mountain Hawks and posted 253 kills (2.75 per set), including a season-high 19 kills in a five-set match against American.

Maya Mauro

Archbishop Spalding – St. Mary's (Maryland)

A sophomore outside hitter, Mauro played in 30 matches, posting an average of 3.03 kills and 2.23 digs per set. She cracked double figures in kills on 16 occasions, with a season best of 16 (twice).

Amanda Protzman

Broadneck – Millersville

A freshman middle hitter, Protzman played in 28 matches for the Marauders, posting 67 kills, 49 blocks, and 57 digs in 93 sets.

Perry Stevenson

Severna Park – Canisius

A sophomore outside hitter, Stevenson played in four matches for the Golden Griffins, posting all 15 of her kills in a four-set match against Cornell.

Maddy Stewart

Broadneck – American

A junior setter, Stewart played in 10 matches for the Eagles, posting 18 digs and six service aces.

Missy Meharg Has Masterminded Maryland's Field Hockey Team For Four Decades

» Continued from page 15

camp are part of Meharg's recruiting efforts. The camps expose young players to Maryland's field hockey facilities, teach them new skills, and allow them to get to know the coaches.

"I've worked the Maryland camp for two summers and working with Missy and her staff is always an enjoyable experience," Hanratty said. "There is

so much passion and joy surrounding the game on their campus and it's awesome to be part of it."

Though her summers are filled with recruiting and camps, Meharg takes time to get in some rounds of golf at Chartwell Golf and Country Club and frequent local restaurants.

"Missy is always a pleasure to be around," said Chartwell head golf

professional **Rob Agresti**. "She always has a smile on her face and impacts people in a positive way."

Meharg calls Severna Park a "sacred place" and relishes the history of Severna Park and heritage of families.

As Meharg's brief offseason window is ending, she's preparing for next season. This past season, she had 11 freshmen on the squad including

Broadneck's **Faith Everett**, Spalding's **Skylar Gilman** and Crofton's **Ryleigh Osborne**.

"I'm super excited for next year with all the young players improving from their first year," Meharg said. "We had seven first-year players accumulating 35 minutes or more per game this year."

Meharg hopes to return to the NCAA field hockey tournament next year as this year was the first time since 1994 that the Terps did not qualify for the tournament. Maryland finished with a record of 10-8.

SOCCER – MEN

Axel Cartagena
Broadneck – Anne Arundel Community College
A sophomore defender, Cartagena started 13 of his 18 appearances for the Riverhawks, netting twice and adding an assist.

Kyle Crawford
Archbishop Spalding – Salve Regina
A freshman midfielder, Crawford started 11 of his 15 appearances for the Seahawks, scoring three times and adding an assist.

Mikey Johnson
Broadneck – Delaware
A senior forward, Johnson started 16 of his 17 appearances for the Blue Hens, scoring 11 goals and adding three assists in earning second-team All-ECAC honors.

Declan Karney
Archbishop Spalding – Christopher Newport
A sophomore center back, Karney started 20 of the Captains’ 21 games, posting two assists and anchoring a back line that posted nine shutouts.

Brett Rice
Severna Park – Salve Regina
A freshman defender, Rice started 10 of his 16 appearances for the Sea-hawks, netting one assist and helping keep eight shutouts.

Jaden Smith
Broadneck – US Coast Guard Academy
A sophomore defender, Smith started in seven of his 16 appearances for the Bears, helping the team post five shutouts.

Evan Souder
Severna Park – Washington College
A junior defender, Souder made six appearances and one start for the Shoremen.

Zach Tetterer
Broadneck – Loyola (Maryland)
A senior defender, Tetterer made his first collegiate appearance in the Greyhounds’ final game of the season.

Cooper Thompson
Broadneck – Notre Dame of Maryland
A freshman defender, Thompson started in eight of his 15 appearances for the Gators, notching one assist.

Knolin Walker
Severna Park – Anne Arundel Community College
A freshman forward, Walker started in 10 of his 18 appearances for the Riverhawks, scoring twice and adding two assists.

Ethan Watson
Severna Park – Washington College
A sophomore midfielder, Watson started in nine of his 15 appearances for the Shoremen, logging one assist.

SOCCER – WOMEN

Kyleigh Bland
Broadneck – St. Mary’s (Maryland)
A sophomore goalkeeper, Bland started 19 games for the Seahawks, posting 96 saves with eight clean sheets.

Caitlyn Boucher
Severna Park – Campbell
A sophomore defender, Boucher started 11 of the Fighting Camels’ 16 games, helping the team post five shutouts.

Breanna Brown
Broadneck – St. Mary’s (Maryland)
A freshman goalkeeper, Brown started 3 of her seven appearances for the Sea-hawks, posting 28 saves.

Abby Cover
Severna Park – North Carolina-Greensboro
A freshman midfielder, Cover made two appearances for the Spartans.

Felicia Fishburne
Severna Park – St. Mary’s (Maryland)
A junior utility player, Fishburne started 17 of her 22 appearances for the Seahawks, scoring twice and adding three assists.

Joi Fleming
Severna Park – Salisbury
A senior midfielder, Fleming did not log an appearance this fall.

Grace Gartrell
Broadneck – Salisbury
A freshman forward, Gartrell made two appearances for the Sea Gulls.

Sydney Holmes
Severna Park – Rochester
A junior forward, Holmes started the final 15 games of the Yellowjackets’ season and played in 18 games overall, scoring once and adding an assist.

Mia Hull
Broadneck – Santa Barbara Community College
A sophomore winger, Hull started once and made six overall appearances for the Vaqueros.

Eva Mowery
Broadneck – Maryland
A junior forward, Mowery played in 18 games for the Terrapins, starting four.

Olivia Nardone
Archbishop Spalding – Maryland, Baltimore County
A freshman defender, Nardone started in all 18 of her appearances for the Retrievers, scoring her first collegiate goal Aug. 24 against Iona.

Ella Raines
Severna Park – St. Mary’s (Maryland)
A fifth-year senior forward, Raines started 12 of her 19 appearances for the Seahawks, bagging four goals and adding three assists.

Kasey Thompson
Severna Park – South Carolina-Beaufort
A sophomore forward, Thompson appeared in 17 games for the Sand Sharks, starting once and scoring twice.

Brooke Velez
Broadneck – St. Mary’s (Maryland)
A sophomore utility player, Velez appeared in five games for the Seahawks.

Sadie Wilkinson
Broadneck – Lipscomb
A junior forward, Wilkinson started the first six games of the season and went on to make 18 overall appearances for the Bisons.

Gabby Wisbeck
Archbishop Spalding – Syracuse
A sophomore midfielder, Wisbeck started all 18 of the Orange’s games, scoring her first collegiate goal on September 7 against Cornell.



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15 Years In A Row

Four Area Teachers Named Semifinalists For 2026 AACPS Teacher Of The Year

By Jaina Peveto

Every year, Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) chooses one Teacher of the Year to celebrate, selected from among worthy nominees across the county. At the beginning of the selection process, each school nominates one educator to be considered for the award.

In December, AACPS announced 18 educators as semifinalists for the award, including four from the Severna Park and Broadneck feeder systems: Joseph Bigsby from Magothy River Middle School, Nik Jones from Belvedere Elementary School, Elizabeth Welsh from Broadneck Elementary School and Meghan Welsh from Broadneck High School.



Joseph Bigsby

Joseph Bigsby

Magothy River Middle School

– Technology and Engineering Education
– Foundations of Computer Science

teacher is to help students learn problem solving. “(I love) seeing those big smiles that come with that perseverance and just reminding them, hey, you did that.”

A resident of Cape St. Claire, Bigsby enjoys forming connections with his students both inside the classroom and out of it. Living in the same area as his students helps him stay in touch with them even after they’re no longer his students. “If they see me at the grocery store, they’re surprised to learn that I leave the school, and that’s kind of fun,” he said, adding later, “They see me as a neighbor and not just as a teacher.”

Since switching programs, Bigsby has started a MRMS robotics team, which is now in its second year. He also runs an afterschool game group called the strategy club, which he created due to a middle school game club helping him make friends when he was the same age as his students.

“Mr. Bigsby consistently goes above and beyond in his dedication to students and to the advancement of STEM education,” said MRMS Principal Lindsay Abruzzo about her nomination of Bigsby.



Nik Jones

Nik Jones

Belvedere Elementary School
– Second Grade

Originally from Virginia, Nik Jones has known since he was a kid that he wanted to be a teacher. Jones at-

tended Notre Dame of Maryland University for his undergraduate degree and George Washington University for his master’s. Now living in Annapolis, he has taught at Belvedere Elementary School for seven years. His first two years were spent teaching third grade, and then he switched to second.

Though he initially thought he’d want to teach kindergarten, Jones enjoys teaching second grade because of how he gets to watch the kids grow throughout the school year. His main goal for his students is for them to become more confident in themselves, both academically and socially. “Those are the foundational skills they need in

order to thrive in school,” Jones said.

Belvedere Principal Sadie Seidl said, “It was very clear to me, even in my first year as Belvedere’s principal last year, that Mr. Jones was the perfect teacher to nominate for this prestigious honor. Families and colleagues alike describe him as transformative, creative and deeply committed to student success.”

In addition to teaching second grade, Jones helps lead SeaPerch, an underwater robotics club for fifth-graders. He also invites Belvedere students of all ages to join his classroom for Friday morning dance parties, a tradition he’s carried over from his time working at a child care center. While the number of students who participate fluctuates each week, there have been weeks where upward of 20 kids joined the fun on Friday mornings.

“I like seeing the kids thrive. I love the relationships I built with the students. I love the trust I have with the kids. I love that they want to learn,” Jones said.



Elizabeth Welsh

Elizabeth Welsh

Broadneck Elementary School
– Music and Choir

Arnold resident and Philadelphia area native Elizabeth Welsh has taught at AACPS schools for 14 years.

Welsh has taught within both the Broadneck and the Severna Park clusters. As the music and choir teacher, Welsh has the opportunity to work
» Continued on page 26

Students Prepare For Cool Schools Plunge For Special Olympics



The Broadneck Brrrrruins proudly raised their flag at the 2025 Cool Schools Plunge.



St. John the Evangelist students prove the Eagles don't mind a little cold water.



BELVEDERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Mrs. Geoghegan's fifth-grade class posed for a photo on pajama day.

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

"What do you think you'll be doing in 20 years, and why?"

I think I am going to play major league softball because I am really good at softball and I love to play! I will also have two kids. The boy's name will be Jackson and the girl's name will be Nancy.

Adrianna C.

In 20 years, I will be playing soccer with my friends because I like to play soccer with them at the park and at school and I am good at soccer because I play a lot at my house.

Alec L.

I think in 20 years, I'm going to be in the NBA because ever since I was a baby, basketball was my favorite sport. I watch basketball a lot and practice with my family. I know it won't be easy, but I will try my best!

Alex R.

In 20 years, I will be a teacher because my mom is a teacher and I want to be just like her. I also want to get a house and raise a family.

Alexa L.

I think in 20 years, I will be a professional photographer taking amazing photos of animals, people or families. I think I will be a photographer because I am good at taking photos, I work really hard, and I practice two times a week.

Alice J.

I don't know what I will be doing in 20 years, but I hope I can become a Marine Raider or have a family because my dad was a Marine and I have always wanted to be one.

Bennett C.

In 20 years, I want to be living in Florida and owning a candy shop.

Brayden M.

In 20 years, I think I will be a professional soccer/football player because I really like soccer and I have played it for most of my life. I also really like Liverpool, which is a soccer team in the Premier League. I would really like to play in Liverpool because they have the best soccer/football.

Brooks K.

In 20 years, I will be a builder and inventor because I have a lot of family members that are builders and inventors and I want to be like them.

Chloe J.

I think I will be hosting gingerbread parties in 20 years, because it is our family holiday tradition to host one every year and every year there are more people! I also think that I will have a job with my best friends, being singers, because we love to sing and one of my friends has a great voice.

Evelyn S.

In 20 years, I'll be playing a sport like football or basketball because I practice every day.

Jack K.

In 20 years, I will be a stay-at-home dad to take care of my own kids and a YouTuber because I like ASMR.

Joe M.

In 20 years, I will be in Florida and a zoologist in Disney World. I get paid \$550 a week and will be very happy owning a dog. I will have my own house, have a pool in my backyard, and volunteer at an animal shelter. I will be able to do this because I will study zoology in college and work hard, because as the saying goes, "If you work hard, you can do anything you set your mind to."

Kaley H.

In 20 years, I will have my own hair and nail shop. I will have a good shop, and it will be called Kamilah's hair shop, and everyone will be welcome in my shop!

Kamilah L.

In 20 years, I will be a baker and I will make chocolate chip cookies because I love to eat.

Kayden B.

In 20 years, I think I will be a songwriter or a singer because I have been singing since I was

seven just practicing for fun, and in third grade I sang for a couple of my friends, and I had a solo for chorus.

Madelyn R.

In 20 years, I hope to be a teacher because I love kids and to

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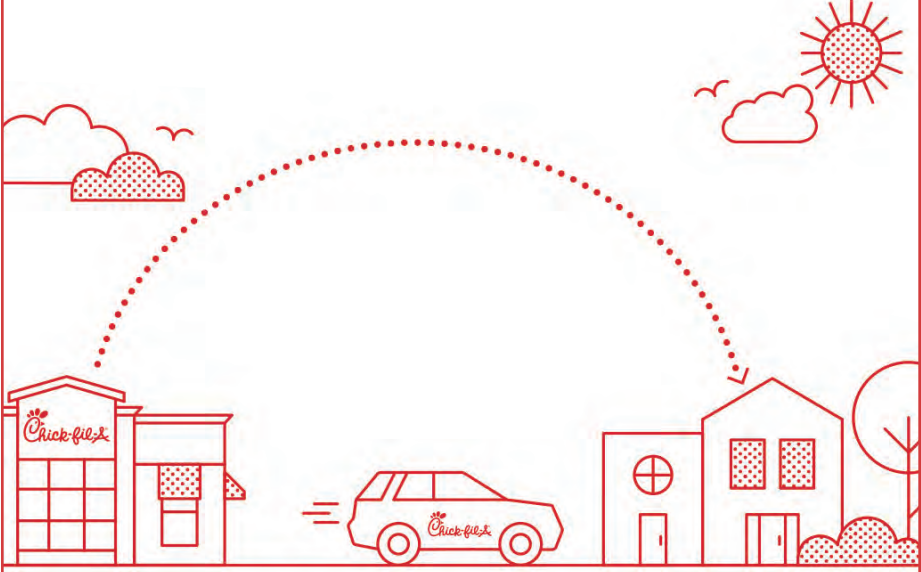
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Educator Of The Month

Olivia Biber Folger McKinsey Elementary School



Folger McKinsey Elementary School kindergarten teacher Olivia Biber is a third-generation educator who doesn't take lightly the opportunity to shape her students' view of school and learning.

By Lauren Burke Meyer

For Olivia Biber, kindergarten is more than a starting point — it's a foundation.

Biber, a kindergarten teacher at Folger McKinsey Elementary School, considers it a privilege to be one of their first experiences in her students' educational journey. Five- and 6-year-olds, she noted, have a deep desire to make sense of the world around them.

"I do not take lightly the opportunity to forever shape how they view school and learning, and for that, I am grateful," Biber said.

A graduate of Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), Biber attended Crofton Elementary School, Crofton Middle School and Arundel High School. For college, she attended St. Mary's College of Maryland and received her Master of Arts in Teaching in 2019. She returned to AACPS shortly after graduation and joined Folger McKinsey Elementary for the 2019-2020 school year. This is her seventh year teaching, all of them in kindergarten.

Biber is a third-generation educator and said her own positive experiences in school inspired her career choice.

"I was very fortunate to have exemplary educators surround me throughout my life," she said. "I knew I wanted to give that same positivity and support to other children someday."

One of her favorite moments each year is watching students learn to read.

"I find an immense amount of joy

in teaching students to 'unlock the code' of reading," Biber said.

To keep students engaged, Biber incorporates gamification and humor into her lessons, creating a classroom environment where learning feels both meaningful and fun.

Relationship-building is central to her teaching philosophy. Biber said she prioritizes getting to know each student and creating a classroom culture rooted in kindness, respect and communication. Students often practice celebrating other people's wins and having discourse when upset.

"I want my students to leave kindergarten being emotionally aware and effective communicators in the world," she said.

Biber also embraces Folger McKinsey's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, known as HOOT, which stands for:

Honor
Other People Matter
Own It
Take Action

The program encourages students to model positive behaviors throughout the school day. Each morning, students recite a HOOT chant and set goals tied to one of the four values. Teachers reward positive behavior with "HOOT Bucks," which students can later exchange for prizes or special experiences.

"My students always look forward to 'Hoot Buck Day,'" Biber said.

Each classroom has different rewards based on what works best for (their) individual classroom community. Biber said the program provides a structured way to reinforce expectations while also allowing for meaningful conversations with students about their choices and growth.

"I find this an opportune time to confer with students regarding their behavior and make a plan, together, on how we will continue on the same trajectory or make adjustments," she said.

At the end of the school day, Biber also presents an "Attitude Award" to a student who demonstrated effort or growth, giving the class an opportunity to celebrate progress together.

As one of her students' first formal teachers, Biber said she understands the lasting impact kindergarten can have on how children view school.

"I hope my students leave kindergarten knowing they have a lifelong supporter, and they are capable of anything they set their mind to," Biber said.

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Superintendent Mark Bedell Recommends \$1.9 Billion FY2027 Operating Budget

“Over the last several years, we have crafted budgets aimed at long-term sustainability while talking openly about the tougher economic times that were on the horizon. Those days are here now.”

— MARK BEDELL, SUPERINTENDENT OF
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In mid-December, Superintendent of Anne Arundel County Public Schools Mark Bedell recommended a Fiscal Year 2027 operating budget to the Board of Education. His proposal dedicates nearly 49% of new funding to employee compensation and benefits.

Bedell’s \$1.9 billion recommendation allocates \$56.6 million to compensation and benefits increases, investing in the employees whom he called “pillars” of the school district’s success. As evidence of that success, Bedell pointed to increases on state assessments, Advanced Placement and SAT tests; a significant increase in the number of five-star schools; decreases in chronic absenteeism and the eradication of a “gatekeeping” mindset that has led to a greatly increased diversity of student enrollment in advanced courses.

“Programs don’t produce results, people do,” Bedell told the board in his budget address. “I want to be clear that this work and our results are not about Mark Bedell. They are about a dedicated team of 12,000 people strong in schools, divisions and offices across our county.”

Subject to negotiations with employee bargaining units, the compensation funding includes a step increase for all eligible employees, and a 2% cost-of-living increase for all employees. These would build on 18% percent increases contained in the last three fiscal years. The district has seen significant decreases in vacancies and increases in retention rates in that time.

Bedell also included \$2.7 million for National Board Certification stipends as the number of such educators continues to increase in the school district and \$510,000 to fund pay increases for temporary support assistants.

Bedell’s recommendation contains 205.3 positions, with more than 96% of those having daily interactions with students. More than 40% of the positions recommended would serve students with disabilities, a population that has risen by 17% over the last five years.

To continue to meet the needs of students with disabilities, Bedell has included \$9.7 million for 82.2 positions. These include 24 positions at comprehensive schools, 13.8 positions to expand specialized instruction and 12 positions in the Birth-5 program.

In his recommendation, Bedell also allocated:

- \$12 million to fund mandates under the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future law, including more than \$6 million in funding directed to 47 community schools.
- \$4.1 million for the New Village Academy public charter school, which will open in August in Annapolis Mall.
- \$3 million for additional student

- laptops to replace Chromebooks at the high school level.
 - \$1.1 million to open the Carver Early Education Center, which will accommodate 120 prekindergarten students.
 - \$900,900 for 10 English Language Development teachers
 - \$722,130 for two school counselors, one school psychologist, one social worker, and one pupil personnel worker.
- “As we take those next steps, however, we must do so fully aware of the fiscal uncertainty that swirls throughout our county, state and nation,” Bedell said. “Over the last several years, we have crafted budgets aimed at long-term sustainability while talking openly about the tougher economic times that were on the horizon. Those days are here now.”
- ### Capital Budget Recommendation
- Bedell’s \$231.7 million FY2027 capital budget recommendation contains nearly \$136 million in construction, study or design funding for five major capital projects:
- Old Mill High School, \$71.4 million (construction)
 - Old Mill Middle School North, \$48.2 million (construction)
 - Ruth Parker Eason School, \$4.6 million (study/design)
 - Riviera Beach Elementary School, \$4 million (study/design)
 - Arundel Middle School, \$7.6 million (study/design)
- Bedell’s capital budget recommendation also includes:
- \$32.9 million for building systems renovations
 - \$6 million for prekindergarten expansion
 - \$6.5 million for a school bus facility and lot

Board Public Hearings And Workshop

The board scheduled two public hearings in early January and plans to hold a public workshop at 6:00pm on Tuesday, January 20, in the board room at the Parham Building in Annapolis. The workshop will be broadcast live on AACPS-TV and on AACPS’ YouTube channel.

Bedell’s full FY2027 operating and capital budget recommendations, as well as a text of his budget address and a Budget in Brief document, can be found at www.aacps.org/fy27budget.

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Students Prepare For Cool Schools Plunge For Special Olympics

» Continued from page 25
zones for a good cause.”

At Broadneck High School, which has a unified sports program, fundraising for and supporting the plunge is a school-wide event. Student government advisor and special education teacher Meghan McLean is in her second year organizing the “Broadneck Brrrrruins” team. Working with the Broadneck Athletic Leadership Council, National Honor Society, unified sports, and Best Buddies to form teams, McLean added that fundraising and the day-of plunge activities make the experience fun and eventful for all students.

Each student is responsible for their own individual funds, and students often get creative to raise additional money. On the last day before winter break, Broadneck’s Student Government Association hosted “Frostyfest,” now in its fourth year. Students donate \$5 to participate in activities such as building gingerbread houses, bingo, mini golf, holiday crafts, or watching a holiday movie. Friendly “best-dressed” individual and team competitions are also hosted.

“Broadneck High School has many students participating in unified sports, and we have a strong inclusion and unified program. This initiative fosters teamwork, leadership and school spirit while supporting an important cause that benefits the Special Olympics,” McLean said. “The plunge provides students and captains an opportunity to connect, engage in meaningful service, and celebrate their contributions together, starting the day with social activities and a hot chocolate bar to build excitement.”

Broadneck High School’s Cool Schools Plunge captains for 2026 are Ella Trout and Dylan Redziniak.

“I would encourage other high school students to get involved with the Special Olympics because it is a welcoming and supportive community,” Redziniak



St. John the Evangelist students warmed up in the Special Olympics tent after their 2025 Cool Schools Plunge.

said. “It brings people together and allows students to have a positive impact while having fun!”

At St. John the Evangelist, the Cool Schools Plunge is something students look forward to even before the weather starts to turn cold.

Will Butler, an eighth-grade student and student government president, has been part of the Special Olympic plunge since fourth grade when he first dipped his toes into a kiddie pool of ice cubes, known as the “Popsicle Plunge,” for pre-kindergarten through fourth grade students. The Cool Schools Plunge coincides with National Catholic Schools Week, and Butler said that all fifth- through eighth-graders will go to the plunge and have an opportunity to brave the icy waters of the Chesapeake.

On December 17, St. John the Evangelist welcomed Adam Hayes, a Special Olympics Maryland athlete, who spoke to the middle school students about Spe-

cial Olympics and the plunge.

“It was really important to hear from a Special Olympics athlete. I think some of our fifth-graders were a little nervous about it,” Butler said. “The assembly was great because everyone got to ask questions and learn that the Cool Schools Plunge is really about much more than just the plunge.”

The Cool Schools initiative empowers students to make a real difference, according to Kylie Carneal, a fifth-grade teacher and student government advisor.

“They take pride in supporting Special Olympics athletes in Maryland and in knowing their efforts directly contribute to opportunities, inclusion and support for those athletes and their families, and they see firsthand how their efforts, both fundraising and plunging, have a tangible impact,” Carneal said. “For student council leaders, it is an opportunity to lead by example, motivate

peers, and grow in confidence and responsibility.”

Carneal added that St. John’s participation in the plunge was an initiative proposed by former student and student government member Charlie Silk, now in high school, who brought forward a thoughtful proposal to the administration along with a strong passion for raising money for Special Olympics. “His advocacy laid the foundation for what has become a meaningful and lasting tradition at our school,” Carneal said.

As of January 9, Crofton High School led all Maryland high schools in fundraising with nearly \$28,000 raised. Special Olympics Maryland has a fundraising goal of \$4.75 million across all plunge groups including the Super Plunge, Cool Schools, police and public safety, corporate and Maryland plunges. To support a plunger, a school, or Special Olympics Maryland, go to www.plungemd.com.

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Board Of Education Adopts 2026-2027 School Year Calendar

In December, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County adopted a 2026-2027 school year calendar that calls for classes to begin for students on Monday, August 24, 2026, and end on Friday, June 11, 2027.

The board made several changes to the calendar recommended by the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Calendar Committee in November. To accommodate the shift of the first day of classes from the committee's recommended date of August 19, 2026, the adopted calendar calls for schools to be open for students from December 21-23, 2026.

The board also shifted the partial-day schedules on the four Unity Days in the calendar from two-hour late arrivals to two-hour early dismissals for students. Those four days are the only partial student days in the calendar.

Other key parts of the calendar include:

- A five-day Thanksgiving break for students.
- A seven-day Easter/spring break for students beginning on Friday, March 26, 2027, and continuing through the week after Easter. That is a shift from the break occurring before Easter as it has in recent years.
- Four non-student days following the last day of each marking period to allow for teachers to complete grades and other staff to engage in professional development.
- Closings on Yom Kippur, Election Day and Eid al-Fitr.
- A non-student day in November for elementary and middle school students only. High schools will operate on normal schedules on this day.
- Closings of high schools on the day of their graduation.
- Three built-in inclement weather days that would be deducted from the end of the school year if not used.

Utilizing flexibility legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Wes Moore earlier this year, the calendar contains 177 instructional days but sufficient seat hours at all levels to comply with state law.

The complete calendar can be found at www.aacps.org/calendar.

To allow families to better plan schedules around the school calendar, the board will consider adoption of the 2027-2028 calendar this spring. The 2028-2029 calendar will be presented to the board next fall.

Faith In The Flakes: Meteorologist Justin Berk Visits SPES



Two days before the first measurable snowfall of the season blanketed Severna Park in a couple inches of snow, meteorologist Justin Berk hosted a “Faith in the Flakes” presentation at Severna Park Elementary School (SPES). Organized by members of the SPES Parent Teacher Organization, the assembly brought to life the school’s science and STEM curriculum for students of all grade levels. Through hands-on demonstrations and real-world connections, students deepened their understanding of weather, climate and the scientific process. They asked questions, made observations, and thought critically like scientists. SPES Principal Emily Abell shared that experiences like this reinforce the school’s commitment to STEM learning by showing students how classroom science applies to real careers and real-world problem solving.

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SPHS Prepares For 2026 Plunge

By Elsa Webster
Student Intern

The Cool Schools Plunge, more well-known throughout Severna Park High School (SPHS) simply as the Polar Bear Plunge, is a staple of the high school. Students from all grades work hard to raise the \$50 needed to secure their spot in the plunge. For students having trouble fundraising, direct donations of \$50 can be made to Special Olympics Maryland. Once that amount is reached, students can attend the event and receive a Polar Bear Plunge sweatshirt.

This year, the Cool Schools Plunge takes place at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis on January 29 for Anne Arundel County schools only from 10:00am to 2:00pm with the plunges occurring at 11:00am, noon and 1:00pm for middle schoolers, high schoolers, and elementary schoolers, respectively.

Donations go directly to Special Olympics Maryland. At SPHS, involvement is not limited to students who plan to take the plunge. Prior to winter break each year, the Student Government Association (SGA) works in tandem with the Key Club to plan the school's participation in the event and hold a spirit week. That week,

students dress in accordance with the themes on each day, and for each student who dresses up, SGA donates \$1 to the Polar Bear Plunge.

In addition to the SGA spirit week donations, SGA raises money with a bake sale. As for the Key Club, the committee creates posters, makes slide decks for advisory classes, and plans meetings to share information on how to participate or otherwise get involved.

Since SPHS' participation in the Cool Schools Plunge is contingent on student organizations, it is the students who run it. Key Club members MaryGrace Blank and Nora Petery are the organizers for the 2026 Plunge committee.

"Ever since I first plunged, which was sophomore year, I really liked it, and I was like, 'This is such a great thing to be able to help out and do,'" Blank said. "And then it's just an amazing feeling. Like, it's cold, yes, but it's really fun."

For SPHS students, the Cool Schools Plunge is an all-day event that begins with the plunge and ends with meeting Special Olympics Maryland athletes. Many students register to support a good cause, and they get to spend all day with their friends while doing so.

"I had an awesome time! It was definitely cold, but

getting to spend a school day doing something different totally made it worth it," senior Koa Bushnell said.

Bushnell attended the Polar Bear Plunge for the first time last year after friends convinced her to sign up. She plans to attend the plunge again this year as a senior. "It will be the last time I can participate while I'm still in high school, but also it was eye-opening to be a part of something bigger than just Severna Park High School that is benefiting the Special Olympics," she said.

As the Cool Schools Plunge draws closer, students are working hard to raise the \$50 they each need to participate in the fundraiser.

"Yes, it's really cold, but it's really not about that," Petery said. "Like, a whole community of people come together. I mean, the plunge is literally for 10 seconds. They blow the horn, you jump in, people are crazy, and they go in and out of the water constantly, but you really only need to put a toe in."

"It's all about the money that you've raised and there's games and stuff, and if you're doing it through the school, it's a whole day off school and you're just getting there and you're hanging out with your friends and in the back of your mind, you're like, 'I did this for a good cause. Like, I feel good about myself.' And you just become really proud of yourself. So, I think everyone should at least do it once in their life."

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Year In Review: Best Films To Hit The Big Screen In 2025



"Marty Supreme"
Photo courtesy of A24



"One Battle After Another"
Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures



"Sinners"
Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

By James Buxton
Film Critic

The year 2025 was excellent for cinema. Whether you're a fan of horror or heartbreak, secrets or superheroes, there was something great for everyone. With the close of the year and the beginning of awards season, here are five films from the last 12 months that rose to the top of the pile.

"Marty Supreme"

This film is arguably the culmination of everything Timothée Chalamet has been working toward for the last five years. Marty Mauser is a little bit Bob Dylan, a little Paul Atreides, and just a dash of Willy Wonka, distilled into a story about ambition, deception and the earth-shattering importance of international table tennis.

"Marty Supreme" is not a walk in the park; it's easily the most stress-inducing trip to the theater you'll have this season, but it's wholly entertaining and

awash with flawless performances. The choice to cast numerous non-professional actors, including rapper Tyler the Creator and "Shark Tank" investor Kevin O'Leary, gives the whole thing a grounded energy and helps elevate what is certain to be Chalamet's first Oscar-winning performance.

"One Battle After Another"

The event movie of the summer received applause from critics and audiences alike, and for good reason. Despite coming off an impressive run of films, Leonardo DiCaprio gives his best performance in years as a burned-out former revolutionary who is determined to rescue his daughter, played to perfection by newcomer and future superstar Chase Infiniti.

It's everything you love about a classic western transplanted onto an uncomfortably modern America. At its core, it's a funny, heartwarming story about fatherhood and duty, but when told against the backdrop of a country in distress and in the constant shadow of a nefari-

ous authoritarian society, it becomes the kind of movie that will remain relevant for decades to come.

"Sinners"

The first big hit of the year remains one of its best. Ryan Coogler's action-horror masterpiece took the world by storm on release, and it set the standard for what a smart, exciting blockbuster could be. Paired with beautiful cinematography and unparalleled musical numbers, it's the kind of movie Hollywood just doesn't make anymore.

While not what you might consider a traditional monster movie, "Sinners" sprinkles classic vampire mythology into a story about liberation in the deep south, an approach that is nothing short of genius. And with career-defining turns from Michael B. Jordan, Jack O'Connell and Hailee Steinfeld, plus one of the best finales of the year, "Sinners" is a great pick even for audiences that don't usually lean toward scary movies.

» Continued on page 34

Dining Out Around The Park

Warm Up This Winter With Local Hot Cocoa

By Meredith Winter

During the cold winter months, whether you've been playing in the snow, walking in the brisk air, or working on outdoor home projects, there is one thing guaranteed to warm you up quickly — in addition to a long, hot shower, of course — and that is hot chocolate.

Enjoyed by all ages, a rich and creamy cocoa is a must-have on especially chilly days. Around Severna Park and Arnold, several cafés and food trailers serve their own takes on the classic beverage. The Voice editorial staff recently sampled several local cocoas — all made with whole milk and topped with whipped cream for uniformity — to discover what is unique about each hometown hot chocolate, and whether one might rise to the top as a favorite.

Always Ice Cream Company

Patrons frequent this popular new spot in the heart of Severna Park for its many enticing ice cream flavors year-round, but did you know that it also offers a treat that isn't frozen? According to Instagram, Always Ice Cream makes homemade hot cocoa using a recipe passed down for over 20 years. Hot water is blended with a generous mix that includes cocoa powder and malt, and the \$4 beverage can be topped with whipped cream, marshmallows or peppermint pieces.

If you're set on ice cream, the scoop shop has a hot chocolate flavor on rotation, featuring a chocolate base swirled with marshmallows.

We agreed that out of the cocoas we sampled, Always Ice Cream's hot chocolate



was on the lighter, not overly sweet side, just right to warm you up and satisfy a dessert craving at the same time.

The Big Bean

The robust menu of coffee, espresso beverages, teas and smoothies at The Big Bean is rounded out by hot chocolate. Made with the café's mocha sauce and steamed milk of your choice, whether skim, whole, almond, soy or coconut, The Big Bean's cocoa can be topped with whipped cream. It comes in four sizes, ranging in price from \$3.25 to \$4.40, and the popular local coffee shop also offers a kiddie size for \$2.65.

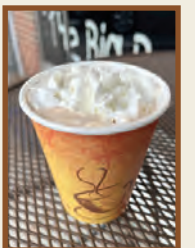
Similar to one of its signature espresso drinks, the Mexican mocha, The Big Bean's Mexican hot chocolate incorporates a warm blend of spices including cinnamon for a layered, unique flavor.

It was unanimous among our taste-testers that The Big Bean's hot chocolate was the richest of all the cocoas we tried, with a distinct dark chocolate taste.

Pura Vida Bowls & Java

This health-conscious food trailer located along Benfield Road offers a variety of acai bowls, breakfast sandwiches, toasts, smoothies, coffee and hot chocolate. Made with a chocolate syrup and steamed milk, its cocoa can be customized with a flavor shot like caramel or peppermint. Milk options include skim, whole, oat and almond.

Pura Vida Bowls & Java's website describes its » Continued on page 34



Winter Wonderland Exhibit Celebrates Elementary Student Artwork



"Icy Igloo"
Mixed Media by Jack Fretz
Pre-kindergartener
Severna Park Elementary



"Hot Chocolate Bear"
Mixed Media By Audi Suppa
First-grader
Severna Park Elementary



"Snowman at Night"
Mixed Media By Lucy Makadia
First-grader
Folger McKinsey Elementary



"Snowflake"
Mixed Media by Claire Dixon
First-grader
Broadneck Elementary

From December 15 through January 8, art pieces created by Anne Arundel County elementary school students were on display at Annapolis Mall. The Winter Wonderland Art Exhibit featured winter-themed artwork created by elementary schoolers from prekindergarten to fifth grade in a variety of media. A reception on December 16 celebrated the visual artists and showcased music performances from Severn Run and Broadneck high schools.



"Winter"
Gelli Print By Trevor Samuel
Second-grader
Belvedere Elementary



"Snowy"
Mixed Media by Ver Carolan
Third-grader, Jones Elementary



"Winterscape"
Mixed Media by Ryder Smith
Third-grader, Oak Hill Elementary



"Blue Sky"
Watercolor and Sharpie By Max Turner
Fourth-grader
Broadneck Elementary



"Winter in a Bottle"
Ink and Watercolor By Caitlyn Brown
Fifth-grader
Shipley's Choice Elementary

Best Films To Hit The Big Screen

» Continued from page 33

"Superman"

DC Studios took its first outright victory over Marvel since 2008 last year with "Superman," a new reimagining of the big blue Boy Scout that, in addition to being a great movie, feels intrinsically linked to the world of today. While it might not reach the iconic status of the original 1978 classic, it's a spectacular return to form for the franchise and a brilliant interpretation of the character.

Despite being another movie about Superman versus Lex Luthor, it's not afraid to take risks, and it fully leans into the wacky side of old comic books in a way that feels almost revolutionary. Maybe it's the influence of all the dark, edgy interpretations of the character we've had recently in shows like "The Boys" and "Invincible," but it feels good to finally have a Superman who wants to be a hero.

"Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery"

Benoit Blanc's latest mystery may be his best, and it delivers in all the ways we've come to expect from our own American Poirot. As with "Knives Out," the real star of the show is the detective's sidekick, this time brought to life by Josh O'Connor. His turn as a troubled young priest is his best performance yet, and his dynamic with Daniel Craig, who takes to his role once again like a duck to water, is a real highlight of a movie packed with highlights.

It's another great mystery full of great characters, able to balance sincerity and humor without having to sacrifice either. The movie will keep you guessing to the end and works just as well on a second viewing as you pick up on all the missed clues. If you're looking for a solid family movie to get people talking, you really can't go wrong with this franchise. Let's hope they make a dozen more.

Other honorable mentions from 2025 include "Weapons," "28 Years Later," "Frankenstein," "Black Bag" and "The Naked Gun."



"Wake Up Dead Man"
Photo courtesy of John Wilson/Netflix

Warm Up With Local Hot Cocoa

» Continued from page 33

hot cocoa as a blend of chocolates that make "a true Dutch hot chocolate." A small is \$3, and a large is \$3.50.

After tasting Pura Vida's hot chocolate, the Voice editorial team noted that it had the most classic or familiar taste, like an elevated version of cocoa made at home, enhanced by the whole milk and whipped cream. If you have a sweet tooth, this may be your favorite. We agreed this was the sweetest of the hot chocolates we tried.

Rise Up Coffee Roasters

Eastern Shore-based Rise Up Coffee has locations in Severna Park and Arnold, and it offers hot chocolate made with mocha sauce, vanilla syrup and your choice of steamed skim, whole, oat, almond or coconut milks. Topped with house-made whipped cream, the rich, frothy beverage comes in three sizes ranging from \$4 to \$4.50. The Severna Park location is currently offering a winter special: caramel hot chocolate.

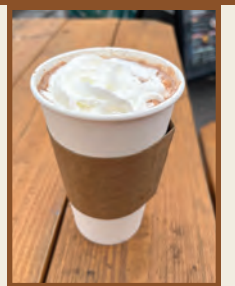
Our tasting notes from Rise Up's cocoa converged on a bold chocolate flavor balanced by the vanilla, making it an appealing selection for both kids and adults.

Two other food trailers, located along the B&A Trail, also offer hot cocoa on their menus. However, **The Coffee Trailer** is closed for the month of January, and **B&A Acai Bowls** is on a winter hiatus until March, so our team was unable to sample their hot chocolate.

Of the four cocoas we enjoyed, all were satisfying in their own way and sure to warm you up on a cold winter's day. But one did rise to the top as a group favorite. We agreed that the rich, flavorful hot chocolate at **The Big Bean** was a palette-pleasing winner.

A Frozen Twist On Hot Cocoa

If the cold doesn't bother you, or if you want to enjoy the chocolatey goodness of cocoa all year long, The Big Bean, Pura Vida Bowls & Java, and Rise Up Coffee Roasters all offer frozen hot chocolates on their drink menus as well.



Children's Theatre Of Annapolis To Present "Holes"

By Jaina Peveto

In February, Children's Theatre of Annapolis (CTA) will perform "Holes," based on the book by Louis Sachar. The play was also written by Sachar.

The show's director, Ally Tierney, is a member of CTA's executive board. She has directed four shows for CTA previously, including its Ruby Griffith Award-winning production of "Tuck Everlasting." She suggested "Holes" as an option for a non-musical partly because it's a story that a lot of kids are familiar with, which is a draw for both actors and for families interested in seeing a performance.

There are 17 actors in the cast, several of whom play more than one role in the show. While not every actor has read the original book, they were all familiar with the story prior to beginning rehearsal, due to either watching the movie or reading the book. Kids also make up the crew other than the stage manager, taking on roles such as lightboard, sound and helping backstage.

"Wherever we can have a student learning either onstage or offstage, we do it," Tierney said.

CTA's production will utilize unique elements such as puppets in the show, and rather than a car, they'll have a bike.

"How I'm really looking at this play, or putting it on, is looking at it as fantasy realism," Tierney said. "I really want it to feel like a book."

The play tells the story of Stanley Yelnats, whose family says that they're

cursed, dating back to his "no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather." Stanley has been sent to a boys' detention center, Camp Green Lake, where the boys are forced to spend every day digging holes in the ground, five feet wide and five feet deep. He realizes the warden is not just having them dig for character improvement, but also because

he's trying to find something. The show features flashbacks in addition to scenes from Stanley's time.

"The kids have been working so hard. I hope that our community comes out and supports them," Tierney said.

Performances will take place at 7:00pm on Fridays, 11:00am and 4:00pm on Saturdays, and 2:00pm on Sundays, February

6-22. Special performances include a Q&A talkback with the cast and crew on February 7, a backstage tour on February 8 and 15, a relaxed performance at 11:00am on February 14, and an American Sign Language-interpreted performance at 4:00pm that same day.

For more information or to buy tickets, go to www.ticketleap.events/events/cta-md.



Photo courtesy of Wendy Hickok Photography

Children's Theatre of Annapolis will perform "Holes," a play adaptation of Louis Sachar's book, from February 6-22.



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Why Tax Season's Arrival Emphasizes The Importance Of A Year-Round Strategy

Jason LaBarge
Financial Advisor
and President
LaBarge Financial



Park on their journey to retirement. As we reflect, we are filled with gratitude to this community for trusting us.

Reflecting and learning lessons is important in financial planning. When it comes to our finances, we're also learning and adjusting client planning strategies. As we look back at last year, one theme stands out: new tax changes could impact your finances now. We want to keep you informed about these changes and help you understand their impact on your finances.

Happy New Year! This time of year allows us at LaBarge Financial to reflect on last year. We grew in 2025 and are thrilled to continue helping guide more individuals in Severna

Federal Tax Changes

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act — a federal tax package passed last summer — brings significant changes that could hit your wallet in the 2025 taxable year. Despite misconceptions, taxes on Social Security haven't gone away, but there is a new tax deduction that gives older people additional tax relief.

Starting in this taxable year, seniors older than 65 with a gross income under \$75,000, or \$150,000 for joint filers, are eligible for a \$6,000 tax deduction, or \$12,000 for joint filers. Those who exceed the limit may still be eligible but for a smaller deduction.

In addition to the senior deduction, the state and local tax (SALT) deduction increased from \$10,000 to \$40,000. This allows you to deduct your state tax expenses from your federal taxes if you itemize deductions. Nearly 20% of Marylanders used the SALT deduction, second only to Washington, D.C., which primarily benefits high-income earners to avoid double taxation.

The act included many other changes,

including extending the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act from 2025, which means federal tax rates remain steady in 2025. Tax brackets had a slight inflation adjustment of just under 3% for income from 2024.

It's important to understand your tax bracket, even if rates didn't change significantly, because your income may have increased. If you're not sure, I encourage you to double-check and consider consulting with a tax professional to guide you through the process.

Maryland Tax Changes

Beyond federal updates, Maryland residents will see notable state-level adjustments. Due to a budget shortfall, a new budget bill increased personal income tax rates and adjusted standard deductions.

Maryland has added two additional tax brackets for state-level taxes, with a 6.25% bracket for taxable income between \$500,001 and \$1 million,
» Continued on page 38

Chamber Update

Liz League
CEO
GSPACC



Please give a warm welcome to our newest members and enjoy reading about all the businesses that make our community the best place to live! Visit their websites and find them in

our directory at www.gspacc.com.

Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County Partners

www.visitannapolis.org

The Annapolis and Anne Arundel County visitor center connects guests to the Chesapeake Bay's rich heritage, maritime experiences, and regional attractions through interpretation, resources and local partnerships. Centrally located in historic downtown Annapolis, the center is an ideal starting point for exploring historic Annapolis, the United States Naval Academy, and over 500 miles of shoreline in Anne Arundel County. Friendly and knowledgeable specialists provide expert travel tips, literature and personalized itineraries to help you explore the area.

Friends of Joan Cole

www.joancole4md.com

Joan Cole is a candidate for delegate in District 31.

Chesapeake Express IV Wellness and Aesthetics

www.chesapeakeexpressiv.com

Chesapeake Express offers customized mobile and in-office IV therapy, weight-loss programs, peptides, wellness services, and aesthetics treatments such as laser hair removal, skin tightening with radiofrequency microneedling (Morpheus8), Botox, CO2 laser, facials, microneedling with SkinPen, Lumecca intense pulsed light and more. Mobile IV therapy can be available in as little as one hour. The business is open every day from 7:00am to 7:00pm and serves all of Anne Arundel County and beyond.

Techfalos

techfalos.com

At Techfalos, the mission is to manifest the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution through the development of AI-driven software. Whether you need a prompt, custom model, or an entire AI software application, the team is ready to build your product exactly the way you want it. Techfalos believes AI amplifies human potential, driving progress and fostering a future where knowledge and innovation flourish for the betterment of all.

Systems By Susie

www.systemsbysusie.com

Systems by Susie is a professional organizing business serving Anne Arundel and Baltimore counties. The business was established in 2014, and owner Susie Salinas now leads a team of organizers who work with clients to declutter, organize and

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Restaurant Association Of Maryland Launches Dine Around Maryland Club

Statewide Dining Membership Offers 50% Off At More Than 150 Restaurants

The Restaurant Association of Maryland (RAM) has launched the Dine Around Maryland Club, an exclusive statewide dining membership created to encourage Marylanders to explore new restaurants while driving new customers and sustained business to participating establishments.

With more than 150 restaurants across 17 counties and Baltimore City, the Dine Around Maryland Club connects residents and visitors to the state's most beloved eateries, from waterfront seafood houses to downtown brunch spots, with exclusive, high-value savings.

For \$195, diners can unlock a full year of 50% off dining at restaurants across the state. This discount applies to parties of up to four people and is limited to one use per each participating restaurant. For a party of four spending an average of \$150 per restaurant visit, the membership pays for itself in just three uses. The membership is valid for the full 2026 calendar year and activates on January 1, 2026.

Memberships can also be purchased as gifts.

How The Club Works

Become a Member — Join and access savings at hundreds of local restaurants.

Download the App — Members can explore restaurants, track visits, and redeem their 50% discount.

Dine Local, Dine Maryland — Each participating restaurant offers



members a one-time 50% discount on food for up to four guests.

Explore Across the State — With restaurants across Maryland participating in the club, members can enjoy everything from family-owned favorites to iconic dining destinations.

Restrictions apply, including standard exclusions such as alcohol, tax, gratuity, merchandise, catering and market-priced items. Discounts cannot be combined with other promotions.

"Maryland's restaurants are the

backbone of our communities, and the Dine Around Maryland Club was created to help them thrive," said Marshall Weston, president and CEO of the Restaurant Association of Maryland. "This program drives new customers through their doors, encourages repeat business and highlights the incredible diversity of dining experiences across our state. It's a win for restaurant owners and a win for diners who want to explore and support local, while also getting a discount."

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Chamber Update

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create systems so their spaces stay organized, and they get their weekends back. Systems By Susie moves clients from feelings of chaos and overwhelm to relief and order — all with kindness, empathy and zero judgement. Proudly partnered with The Container Store, it has been voted “Best Organizers of Annapolis” for years.

The highlights of December were the chamber's two major events, our annual tree lighting celebration and the 15th anniversary of the Taste and Sip Extravaganza.

Traditionally held on the first Friday of December, the tree lighting was rescheduled to December 11 due to inclement weather, and it did not disappoint! Revelers enjoyed entertainment from **The Edge Dance Complex, the Severna Park Elementary School chorus, the Severna Park High School jazz band, and Bach to Rock music school's glee**

club. Santa, the Grinch and the Chick-fil-A Santa Cow delighted the crowd, who sampled treats from the **Toast of Severna Park Toastmasters Club** and **Always Ice Cream Company**.

Many thanks to our generous sponsors for helping to defray the cost of illuminating the 75-foot tree. Our main sponsor was **IPM Pools and Patios**, which repairs and strings the lights each year. Other generous sponsors included **Jimeno and Gray P.A., Severna Park Automotive, Hello Home of Compass Betty Batty Real Estate, JK Organizing, Lighthouse Car Wash, Creative Force Dance Center, Chick-fil-A, CheckMark Power Washing, Re-Elect Senator Dawn Gile, Edward J. Herold CPA, Life of Joy Foundation, Be My Guest Catering, Chip Carr of Monument Sotheby's International Realty and Freeman Bagnall**.

We held our 15th annual Taste and Sip Extravaganza at the **Chartwell Golf and Country Club** to the delight of close

to 400 attendees. Sponsored by **Matt Wyble and Joe Smith of Next Step Realty**, this signature chamber event spotlights the best of our local culinary and beverage scenes.

We enjoyed entertainment from the **Chesapeake Harmony Chorus** and the **Harbor City Music Company**. About 100 silent auction items were donated by our generous businesses, and a percentage of the proceeds supported the **Anne Arundel County Food Bank** and **Anne Arundel Animal Services**.

Looking ahead, 2026 is shaping up to be a great year for the chamber as momentum continues to build around community engagement, business growth, and meaningful connections. This year, we are collaborating with the Maryland Curiosity Lab to bring you a children's business fair so you can meet our youngest entrepreneurs.

For more information about the chamber and events, visit www.gspacc.com.

Dine Around Maryland Club

» Continued from page 37

For full program details and to purchase a membership, visit www.marylandrestaurants.com/dine-around-maryland-club-diners.

Participating Anne Arundel County Restaurants

Annapolis

Buddy's Crabs & Ribs
Carrol's Creek Café
Eastport Kitchen
Jalapenos Restaurant
Latitude 38
Red Hot & Blue
Stan and Joe's Saloon
VIN 909 Winecafe

Arnold

The Point Crab House & Grill

Crofton

Dat Jerk Caribbean Chargrill
Fat Boys Crab House
Frisco Tap House

Edgewater

Old Stein Inn
Yellowfin Steak & Fish House

Galesville

Stan and Joe's Riverside

Gambrills

Fat Boys Crab Shack

North Beach

Chesapeake Market & Deli
Ketch 22

Odenton

Perry's/Golden Flame Lounge Inc.

Pasadena

The Lodge
The Rumor Meal

Severna Park

Cafe Mezzanotte

The Importance Of A Year-Round Strategy

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or \$600,000 and \$1.2 million for joint filers, and 6.5% for taxable income over \$1 million, or \$1.2 million for joint filers.

In Maryland specifically, the maximum standard deduction has increased from \$2,800 to \$3,350, or from \$5,600 to \$6,700 for joint filers.

Consider Tax Planning In 2026

There is a lot to unpack when it comes to taxes, but that's why it's important to involve a professional. If you were caught off guard by these changes last year, consider adjusting your strategy in 2026. Without a year-round strategy, you may unknowingly

push yourself into a higher bracket, miss deductions, or make inefficient retirement withdrawals.

While a tax professional can guide you through the filing process, a financial professional takes a comprehensive look at your financial picture to understand how each aspect impacts your taxes. We're entering 2026 with a fresh mindset and an opportunity to try something new. Consider working with a financial advisor to help understand tax strategies for your overall financial plan.

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and president of LaBarge Financial
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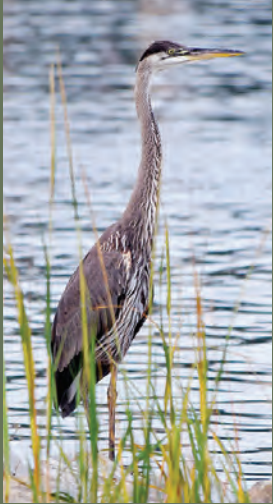
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