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Woods Church
To Perform
"Prince
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FEBRUARY 2026

Hockey Dad Builds "Rink Of Dreams" In Arnold



Photo by Judy Tacyn

Christine Ruff (far left) and Justin Ruff (far right) are happy to share their ice rink with their daughters and neighbors.

By Judy Tacyn

The product of combining an ingenious hockey-fanatic dad with Olympic-sized dreams and an epic snow and ice storm can be found not in Milano Cortina, Italy, but in the quiet but close neighborhood of Ulmstead Cove in Arnold.

Former Severna Park High School hockey player Justin Ruff began dreaming about the upcoming Olympics last fall and contemplated how he could bring the thrill of skating to his three daughters, ages 2 to 6. After watching online how-to videos, experiencing a little trial and error, and receiving a deep freeze in the area, Ruff built a backyard ice rink just before the January 25 snowstorm that provided hours of skating fun for his neighborhood.

Ruff, who works in roofing, said he got the idea from social media last fall and thought it didn't look too difficult.

"He started sending me YouTube videos of ice rinks, but they were all from South Dakota and Canada," said Christine Ruff, Justin's wife. "I told him there was no way he could make that work in Arnold, Maryland. He said, 'Oh, I can make that work!'"

She added that she "knew he was up to something" when ice skates appeared under the Christmas tree by surprise.

The first steps for Ruff were » Continued on page 6

Help Choose The Best Of Severna Park

The choices are yours. Each year, we ask our readers to pick their favorite community amenities and schools, nonprofits, restaurants, shops, health and service providers, and more during the Best of Severna Park contest.

Have you been waiting for the perfect opportunity to brag about your favorites? Well, you don't have to shout from the rooftops. You can simply fill out the Best of Severna Park survey.

The Rules

- Nominees must be located within the Severna Park Voice distribution area zip codes: 21146 (Severna Park), 21012 (Arnold) and 21108 (Millersville).
- Responses should not use nicknames or abbrevia-



tions. If a nomination is unclear, the vote cannot be counted.

- If you are nominating a business that has multiple locations, **please specify the exact location you are nominating.**
- You must fill in nominations for **at least 15 categories** for the ballot to be valid.

The Dates

This year, **votes will only be accepted online.** There will be no printed ballots. For this year's survey, visit www.severnaparkvoice.com/bestofsevernapark.

To participate, fill out the survey by March 24. We will tally all the votes and announce this year's winners in our April 9 edition.

To all the people and places who are eligible for awards, best of luck!

The Rev. Nancy Lincoln Reynolds Retires From Pastoral Ministry

Beloved Associate Pastor Will Continue As Woods Counseling And Care Center Director

By Meredith Winter

Since 2003, the Rev. Nancy Lincoln Reynolds has delivered countless sermons from the pulpit of Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church, many in her role as associate pastor and some in the role of interim pastor.

On Sunday, February 8, Lincoln Reynolds shared her last message with her church family, marking the beginning of her retirement from pastoral ministry. The day before, she was honored for 23 years of faithful service at Woods with a reception at Chartwell Golf & Country Club.

Yet, at the age of 76, Lincoln Reynolds is not retiring from ministry

altogether; she will continue to serve in her role as director of the Woods Counseling and Care Center, doing what she has done for most of her life: practicing psychotherapy.

Originally from Florida, Lincoln Reynolds grew up attending church. Her first memories of having a relationship with God are from early childhood.

"I had heard that the Bible said we are to fear God, and to do whatever the Bible says we're supposed to do. However, I had a relationship with God outside when I would be playing, and I would talk to God all the time, and I wouldn't tell anybody because I was learning in church (that) I was supposed to fear God," she recalled. "One Sunday school lesson explained that fear actually was related to the love of God, and that God was to be seen as

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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.

Ravens Chiropractor Dr. Alan Sokoloff Educates Young Athletes About Sports Safety

By Meredith Winter

Arnold resident Dr. Alan Sokoloff has been a practicing chiropractor for 38 years. He has been the Baltimore Ravens' team chiropractor since 1999 and has been with the University of Maryland since 1997. He also works with the Baltimore Orioles.

"Dr. Sok," as he is widely known, has also devoted much of his life to educating rec league coaches and parents about best practices for the health and safety of student-athletes. He has done coaching clinics throughout the county for over two decades, and for the last eight years, he has supported the Greater Severna Park Athletic Association (GSPAA), or Green Hornets, with education about concussion awareness and hydration.

Working with the Ravens and Terps, he said, "I get all of this knowledge from the best of the best ... So, you know, (I'm) taking what I'm learning at one level (and) bringing it down to the masses. And at the end of the day, for me personally, it's all about preventing injuries with kids."

In past years, Sokoloff did smaller things with Green Hornets coaches. Years ago, his daughter played soccer with the organization when they were Chartwell residents. When he was given the opportunity to do more to educate coaches and parents, he said, "Why not?"

Sokoloff hosts three different workshops with the Green Hornets — for kids, for parents, and for coaches — that all have similar messages delivered in different ways. Most recently, his volunteerism has been focused primarily on educating parents.

The two main topics he addresses are concussion awareness and prevention and preventing heat-related illness and dehydration.

"You can pick up a newspaper and



Arnold resident Alan Sokoloff, or "Dr. Sok" as he is widely known, has worked as chiropractor for the Baltimore Ravens since 1999 and devotes his time to educating Green Hornets coaches, parents and athletes about concussion prevention and hydration.

you can see how many kids have been injured and, God forbid, passed away because no one knew CPR, no one knew the warning signs of heat-related illness. It happens every day. Young, innocent kids, that all they want to do is play," Sokoloff said. "And being able to help at the youngest level, being able to give them a chance to get to the next level — you know, that's what I want as a parent with my kids, and I'm sure that's what parents want with their kids."

He added, "And if we can do a better job of increasing awareness of those core people and parents, there's going to be that many more kids that we save."

Sokoloff noted that working with the Green Hornets benefits both parents and coaches, too. Coaches can make better decisions about whether athletes should or should not play under certain circumstances, and parents are better educated about

"At the end of the day, for me personally, it's all about preventing injuries with kids."

— DR. ALAN SOKOLOFF

what their children should eat or drink prior to a game, as examples.

Sokoloff finds it rewarding to work with the Green Hornets because they are eager to learn and apply the information presented. Likewise, the Green Hornets are grateful for his service.

GSPAA executive board member and vice president of sports Larry Sells shared, "We are so fortunate to have Dr. Sokoloff living in our community. He has always supported the Green Hornets organization by presenting his hydration and concussion awareness talks annually with athletes, coaches and parents. He is a community treasure."

Last fall, Sokoloff was recognized for eight years of supporting the Green Hornets with citations from Senator Dawn Gile and Governor Wes Moore. He shared that he was surprised and thankful, but he would do what he does for the GSPAA without any recognition.

"To tell you the truth, I don't look at it as volunteering," Sokoloff said. "It's more of like it's (my) obligation. It's kind of like retiring. For me, I don't think I'll ever retire because as long as I have a skill set that I can help people with, I'm going to do it. It's kind of like that with the coaching clinics and education."

He shared, "The athletes I treat at the professional level — they made it there because they were child athletes too. And if it is that kid's dream to make it to that level, then why not give them the best chance to get there?"



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Alison Milligan To Speak At Unity Gardens Lecture Event

Unity Gardens is a small nonprofit in Anne Arundel County that awards grants to community groups to plant native trees, shrubs and plants. Its mission is "Cultivating Communities, One Native Garden at a Time." Last year, Unity Gardens awarded grants to 34 diverse community groups across Anne Arundel County for native perennials, shrubs and trees to control stormwater runoff and to create pollinator and rain gardens that foster thriving ecosystems.

In the Severna Park area, Unity Gardens has given grants for native plants to Severna Park Elementary School,

Kinder Farm Park, Round Bay, West Severna Park, Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church, Severna Park United Methodist Church, Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, the Colchester community, the Severna Park Community Center, the Severna Park Library, the Chartwell and Hollyberry garden clubs, Chartwood, Berrywood, Fair Oaks, Crain West and several scout projects.

Unity Gardens is holding a lecture event featuring Round Bay resident Alison Milligan, who will present "Gardening with Native Plants, One Square Yard at a Time" on Saturday, March 14. Mil-

ligan will address practical approaches for home gardens, plant selection and landscaping suggestions for watershed gardening among other topics. The talk will be held from 9:30am to noon at St. Martin's Lutheran Church on Spa Road in Annapolis. Tickets are \$40 and the proceeds from the lecture support the ongoing work of Unity Gardens with grants for community groups.

The spring grant cycle is open until April 1 for community groups in Anne Arundel County to apply for grants up to \$3,000 for native plantings. Visit www.unitygardens.org for more information.

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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Banquet Recognizes Kenya With Love

By Jaina Peveto

The Rev. Noland Henson and Pastor Terry Henson have spent over 20 years serving not only their local community but also a community on the other side of the world. Their nonprofit organization, Kenya With Love (KWL), works with organizations in Kenya to support hundreds of children in orphanages and children's homes, helping provide them with better living conditions and education.

On January 16, the Hensons and 16 other civil and human rights activists were honored during the 38th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Banquet. The ceremony took place at La Fontaine Bleue in Glen Burnie and featured Governor Wes Moore as keynote speaker.

"It's always gratifying to be recognized for the work that you're doing," Terry said. "I'm always mindful that it's very much a group effort, a team effort ... So I was real pleased and excited that some of them could be there as well."

KWL was founded over 20 years ago, during the husband-and-wife-duo's time leading New Life Church in Arnold, which has since closed. Friends of a friend from Kenya gave a presentation at the church about feeding beans and rice to hungry children, leading the Hensons to take interest in helping kids in Kenya. Since the foundation of KWL, the organization's impact has grown to help hundreds of kids across different children's homes and orphanages, prisons and schools.

"We work with 10 different organizations that we help over there," Noland said. "A lot of them do Christian ministry. I'm mostly concerned with humanitarian work."

For some of those organizations, KWL provides the primary funding, while for others, KWL steps in to help with emergency situations.

During the second week of February, a team of more than 30 people from KWL, including Noland, will take an annual trip to Kenya. Many of the organizations KWL works with have communicated things they need assistance with.



The Rev. Noland Henson and his wife, Pastor Terry Henson, cofounded Kenya With Love. Their work was recognized with the Drum Major Award at this year's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Banquet.

The Happy Life Children's Home Juja campus will receive new tracksuits and fleece sweaters for 120 orphans. In previous years, the children's home has requested they bring items such as shoes.

One place that Noland is especially involved in is the Moses & Mary's Girls Home in Elburgon, Kenya. KWL supports the girls who live in the home all the way through college, university or certificate school.

Twenty-nine girls currently live at the home.

"We're actually out here changing lives," Noland said. "We're sending girls to university. Full ride."

During KWL's annual trips, girls from the Moses & Mary's Girls Home travel to meet Noland and the KWL team in Nairobi, Kenya's capital. Once they graduate from high school, they're given a phone, enabling them to keep in touch with Noland throughout the year.

"We talk by Facebook Messenger as much as they want, as many times as they want," Noland said. "I try my best to make them feel important. I try my best to make them feel like they have a real father."

KWL receives support and funding from people in the Severna Park and Arnold area. Once or twice a month, the organization sends a newsletter out to keep donors informed.

"If there's a need for something simple like blankets or mosquito nets, we can let the donors or our supporters know. They provide funding, and we're able to purchase those things," Terry said. "So what I really like about (KWL) is the impact, that we're really quickly able to meet a need."

The Hensons are busy with KWL all year. Though Terry isn't traveling to Kenya with the group, she plays a large role in the organization from home.

"Every day we're doing something toward the effort," Terry said. "I'm very involved on the back end of it."

In addition to their work in Kenya, the Hensons have also spent years serving their local community. They've done food giveaways and helped food pantries, done back-to-school giveaways for kids, provided toys for children and families during the holidays, and helped with summer camps for kids and Bible studies in the community with their church.

"We've been doing community outreach for decades in Anne Arundel County and in the state of Maryland as well. It's what we do," Terry said.

During the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Banquet, the Hensons were presented with the Drum Major Award, which was awarded to four other honorees as well. The award is named after a speech on the "Drum Major Instinct" that King gave in February 1968.

"I believe that to some extent, the work that you do chooses you," Terry said. "You don't always choose the work. Sometimes you are just called to certain things. ... And that's how we feel about this outreach and civic engagement."

Toast Of Severna Park Toastmasters Aspires To Be A Club "Where Leaders Are Made"

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Oscar Zalamia never thought a pizza flyer would change his life. But that is exactly what happened in 1996 when he found a notice for a Toastmasters meeting.

"I saw a poster for a free pizza if you come to a meeting," he recalled. "I thought, 'How can I turn that down?'"

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit that teaches public speaking and leadership skills, which fosters self-confidence and personal growth for members. The Toast of Severna Park Toastmasters club meets twice every month. Any given meeting might have 10 people or a few dozen, including Zalamia, who had no plans to quit after getting his pizza reward.

"I was an engineer. I thought my skills were good enough, but I wanted to become a manager, which means I had to become a better communicator," he said. "The people advancing were good speakers, I realized."

Toastmasters meetings include

prepared speeches and Table Topics, which are brief impromptu speeches designed to help speakers organize their thoughts quickly. Speakers are evaluated and receive constructive feedback with a dash of encouragement.

"We are still focused on content, delivery, language or word usage, and time," Zalamia said.

Meetings are interactive, so everyone plays a role. A "Toastmaster of the day" introduces speakers. Another member checks grammar and counts filler words like ah and um. The "wordmaster" provides a word of the day to be used in speeches, and a timer manages the clock.

During a January meeting, Freeman Bagnall served as a speech evaluator and presented a speech of his own. After more than 15 years with the club, he still consid-

ers it a valuable resource.

"I think it has helped me become a clearer speaker," he said. "I learned how to use pauses. It's OK to take a pause, take a break. If I develop my ideas, hopefully they are clear to me and to the audience."

He has found critiques to be both gentle and helpful. "What you learn is, sometimes during evaluation, you have to be a better listener to be a better speaker," Bagnall said. "It's a circle."

The club's president, Geraldine Cvetic, lauded the Toastmasters for providing a welcoming space where members can practice and be evaluated.

"Leadership skills are instilled through various capacities including meeting roles and officer roles at many levels," Cvetic said. "I highly value the sense of belonging to a group

that values continuous learning and service. And Toastmasters' platform of self-paced learning ensures all the tools needed to be successful."

Members can also participate in local, regional and national competitions if they want to keep sharpening their skills.

With an ambitious pace, Zalamia rose through the ranks and volunteered for officer roles and leadership positions. Eventually, he ran for district governor, a position that oversees several divisions of clubs. Each rung on the ladder took time and energy, but Zalamia considers it all worthwhile.

"I credit the Toastmasters for me being able to connect with people and being able to lead a team," Zalamia said. "You have to put in the work. There is a lot of sacrifice, but the reward is limitless."

Toast of Severna Park Toastmasters meets on the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 7:00pm in the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce office at 1 Holly Avenue. Anyone who may want to join the club is welcome to attend as a guest for free. A hybrid option is also available. For more information about the club, visit www.severnapark.toastmastersclubs.org.



Hockey Dad Builds “Rink Of Dreams” In Arnold



Skaters of all skill levels took to the Ruff family rink in Arnold following the January snowstorm.

» Continued from page 1

framing the rink with 2-by-6-inch lumber, using building insulation to help level the ground, and utilizing roofing materials to make it waterproof. The construction took only a day, but the filling of water and waiting for ice to form took much longer.

Ruff said he tried to fill the rink between Christmas and New Year's but didn't get the cold weather that was needed. With extreme cold predicted for late January, the timing was finally perfect.

"The water needs to go in layers in order for it to solidly freeze," he explained, also noting that the standing water really showed how unlevel his backyard is. He would add an inch or so of water to his rink and wait for it to freeze. He repeated this process until the rink was 4 to 6 inches thick.

Ruff also created a "Zamboni" out of PVC pipe. After a day of skating, he uses his contraption to flood the rink at night, ensuring a smooth new surface for the kids the next day.

"The maintenance is a little more than I expected!" he joked, but seeing his kids skating makes all the effort worth the time. The Ruffs also added seating and a firepit for the parents.

Lauren Kilcoyne, a neighbor and parent of four kids who have enjoyed the ice, including twin 7-year-old boys, said her children love the rink. "They are new to ice skating, but they are having fun and getting right back up after they fall," Kilcoyne said. "We live in an incredible neighborhood, and we really appreciate all the fun (the Ruffs) bring to our kids."

Ten-year-old Louise Britton said she loves skating all day and couldn't be happier having a week off from school. "All of my friends are here!" she exclaimed. "The last time I skated, it was on a lake. My skates were too big, and it didn't go very well. But this time, it's a lot of fun."

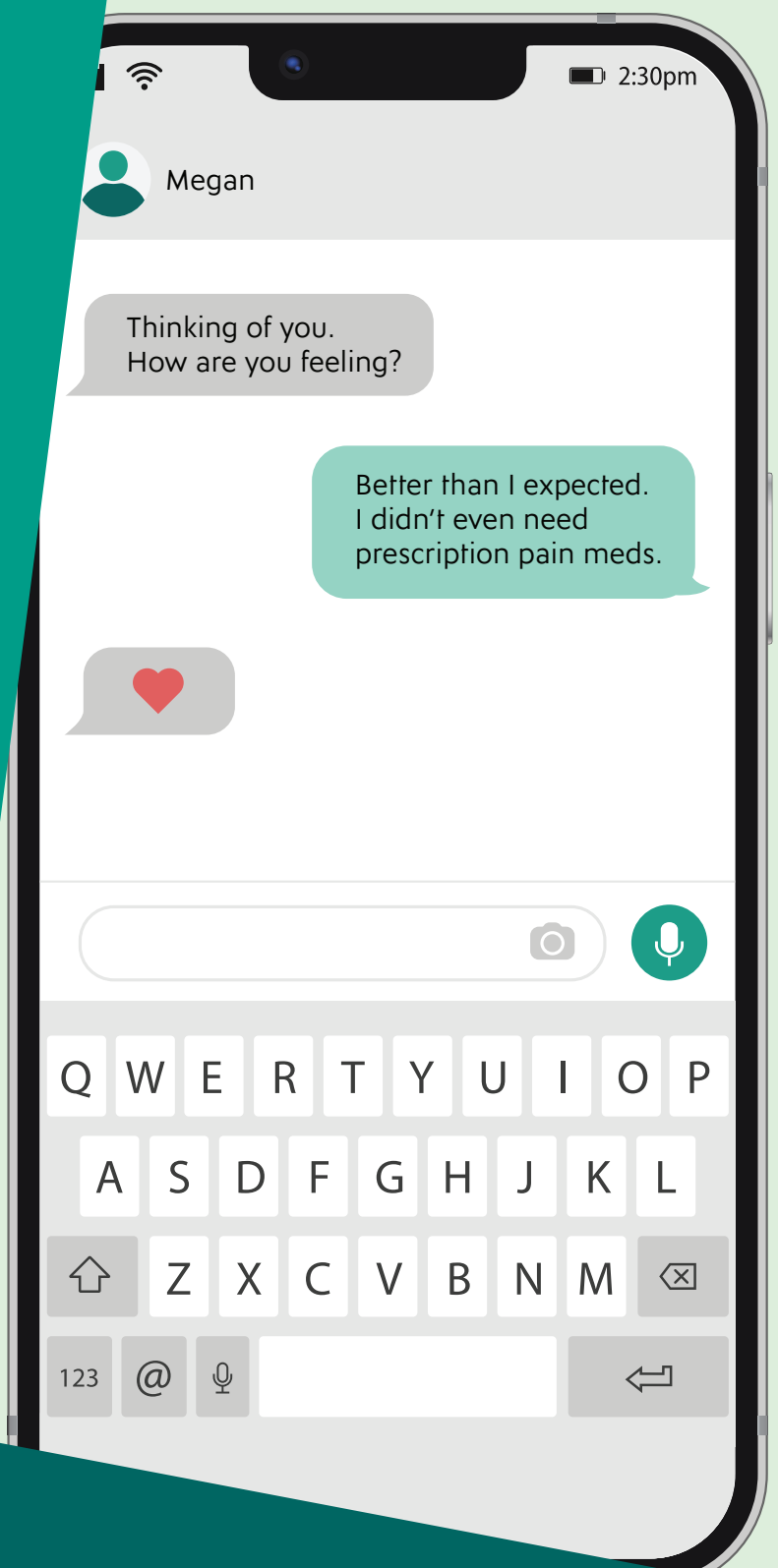
Ruff is already planning improvements to his 18-by-30-foot ice rink for next winter, including adding hockey boards around the outside, painting lines and adding lights. For now, however, he's excited to watch Team USA in the Olympics with his daughters.

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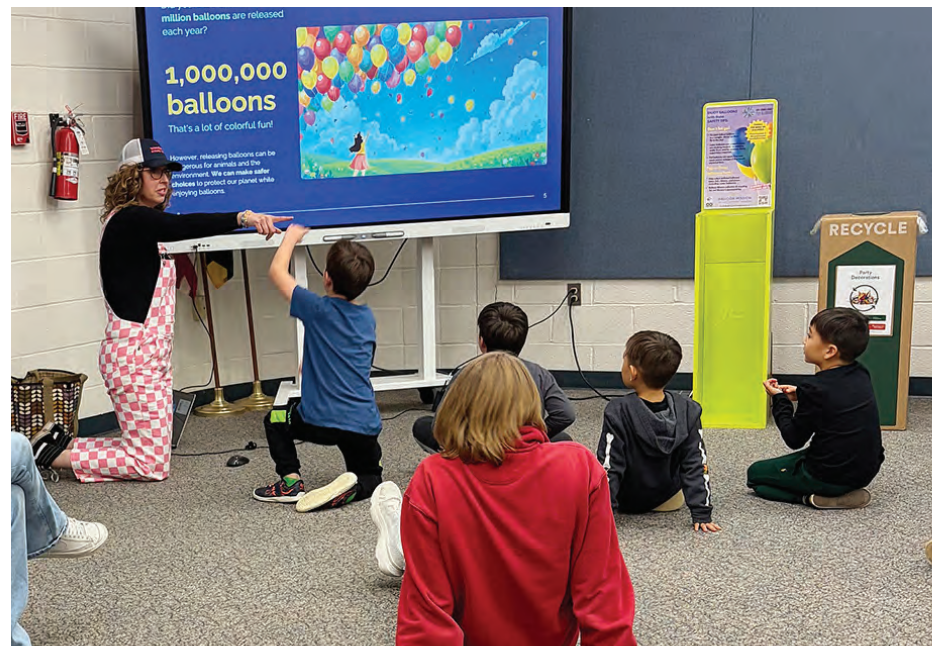


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Severna Park Library Partners With Business Owner For Balloon Recycling Initiative



Above: Wonderwall Event Co. founder Jen Whitlock visited the library in December to highlight the Balloon Mission: Planet Possible program and to kick off a year-round collection effort. **Right:** Ally Jones deposited balloons into the Severna Park Library's "pop and drop" donation box.

A new program at the Severna Park Library is ballooning in interest. Since Wonderwall Event Co. founder Jen Whitlock visited the library in December to highlight the Balloon Mission: Planet Possible program, families have shown an increased interest in sustainability.

As Whitlock explained, Balloon Mission is more than a craft program; it marks a first-of-its-kind community partnership in Severna Park and in all of Maryland. The library is hosting a permanent "pop and drop" recycling box inside its location, allowing families and event hosts to responsibly dispose of used balloons rather than sending them to the landfill.

"As a balloon artist, I felt a responsibility to do better once I understood the environmental impact," Whitlock said. "Partnering with the Severna Park Library allowed me to share what I've learned and show that celebrations and sustainability don't have to be at odds. What's been most encouraging is seeing the community respond — over 230 balloons were collected through the Balloon Mission pop and drop box in just 25 days. It shows that when people are given an easy way to do the right thing, they want to participate."

The Severna Park Library is the only Balloon Mission partner within at least 100 miles of Anne Arundel County. Based in Annapolis, Wonderwall Event Co. sends all collected and popped balloons to TerraCycle, which manually separates latex and foil balloons before shredding the materials. After being consolidated with similar materials, the foil and latex pieces are shredded and reduced into small flakes so they can make new products including indus-



trial drainage pieces, storage boxes and playground flooring.

With Valentine's Day approaching, Whitlock hopes for more donations. She has full support from the library, whose staff appreciates the hands-on, family-focused program.

"We were delighted to have Jen's balloon program at the Severna Park Library!" said librarian Sarah Joseph, who works at the local branch on McKinsey Road. "Her engaging presentation taught our community how to protect the environment from balloon waste while shining a spotlight on the inspiring work of Balloon Mission."

This new effort is an encouraging reminder that progress can start with small actions.

"The program is part education, part environmental action, and part creativity, showing families that eco-conscious choices don't have to come at the expense of fun or celebration," Whitlock said.



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Ooh Baby It's Cold Outside: Slipping And Falling On Ice

David V. Diggs, Esq. and
Lisa Bogan-Reohr, Esq.



The National Weather Service reported that the January 25 storm brought about 8.5 inches of snow and ice to Pasadena and 11.1 inches to Glen Burnie. What has been remarkable is the cold weather that has followed, keeping that snow and ice around for longer than usual and turning some of it into what feels like cement when one is trying to shovel a path. Usually, Maryland returns to warmer weather, and the snow melts in a few days. Currently, however, we are skating over the layer of ice covering the snow!

If you are injured by slipping and falling on snow or ice, you must prove that the owner was under a duty to protect you from injury, that that duty was breached, that you suffered an injury, and that your injury was the direct and proximate result of the owner's breach of that duty.

Property owners, both homeowners and businesses, have a duty to exercise ordinary care to maintain their property in a reasonably safe condition for visitors, customers and invitees, although the level of duty varies depending on your status on the property. A landlord, for example, has a duty to provide his or her tenants with a reasonably safe means of passage to and from their homes.

This duty includes shoveling snow and spreading salt to melt ice in areas where people might legally be walking on the property. One must show that the property owner had actual or constructive knowledge of the dangerous condition and sufficient time to remove it or warn invitees about it.

However, if you observe the dangerous condition yourself (for example, the snow or ice on a surface), but

you choose to walk on the surface anyway, you may not recover if you fall. This is because of the doctrine of "assumption of risk," which is an affirmative defense. Essentially, if you voluntarily and intentionally walk on a surface that you know and understand has a risk of danger, you have assumed the risk of falling.

Falling on "black ice" is an interesting area of developing law. A recent but unreported Maryland case from 2021, *Avissar v. Westlake Terrace Condo.*, discussed a condominium owner's liability to a tenant who slipped on black ice on a sidewalk outside the condominium. The case turned on whether the owner had constructive notice of the dangerous condition.

The court determined that the plaintiff had presented evidence that the area had a particular grading, which created a drainage pattern. Along with the common knowledge that snow was likely to melt during the day and freeze in the evening, the appeals court held that there was a triable dispute of fact regarding the owner's notice of the dangerous condition and sent the case back to the trial court.

In a more recent and unreported Maryland case from 2025, *Flood v. FSK Land Corp.*, it was held that the plaintiff had not presented any evidence showing that the owner of the land had actual or constructive notice of the black ice that caused her fall.

If you or a loved one experience a personal injury, you will have questions. You should consult with an attorney who is familiar with this area of the law and who will assist you in making informed decisions. David Diggs is an experienced personal injury lawyer, recognized as a leader in the area. If you need further information regarding this subject, contact the Law Office of David V. Diggs LLC, located at 8684 Veterans Highway, Suite 302, in Millersville. Call 410-244-1189, visit www.diggsllaw.com, or email david@diggsllaw.com.

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The Rev. Nancy Lincoln Reynolds Retires From Pastoral Ministry

» Continued from page 1

the loving being that cared for all of God's children, and I was so excited I ran home (and) told God, 'We can be friends now out in the open!'"

Lincoln Reynolds continued to learn about the God of the Bible throughout youth group and at retreats. She ultimately received a scholarship offer to attend Princeton Theological Seminary. Family members' reactions were less than encouraging.

"My mother's response was, 'Thank God, if you don't find someone there, you never will.' My brother's response was, 'You can't do that, you're a girl.' But I went, and I was subsequently ordained," Lincoln Reynolds shared.

During seminary, she was assigned to a psychiatric facility to complete her unit of clinical pastoral education. Lincoln Reynolds was fascinated by peoples' personalities and fell in love with the work there, which led to a five-year residency in psychotherapy.

The mother of two served a couple of churches as interim pastor, but her primary work followed her passion for psychotherapy, which is what brought her to Woods Church.

The late Rev. Terry Schoener was pastor at the time and had started a pastoral counseling center at the church in 1993. When an associate pastor left Woods, Schoener asked Lincoln Reynolds if she would fill the gap until a replacement was hired. She agreed on the condition that she could continue practicing therapy. It ended up being a long-term commitment; Lincoln Reynolds



continued to serve as both associate pastor and director of the counseling and care center until this month.

Reflecting on 23 years of ministry, she found it difficult to highlight just a few significant memories and life lessons.

"I think for me, the most important thing is to go to the people and meet them where they are, rather than expecting them to come to us just because we're a big church on the hill," Lincoln Reynolds said, praising the congregation for being faithfully involved in the community around them. "That's probably one of the things that the members of Woods are best at, is going to meet people where they are, our mission ministry, or youth ministry, all of those."

While many pastors enjoy officiating weddings, Lincoln Reynolds shared she has felt privileged to officiate funerals.

"I have been saying, if I weren't a therapist, I couldn't do this work. But I think with the funerals, it's an opportunity to sit down with families who are grieving, and if there are things they're worried

about or concerned about, it's not a difficult thing for me to process with them," she explained. "What a blessing to be with somebody in his or her last days, and then to work with the family and walk through that journey with them."

Friends with her for over two decades, the Lerarios are one of the many families blessed by Lincoln Reynolds' care through the loss of a loved one. Tom Lerario served on Woods' staff with her for 17 years and his wife, Karen, moderates the church's board of deacons.

"Thank you so much, Lord, for the gift of Nancy," Karen said, recalling that Lincoln Reynolds has been there for "beginnings and endings" for her family. She not only baptized their granddaughter but also traveled to Washington Hospital Center in D.C. in 2008 to do a service for the dying for Karen's mother.

"We, the deacons, will carry on her legacy of pastoral care," Karen stated.

Even though Lincoln Reynolds has asked him to wear themed outfits for stewardship campaigns over the years,

On Saturday, February 7, members of the greater Woods Church family gathered for a retirement party to honor Lincoln Reynolds (front left) for her 23 years of pastoral ministry.

Tom has great affection for her as well.

"You think of the (phrase) in the Bible, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' She's to me — and to Karen, and to most of the people in this church — the epitome of that," Tom said. "She is probably one of the most kind and giving people. She gives of her time, she gives of her counsel, gives of her love to anybody."

Lincoln Reynolds not only had an impact on thousands of congregants over the decades, but coworkers at Woods as well. Maureen Adams, who serves as the coordinator for pastoral care, has co-labored with Lincoln Reynolds for 11 years.

"With boundless energy and a servant's heart, she showed us what it means to love God, love people, and care for all creation," Adams said of her colleague in ministry.

Lincoln Reynolds is grateful for the many opportunities she has had to put her faith into action throughout her time at Woods — from serving on the county's clergy advisory committee, to environmental work, to helping launch Parenting for a Different World — and for how God has worked in her life.

"I think the biggest way my faith has grown is ... I've always known it, but it's really an action to trust God's guidance and God's intervention in things," she reflected.

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Police Department Reports Major Reduction In Violent Crime For 2025

In mid-January, the Anne Arundel County Police Department announced significant progress in reducing violent crime across the county throughout the 2025 calendar year.

This achievement is a testament to the department's multifaceted strategy, which includes proactive patrol work; the implementation of data-driven strategies to rapidly identify crime patterns and coordinate resources; and the responsible use of technology. Key to this success was the utilization of drones and automated license plate reader technology with assistance from the agency's centralized information and technology hub, the Real Time Information Center — along with thorough follow-up investigations by detectives and crime analysts and robust community partnerships.

Significant year-over-year comparison findings include substantial reductions across several crime categories:

- 47% reduction in citizen robberies (102 vs. 192)
- 46% reduction in commercial robberies (33 vs. 61)
- 30% reduction in stolen autos (1,220 vs. 1,751)
- 27% reduction in carjackings (16 vs. 22)
- 26% reduction in non-contact shootings (76 vs. 103)
- 19% reduction in contact shootings (13 vs. 16)
- 13% reduction in sex offenses/rapes (139 vs. 159)

"The modern policing strategies implemented by Chief (Amal) Awad and the Anne Arundel County Police Department are making our communities safer," said County Executive Steuart Pittman. "Their partnerships with other county agencies have created an integrated approach to address the social determinants of violence like poverty, hate and mental health. This work is the key to long-term public safety."

The department's investigations also included 11 murders in 2025, one more than the previous year's total, which was the lowest number of murders recorded in more than a decade. Throughout the year, the agency further seized 275 guns for evidentiary purposes.

"I am extremely proud of our men and women who remain steadfast in ensuring the safety of Anne Arundel County," Awad said. "Our department continues to be innovative and forward-thinking in our approach to reducing crime while relying upon vital, long-standing community partnerships. Utilizing advanced technology has also contributed vastly to our increased interagency coordination and case solvability. These collaborative efforts have translated to a safer community for all who choose Anne Arundel County as their home, workplace or favorite place to visit."

This preliminary data is based on police reporting and is subject to change based on additional reporting and investigation, as well as categorization of police reports for Uniform Crime Reporting.

MTR's "Chrissy" Honored

Maryland Therapeutic Riding (MTR) got special news in January. Kiss Me Blue, affectionately known as "Chrissy," was named the 2025 United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Heart Horse Award winner, a national honor recognizing horses whose extraordinary service and partnership profoundly impact the lives of others.

Based in Crownsville, MTR serves residents all over the county. The nonprofit partners with horses to support the physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being of children and adults with diverse challenges.

The Heart Horse Award was presented on January 15 during the USEF Pegasus Awards Dinner at the USEF annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky. Members of the MTR leadership team were in attendance, with the award accepted on behalf of the organization by Executive Director Kelly Rodgers and Mental Health Program Manager Katie Streett.

The USEF Heart Horse Award celebrates equine partners who exemplify kindness, patience and unwavering dedication through their work in equestrian sport and community outreach. These horses represent the very heart of equestrian service, making meaningful and lasting differences far beyond the arena.

Chrissy was selected for her exceptional commitment to serving

individuals with physical, emotional, cognitive and mental health challenges through Maryland Therapeutic Riding's diverse equine-assisted programs.

MTR is a member of the USEF community outreach program, a national initiative that supports organizations using equestrian activities to positively impact their communities. Through this program, USEF uplifts and recognizes organizations like MTR that expand access to the healing power of horses for individuals and families who may not otherwise have access.

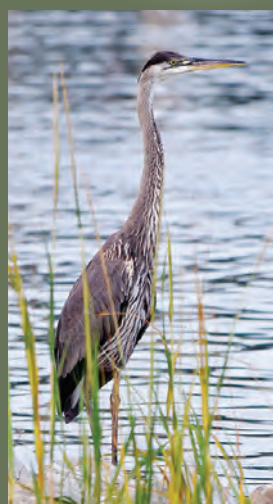
For the past 17 years, Chrissy has been a cornerstone of Maryland Therapeutic Riding's programs, quietly and consistently transforming lives. Known for her calm presence, steady movement, and intuitive ability to connect with participants, Chrissy has supported thousands of moments of growth, confidence and healing — from first rides and physical breakthroughs to powerful emotional connections formed during equine-assisted psychotherapy sessions.

"Chrissy represents everything we value in our equine partners," Rodgers said. "She meets each participant exactly where they are, offering patience, trust and unconditional support. This national recognition honors not only Chrissy but all of our horses who make this profound work possible every day."



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Why Your BGE Bill Keeps Rising — And How Annapolis Created Maryland's Energy Crisis

Brian Chisholm
Delegate
District 31



And it certainly isn't accidental.
It's policy.

For years, politicians in Annapolis have quietly layered mandates, fees, carbon programs, and market distortions onto Maryland's energy system. Every one of those decisions now shows up on your BGE bill.

Let's be honest about what Marylanders are paying for.

First, there's **supply and transmission** — the cost of generating electricity and moving it across the PJM regional grid. Because state policies forced reliable power plants to close and shrink in-state generation, Maryland now imports more expensive electricity from outside the state. Less supply means higher prices. That's basic economics.

Next comes **delivery** — the poles, wires, substations, transformers and grid maintenance. Delivery rates have nearly doubled over the past decade as infrastructure upgrades and regulatory compliance costs are passed directly to ratepayers.

Then there's **EmPOWER Maryland** — a state-mandated surcharge buried in every bill. Whether you use the programs or not, you pay. It functions as a hidden energy tax. Even more concerning, extreme environmental activists now want to use this program to target and eliminate affordable, reliable natural gas — the backbone of Maryland's electric reliability.

Add to that **RGGI — the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative**. Maryland participates in this multistate carbon credit scheme that forces power plants to buy emissions allowances. Those costs are not absorbed by utilities. They are passed directly to consumers. RGGI is a carbon tax by another name, costing Maryland families and businesses **between \$300 and \$400 million every year**.

And it gets worse.

Last year, the governor diverted more than **\$300 million from the RGGI fund** to help balance the state budget, and he plans to do it again. That means Annapolis is now using energy bills as a backdoor revenue stream to prop up state spending.

Once again, Maryland families are being asked to carry the burden.

Meanwhile, fixed monthly charges keep climbing. Even if you reduce usage,

Maryland families are opening their utility bills every month and asking the same question:

Why is this getting so expensive?

The answer isn't the weather.

It isn't increased usage.

the fees keep coming. A growing share of your bill has nothing to do with energy consumption and everything to do with political decisions.

The results are undeniable.

Since 2010, **gas delivery rates have more than tripled**.

Electric delivery rates have nearly doubled.

Wholesale supply prices are rising as in-state generation disappears.

And that brings us to the policy disaster at the center of this crisis.

The **Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022** imposed aggressive renewable mandates, electrification requirements, and unrealistic emissions targets. The consequences were predictable: forced retirement of reliable baseload power, reduced supply, greater dependence on imports, rising wholesale prices, and growing reliability risks.

Then, in 2024, lawmakers passed **Senate Bill 1**, eliminating retail energy choice and consolidating control back into monopoly utility structures. Less competition means fewer options, less innovation, weaker price pressure, and higher costs for consumers.

On top of that, Maryland has shut down major power plants since 2018, including Crane, Dickerson, Chalk Point, Luke Mill, Morgantown coal units, and Warrior Run. Thousands of megawatts of reliable power have been wiped off the grid. Some remaining plants were only spared temporarily at enormous cost to ratepayers.

This is not a market failure.

It is a policy failure.

Maryland chose to tax electricity.

Mandate expensive compliance schemes.

Eliminate consumer choice.

Force generation offline.

Expand infrastructure costs without protecting ratepayers.

Families aren't just paying for electricity anymore. They're paying for political ideology, regulatory bureaucracy, carbon programs and poor long-term planning.

Energy affordability is now a cost-of-living crisis.

That's why this legislative session, I am introducing bills to **roll back the Climate Solutions Now Act, remove Maryland from RGGI, repeal Senate Bill 1 to restore energy choice and pause or eliminate the EmPOWER surcharge**.

These are not radical proposals. They are common-sense corrections.

We cannot regulate our way to affordable power.

We cannot mandate our way to reliability.

And we cannot keep using Maryland families as the funding source for failed energy experiments.

It's time to put affordability first.

It's time to put reliability first.

And it's time to put Marylanders first.

2026 Legislative Session Update

LaToya Nkongolo
Delegate
District 31



this year includes several changes in House leadership that will influence the important work ahead.

I am grateful to share that I have been appointed deputy minority whip of the Maryland House of Delegates Judiciary Committee. I sincerely thank House leadership for their confidence in me and for recognizing my thoughtful, level-headed leadership, as well as the experience I have gained serving in leadership roles since the age of 28. I do not take this responsibility lightly and remain committed to leading with integrity, collaboration and purpose, always prioritizing the safety and well-being of Maryland's children, seniors and families.

Maryland Legislative Scholarships

As part of my ongoing commitment to expanding educational opportunities, I am pleased to provide updates on the Delegate Nkongolo Scholarship and other Maryland legislative scholarships.

Each year, members of the Maryland General Assembly are authorized to award scholarships to eligible students pursuing higher education or career and technical training. These scholarships reduce financial barriers for students and families while investing in Maryland's future workforce.

The Delegate Nkongolo Scholarship is

The 2026 Maryland legislative session officially began on January 14, and I am honored to continue representing the residents of District 31 in Annapolis. The session will conclude on April 13, and

available to eligible District 31 students, with an application deadline of April 15.

To assist students and families in navigating the application process, District 31B Delegate Stuart Schmidt and your District 31 delegates will host a legislative scholarship information session on Monday, February 23, at 7:00pm. This session will provide an overview of all available Maryland legislative scholarship opportunities, eligibility requirements, and application tips.

Participants are encouraged to **use the QR code provided** to:

- Register for the information session
- Submit questions in advance



Submitting questions ahead of time will help ensure the session is informative and responsive to common concerns.

Join Your District 31 Representatives For A Meet And Greet

I also invite District 31 residents to join us for an upcoming meet and greet with your elected representatives on March 2. Details are below. This event is free and open to all District 31 residents, and it offers an opportunity to connect, ask questions, and share what matters most to you. Guests can also visit the gallery and observe the floor session beginning at 8:00pm.

To RSVP or request assistance, please contact my office at 410-841-3510 or email latoya.nkongolo@house.state.md.us. My chief of staff, Julie Butler, and I are happy to assist you.

I look forward to continuing my work in Annapolis while staying closely connected to our community and supporting the next generation of leaders.

District 31 Night And Student Art Showcase

A special student-focused event is coming to the Lowe House office building in Annapolis on March 2 from 6:00pm-7:30pm. District 31 night is an event designed to bring delegates and senators together with constituents in Annapolis while highlighting the exceptional culinary, artistic, and musical talent within the community.

The evening will include light food and soft drinks, student artwork displays, a slideshow featuring photos from around the district, a performance by a school choir from District 31, and brief remarks from elected officials.

As part of District 31 night, a student art showcase will highlight the creativity and talent of students.

Parents and guardians are invited to submit one piece of artwork per student by going to bit.ly/d31artshowcase.

Please review the submission guidelines carefully before uploading.

Submission Guidelines

- Artwork must fit within an 8.5-by-11-inch frame (vertical or horizontal orientation)
- Upload size is limited to 10 megabytes
- Artwork that is not printed will be displayed digitally in a slideshow
- The artist's first name, age/grade, and school will be displayed with the artwork
- Submission of artwork does not constitute registration for the event. To attend District 31 Night, register at bit.ly/d31night
- The artwork submission deadline is February 25

Broadneck Boys, Girls Swim To County Championships



The Bruin boys finished with a score of 260, ahead of second-place Annapolis with 204. On the girls side, the Bruins scored 250 to outpace Severna Park, which had 231.

Photos by Alex Bardakh

Dominant — that's how coaches and peers view the Broadneck boys swimming team, which just captured a fifth-straight county title during the county championships at the Arundel Olympic Swim Center in Annapolis on February 6. The boys finished with a score of 260, ahead of second-place Annapolis with 204. **Nolan Rider**

scored big wins in the 200-yard individual medley and 100-yard backstroke, **Kohl Hanes** secured the 500-yard freestyle, and the team added to the total by taking the 200-yard medley relay and 400-yard freestyle relay.

Broadneck's girls scored 250 to outpace Severna Park, which had 231. The 200-yard

freestyle victory went to **Cedar Gallaudet**, and her team also won the 200 medley relay.

The Severna Park girls earned their second-place finish behind wins in the 200- and 400-yard freestyle relays and with a 100-yard butterfly first-place finish by **KK Sullivan**. On the Severna Park boys side, **Riordan Kelley** won the 100-yard butterfly.

Severna Park's Gavin Fetty Selected For National Punting, Kicking Showcase

By Kevin Murnane

After a successful senior season for the Severna Park Falcons that included being named an All-State and All-County kicker/punter, **Gavin Fetty** received his highest accolade by being selected to the prestigious Kicking World National Showcase in Austin, Texas.

Fetty was one of 105 kickers/punters out of 1,300 high school athletes nationally to be invited and only one of 65 to participate in the two-day event that was attended by numerous college recruiters in December.

"Gavin was one of just over 100 players invited to our national showcase this winter," said Kicking World owner and coach **Brent Grablachoff**. "To qualify for this special event, we consider Gavin to be one of the top 10-15% of kickers in the nation. He had a strong showing making six consecutive field goals and averaging 60 yards on his kickoffs."

On the second day of the event, Fetty ranked eighth in the punting exhibition with a 40.29-yard average and an average hang time of 3.55 seconds. Fetty's best punt was 43 yards.

Fetty started kicking at 8 years old with his grandfather taking him to Brooklyn's Farring-Baybrook Recreation Center, where Fetty began by kicking off a tee.

"I was inspired by the Ravens' **Justin Tucker** and thought to myself, 'I wonder if I could learn how to kick and help teams score points and win football games,'" Fetty said.

Fetty's family eventually moved to Severna Park, and he continued his dream by practicing kicking field goals and kickoffs at Kinder Farm Park and playing for the Green Hornets. He added punting to his skill set in ninth grade.

"I would practice for about two hours every day in addition to practice and my coach in the Green



Photos by Fincham Photography
Severna Park High School kicker and punter Gavin Fetty was instrumental in the Falcons' success last fall. He finished 21 for 22 in extra-point attempts and had a 34-yard average on punts.



Hornets, **Kevin Howell**, gave me a lot of confidence with my kicking," Fetty said. "I was probably kicking 30-yard field goals with the Green Hornets, and we used a lot of onside kicks, and I was pretty good with those."

Fetty played on Severna Park's junior varsity

football team during his freshman and sophomore years. The varsity squad previously had an excellent kicker, **Tucker Smack**, who kicked for Salisbury University last fall.

During those freshman and sophomore years, Fetty's kicking and punting improved.

"I had a big increase in my kickoffs and field goal length due to my strength training ritual," Fetty said. "I used explosive training like box jumps and weights along with my flexibility workouts."

Those improvements helped the Falcons the last few years, especially last season as Fetty was an integral part of the Falcons' offense.

"Gavin was three for three in field-goal attempts including the game-winning score and upset victory against Old Mill," said Severna Park football head coach **Nick Marks**. "He was also 21 for 22 in extra-point attempts and had a 34-yard average on punts with eight being strategically placed inside the 20-yard line to put our opponents at a disadvantage in field position. As far as kickoffs, his kicks resulted in touchbacks 75% of the time."

The Falcons finished with a 7-4 record this year, and for the first time since 2008, they won a playoff game. The Falcons' season ended the following week against Old Mill, but Fetty had two field goals in that game, from 44 and 31 yards.

Fetty handled high-pressure kicks in big games by relying on his visualization training and endless hours of training and practice. He has also been a stalwart participant in numerous camps including the national Kohl's kicking

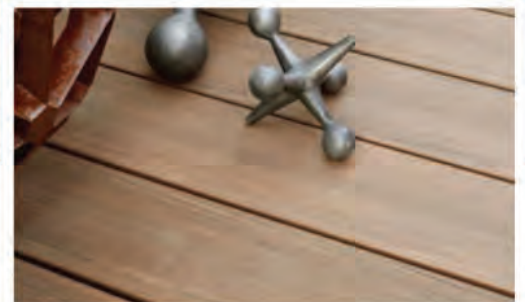
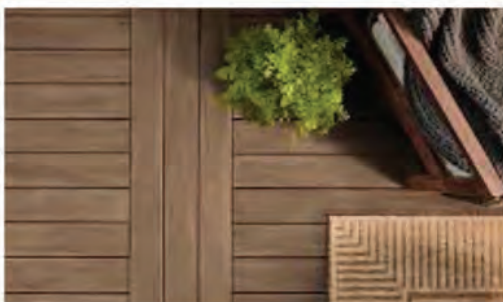
camp and the University of Maryland's punting camp as well as Towson University's punting camp, where he finished first.

At the 2025 Kohl's Future Stars Invitational camp in Baltimore, Fetty's impressive performance included

» Continued on page 19



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Falcons Soar As Boys Basketball Playoffs Approach

By David Bashore

Every year, Severna Park boys basketball coach **Pete Young** sets a benchmark for his team: find a way to at least 14 wins.

With at least five games left, the Falcons have already eclipsed that mark and are setting their eyes on a loftier prize.

The Falcons head into their strongest three-game test of the season with a 15-2 record and everything still in front of them: a chance for the county and regional championships are ahead of them.

With the way they're playing, they've got a chance to win every time they set foot on the court.

"You're constantly on your guys about playing 32 minutes, but you know realistically in 32 minutes you're going to play well in stretches. You just want to make sure that every night you play, the stretches get longer and more frequent," Young said. "When you're not in one of those stretches, you're not doing things that are going to shoot you in the foot and leave you in a bad situation. That's the hope, that we play well long enough to play on teams' psyches a little bit, because that's one of the areas that we think we can find an advantage. We're not always the most athletic, we're not always the quickest, we don't always jump the highest, but if our kids are patient and play the right way, we can find an advantage."

Severna Park had an 11-game win streak interrupted by an overtime loss to Severn Run on February 3, the middle of three games in three days due to rescheduling from January's snow and ice storm. Nevertheless, they have been impressive in virtually every showing.

There was the second quarter against Arundel, where they blew the Wildcats off the floor en route to a 55-27 victory. That followed a two-point win over highly touted Southern, and there were comfortable victories over



Photos by David Bashore

Left: Blake Coard drove to the basket for two of his 22 points against Arundel on January 23. **Right:** John Batty has added interior scoring to his perimeter shooting to become a multi-layered scoring threat.

Green Street Academy and Crofton as well.

They bounced back from the Severn Run loss the next night with a 55-53 win over Old Mill, victory coming on **Xavier Marshall's** putback at the buzzer.

The contributions have come from all over the place: **Blake Coard**, the team's leading scorer, netted 22 against both Arundel and Old Mill, and his steal on Old Mill's last possession led to Marshall's winning basket.

"I have to not take a possession off and just keep working, bring the intensity," said Coard, a sophomore guard. "We're definitely better at shooting than last year and our chemistry is really good, moving the ball around and getting open shots."

John Batty, a height mismatch on the perimeter, has added a mid-range and interior scoring ability to give defenses more to think about.

Marshall and **Dash Havens** provide toughness and energy down low, and **Garrett Moden** runs the show as the point guard. All can score, all can contribute, and Young said there's not one player on the 15-man roster the team wouldn't trust in situations where they can play to their strengths.

"It's nice just to know that we have guys all over the team who can hit shots and get our offense going," Batty said. "We're not the tallest team all around, and we usually just play positionless, but we just try to box out and not get beat too much on the boards."

Fresh off a 71-60 victory over Annapolis, the Falcons will face a more challenging final stretch: they have undefeated Meade on February 11, followed by Broadneck — responsible for their only other loss — on February 13. Then it's South River, Chesapeake, and reigning 4A state champion Laurel to round out the regular season.

If they keep doing the things they're doing well, Young feels like they at least have a shot to prove themselves in the final gauntlet.

"It's like the old adage: you've got to dress for the job you want. You've got to play for who you want to beat. Every night if you're in the Western Conference in the NBA, you want to beat the Lakers, and you have to play every night like you want to beat the Lakers," Young said. "Right now in the county, we know South River runs it, Meade runs it, and you want to hope that if you play well enough consistently, it might translate to you being able to hang around later on when you play them."

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As Basketball Season Nears End, Bruin Girls Are Ascending

By David Bashore

Broadneck's girls basketball team isn't having everything their own way all the time. With a young squad, mistakes are bound to happen as part of the growth process.

But prolonged stretches of mistakes are growing fewer and further between, which has head coach **Juan McKinney** and his crew in a good place as the season progresses.

After starting the season 3-3, the Bruins are now 10-5 and looking toward the postseason with a steady center and a guard line growing in experience to go with athleticism.

The whole season was on display in the team's 45-38 win over Northeast, giving equal parts cause for optimism and food for thought.

"We were up 10 going into halftime, and then suddenly it was

down to four. We challenged the guards at halftime to move the ball more and continue to run our offense," McKinney said.

They answered the call, stretching the lead back to 11 early in the fourth quarter on big 3-pointers from **Kileigh Perkins** and **Ellie Wagner**. Then the team went barren for nearly six minutes, but they played tough defense to deny the interior and keep Northeast at bay.

The steadying presence of senior center **Makayla Kropfelder**, the team's only senior, gave Broadneck an anchor to settle in. And as she has done multiple times this season, Kropfelder rose to the occasion.

"I don't feel like it's added pressure (being the only senior)," she said. "I just love basketball. I love scoring, I love rebounding, I love blocking shots. ... It's been so fun to

watch and participate in this team, to see everyone grow and come together."

Winners of five of their last six, the Bruins turned their attention to a rematch with Annapolis on February 9. The two teams battled in early January with the Panthers winning 56-23, in a game McKinney said the Bruins did not play to their usual standard.

After the Annapolis game comes a rematch with Severna Park on February 13, in addition to games against Southern, Crofton and Arundel.

With the games growing short, the message stays the same: be consistent.

"We are just looking for consistency," McKinney said. "Continue to work hard, work our offense, and just be consistent."



Photo by David Bashore
Jillian Gross drove to the basket and provided leadership on the guard line against Northeast.



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Severna Park Girls Hope To Turn The Corner

By David Bashore

After a rough start to the season, Severna Park is getting back into their stride.

The girls basketball team, starting the season 2-9, reeled off a win streak to put themselves back into the postseason conversation ahead of a challenging finish to the regular season.

How the season will end is anyone's guess, but the Falcons are enjoying this feeling of starting to turn the corner.

Despite seeing a five-game win streak end at the hands of Annapolis on February 6, Severna Park is back in contention in the 4A East I region with an improved performance and the return of some much-needed cavalry from injury. "I think it started at the end of the Southern game ... everyone is starting to contribute a little bit and that's nice to see," said Severna Park coach **Kristofer Dean**. "The biggest thing is that I'm seeing them learn and process what we talked about. Now we're seeing it on the floor."

One of the biggest things has been getting senior guard **Maria Bragg** back to near full strength after an injury to start the season. Her presence has helped bring along sophomore guard **Riley Buck**, who was thrust into the lead guard role with injuries to Bragg and junior **Izzy Burleson**.

Since Bragg's return, though, the duo has come together in the backcourt to provide a steadying force and allow more of the team to come

into their own.

"If we can get back Izzy, that would make three point guards on the floor and that would be even better," Dean said. "That tandem is starting to really

jell nicely. They've played great the last few games."

Buck controlled the game against Arundel, a 52-23 win where Bragg played the experienced head and let the younger players do their thing.

It's a role the Florida-bound lacrosse player has embraced as she pours everything she's learned over the last three years to the next generation of Falcons basketball players.

"I look at them and think, 'That's me three years ago,'" Bragg said. "I try to tell them what I would want to tell myself three years ago and give (Buck) what I've known and learned the last three years. I just try to be the best mentor and teammate I can. I love watching them grow and learn from everyone."

The final stretch is daunting: after Annapolis came Leonardtown on February 9, followed by Broadneck on February 13 and South River on February 16, with Meade sandwiched in there.

That stretch will tell the Falcons a lot about where they stand this season, and how they can push to finish on a high.

Photos by David Bashore

Top: Maria Bragg returned to the starting lineup against Arundel to give the Falcons more experience during their recent five-game win streak. **Bottom:** Riley Buck stepped into the lead guard role as a sophomore.



Bruins Batter Northeast To Start Stretch Run

By David Bashore

On February 6, Broadneck's boys basketball team gave coach **Jeff Starr** and the home fans a glimpse of what they had been waiting to see all season.

Northeast scored the game's first two points. Broadneck netted the next 26.

Just like that, everything had clicked, and the Bruins built up a 35-point lead in coasting to a 63-38 victory over the Eagles, avenging a 17-point season-opening loss in Pasadena.

"We had to have a fast start for our seniors, because we've been starting slowly in the first half all season," said senior **Ashton Sellman**, one of six outgoing players feted during senior night festivities. "We wanted to come out hot for that, and they blew us out last time, so there were a lot of variables to make us want to do well."

There was no such danger in this game, as the Bruins rolled to a 41-8 lead late in the second quarter. The margin didn't hit its maximum until the late stages, but the way Broadneck fired on all cylinders in the game's first 14 minutes, there was no way they were going to let the game slip away.

Sellman scored 12 points, **Liam Sabo** led all scorers with 16, and **Alijah Hawkins** added 10 to pace the Bruins.

"We've been waiting for that, for everyone to be going at the same time and everyone having energy. We had five guys with energy on the court tonight," Starr said. "Hopefully now that they know what they're capable of, they can keep that going."

Sellman, **Kamari Williams** and **Kemarri Collison** are three of the senior leaders pushing the team forward. After a game against Old Mill in January, Starr singled Sellman out as taking the next step in his evolution as a leader, but the senior demurred when asked about his progress.

"Seventy-five percent of the team I've played with my entire life," Sellman said. "It's where we are all taking every practice, and every game, and treating it like they're our last ones."

The win was the third straight for Broadneck, coming after a 10-point loss to South River that handed them their sixth setback of the season. They also beat North County 54-52 and Chesapeake 67-27.

They'll close the regular season with seven games in 10 days, starting with Chesapeake Science Point on



Photos by David Bashore

Above: Kemarri Collison muscled through the interior defense against Northeast on February 6. **Below:** Kamari Williams acted as maestro for the Broadneck offense as they hung 26 straight points on Northeast in the first quarter.



February 10. Also in that stretch is a visit from Southern on February 11, a trip to Severna Park on February 13, and a rescheduled game against Glen Burnie on February 16.

"A lot of games, but it can build momentum, and that's what we're hoping to do," Starr said.

Fetty Selected For National Showcase

» Continued from page 14

his longest punt of 52 yards and a 3.83 second hang time. His kickoff score was rated 99.97 out of 100 for length and accuracy.

"Gavin works very hard at his craft," Marks said. "I'm sad to see him graduate as he was such a great weapon

for us by kicking long field goals and half his kickoffs reached the end zone. That's a huge advantage for a high school team."

Fetty plans to kick and punt in college and is visiting numerous campuses including Salisbury, Morgan State and Howard.

Severna Park Basketball Camp To Train Young Falcons

With its June camp, the Severna Park High School boys basketball program will raise funds for future needs. Designed for elementary and middle school players, the camp will teach fundamentals and include full-court games. Registration opened in

early February and is limited to the first 200 campers. The camp will run for two weeks: June 22-25 and June 29-July 2. For more information, contact Severna Park High School boys basketball head coach **Pete Young** at spfalconhoops@yahoo.com.

STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

NKECHI STREETE

Broadneck High School
Track And Field, Indoor Track

By David Bashore

Whatever Broadneck junior **Nkechi Streete** does, she attacks it with full vigor.

Whether it's on the track, in the jumping pit, the classroom, or formerly in the gymnastics arena, she's all go, all the time.

Streete owns a perfect GPA through five semesters, including four AP courses in progress. She devours weightlifting and personal training sessions in search of continuous improvement. She owns the school's outdoor and indoor long and triple jump records and is part of three more relay records.

She prefers to talk about process rather than results.

"Absolute team player who puts in lots of time on her own to better herself," said Broadneck track coach **Josh Webster**. "She's a great student, fantastic representative of our program, and amazingly humble considering her accolades."

Her best attribute? Leadership. "I've been a captain since soph-



Photo courtesy of Olu Olamigoke

Nkechi Streete owns Broadneck's outdoor and indoor long and triple jump records and is part of three more relay records.

omore year and it's kind of just leading warmups, leading group chats, team bonding and exercises when we can, going out to lunch," Streete said. "One of the most important things is that everyone feels comfortable, especially coming in as a freshman or new athlete, it is difficult to blend in. For me, it just felt uncomfortable, so I try to incorporate more people into conversation and groups, to have fun with everyone."

As part of the Broadneck Athletic Leadership Council, Streete works with student leaders from other athletic teams at Broadneck to guide the overall athletic program into connecting with the athletes, and the Broadneck and surrounding communities at large.

In last spring's outdoor season, Streete finished third in both of her disciplines at the state meet. She's currently the top-ranked public school jumper; perhaps the only thing preventing her from winning multiple indoor titles

is that the state doesn't sanction those two disciplines for the indoor championship meet.

That's OK, though, because she's got bigger things in sight. With her personal best of 39 feet, 4.25 inches, Streete qualified automatically for the New Balance National Indoor high school championships in Boston next month. She also has provisionally qualified for the long jump, though her mark of 18 feet, 6 inches is two inches shy of the automatic qualifying standard and leaves her place currently in question.

With that prowess, room to grow, and another year plus left to attack personal records, Streete hopes to continue her track career in college and parlay it into a career of working in athletics as an orthopedic specialist.

"As much as I enjoy athletics and all I put into it, I try to balance it with academics and be as well-rounded as I can," Streete said. "I've always been interested in medicine because my dad was a surgeon, but I never really knew what I wanted to do. I'm really fascinated by orthopedics because I've been an athlete my whole life, and it would be cool work with other athletes."



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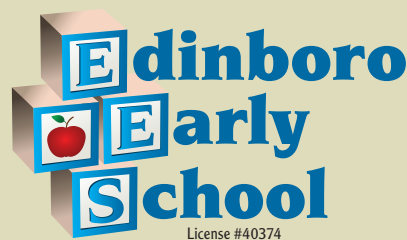
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Elvaton Soccer Program Thrives On Fundamentals

By Judy Tacyn

Nestled between Millersville and Severna Park, off East West Boulevard, is Elvaton Park, a pristine Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks gem. Located at 311 Dogwood Drive in Millersville, the park has tennis courts, a playground, a pavilion, walking trails, and soccer, baseball and softball fields.

Since 1958, the Elvaton Recreation Association has provided year-round sports leagues for thousands of youth.

Anthony Perry, Elvaton's soccer commissioner now in his sixth season since the fall of 2024, leads the "booming" soccer program. When Perry took the helm, the program had 30 kids. This spring, he expects more than 150 kids ranging in age from 5-14, with players in Junior Academy and an Elite Development Program (EDP).

Perry credits the exponential growth of the soccer program to a strict focus on development versus winning, and instruction provided by licensed, highly trained, professional coaches for players of all ages and stages.

"We've all seen it before. Your child's experience, even in a great program, depends on getting a great coach, which is determined by a lottery," Perry said. "Here, every team has a paid professional coach whose focus is on each player, not on winning. We use the U.S. Soccer curriculum and teach skills and development based on stages."

He added, "Last year every one of our 14-year-old players made their high school teams, not because we focused on winning, but because of the high degree



The Elvaton Recreation Association soccer program teaches kids that they can get better at anything in life with practice and focus. All Elvaton soccer athletes, regardless of skill level, get an opportunity to play.

of individual player, technical and skill development from our professional licensed coaches."

Professional coaches lead weekly practices, with parent coaches serving as assistants, who lead games and reinforce the skills taught that week and prior. Following the U.S. Soccer curriculum and working with professional coaches on what to teach depending on age and stage, Perry said kids gain confidence, bravery and creativity on the field.

"In a typical soccer world, a parent coaches and probably wants their kid to be the star, right?" Perry questioned rhetorically. "Coaches build reputation on how they win, so they play the best players. We don't do that. We tell parents no matter where their child is skills-wise, we will work with them and they will get better. The harder you train and the longer you stick with it, the better you'll be."

Perry recalls the excitement a young goalkeeper felt following a brutal 10-0 shutout. "Did you see that really good save I made?" the goalkeeper asked, forgetting the 10 shots that got past him. "Man, I

played great!" Perry replied, "Yes! I did. That was awesome. Great job!"

"I believe most programs talk about our approach, but we are really doing it. That's why we are growing. That's why we are a compelling option," Perry said. "I can confidently say that any kid that joins our program is going to have a positive experience and grow as a player."

Elvaton's soccer program is expanding so much that Perry now sees siblings joining. And he's heard from parents that they are relieved they don't have to worry about being asked to coach but are happy to assist.

"Our primary goal is to teach kids that whether in soccer or in life, whatever they want to do, they will get better at it with the right deliberate practice and the right focus," Perry said. "There is no limit on what our kids can accomplish and how good they can be."

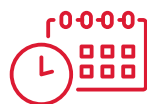
Elvaton Recreation Association spring registration for sports including baseball, softball and soccer is now open at www.elvatonrec.org.



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SPHS Students Set To Storm The Stage During “Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival XXXVII”

Popular Annual Production Will Run March 13-21

By Meredith Winter

Thirty-seven years running and it just keeps getting better: Severna Park High School’s (SPHS) biggest annual production, “Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival” (RNR), will showcase student talent and wow audiences again this March.

This year’s theme, “Storm the Stage,” has layered meaning. “On the surface, we loved the image of a slightly unhinged rock crowd ready to literally storm the stage — very much a return to RNR’s rock-and-roll roots,” said SPHS Drama Program Director Trevor Greenfield. “On a deeper level, it ties directly into this year’s overarching ‘storm’ concept, where every song connects to weather in some way.”

Greenfield shared that this year’s show may be one of the largest RNRs ever, with more than 120 students participating across all areas from cast to band, tech to build crew, and more.

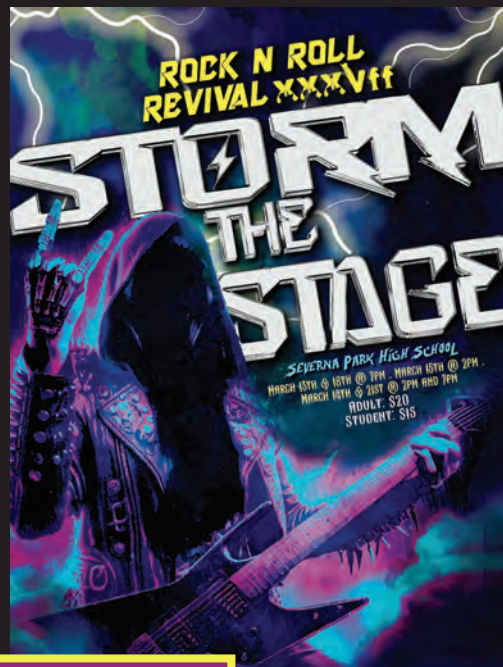
It may also be one of the most visually impressive shows to date, with more projections, weather effects, advanced lighting cues and immersive lobby and auditorium décor, Greenfield noted.

SPHS senior Brooklyn LaBrier, one of the show’s student directors, shared, “Rock ‘N’ Roll” takes a team of artists to pull off. From singing, dancing, choreographing, costumes, makeup, band and tech, everyone is so brilliant in their

own department — or multiple departments! Everyone’s dedication to the show is truly what makes the final product so magical.”

Leading up to the show, which is known to sell out year after year, students rehearse for roughly eight weeks followed by intense tech weeks when everything will converge into an impending storm of epic proportions. Casting took place just prior to SPHS’ winter break, and the teams set to work as soon as they returned to school.

“It’s such an important time of the year because no matter what is going on in your life, RNR provides a community of kindness and support. It’s my favorite place to be, with my favorite people. I truly feel like every year it becomes a family,” senior Syrenna McNutt shared. “It’s an



SPHS senior Syrenna McNutt designed the show poster for “Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival XXXVII,” themed “Storm the Stage.”

honor to be a student director for a show that I’ve been seeing since elementary school, and carrying on the tradition is just so special.”

Greenfield said the RNR team is thrilled to welcome back unified students, or those in SPHS’ Alternate Curriculum Classes, again this year. They will perform in two numbers with the ensemble during the school preview on March 11 and both Saturday matinees.

“These students are an incredible part of our program, and this opportunity exists thanks to the leadership of Thespian (Honor Society) President Sophie Leon and special education teacher Ms. Noelle Cruder, who have helped continue and grow this meaningful collaboration,” Greenfield said.

The director declined to share a forecast of any musical numbers that will be performed.

“Half the fun of RNR is the surprise. That said, if you’re expecting some storm-themed classics, you won’t be totally ... thunderstruck,” Greenfield intimated.

Each year, RNR song selection is rather straightforward: Is the song at least 20 years old, does it fit the theme, and does it help strike a balance of decades and sounds? If it fits, it rocks.

» Continued on page 30

Mo Strong: Students Recognized For Positivity

Oak Hill Elementary And Magothy River Middle Students Among Winners

Photos courtesy of AACPS

Many sports talk radio fans around Maryland can fondly remember the occasions when Mossila “Mo” Kingsley Gaba would call the programs while his mother was at work. The Baltimore Orioles and Ravens superfan will forever be remembered for his fun-loving spirit and ability to make people smile, instead of the cancer that took his life in July 2020 at the age of 14.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) established the annual Mo Gaba Positivity and Perseverance Awards in 2021 to honor the former Lindale Middle School student.

This year’s process started with 83 nominees and resulted in five award winners, who were announced in a video on January 26, what would have been Mo’s 20th birthday. A student from Oak Hill Elementary School and one from Mag-

othy River Middle School were among those winners. Each of the five honorees represented a different category — for primary and intermediate grades, middle and high school, and a legacy award winner.

Students usually show up at school wearing purple and orange, but this year’s snowfall prompted kids to show their solidarity online.

“While we didn’t get to high-five in hallways or see our schools glowing in orange and purple in person, our AACPS family still showed up online spreading Mo’s message of joy, courage and kindness through social media posts, videos and plenty of cozy snow-day smiles,” said Maneka Monk, AACPS manager of communications.

The Board of Education of Anne Arundel County recognized the 2026 winners of the Mo Gaba Positivity and Perseverance Awards at its meeting on February 4.

Clyde Hicks

Oak Hill Elementary

Intermediate Grades Winner

Oak Hill Elementary School fourth-grader Clyde Hicks has fought a rare pediatric spinal cancer and brain cancer. As his family told the Severna Park Voice last year, Clyde loves his family — his parents, sister and pets — as well as his friends, art, chess, puzzles, math, “Despicable Me” and “Minions.” He is especially passionate about baseball, and he treasures the memory of his teammates pushing his wheelchair to first base one summer.

Clyde is known for his encouraging expressions including “let’s

» Continued on page 30



Riley Whitney

Magothy River Middle School

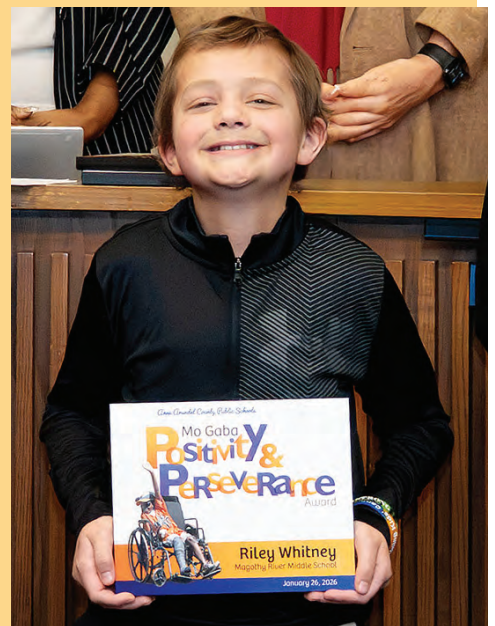
Middle School Winner

Diagnosed with neuroblastoma at age 5, Riley Whitney enjoyed years of remission before the cancer returned in 2024. He is also managing diabetes and Addison’s disease.

“The smile on this boy’s face steals the room; it’s why they call him ‘Smiley Riley,’” said Melissa Walker, organizer of a 2024 Rally for Riley event and friend of the Whitney family.

Even following medical procedures — often while still experiencing pain — Riley chooses to come to school,

» Continued on page 30



Severn School's Water Street Players To Perform "Les Misérables"

By Jaina Peveto

"Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise." Severn School will invite audiences to its winter musical from February 19-21 at 7:00pm for the school edition of "Les Misérables."

"Les Misérables" is a completely sung-through musical based on the novel by Victor Hugo, and it is sometimes called the world's longest-running musical. The story is set in 19th century France and takes place over the course of the life of Jean Valjean, who was formerly imprisoned for 19 years for stealing a loaf of bread. The show takes audiences through the Paris student uprising of 1832, when Valjean's adoptive daughter, Cosette, falls in love with a revolutionary.

"(The students) were ... 50% excitement, 50% 'Oh my gosh, can we actually do this?'" said Dr. Elizabeth Patterson, the show's director. This is her fourth year at Severn, and "Les Misérables" is the 10th show she's produced and the eighth show she's directed for the school. Originally from Massachusetts, Patterson now lives in Severna Park.

"Les Misérables" was chosen as the winter musical this year in part to showcase seniors with strong acting abilities, as well as to allow younger students the opportunity to step into larger roles. "It's been a really lovely experience to see them watch their peers," Patterson said.



Left: The cast and crew of "Les Misérables," including Paige Horton and Caden Schnabel, have been rehearsing throughout the semester.

Below: Astrid Lukens, Ella Smith and Tenley Mann used a prop during rehearsal.

"And to see these ninth-graders watch these seniors rehearse, they are learning by doing."

The cast is made up of 33 students portraying over 100 roles. Other than the accompaniment, which will be live music played by professional musicians, the entire cast and crew is made up of Severn School students. The show has been a collaborative process between those on- and off-stage, even early in the process, with everyone coming together each week to contribute to the creation of sets. The sets are being constructed entirely by the students on the cast and crew, with supervision.

"In high school theater particularly, there can be that sort of division



between cast and crew ... our program intentionally and deliberately knocks down that barrier," Patterson said.

Patterson has appreciated seeing the effort the cast has put into the production. "This is such a huge show to do. And it comes with a certain level of ... we want to do it justice, you know? Every step we've

taken forward, I've become more and more sure-footed," Patterson said.

Part of the challenge of the show is the fact that it's sung-through, meaning that there aren't any spoken lines of dialogue that happen outside of a musical number. Every part of the show is a song. As a result, rather than keeping music rehearsals and blocking rehearsals separate, many of the rehearsals were both held at once. This offered the opportunity for collaboration in another area of musical theater that often takes place separately.

One moment from rehearsal especially stuck out to Patterson. "It became very, very quiet for Eponine's death," she said. "It was powerfully quiet in the room. And I remember looking around and seeing all of these ... the faces of these young artists who are so fully engaged with this very difficult material, and I had this very out-of-body experience of 'this is why we do this.'"

Patterson noted that while the specific circumstances of the plot are not the type of thing the actors have lived through, a lot of "Les Misérables" themes line up with experiences they have had. "It's kind of the innate humanity of this show that makes it resonate," she said. "We can all find ourselves somewhere in Les Misérables."

Tickets for "Les Misérables" can be purchased online at severnschoolperformingarts.ludus.com.

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Falcons Give Back Through Leadership Projects

This year's group of Severna Park High School (SPHS) Leadership Institute III students capped a three-year commitment by partnering with charitable organizations for service projects. The Leadership Institute is a program designed to instill the characteristics needed to excel in the classroom, the community, and in life. Led by teachers Mary Heath, Elizabeth Colon and Heather Barnstead, students learned about needs in their communities while becoming more effective leaders with the following projects.

Lift Every Little

Kelsey Griffith, Emily Hall, Maggie Deegan

Griffith, Hall and Deegan recruited fellow students and partnered with the ShareBaby organization to raise awareness and provide critical support in the fight against diaper insecurity, an overlooked issue affecting families with young children. Last fall they shared a payment link, posted on social media, volunteered, and collected donations. In total, they collected \$556 in donations, \$400 of materials, and volunteered for more than 13 hours.

Pet Pals Fight Animal Cruelty

Reid Bergstrom, Henry Marriner, Feng Xue

Along with a team of 10th-grade students, Bergstrom, Marriner and Xue partnered with the SPCA of Anne Arundel County to improve animal welfare. Throughout a collective 18 hours of volunteerism, the team assisted in cleaning up the Lights on the Bay event, which benefits the SPCA of Anne Arundel County. Through outreach to the community, the Pet Pals also raised \$994 in supplies and monetary donations to support the SPCA.

Home Away From Home

Lilly Nagy, Maura Cronin, Alaina Johnson

Nagy, Cronin and Johnson partnered with the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) in Baltimore to aid families with hospitalized children. The girls wanted to reduce added stressors such as transportation, meal and hotel costs. In September they gathered their peers to make 55 snack bags. Additionally, they made goodie bags and encouraging notes. They also organized \$400 worth of can tabs, which the foundation collects to raise money, and asked peers for monetary donations that were sent directly to RMHC.

Paws For A Cause

Giuliana Fitzsimmons, Lyla Winship

SPHS students, led by Fitzsimmons and Winship, partnered with the SPCA of Anne Arundel County to promote animal welfare within the community. They hosted events to make DIY dog toys and solicited monetary and supply donations at SPHS. With the support of three sophomore Leadership Institute students, they spent 20 hours making dog toys, creating posters to promote the project, and spreading the mission of the SPCA.

Falcons Creating Comfort

Lila Sandel, Ty Maddox

SPHS students, led by Sandel, Maddox and another senior, partnered with the Binky Patrol organization to make and donate blankets to kids in hospitals, foster care, homeless shelters, and more. Sixty students volunteered to hand-make 15 blankets. In addition, the students raised over \$350 to donate directly to the organization.

Kindness In Bloom

Angela Reed, Giuliana Newton

Through the impacts of kindness in their own lives, Reed and Newton decided to launch an initiative to spread kindness through social media. The students created awareness videos on kind acts, interviews, skits, and information about the organization Kindness Grows Here, then shared them on Instagram. By including students in their classes and clubs, and school administrators, Reed and Newton were able to reach SPHS schoolwide with their project. In addition to the videos, the students wrote advocacy letters and raised funds for Kindness Grows Here.

Beyond Boundaries

Abby Roberts, Parren Smith

Roberts and Smith partnered with GiGi's Playhouse Annapolis to spread awareness and provide more opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome. They fundraised, collected supplies, and volunteered at key events. To achieve their goals, Roberts and Smith raised \$250 through a donation link they sent out to family and friends. They also collected supply donations and planned a day for their classmates to create kind messages for the members of GiGi's Playhouse Annapolis.

SP In Style

Hannah Hlaing, Taylor Moran

Hlaing and Moran partnered with Success in Style to spread awareness and support for local unemployment. Together they collected \$450 worth of clothing to donate to the nonprofit. They also led a group of peers who donated their own clothing and volunteered alongside senior leaders to assist them in preparing inventory to be released for purchase in the Success in Style stores.

SPHS Is "Severn Strong"

Stella Kiddney

Kiddney hosted a restaurant night at McGarvey's Oyster Bar in Annapolis, raising \$200 to support the Severn River Association, an Annapolis-based nonprofit. In addition to the fundraiser, Kiddney led an oyster education lesson for a class of 30 freshmen.

Blanket Buddies

Norah Cornwall, Sadie Mack

To provide comfort to children, Cornwall and Mack donated 21 hand-tied blankets to the nonprofit Binky Patrol. They traveled to Upperperco, Maryland, with fellow Leadership Institute students Tariku Maddox, Anna Willis and Lila Sandel to drop off the blankets. They also raised funds for the nonprofit. Binky Patrol provides blankets to children facing difficult or traumatic situations such as illness, homelessness, foster care placement, or crisis situations.

Healing Broken Hearts

Ally Kuhn, Samantha Lavallee

Kuhn and Lavallee went to Johns Hopkins Children's Center to deliver 20 care boxes with toys and gifts to the pediatric cardiac intensive care unit. The trip was part of their project aimed at spreading holiday cheer and hope to the families in the unit. In addition to the boxes, Kuhn and Lavallee also hosted a "Heart Walk" in November and raised over \$200 for the American Heart Association.

Sports For Change

Jack Watkins, Joey Viskocil, Evan Boucher

Watkins, Viskocil and Boucher led a service project advocating for equality in youth sports in the Baltimore area. Aided by classmates, they volunteered at the local Leveling the Playing Field warehouse, hoping to collect a minimum of \$450 worth of sports equipment to donate to the organization. They ultimately raised \$3,226 in equipment, as well as an additional \$150 in monetary donations, far exceeding their goal.

Miles For Meaning

Bella Mazzola, Gracie Ciuba

Mazzola and Ciuba led a group of fellow students to volunteer at the Baltimore Running Festival on behalf of Athletes Serving Athletes, which exists to improve quality of life for individuals with limited mobility by empowering them to train and join mainstream running events. The students set up a water stop and cheered on participants. The girls also raised \$350 for the nonprofit and created 25 race posters prior to the event to encourage runners as they pushed toward the finish line.

Smiles For Hospitalized Children

Violet Thompson, Julia Dove, Mackenzie Goldman

Thompson, Dove and Goldman worked together to raise money and awareness for Ronald McDonald House Charities. They volunteered on multiple occasions at the Ronald McDonald House in Baltimore. The students planned and brought games and crafts to do with hospitalized children during their nightly activity hour, including helping with a bingo event. They raised \$355, volunteered 30 hours, and created cards for kids and families.

United By Luv

Gabi Villegas, Vivian Major

Villegas and Major partnered with the nonprofit Luv Michael, which works to create meaningful job opportunities and inclusive living communities for adults on the autism spectrum. They organized their project United by Luv, led a group of underclassmen through the program, and raised \$2,500.

Fur the Love of Pets

Alaina Washington, Audrey Chen

Washington and Chen teamed up to advocate for animal welfare with the SPCA of Anne Arundel County. As part of their service project, the students led a team to collect funds and pet supplies and make DIY pet toys to donate. Washington and Chen were inspired by their love for their own pets at home and a shared belief that every animal deserves to find a forever home. The students raised over \$180 in monetary donations, made over 40 dog and cat toys, and donated pet food and supplies.

Empowering Local Families

Emmy Wright

Wright partnered with The Y in Central Maryland to spread awareness and support people struggling with food insecurity. There were three goals for the project: raise \$150, donate \$30 worth of food, and volunteer for eight hours. To achieve these goals, Wright volunteered at the Y Fresh Mart at the Pasadena YMCA and contacted friends and family to donate money and food. Wright completed all three goals.

Fight Against Poverty

Ella Atwood, Molly Martin

Led by Atwood and Martin, a group of SPHS students partnered with Orphan Grain Train to spread awareness for those in need around the world. To accomplish their goal, the pair planned and executed placing donation boxes around the school and volunteered with their junior leadership members.

Families First

Mackenzey Luoto, Elizabeth Thompson

Luoto and Thompson lead a group of students to serve breakfast at the Ronald McDonald House in Baltimore to help children hospitalized with critical illnesses. The girls also fundraised for RMHC, directly benefiting the house in Baltimore. Both students want to pursue careers in the medical field and felt a connection with helping families who spend a lot of time in and out of hospitals.

Packs 4 Pals

Emerson Scott, Ava Scott, Koby Bragg

Scott, Scott and Bragg lead a group of students and community members in combatting food insecurity. Their group, Packs 4 Pals, partnered with Weekend Backpacks Baltimore. The students raised \$335 in donations, collected \$100 worth of canned goods, and created 30 posters, exceeding their goals.

Peace For Pups

Andrew Kelly, Cole Cavanaugh, Teddy Uy

Kelly, Cavanaugh and Uy assembled a team of three workers to volunteer at Sandy Point State Park for Lights on the Bay. The boys helped set up Christmas lights and decorations. Along with volunteering, they made over 30 dog toys out of old T-shirts and donated them to the SPCA in Annapolis. As a group, they also raised \$285 in donations for pet food and supplies.

Sports for Change

Hayden Fox, Declan Laughlin

Fox and Laughlin spearheaded a service project by students and community members on the power of athletics. Sports for Change was developed to utilize sports to promote equity, teamwork and positive community impact. The group organized donation drives and raised awareness about Leveling the Playing Field, showcasing how sports can unite and inspire people to effect meaningful change.

**Anyone Athletics**

Kate Edwards, Isabella Elliott

Partnering with Athletes Serving Athletes, Edwards and Elliott assembled a team of volunteers and passed out water to runners at the Baltimore Marathon last fall. In addition to volunteering on race day, the girls helped support limited-mobility athletes through fundraising for Athletes Serving Athletes and leading a class to create race day posters.

Kits Against Cancer

Brooke Klima, Brooke Vaught

Klima and Vaught partnered with the Kits to Heart foundation to support cancer patients across the nation. They led their Leadership III class of roughly 30 students in a rock painting session to contribute thoughtful items toward the organization's collection drive. The girls raised a total of \$270 in monetary donations and \$100 in collection donations.

SP For Hearts

Aileen Jeter, Sophia Vu, Lilly Waterman

Jeter, Vu and Waterman led a group of students and community members as they volunteered with Kits to Heart to create care packages for cancer patients and survivors. To accomplish this goal, the trio planned and executed the creation of over 24 art journals, 32 letters and 18 towels to include as part of the nonprofit's care packages. With the help of Leadership I student Hannah Satterfield, they participated in over 10 hours of service and raised over \$150 in donations.

Kindness For The Cure

Blair McDaniel, Josie Wong

McDaniel and Wong volunteered at the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk put on by the American Cancer Society to spread awareness and support cancer survivors and their families. In addition to the walk, both girls raised funds for a local branch through family and friends. They also planned a love-note making activity through their local school club, donating over 200 notes to the sister group of the American Cancer Society, Love Notes Around the World.

Stand Up To Cancer

Sophia Listman, Kaelin Cservek

Listman and Cservek led a project in support of the American Cancer Society. By holding meetings at school, they were able to reach their project goals on blanket and card making with the help of classmates and volunteers. In total, they created 50 inspirational cards and goodie bags and seven fleece tie blankets that were donated to the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge in Baltimore. They also raised \$300 for the American Cancer Society.

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ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CAMP GUIDE



Be sure to check out the 2026 Camp Guide coming in the March edition of the Severna Park Voice. It highlights summer camps throughout Anne Arundel County.

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Educator Of The Month

Nicole Fornadel
Art Department Chair
Severna Park
High School



By Jaina Peveto

Severna Park High School (SPHS) art department chair Nicole Fornadel has made an impact not only on her local community but also on high schools across Anne Arundel County. Fornadel is the creator of the unified art course, which brings together students with and without disabilities.

Fornadel grew up in Pennsylvania but moved to Maryland to begin her teaching career after college. Before teaching at SPHS, she taught at Maryland City Elementary School, High Point Elementary School and Old Mill High School.

The unified art course originated during Fornadel’s time at Old Mill. She taught introductory art to both a traditional class and a specialized learning class in the same lesson, which was a struggle for everyone involved due to the differences in students’ needs and learning styles.

“At the time, I had gone to the art coordinator for the county, and I was like, ‘We need to do something differently,’” Fornadel said. She wrote the pilot for the class in 2019. Now, she’s the county lead for the program, which has been integrated into nearly every public high school.

The course allows students to take on leadership roles and practice skills for career pathways such as occupational therapy, physical therapy or speech-language pathology, as well as connecting students with peers they might otherwise not get the chance to know. Peer leaders and buddies work together one-on-one.

“I see the kids out and about, and I think one thing that’s been really rewarding is ... nine times out of 10 they acknowledge me. They don’t put their head down. I feel a really good sense of belonging with the kids and with a lot of the parents and living in the community too.”

— NICOLE FORNADEL

“I get a lot of positive feedback from the parents too, like, ‘My kid feels such a sense of belonging,’ or ‘This has really changed their high school experience,’ because their peers that aren’t in the classroom are saying hi,” Fornadel said. “So (it’s created) a positive environment all around the school.”

This is the third year that the unified art course has run at SPHS. Fornadel enjoys seeing the excitement it brings. The course has a waitlist due to the number of students who want to take it, and some students have shown interest in taking it for a second time. “I actually get kids to sign up faster for these field trips than I do a typical art field trip,” Fornadel said. “I think it just goes to show how this community has really developed in Severna Park.”

Over the course of her 14 years as a teacher, Fornadel has taught many forms of art to both elementary and high school students. In addition to the unified art program, Fornadel primarily teaches photography at SPHS.

One of Fornadel’s favorite parts of being an art teacher is the way that open-ended expectations foster creativity. “You can give them a set of criteria, but then you have one class turn it in, and you get like 32 different responses,” Fornadel said. “I like seeing the creative problem-solving.”

As a resident of Severna Park, Fornadel can connect with her students outside of the classroom. She attends many of her students’ sports games with her son, who’s a big soccer fan.

“I see the kids out and about, and I think one thing that’s been really rewarding is ... nine times out of 10 they acknowledge me. They don’t put their head down,” Fornadel said. “I feel a really good sense of belonging with the kids and with a lot of the parents and living in the community too.”



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SHIPLEY'S CHOICE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Each month, the Severna Park Voice poses a question to a local fifth-grade class. This month, students from Mr. Holt's class at Shipley's Choice Elementary school answered the question:

"How do you like to show your family that you love them and why?"

One way I show my family that I love them is by doing stuff that they ask me to do, because when I ask my mom, dad or brother to do something for me, they do it.

Aliya B.

I show my family that I love my family by celebrating special family events, giving them hugs and saying, "I love you."

Annalynn D.

I show my family I love them by playing games with them. I do this because it is fun to be with them and play games.

Audrey K.

I like to show my family I love them by spending all the time that I can with them. If I could, I would spend every second of the day with them. My dad and I always find a way to keep ourselves occupied, from two-player games to bike rides to the end of the road. My mom and I like to go on walks with my dog. My sister and I are always goofing around, no matter at noon

or at midnight! I love my family so much and am thankful I was blessed with having them in my life.

Ava W.

I show my family I love them by helping them. I do this because they do so much for me. I want to help them like they help me.

Caitlyn B.

I show my family I love them by celebrating them on special events, like birthdays and holidays. I also show love every day by giving them a hug because they take care of me.

Cameron U.

I show my family that I love them by giving hugs to my mom and sister because they like it and it makes them feel good. Then my brother, I give compliments, because he doesn't really like getting anything else, and I show my dad that I love him by talking to him and telling each other about our day.

Dylan D.

I show my family how I love them by playing games with them and attending family events/activities. I also do fun traditions with my family and say "I love you" almost

all the time. I like to spend a lot of time with my family whenever I am not busy with friends or sports. I love them because they help me with my field hockey and get me into SCES.

Emerson E.

I show my family I love them by asking them if they want to "hang out" with me. Also, by saying "I love you," but they already said that I tell them that I "love them" too. Showing this feeling is something I love to do.

Felicity G.

The way I show my family that I love them is by telling them, "I love you guys." The way I show my dad I love him is by wrestling him. The way I show my mom I love her is by eating her dinner, and it is always good. The one way I love them all is hugging them.

Graham M.

How I show my family that I love them is that I make up fun things like scavenger hunts for my younger family members, and for the adults I give them gifts like photos of me because they don't get to see me often or drawings like realistic

flowers or candy. But for my parents, I give them big hugs and kisses every day.

Harper S.

I show that I love my family by wrestling my dad or doing things for them so they just stay there. Lastly, I don't complain, which is like one in 100 million, but one time is better than zero. That is how I show I love my parents.

Jack B.

I love my family because they take care of me and help me when I need it. I show them I love them by trying to do the same for them when they need it.

Kennedy S.

How I show my family that I love them is telling them, "I love you." Just by saying "I love you" or "I love you too," I'm making sure they know that I love them. I also show them by spending time with them. I would love to spend time with them every day, all day, but sometimes I'm too busy. How I show my dog I love him is by petting him. My dog is so soft I could pet him all day. That's how I show my family that I love them.

Lauren H.

I like to use gifts to show love for my family because it shows how much I care about them.

Luke S.

I like to show my family that I love them by saying I love them, hugging them and kissing them (well, my brother does not let me, but I still try to)! I play games with them, like card games and board games, and by supporting them when they are down and they need some love. There are so many ways you can show love to your family, and this is how I show my family love.

Maanya A.

To be thankful for everything they do for me. To be nice and kind and not be crazy around them.

Mason O.

I show my family that I like them by spending time with them, saying yes to them and by helping them when they need it.

Max G.

When I leave, I always say "I love you" to my whole family, even my dog. I also help them out with hard situations. And I hug them and say, "I love you."

Michaela W.

I show I love my family by not going into their rooms, because they hate it when I go in their rooms. I want them to trust me, so I don't go in my sisters' rooms. Also, I show my parents I love them by helping them around the house when they need it, like walking my dog, laundry and dishes. It's not fun, but it shows that I love my parents and care for them and that I care for my dog.

Mya T.

I like to give my parents cards on Mother's and Father's Day.

Toby M.

I like to show my sister I love her by messing with her. With my parents, I like to watch movies and shows. Sometimes I will cuddle with them or get them gifts like breakfast in bed or something else.

Tripp O.

SPHS Set To Storm The Stage During "Rock 'N' Roll Revival"

» Continued from page 23

Dance will again be a huge part of RNR, with choreographer Emily DeLisle returning, along with a dance team highlighted throughout the show and cast members dancing during many numbers.

Greenfield shared that the production will be brought to life by an incredible creative team consisting of community professionals and SPHS staff including music directors Michelle Bruno, Matthew Dohm and George Evans; Assistant Director Kristin Tufo; Tech Director Alex Moundalexis; Audio/Visual Director Geoff Bernstein; and arranger Liam Cooney.

"I'm directing the show and the band, and could not be more grate-

ful for this team," Greenfield said, expressing his enthusiasm about the hard-working students as well.

"At the end of the day, I'm just incredibly proud," he emphasized weeks before opening night.

"There's still a lot of work ahead, but the collaboration, energy and kindness within this group have been amazing to watch. I truly believe this will be an RNR people remember for a long time."

"Rock 'N' Roll Revival XXXVII" performance dates are March 13 at 7:00pm; March 14 at 2:00pm and 7:00pm; March 15 at 2:00pm; March 18 at 7:00pm; and March 21 at 2:00pm and 7:00pm. Tickets are slated to go on sale February 13 and will be available at www.sphsdrama.com.

Students Recognized For Positivity

Clyde Hicks

» Continued from page 23

do this!" as he is assisted in his daily schedule. He understands the seriousness of his disease, but despite this knowledge, and perhaps because of it, Clyde makes the most of every day.

In the AACPS video announcement, Oak Hill Elementary School

Principal Deneen Houghton proudly raised a shirt with the words "On Clyde's Side."

"He is an inspiration to Oak Hill Elementary School. He radiates optimism with his positive spirit," Houghton said. "Oak Hill's motto is 'Rise Above It,' and Clyde embodies 'Rise Above It' every day."

Riley Whitney

» Continued from page 23

determined to learn and connect with his friends and classmates. Riley focuses on the positive and approaches each day with gratitude and strength.

Magothy River Middle School Principal Lindsay Abruzzo and school counselor Laurel Hulkenberg filmed the video message to Riley.

"Riley exemplifies extraordinary perseverance and positivity, having bravely overcome childhood cancer twice while managing significant medical challenges," Hulkenberg said. "Riley inspires his classmates, teachers and entire community by showing up each day with unwavering strength, determination, kindness, positivity and joy."

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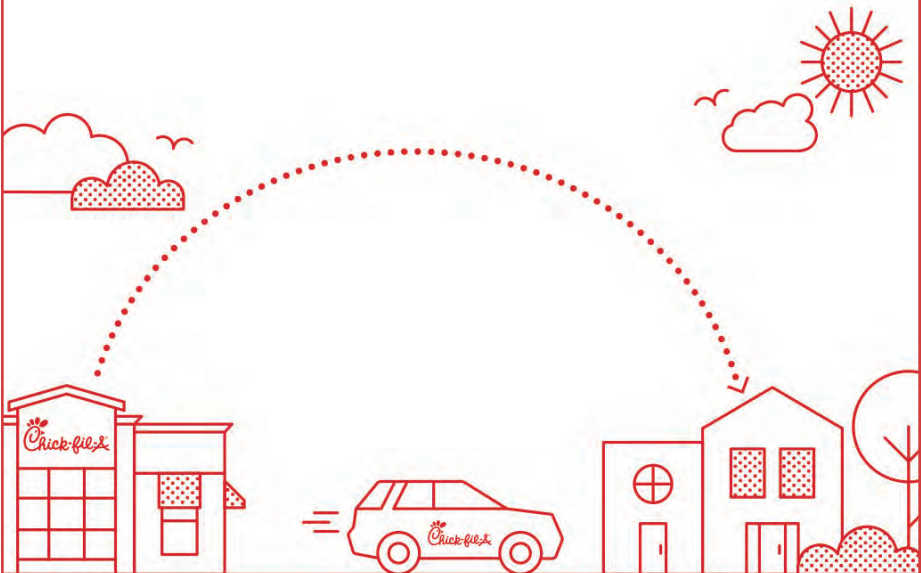


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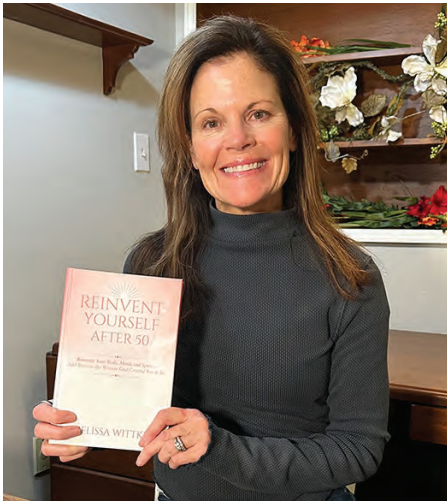
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New Book Supports Women Through Midlife Awakening



Millersville resident Melissa Wittke has authored a book that encourages women to experience midlife awakening rather than crisis through rejecting stereotypes and pursuing callings.

By Judy Tacyn

When training for a kung fu black belt, Millersville resident Melissa Wittke felt strong, empowered, and proud of what she was accomplishing throughout the months-long training and testing period, and she thought other people would be supportive. But what she started to hear, first as whispers and then loud and clear, were questions like, “Why would you want to do this at your age?” or “Are you sure you should be doing this at your age?”

At 53, Wittke was in top physical condition after a lifetime of maintaining a high level of fitness, but people saw only her age, when Wittke herself had never given the number any thought.

“At my age?” Wittke asked, wondering when she crossed the imaginary societal threshold and why she should be slowing down.

“All women come to a point in our lives where our roles start changing, our bodies start changing on the inside and the outside, and the whole world starts to notice,” Wittke said. “Then we start hearing people tell us what we ‘should’ be doing now that our value to our family, to our careers, and to society diminish. I refused to accept these as norms for myself.”

In her new book, “Reinvent Yourself After 50: Reinvent Your Body, Mind, and Spirit — And Become the Woman God Created You to Be,” Wittke helps women find their midlife awakening and avoid a midlife crisis.

» Continued on page 39

Woods Church To Tell Story Of Faith And Hope In “The Prince Of Egypt”



By Alyson Kay

Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church will hold eight performances of “The Prince of Egypt” musical March 13-15 and 19-21.

The play follows the plot of the DreamWorks movie by the same name, which retells the biblical story in Exodus of Moses as he follows the call of God to free his people.

The play features new songs by lyricist and composer Stephen Schwartz, as well as five songs that he wrote for the movie, including the Academy Award-winning song “When You Believe.” “The Prince of Egypt” will be the church’s ninth large-scale production.

“It was sort of an easy pick, since it is a Bible musical about Moses and Ramses and that story of the Old Testament,” said Dave Merrill, Woods Church’s director of music and the arts. “And it’s also a story about trust and to not give up; even when you think things are falling apart around you, have trust in God, and God will bring you home and find your path.”

Although the story originates from the Old Testament, its themes continue to resonate in the present.

“I think it’s so important to remind ourselves that hope is always with us, even in dark times,” said Anya Lengbeyer, who plays Moses’ wife, Tzipporah, in the production.

The church held auditions in November. The production has a cast of 60 and includes people of all ages from as far away as Arlington, Virginia, as well as from Severna Park and Annapolis. It will also showcase a 30-member choir.

“Being from about an hour and a half away, I was so nervous coming into this show knowing no one,” said Matthew Monaghan, who plays Ramses. “But everyone has been



Actors Meridian Toalepai (Miriam), Jacob Hahn (Aaron), Ian Cripe (Moses) and Anya Lengbeyer (Tzipporah) practiced “When You Believe” along with members of Woods Church’s ensemble and dance ensemble.

so kind and welcoming. I’m so glad to have found a home with these wonderful people!”

The play has provided unique creative challenges for the team.

“When we did ‘Hunchback,’ last year going in, I knew that was gigantic,” Merrill said. “But this one has so many different characters on both Ramses’ side and Moses’ side, and they have so many different storylines that all come together at the very end of the show. It’s just fascinating how all the different parts come together.”

“Plus, for this one, we have to flood the sanctuary and part the Red Sea. How are we going to do that? There’s many large-scale, exciting things in this production that when you read on page, you’re like, ‘Oh, that’s nice.’ But trying to put it together in this space — that definitely has been an exciting adventure.”

Logistics have also been more of a challenge for this play than previous ones, including integrating the use of pre-recorded tracks and figuring out how to light everything in a space

that will include the center aisle as the Red Sea.

The church has a team of 25 to 30 people to help make decisions and bring such a large musical together, including the Rev. J.C. Austin and choreographer Elysia Merrill, Dave Merrill’s wife.

The team has been rehearsing four days per week for the play since November.

“It’s a lot of commitment, but the reward is definitely worth it once we get to the final product,” Merrill said.

Woods Church is also working with local synagogues to have a rabbi speak with the cast about how the story of Moses and the Old Testament relate to both Jewish and Christian traditions.

“We’re trying to make this educational for those who are involved in addition to creating a musical,” Merrill shared.

The church will hold six evening performances at 7:30pm and two matinee performances at 2:00pm on Saturdays. Tickets are available at www.woodstix.org.

Naptown Philharmonic Orchestra Concerts To Feature Broadneck Students, Chorus Debut

By Meredith Winter

The Naptown Philharmonic Orchestra (NPO) has three concerts remaining in its 2025-2026 season, each of which promises new and exciting elements for the enjoyment of music lovers of all ages.

Legends & Landscapes

Sunday, February 22, 3:00pm

This month, the NPO will showcase many artistic talents in "Legends & Landscapes." Music Director/Conductor Anna Binneweg shared that Sibelius' "Finlandia" will be a dramatic, full-orchestra opener.

"We're going to follow that with Brahms' 'Piano Concerto No. 1,' which is an all-time classic piano concerto, beloved by all classical musicians, featuring William Bloomquist, one of our local professional pianists that everybody loves," Binneweg said.

The second half will open with female composer Jessie Montgomery's "Hymn for Everyone," which Binneweg described as an introspective, contemplative piece in which the orchestra itself sounds like a choir. The concert will culminate with Ravel's "Daphnis Suite No. 2," from the composer's ballet, during which two dancers from the Ballet Theatre of Maryland will perform as well.

"Legends & Landscapes" presents an exciting opportunity for younger musicians as well: students from Broadneck High School's orchestra will play side-by-side with the NPO.

Molly Fullerton, who teaches orchestra and music theory for Broadneck and Apex Arts students, stated that this is the second year Bruin musicians will play with the NPO. She shared that the school's orchestra comprises 110 students who perform at least six times a year, including regular concerts, "Spooky Strings" at Halloween with middle or elementary students, and "Night at the Movies" in June with Broadneck's band.

Students auditioned in December for the opportunity to perform side-by-side and have been rehearsing with the NPO. This month's concert will feature seven Bruins: Jane Blair (bassoon 2), Ezra Barbour (second violin), Gavin Stojakovich (cello), Tobias Clark (cello),

Desmond Willis (double bass), Vivienne Newburger (first violin) and Sam Sheesley (cello).

Fullerton shared that Broadneck orchestra students are very committed and often go above and beyond. With the collaboration now in its second year, she hopes to continue the side-by-side program with the NPO.

"I think this is a really cool experience because it's a full orchestra. So, like a symphony with band and orchestra instruments, which we do a little bit of at Broadneck, but it's not ... every concert," Fullerton said. "So they get that experience, and they're playing harder music and getting a chance to sit aside professional musicians."

"The Magic Of Cinema"

Saturday, April 18, 7:30pm

The NPO's April program will also feature student musicians: The winners of the NPO's statewide Young Artists Concerto Competition will perform during the first half of the concert.

"The second half is 'The Magic of Cinema,' so it's all classical pieces that have been featured in famous films and special scenes in films," Binneweg said, adding, "So there's music from Beethoven and John Williams and the famous 'Lakmé' 'Flower Duet' that everybody loves."

Audiences may recognize tunes from "A Space

Odyssey," "Indiana Jones," "Up!" and other films. The concert will feature two local professional opera singers, soprano Natalie Conte and mezzo soprano Jennifer Blades, as well.

"American Voices: United Through Song"

Saturday, June 6, 7:30pm

The NPO's season will conclude with a celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary. Binneweg explained the concert will feature an all-American program by composers "everybody knows and loves." Pianist Thomas Pandolfi will perform Gershwin's "Piano Concerto in F."

"The part that's extra special about this (program) is we will be debuting our very own Naptown Philharmonic Chorus. We just started the chorus this season under the direction of our chorus master, Jeanne Kelly," Binneweg said.

She anticipates the concert, which will include the familiar tunes "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "America the Beautiful," will strike a festive and unifying note to celebrate the country's anniversary.

All three concerts will be performed at Maryland Hall in Annapolis. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to www.naptownphil.org.



Photo courtesy of Michael G. Stewart

The Naptown Philharmonic Orchestra's three remaining concerts of the season will feature musicians from Broadneck High School, dancers from Ballet Theatre of Maryland, the debut of the Naptown Philharmonic Chorus, and more.

Annapolis Restaurant Week Runs February 21 To March 1

Annapolis Restaurant Week returns this month. Participating restaurants will offer prix fixe menus such as a two-course breakfast between \$13.95 and \$19.95, a two-course lunch between \$15.95 and \$22.95, or a three-course dinner between \$29.95 and \$45.95 when dining in. Some restaurants have bonus specials as well.

Participating restaurants for the 2026 event include:

- **Annapolis Market House:** lunch and dinner
- **Buddy's Crabs & Ribs:** lunch and dinner
- **Cafe Mezzanotte:** dinner, wine bottle specials on Tuesday
- **Café Normandie:** lunch and dinner, wine specials on Wednesday
- **Carpaccio Tuscan Kitchen & Wine Bar:** lunch and dinner
- **Chart House Prime:** dinner
- **Cooper's Hawk Winery & Restaurant:** lunch and dinner
- **Federal House Bar & Grille:** lunch and dinner

- **Galway Bay Irish Pub & Restaurant:** lunch and dinner
- **Julep Kitchen & Bar:** lunch and dinner
- **Light House Bistro:** breakfast, lunch, brunch
- **Main & Market Cafe:** breakfast and lunch
- **Metropolitan Kitchen & Lounge:** dinner, wine bottle specials on Wednesday, all-night happy hour on Tuesday
- **Middleton Tavern:** lunch and dinner, wine bottle specials on Wednesday
- **Mi Lindo Cancun Grill:** dinner
- **Miss Shirley's Cafe:** breakfast, lunch, brunch, bonus cocktail deal
- **O'Brien's Oyster Bar & Seafood Tavern:** lunch and dinner
- **Paul's Homewood Café:** lunch and dinner, wine bottle specials on Wednesday
- **Pearl Restaurant and Ponche Tiki Bar:** dinner
- **Picante Cocina Mexicana:** lunch and dinner



Left: Miss Shirley's Cafe is offering breakfast, lunch, brunch and cocktail deals.

Right: Lunch and dinner are the focus for O'Brien's Oyster Bar & Seafood Tavern.



- **Ruth's Chris Steak House Annapolis:** dinner, bonus deal
- **Severn Inn:** lunch and dinner

Treat yourself or your friends to delicious, reasonably priced meals. Learn more about each participating restaurant at www.downtownannapolispartnership.org/annapolis-restaurant-week.





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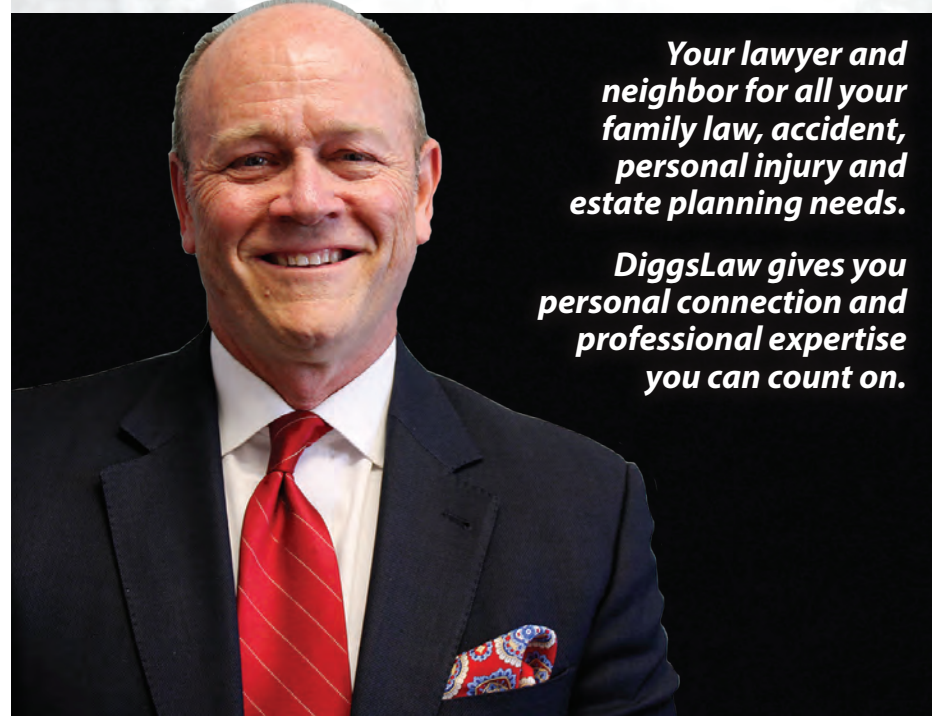
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Compass Rose Theater And AACC Join Forces For “Rent”

Compass Rose Theater and Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) are producing the Tony Award-winning musical “Rent” by Jonathan Larson now through March 8.

The project reflects Compass Rose’s educational mission and commitment to providing opportunities for students to work alongside professionals, both onstage and behind the scenes. AACC students were invited to assist with lighting, sound, costuming, ushering and set-building, and an opportunity to experience a professional audition to practice their acting and auditioning skills.

A live four-piece band will provide the musical backdrop to the award-winning show, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

“We are thrilled to begin 2026 with this new collaboration between AACC’s theater department and Compass Rose Theater,” said AACC’s dean of liberal arts, Alicia Morse. “This provides an exceptional opportunity for AACC students to gain hands-on experience working alongside professional artists in a full-scale production of ‘Rent.’ It strengthens our connection with the



Photo courtesy of Joshua Hubbell

“Rent” performances run Fridays and Saturdays from 7:30pm-9:30pm, and Sundays from 2:00pm-4:00pm, in the Humanities Little Theater at AACC, located at 101 College Parkway in Arnold.

community by bringing powerful, live theater to local audiences. Thank you to AACC’s theater department chair, professor Sean Urbantke, and executive director of Compass Rose Theater, Barbara Webber, for bringing this vision to reality.”

“It’s been 30 years since ‘Rent’ premiered off-Broadway at the New York Theatre Workshop and went on to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama and the Tony Award for Best Musical,” said Barbara Webber, executive director of Compass Rose Theater. “This production takes a modern look at the musical, with a live band, and a young, professional team that includes three Helen Hayes Awards nominees (Sam Slottow, Azaria Olglesby and Paige Rammelkamp) and a contestant from John Legend’s team on NBC’s ‘The Voice’ (Demario Adams-Holiday).”

Tickets are \$10-\$55, available until showtime while supplies last. Reduced prices are offered for students, seniors, members of the military and veterans, and groups of 12 or more. Purchase tickets at www.compassrosetheater.org, through InstantSeats, or by calling 410-980-6662. Doors open 20 minutes before the show, with open seating. Free parking is available in Lot B.



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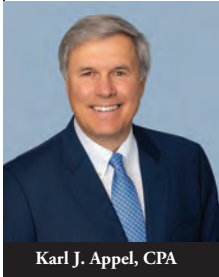
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New Book Supports Women

» Continued from page 33

"Life is a string of transitions. When we are young, we transition from our teens into our 20s and life is full of possibilities. It's fun and exciting, and society supports our hopes and dreams," Wittke shared. "By our 40s and into our 50s, especially for women, many of us find ourselves passing through transitions that often bring drastic mental, physical, and spiritual challenges and abrupt role changes."

Looking back at her own life, Wittke was struck by the attributes that make women beautiful: tenacity, bravery, creativity, strength, endurance and downright grit, none of which spoke of decline.

"Just because we turn a certain age, or we transition from full-time mother or employee, or athlete, or advisor, those attributes are still there. We haven't lost them, so why do we have to sit down and stop using them?" she asked. "Am I going to buy into this or am I going to try to change it? Now is the time I can focus on me, and put those attributes to a new, different, maybe even better use. I am still me, and perhaps the transitions allow me to be more authentically me!"

Feedback from women in their 30s and 40s has been positive, though admittedly unexpected. Young women are saying they don't want negative stereotypes to affect them as they mature.

Wittke's book provides many words of wisdom for women navigating change including:

We have a choice. We don't have to

accept any stereotypes the world tries to put on us. There is no expiration date for your dreams or your purpose in life. As long as you're here, there is still work to be done.

Be kind to yourself. Love and accept yourself where you are; we can only launch from here.

Look for your calling. Each one of us was born with a plan for our lives, born with purpose for a purpose. Maybe we put our calling on the shelf when we were younger as we put others' needs in front of ours. If you're still here, there is a reason for it. Rather than accept the midlife crisis, make it a midlife awakening.

"Women in midlife are so better prepared now because we've accomplished so much! We've survived, we've endured, we've done all of that, but we are still standing!" Wittke exclaimed. "To me that brings so much hope into the world and it's time to write our next chapter with our most authentic selves."

In addition to being an author, Wittke is a mentor and co-founder of Younger Body and Mind (www.youngerbodandmind.com), a platform dedicated to helping women rediscover strength, purpose and vitality in the second half of life. Through her work, she empowers women to reconnect with their faith, honor their bodies, and step confidently into who they are becoming.

"Reinvent Yourself After 50: Reinvent Your Body, Mind, and Spirit — And Become the Woman God Created You to Be" is available on Amazon.



Photo courtesy of
Jeri Tidwell Photography

With "Rock Of Ages," Toby's Audiences Enjoy "Nothin' But A Good Time"

Toby's Dinner Theatre in Columbia has turned back the clock to 1980s Hollywood for its "Rock of Ages" production, onstage now through March 15. The show features a "small town girl living in a lonely world" who meets a "city boy, born and raised in South Detroit" on the Sunset Strip, and they fall in love to the greatest hits of the era. Playing to packed houses on Broadway for over five years, "Rock of Ages" transports audiences to the time of big bands that play big guitar solos and sport even bigger hair.

Enjoy more than 28 '80s hits including "Here I Go Again," "The Final Countdown," "Can't Fight This Feeling," "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" and "Every Rose Has Its Thorn." The show contains adult language and situations. For tickets, visit www.tobysdinnertheatre.com/shows/rock-of-ages.

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The football playoffs were thrilling, even if the Baltimore Ravens weren't involved. Their team was injured at times and disjointed during key games down the stretch, which kept them out of the playoffs. From the offense and defense to special teams and the coaching staff, football teams need to work together to be successful.

These are lessons we can learn from and apply to our finances. Modern financial planning is complicated, and not only do you need to plan for retirement or manage investments, but you also should consider taxes, insurance, Social Security and more.

Once upon a time, these were all done separately with attorneys, accountants and financial planners with little communication between each resource. I believe that today's financial landscape needs a cohesive team to create a strategy and execute it efficiently.

Lessons From Multifamily Offices

I've observed this philosophy in practice at multifamily offices. These operate and manage the finances of ultra-wealthy families, like the Bisciotti family and Ravens owner Steve Bisciotti. They have billions of dollars, which few others can match, but a closer look shows comprehensive planning that matches the work of a team that understands the greater mission.

From retirement and taxes to investments and estate planning, attorneys, accountants and financial planners are all in lockstep with one another. When one family member dies, the money remains managed by the office, and they work together to continue managing the money for the rest of the family.

I believe this cohesive planning process is more efficient and involves extensive communication. Decisions aren't made by individuals but by the team, and the entire plan is taken into consideration.

Apply These Lessons To Your Financial Planning

Whether you have billions of dollars or thousands of dollars, the same philosophy can be applied to
» Continued on page 42

Local Liquor Sales Are Shrinking

Liquor Store Owner Says Sales Are Down At Least 10% Since Recreational Marijuana Legalization

By Kevin Murnane

Liquor store owners are lamenting over a notable trend of local residents purchasing less alcohol and younger generations preferring marijuana instead of alcohol.

On July 1, 2023, the state of Maryland enabled residents to purchase marijuana from dispensaries for recreational use. Since then, local liquor store owners have noticed a decline in alcohol sales.

"We are easily down 10% over the last few years," said Goska's Liquors owner Kevin Sosnowski. "Wine sales are way down as well as liquors such as whiskey, scotch, vodka and rum."

Sosnowski attributed the decline in sales to the legalization of marijuana, but he emphasized that the downturn is multifaceted.

"The younger generations buy for the moment," Sosnowski said. "In the past, customers purchased 30 packs of beer and cases of wine and liquor. The younger generations buy just a six-pack or a few seltzers for a few days or if they're going to someone's home."

In a Gallup study from August 2025, researchers discovered that 62% of young adults between the ages of 21-34 "have occasion to drink alcoholic beverages," down from 72% of young adults in the early 2000s. The researchers attributed that the main factor of change was using legalized marijuana.

Fishpaws Marketplace General Manager Phil Altherr noticed a reduction in sales shortly after the legalization of marijuana.

"The decrease in sales is across the board," Altherr said. "We had more in the cutbacks in buying spirits, bottled wines and domestic beer."

Other Severna Park liquor store owners see opportunities for new products to meet changing purchasing trends.

"What we've seen is a huge increase in new products like the ready-to-drink (RTD) products like seltzers as well as craft beer," said Dawson's Liquors



Photo by Kevin Murnane

Goska's Liquors owner Kevin Sosnowski said his liquor store sales are down at least 10% since the legalization of marijuana for recreational use in 2023. He also stated that younger customers' buying habits have changed.

owner Nick Cipriano.

According to the International Wine and Spirit Record's (IWSR) global research, RTD purchases have risen 18.9% over the last year while distilled liquors like whiskey, rum, brandy and vodka have decreased. The study also states that people are going out to bars and purchasing liquor less frequently and there are fewer gatherings at homes.

During a Sunday morning in January at Goska's Liquors when National Football League (NFL) playoff games were scheduled, customer volume was light and Sosnowski stated that fewer people are having watch parties now, and if they have people over, it is bring-your-own-bottle.

» Continued on page 42

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!

Skate Zone

www.sk8zone.com

Skate Zone is a family-owned roller skating and entertainment center serving the community for over 50 years, with two locations in Crofton and Odenton. Offering public skating, birthday parties, fundraisers, school and STEM programs, and themed events, Skate Zone provides a fun, safe and welcoming environment where generations come together to stay active and make lasting memories.

Lore Goldstein — Life Transitions and Integrative Movement

www.loregoldstein.com

Lore helps midlife professionals understand how they are wired — physically and mentally — especially during times of change. Her work blends integrated movement and practical guidance to reduce stress, ease physical discomfort, and help people move through life transitions with more clarity, confidence and stability.

Delegate Nic Kipke

www.kipke.com

Nic Kipke is elected to the Maryland House of Delegates and has filed to be on the ballot for state Senate in 2026.

Haven & Hue Hair Co.

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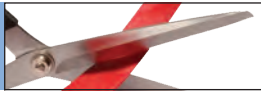
Landis Architects | Builders (new bronze member)

www.landisconstruction.com

Over 25 years ago, Ethan and Chris Landis founded the company, operating out of their truck. They managed all aspects of the business, including

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RIBBON CUTTINGS



Club Pilates Marks A Decade In Severna Park

Located at 454B Ritchie Highway, Club Pilates celebrated 10 years in business in January with an open house and a Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce-hosted ribbon-cutting ceremony. Club Pilates promotes that Pilates is a workout for everyone, designed to increase mobility, balance and strength. Learn more about the benefits of Pilates and the class types offered at the studio at www.clubpilates.com.



Palma Mexican Restaurant Opens In Millersville



In early February, restaurant owner Jorge Landaverde and his team celebrated the grand opening of Palma Mexican Restaurant with a ribbon-cutting ceremony hosted by the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce. Landaverde also operates Pitaya Mexican Restaurant in Severna Park and La Sierra in Annapolis. Palma will offer breakfast, dinner and a bar, and is located at 722 Generals Highway in Millersville.



Finding A Good Team To Manage Your Comprehensive Financial Plan

» Continued from page 40

your financial plan. Each component of a plan impacts the other one. A tax strategy may unintentionally increase estate taxes, or an investment decision could disrupt your Medicare benefits.

That's why it's important to have each aspect of your financial plan in lockstep with one another, not just through communication, but through coordinated strategies across all parties involved. Just like multifamily offices, accountants, estate planning attorneys and financial planners can be partners in your financial journey.

This shouldn't end when you pass away. The team should continue to manage the finances for your entire family and work to help create a legacy that you can be proud of.

Finding A Cohesive Team For Your Finances

Financial planners can often be focused only on investments, not tax or estate planning, leaving you to find help elsewhere and a disjointed financial plan that could lead to mistakes and inefficiencies.

We believe the future of financial planning is having a team to manage your financial plan. That means establishing partnerships with attorneys, insurance, and accountants who understand your financial picture and can work with the financial advisor to create a cohesive plan.

As you evaluate your financial future, consider

the complexities of your financial situation. Do you want to play telephone between multiple offices, or do you want to have the convenience of a solid team that is going to work together to help you achieve your goals?

Jason LaBarge, financial advisor and president of LaBarge Financial
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Local Liquor Sales

» Continued from page 40

The IWSR also wrote that another contributing factor for the reduction in liquor sales is concerns with personal budgets. Due to inflation, people have less discretionary income and are reducing the frequency and/or volume of buying liquor.

During the last few months, federal tariffs have also resulted in price increases, especially for Canadian whiskey, Mexican tequila and European vodka. "Tariffs have had an effect on sales, no doubt," Cipriano said. "Unfortunately, we have had to pass along these tariffs to our customers. The tariffs have also affected our ability to gather some products like imported beer."

The downturn in liquor sales has also affected the national landscape. According to USA Today, several distilleries throughout the United States have closed or claimed bankruptcy. The most noteworthy distillery to halt production is the Jim Beam facility in Clermont, Kentucky, which stopped production in January 2026.



Dawson's Liquors owner Nick Cipriano is trying to meet the trends of younger customers by having an ample supply of ready-to-drink (RTD) beverages. These products are prepackaged, single-serving drinks for immediate consumption without needing to mix, shake or prepare ingredients.

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Chamber Update

» Continued from page 40

design, project management, construction and accounting. Many years later, they have grown to become an award-winning, premier design-build business supporting commercial and residential projects in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. In addition, the executive officers belong to several nonprofit organizations including the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board and the Rock Creek Conservancy.

Herbs and Sweets

www.herbsandsweets.com

This business began with a passion for natural ingredients and a desire to bring the benefits of herbs and spices into everyday treats. The team recognized that herbs and spices not only enhance flavor but also offer a variety of health benefits, from boosting immunity to aiding digestion. By incorporating these powerful ingredients into its baked goods, Herbs and Sweets created a unique fusion of taste and wellness.

Bay Brothers General Contracting

www.baybrothersgc.com

Bay Brothers is a general contracting company that specializes in insurance restoration. It helps clients through the insurance claims process by providing the insurance company with estimates and providing general contracting knowledge to assist with storm damage claims. Bay Brothers also provides interior and exterior contracting work.

EmberBox LLC

www.emberboxstrong.com

EmberBox was created by members of the U.S. Secret Service to bring disciplined, tactical training anywhere. Modeled after a cinder block and built from weather-proof steel, it replaces bulky gym gear with one compact, weight-adjustable tool engineered for dura-

bility, versatility and strength you can take anywhere. EmberBox condenses an entire gym setup into one sleek, compact form, without compromising on performance. Whether you train in the field, a garage or a tight apartment, EmberBox is built to stand in, not out.

Commercial Management Company

www.commercialmanagementcompany.com

Family-owned and operated for over 50 years, Commercial Management Company (CMC) operates as a full-service commercial property management firm, providing innovative and reliable solutions that support both the goals of property owners and the needs of tenants. Of its 13 commercial properties, two are in Severna Park: the River Reach office building (760-790 Ritchie Highway) and 650 Ritchie Highway.

We kicked off the new year by joining forces with the other chambers in the county for an informative legislative breakfast. More than 180 people attended this standing-room-only event hosted by the **Blackwall Barn & Lodge in Gambrills** to hear the legislative priorities of our local elected officials.

We held three ribbon-cutting celebrations in January: the three-year anniversary of **La Sierra Authentic Mexican Restaurant** in Annapolis, the 10-year anniversary of **Club Pilates in Severna Park** and the grand opening of **Mad Soaps Inc.**'s new location in Edgewater. Congratulations!

The Sheridan at Severna Park graciously hosted a wonderful breakfast for our Successful Women in Business group. And our chamber monthly mingle was held at **The Social**, complete with delicious appetizers.

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

Anne Arundel Chamber Announces New Leadership

The Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce is marking the departure of president and CEO Mark Kleinschmidt after seven years of dedicated service, and the promotion of Amy Berry to the same role.

During his tenure, Kleinschmidt led one of Maryland's largest chambers through a period of significant growth and unprecedented challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. His steady leadership, commitment to advocacy, and focus on supporting the business community helped guide the chamber through uncertainty while continuing to deliver value to its large membership base.



Amy Berry

"Anne Arundel County is an extraordinary place to live and to build a business," Kleinschmidt said. "Our business community is not only driven but it is innovative and deeply committed to making the county stronger for everyone. As I transition into a new role, I'm grateful for the opportunity to have served this

remarkable community. The chamber is well-positioned for continued success, as Amy steps into the president and CEO role."

Succeeding Kleinschmidt is Amy Berry, who has been promoted to president and CEO, bringing more than 15 years of chamber experience and a deep personal connection to the Anne Arundel County community. Berry joined the chamber in November 2019 and oversaw membership and marketing initiatives while playing a key role in strengthening engagement, partnerships and organizational growth. Berry is also a 2025 graduate of Leadership Anne Arundel.

Prior to joining the Anne Arundel County Chamber, Berry spent a decade in the Dallas region serving in multiple chamber leadership roles, including event coordinator, membership and marketing director, and president. Her promotion also marks an important milestone for the organization, as the chamber celebrates female leadership at the helm.

"I am deeply grateful for the trust placed in me and for the incredible support of our board and members," Berry said. "It is truly an honor to serve the community that helped shape who I am — both professionally and personally. I look forward to building on our momentum, strengthening our partnerships, and ensuring our members have the advocacy, resources and support they need to succeed."

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