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APRIL 2026

Arnold Soccer Standout Invited To Olympic Development Program Team

By Judy Tacyn

At just 16 years old, Arnold native Landon Kaline received an invitation in February to join the Olympic Development Program (ODP) National Select soccer team while still playing for his U17 American national team, Barça Residency Academy USA, in Casa Grande, Arizona. The honor is Kaline's next step toward playing for the U.S. national team, and one day perhaps play for the U.S. Olympic or World Cup team. The ODP National Select team is a tournament-only team that competes internationally and is made up of top-tier American players in their age group.

The meteoric rise from playing recreation soccer at age 5 to the international level has been a steep though steady trajectory of hard work, commitment and maturity. Former coach Pat Hulede, head coach of the Arundel Soccer Association's Juventus Elite 2009 team, was one of the first to see Landon's potential.

"When Landon first joined the team at 11, he immediately stood out for his strong motivation to improve, his determination to compete, and his hunger to take his game to the next level," Hulede recalled. "He consistently demonstrated a willingness to put in extra work on his own, which translated into steady and noticeable progress."

The Kaline family began to realize that Landon may have exceptional talent in the summer of 2021 when he was 12 years old. They were approached by the head coach of the Maryland Bobcats during a soccer camp. The coach said he believed Landon should be playing at a higher level and suggested he try out for the team, which was for an age group two years older than Landon. He didn't try out for that team, but the seeds were planted.

In early 2023, then 14-year-old Landon, a Magoth River Middle School eighth-grader, went to Spain for a tournament with his travel club team, Arundel Soccer Association 2009 Juventus Elite.

"We realized he had some serious talent during the Surf Cup Salous tournament in Spain," explained Landon's mother, Jennifer Kaline. "The competition was out of this world and Landon was able to hang with the Spanish players, even winning Man of the Match in one of the games."

During that tournament, an independent FIFA agent saw Landon play and contacted the Kalines to ask if Landon would be interested in trying out for teams in Spain. Concurrently,

» Continued on page 6



Photos courtesy of
Hugo Van't Veer/
Barça Residency
Academy

*Landon Kaline
showed off his
footwork as
he dodged a
defender.*

And The 2026 Best Of Severna Park Winners Are...

Nearly 3,500 people cast their votes in this year's Best of Severna Park contest from February through March. Categories represent the best community amenities, services, restaurants and other businesses, and more as chosen by residents of Severna Park, Arnold and Millersville.



Congratulations to all of the winners, listed on page 10.

Completion Of Broadneck Peninsula Trail Celebrated With Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony



County officials, trail advocates and community members gathered to cut the ceremonial ribbon representing the opening of the final phases of the Broadneck Peninsula Trail.



Photos by
Meredith Winter

Parts of phase 3 of the Broadneck Peninsula Trail include newly constructed bridges.

On March 30, county officials held a ceremony to commemorate the official opening of phases 1B, 3 and 5 of the Broadneck Peninsula Trail, which now links the greater trail network to Sandy Point State Park. The roughly 8-mile trail, used by walkers, runners, cyclists and others, provides vehicle-free access to Anne Arundel Community College, the Broadneck Library, Broadneck Park, Bay Head Park, neighborhoods, retail destinations and more. The \$17.5 million project has been in the works since 1999.

Director of Recreation and Parks Jessica Leys, County Executive Stuart Pittman, Director of Public Works Karen Henry, County Councilwoman Amanda Fiedler, BikeAAA President and Anne Arundel County Bicycle Advisory Commission member Jon Korin, and the Friends of Anne Arundel County Trails' Jack Keene delivered remarks prior to a ribbon cutting.

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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.

Behind The Wheel And Behind The Scenes, Stephanie Zyvoloski Supports Walk The Walk Foundation

By Meredith Winter

A resident of Severna Park for nearly 17 years, Stephanie Zyvoloski was first introduced to the nonprofit Walk the Walk Foundation (WTWF) through her church many years ago. At the time, WTWF coordinated a Christmas gift drive for underprivileged children at Bay Area Community Church. Zyvoloski and her husband are parents to three boys and a girl, ages 14-22, and each year they would sponsor gifts for a family that had three boys and a girl or vice versa.

WTWF's Gifts for Children initiative now operates independently of the church, along with its Backpacks for Kids and Diapers for Babies programs, all supporting families in Anne Arundel County.

Zyvoloski again crossed paths with WTWF through her daughter's involvement at Thrive Gym. Throughout her final year as a gymnast there, she participated in the service-oriented Thrive Ambassadors program, through which she and her mom packed diapers for WTWF.

When Zyvoloski found herself seated with WTWF Executive Director Nicole Dolan at a church event, a conversation led to becoming a regular volunteer with the nonprofit. She started out helping with Gifts for Children, then Dolan learned that Zyvoloski had a minivan and a willingness to put miles on it for WTWF.

"A lot of people don't like minivans, but I love my minivan because not only can I haul kids; I can haul things," Zyvoloski said with a laugh.

Initially, those "things" were Christmas gifts picked up from organizations with large donations. Zyvoloski also collects diapers from donation drives and drop-off points including BD Provisions, Rolly Pollies and Thrive Gym. From there, her involvement grew.

"My kids are older now, and I'm



Photo by Meredith Winter

From delivering backpacks to packing diapers, Stephanie Zyvoloski devotes much of her time to serving with the Walk the Walk Foundation.

still a stay-at-home mom, so ... this is where my heart's leading me," she said. "I feel blessed that I have some of the daytime hours to be able to help out."

Zyvoloski helps at the WTWF warehouse in Millersville with monthly diaper pulls, during which volunteers prep diapers by size and quantity for pickup by 25 diaper distribution partners throughout the county. The majority of distribution partners pick up on the same day, but as more have been added, Dolan has assembled a "second shift" of diaper staging volunteers as well. Zyvoloski is on the frontlines of that team, too.

She helps with the diaper program on a year-round basis and assists in other areas as she's available, including dropping off backpacks for kids in need to local schools.

Last summer, Dolan asked Zyvoloski to transport backpacks to Lothian Elementary School in southern Anne

Arundel County. A school employee who helped unload them asked what else WTWF did. A conversation led to a connection, and Lothian Elementary now has a baby pantry and is one of WTWF's newest diaper partners.

"I just love the feeling of being able to help somebody else out," Zyvoloski said of volunteering with WTWF. "What happened with Lothian Elementary ... just seeing the way God works, and the joy that comes from realizing that because I said 'yes, I'm willing to help out,' it got the ball rolling and started a process that's going to help out even more people ... It's just a really rewarding feeling."

She added that using her vehicle to transport things also makes her feel like a piece of a larger puzzle of helping people who might be experiencing hardship.

Dolan shared, "I can always count on Stephanie when I need an extra hand. She is thorough, pays attention to detail, and cares deeply about Walk the Walk's mission."

Zyvoloski has also served at her church in children's ministry and as a Bible study small group leader, and she has faithfully volunteered to do book talks at Severna Park Middle School for close to a decade.

She explained that the school has a program through which parent volunteers read and discuss books with students. When the volunteer roster thinned out during COVID, Zyvoloski stepped up, and has done about six to nine book talks for different classes in recent years. Although her youngest child is wrapping up eighth grade, Zyvoloski told the book talk coordinator to keep her on the rolls if they have need for future volunteers.

To learn more about or get involved with WTWF's Diapers for Babies, Backpacks for Kids, or Gifts for Children programs, go to www.wtwf.org.



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Celebrate Earth Day At Local Festivals

Observed annually on April 22, Earth Day falls on a Wednesday this year, and locally, it will be bookended by two celebratory events taking place on the Sunday prior and the Saturday after.

Journey Around the World

Eco Adventures

Sunday, April 19, 11:30am-2:30pm

Millersville-based Eco Adventures is throwing a 15th anniversary Earth Day extravaganza that will honor cultures from every corner of the world. Travel the globe in one day through exploring different cultures, wildlife and conservation efforts from around the world.

Attendees can connect with environ-

mental and conservation organizations, scout groups, and vendors inspired by global traditions and sustainability. Guests of all ages can look forward to live performances, animal shows, a magic show, exhibitors, face painting, pony rides, a petting zoo, food and more.

Admission to the outdoor festival is free; ticketed animal presentations and a magic show will take place indoors. Learn more at www.ecoadventures.org/special-events.

Earth Day Festival

Good Neighbors Group

Saturday, April 25, 10:00am-2:00pm

For 24 years, the Good Neighbors Group has been bringing residents of the

greater Severna Park area together for its Earth Day Festival to educate attendees about the world and how to better take care of the community and themselves.

This year's event will take place at a new location, Severna Park United Methodist Church, though the mission will remain the same. Good Neighbors Group will again bring together organizations, vendors and school groups to create a fun, engaging and meaningful event.

Exhibitors at the free festival will include environmental and animal welfare organizations, recycling and composting exhibitors, alternative energy specialists, and others. Attendees can enjoy food and music and are encouraged to bring unwanted items to the Good Neighbors Depot. Learn more at www.goodneighborsgroup.org.

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THANK YOU!

to all our community partners for contributing to the Voice's

Nonprofit of the Year Give Back.

You too can help WTWF. Donate diapers at the Severna Park Voice booth during the 2026 Spring Local Fun Festival in Park Plaza on May 2 or at a local collection point. See page 6 for more information.

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Severna Park Farmers Market Opens For The Season April 25

A true sign that spring has arrived and summer is on its way is the return of local farmers markets. The Severna Park Farmers Market, a beloved decades-old tradition, will open for the 2026 season on April 25.

The market will be open every Saturday, rain or shine, from 8:00am to noon, and is located at the park and ride on Ritchie Highway at Jones Station Road in Arnold.

Many longstanding vendors will return this year with fresh produce, meats, eggs, flowers, baked goods and specialty items, including the following:

Joyce's Flowers & Herbs: A part of the market for over 30 years, Joyce offers a selection of locally grown plants, herbs and flower bouquets.

My Nana's Kitchen: This is founder Anita's 28th year at the market, offering products you could find in your grandmother's kitchen including jams, jellies, eggs, cheese and more.

Pat's Produce and Gourds: A 24-year farmers market veteran, Pat will start the season with spring vege-

tables like asparagus followed by summer favorites such as berries, tomatoes, corn, zucchini and melons.

The Breadery: Also returning for a 24th year, this vendor offers an assortment of fresh baked breads, rolls, muffins, cookies, pop tarts and more.

The Ville's Dills: Find a variety of fresh pickles, hot sauces and spice rubs at this vendor, returning for a 14th season with the Severna Park Farmers Market.

Other vendors participating in the 2026 season include **Morris Hill Farm** with chicken, duck, lamb, turkey, eggs, pork and beef; the **Anne Arundel Beekeepers Association** with honey products; **Whistle Stop Winery** with red, white and sweet wines; **Rosy Side Farm** with cut flowers, plants and seasonal vegetables; **Baltimore Waffle Company** with hot, fresh cast-iron sugar waffles; and many others.

Find a full list of vendors and keep up with all that is happening at the Severna Park Farmers Market at www.facebook.com/severnaparkfarmersmarket.

Department Of Recreation And Parks Launches Public Survey For The 2027 Land Preservation, Parks, And Recreation Plan

Public Input Will Help Shape The Future Of Recreation And Parks

Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks has launched a public engagement survey for the 2027 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). Through public input and feedback, this initiative serves as a five-year roadmap for developing local parks, improving recreational facilities, and advancing ongoing land preservation efforts.

The LPPRP is a state-mandated requirement updated every five years to guide future recreation and parks investments, reflect the evolving needs of residents, and identify new priorities for the coming years.

"Our parks, recreation programs, and open spaces are the heart of our communities, and they should reflect the needs of the people who use them," said County Executive Stuart Pittman. "Public input is the cornerstone of our planning process. By participating in this survey, residents are directly influencing how we invest in our future to make Anne Arundel County 'The Best Place For All.'"

The survey takes approximately three to five minutes to complete and is available at www.aarecparks.org/lpprpsurvey. To ensure broad community participation, a Spanish version is available by selecting the language option within the survey. Participants who complete the survey will have an opportunity to win exclusive Recreation

and Parks giveaways. The survey will remain open through early May. For more information on the 2027 LPPRP, visit www.aarecparks.org/lpprp2027.

"We want to hear from every resident in the county," said Jessica Leys, director of Recreation and Parks. "Whether you are visiting our athletic complexes, enjoying the beach, participating in recreation programs, or hiking our trails, your feedback shows us exactly where we need to grow. This is your chance to help shape the future of our parks and recreational amenities for generations to come."

Why The Public's Voice Matters

Input from the LPPRP process leads to tangible results. Projects completed or identified based on the previous 2022 plan include:

- Brooklyn Park Athletic Complex and Brooklyn Park Community Center
- Edgewater Community Center
- Deep Run Recreation Center
- Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park
- Lake Waterford Park tennis bubble

2026-2027 Key Dates

- **March — early May 2026:** Public engagement through the LPPRP survey
- **June — July 2026:** County-wide virtual and in-person public meetings on survey results
- **Summer/Fall 2026:** Drafting of the 2027 LPPRP report begins
- **Early 2027:** The 2027 LPPRP report draft is shared for public comment

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HOMETOWN HEROES

Bob Quigel Is Post 175's Most Decorated Veteran

By Zach Sparks

Trudging through the central highlands of Vietnam was no picnic during the 1960s. Triple canopy jungles, sweltering heat and rain monsoons frequently greeted U.S. troops. Though that's not the full picture that Bob Quigel got from seeing the war effort depicted on television.

"It looked like a good adventure," the Severna Park resident recalled roughly six decades later when asked why he decided to enlist in the Army.

American Legion Post 175 officers believe Quigel is their most decorated veteran. He has a Purple Heart, Bronze Star and Combat Infantry Badge from his time in the Army, from 1968-1971. He started as a private first class and ended as an E-5 sergeant.

After a stint with the 82nd Airborne Division, he became a member of the 4th Infantry Division. These soldiers — affectionately called "grunts" — were also known as the "Ivymen" for the Roman numeral IV.

"It was our job to find and kill the Viet Cong," Quigel said. "That's what we were supposed to do: find the enemy and shoot them. It all happened so fast."

His time in Vietnam was filled with adventures but also the horrors of war. An encounter in November 1969 gave him permanent injuries: a busted knuckle, a twisted finger and a head wound.

"I was holding an M16 machine gun when I got hit," Quigel said. "It went through my helmet. My helmet didn't do much."

"My platoon's machine gunner in front got



Photo by Zach Sparks

Bob Quigel has found a new brotherhood at American Legion Post 175.

shot through the liver," he continued. "He got hit, so I picked up his M60 and then I felt a big blast on the hill."

The Ivymen did not see the attack coming. "They were waiting for us with an ambush," Quigel said. "A helicopter came in with a red cross and (the soldiers) were shooting at us."

He spent a few months in a hospital, grateful that he survived, as did the machine gunner. More than 58,000 U.S. troops died during the war or from their injuries suffered during the conflict.

Some of those fatalities he witnessed firsthand.



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One time, his infantry could not communicate with a helicopter pilot, and the soldiers aboard killed two people in a friendly fire incident.

They also had to contend with the Viet Cong, who were skilled in guerilla warfare. "They were good at hiding," Quigel said. "We even found a hospital underground."

As was the case for many Vietnam veterans, his homecoming was not all pleasant.

"They called us baby killers. We didn't kill babies," he said. "I hate that all those people died. That's war."

In 1971, Quigel took a position at Fort Meade. Even there, he did not feel comfortable.

"I was a decorated combat veteran. They had never been to Vietnam," he said, contemplating the differing views.

"Now, I wear my Vietnam hat and people thank me for my service. So, it doesn't bother me."

He has found solace in the support of his family: his wife of 55 years and two daughters.

Also comforting, oddly enough, is watching war films. His favorite is Stanley Kubrick's "Full Metal Jacket." But he still grimaces when he sees factual inaccuracies depicting war, like when blood packets squirt out of a character due to an injury.

Vietnam was full of uncomfortable moments and devastating losses. But if he closes his eyes, Quigel can picture exhilarating moments too. An estimated 50 times, he put aside his fear of heights as he rode in a helicopter, often with his legs hanging out the door and a machine gunner to his side.

"It was an adventure," he said.

Shop Local, Support Families In Need At Spring Local Fun Festival

Save the date for Saturday, May 2, for the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce's Spring Local Fun Festival. This annual celebration of supporting local businesses will feature a health and wellness expo, food, live entertainment, music and more, and entry is free.

As part of the Severna Park Voice's Nonprofit of the Year initiative, through which we are supporting the Millersville-based Walk the Walk Foundation (WTWF) for all of 2026, the Voice will host a diaper drive in partnership with WTWF at the Spring Local Fun Festival. Look for the WTWF tent and Severna Park Voice banner.

Throughout the month of May, WTWF will host its Anne Arundel County's Largest Diaper Drive event, and diaper donations made at the Spring Local Fun Festival will go toward that effort. WTWF is part of the Nation-

al Diaper Bank Network and supports 25 diaper distribution partners throughout the county, helping thousands of families in need. In the U.S., approximately one in two families with young children struggles to afford diapers.

Diaper donations of all sizes are appreciated, but the greatest need is for diapers sizes 4 to 6.

Can't make it to the event on May 2? Spring Arbor of Severna Park will also serve as a donation drop-off location seven days a week, 8:00am-6:00pm, now through the end of

May. Other nearby drop-off locations include BD Provisions, Thrive Gym and Rolly Pollies of Severna Park.

The Spring Local Fun Festival will run from 11:00am-2:30pm at the Park Plaza shopping center in Severna Park. For more information about the event, go to www.gspacc.com. To learn more about WTWF, go to www.wtwf.org.



WALK THE WALK FOUNDATION

Arnold Soccer Standout

» Continued from page 1

the Kalines were in communication with the head of the International Soccer Academy where Landon was enrolling. It was official: Landon's skill was widely recognized on the international playing field.

Landon played his youth career with Arundel Soccer Association Juventus Elite 2009 boys' team from 2020 until he left to train in Spain in late February 2024. In August 2025, Landon moved to Casa Grande, Arizona, to play with the Barça Residency Academy USA. He will continue to play with his Barça U17 team and play in tournaments with the ODP national team. Should he stay healthy and continue to refine his skills, his next step would be to play for the United States youth national team for an opportunity to play in the Youth Olympics.

Landon lives, trains and attends high school classes at Barça Residency Academy in Arizona, which is the first and only FC Barcelona-affiliated residential academy in the United States. He is the only player on Barça U17 invited to the ODP tournament team. His days at the academy are strictly structured.

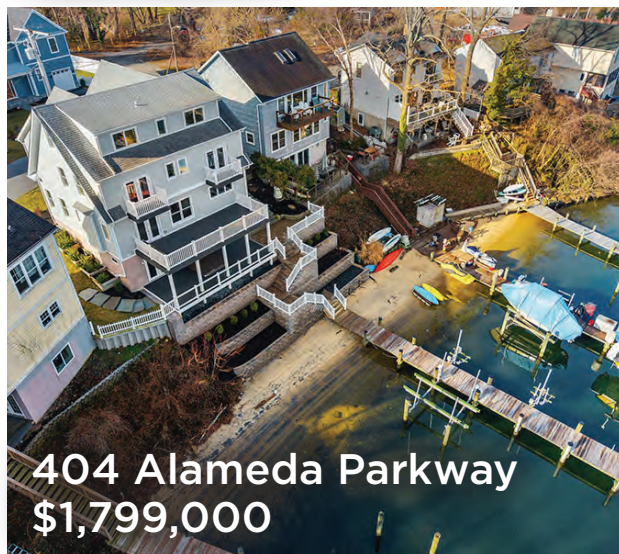
"Landon has shown exceptional mental strength, having lived and

developed in Spain and now Arizona, while remaining fully committed to achieving his goals. His ability to adapt to new environments and continue progressing speaks highly of his character and resilience," said Hulede, who stays in touch with Landon and the Kaline family. "He's a strong role model for young players pursuing their dreams and an example of what can be achieved through hard work, dedication and belief in oneself."

Landon's favorite national team — after the United States — is the Spanish team, which plays in Barcelona. He credits Hulede and Carles Coto, his coach in Spain, for guiding his career thus far.

Growing up, Landon closely watched the career of Eden Hazard, a former Belgian footballer who retired in 2023 after a 16-year-career. "His impact on the field and ability to keep the ball close to his feet was insane," Landon said.

Today Landon follows Lamine Yamal, an 18-year-old professional on the Spanish national team, who Landon may have the opportunity to play against in the future. For now, Landon is focused on getting stronger, faster, improving his fútbol, but never taking his eye off his ultimate goal of playing in a World Cup.



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When A Doctor Says “Get Your Affairs In Order,” What Does That Mean For Your Family?

**Rachel
Muñoz, Esq.**
*Muñoz Estates
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Seventy-six percent of Americans do not have a will. It's a surprising number, and in a close-knit community like ours, it often means families we know and care about are left navigating difficult decisions without a clear plan. I often meet families who assumed they had more time — until a diagnosis, an unexpected hospitalization, or even a routine doctor's visit changed everything.

For many people, estate planning doesn't happen until life forces the conversation. One of those moments is hearing a doctor say, “It's time to get your affairs in order.”

One of the hardest parts of being an estate planning attorney is helping clients who have been given a limited amount of time by their doctors. These are deeply personal, emotional conversations — but they are also incredibly meaningful. In those moments, what matters most becomes clear: protecting your family, communicating and honoring your wishes, and creating as much peace and clarity as possible. The good news is that planning ahead can make all the difference.

Planning For Medical Decisions

If you're ever unable to communicate your wishes, someone will need to step in on your behalf. A health care directive allows you to choose that person in advance — someone who understands your values and can make decisions with confidence. A living will provides guidance about the types of medical treatment you would or would not want in certain circumstances. This can be an incredible gift to your family, removing the burden of guessing during already emotional moments.

For individuals facing more serious health conditions, they may also want medical orders for life-sustaining treatment. These translate your wishes into clear instructions that medical providers are required to follow in an emergency.

Planning For Financial Decisions

A financial power of attorney ensures that someone you trust can step in to manage your finances if needed — paying bills, handling accounts, or managing property. Without it, families often face delays, court involvement, and unnecessary stress during an already difficult time.



Planning For Your Family's Future

A last will and testament directs how your assets are distributed and allows you to name guardians for minor children. Without a will, those decisions are left to the court — without your input. Many families also choose to create a trust, which allows assets to pass more efficiently, privately, without court involvement, and provides greater control over how and when assets are distributed.

Trusts can also serve as a powerful tool during incapacity, allowing someone to step in seamlessly to manage assets without disruption. One detail many people don't realize is that accounts with beneficiary designations — like retirement accounts and life insurance — pass outside of your will. Keeping those updated is just as important as having the documents themselves in place.

Just as importantly, having a clear plan in place can prevent misunderstandings and conflict among loved ones. We often see that when wishes are clearly documented and communicated, families are able to focus on supporting one another rather than navigating disagreements during an already difficult time.

The Details That Matter Most

Beyond the legal documents, the most impactful plans are the ones that create clarity. Make sure your loved ones know where to find important information. Keep beneficiary designations up to date. Consider your digital life — email, financial apps and online accounts — and how those should be handled. And most importantly, have conversations with your loved ones. Without a plan, families are often left making urgent decisions in the middle of a crisis. With a plan, those same decisions become clear, calm and guided.

We often see families feel a sense of relief, not burden, when these discussions happen ahead of time. In many cases, it brings families closer and provides a sense of calm that carries forward. Some parents even choose to leave a personal letter for future guardians, sharing their hopes, values and guidance. While not legally binding, it can be one of the most meaningful parts of a plan.

A Gift Of Peace Of Mind

Estate planning isn't just about documents. It's about making sure your family is protected, your wishes are honored, and your loved ones aren't left carrying uncertainty during life's hardest moments. In our community, where family and relationships matter deeply, having a plan in place is one of the most thoughtful things you can do.

If there's one thing I would share from walking with families through crisis planning, it's this: don't wait for the emergency to have these conversations. Planning ahead allows you to make decisions thoughtfully rather than in a moment of urgency and gives your family a lasting gift of clarity and peace.

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

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Kinder Farm Park Invites All To Speaker Series

The Friends of Kinder Farm Park will present a speaker series event titled “Woodshop, Sawmill & Blacksmith Shops: Learn About Their Contributions To Kinder Farm Park” on May 3 at 2:00pm. Attendees can gather in the visitors center to hear about the talents of volunteers in these groups and how their skills and time are used to celebrate the

history of Kinder Farm Park, while providing valuable assets to enhance the park's operations.

The event is free to park members and \$3 for non-members. Members can register by sending an email to speaker2026@kinderfarmpark.org. For paid registration, visit TicketLeap and search for the Kinder Farm Park speaker series.

Strengthening SPAN's Mission

By Maia Grabau

Director of Operations, SPAN Inc.

April is a month that welcomes the beauty of spring and symbolizes fresh beginnings.

At SPAN, April also kicks off our spring fundraising season. We hope you'll join us for a special fundraiser at Cafe Mezzanotte on Wednesday, April 15, from 4:00pm–9:00pm. That evening, 15% of all dine-in and carryout proceeds will be donated to SPAN. It's a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a night out while helping us continue providing emergency assistance to families in our county.

We are also preparing for our annual online silent auction and Broadway Songfest in June. Do you have something to donate? Some of our

most popular items in past years have included vacation condo stays, gift cards to restaurants or local businesses, and professional services such as photography. The silent auction is one of our two largest fundraisers of the year, and every donation strengthens our mission.

I'd also like to share the story of one of the families we recently assisted. Hope, a divorced mother of five school-age children, has been working tirelessly to support her family. After her SUV broke down around Christmas, she lost the ability to run the small business she had built. Despite her determination, the financial strain has been overwhelming.

Since then, she has used a borrowed car to transport her kids and to make

deliveries to earn some money. Without a reliable vehicle, she cannot get a job. Without a consistent income, she is stuck. Like many of the families that we serve, Hope is caught in a vicious cycle.

We offered her one of our Easter dinner boxes. She was so thankful. We loaded her car with food boxes, fresh items, birthday bags for her children, and a gift card to cover gas for the week. While we cannot solve every challenge she faces, we were grateful to offer support that brought her renewed hope and encouragement.

The financial challenges that many families face often arise during seasons of deep stress and uncertainty. The donations that we receive from the community help provide stability, dignity and renewed hope.

At SPAN, we see ourselves as one small part of a larger community working together to provide food

and critical financial assistance to families in urgent need. We could not do what we do without the generosity of people like you. Your donations are a meaningful investment in the well-being of our neighbors and a powerful reminder that our community truly cares for one another! Together, we can make a difference.

“Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”
— Mother Teresa

SPAN (*Serving People Across Neighborhoods*) is an independent nonprofit food pantry and emergency services provider that has been helping local families with eviction prevention, utility turnoffs, medical/prescription bills, and food since 1990. For more information, call 410-647-0889, email spanhelps@yahoo.com or visit www.spanhelps.org.

And The 2026 Best Of Severna Park Winners Are...

COMMUNITY

Most Desirable Community To Reside: Chartwell
Best Community Beach: Linstead on the Severn
Best Community Pool: Chartwell
Best Club/Organization: Green Hornets
Best Nonprofit Organization: SPAN
Best House of Worship: St. John the Evangelist
Best Pastor/Church Leader:
 The Rev. Erik Arnold — St. John the Evangelist
Best Preschool: Woods Child Development Center
Best School: Severna Park High School
Best Business To Open In 2025:
 Always Ice Cream

KIDS' ACTIVITIES

Best Activity Center: Severna Park Community Center
Best After-School Program: Kwon's Taekwondo
Best Children's Dance Company:
 Creative Force Dance Center
Best Day Care: Vineyard Child Care Center
Best Music Instruction Program:
 Theater in the Park
Best Educational Services: Mathnasium
Best Party/Special Occasion Venue:
 Eco Adventures
Best Playground: Kinder Farm Park
Best Summer Camp: Creative Force Dance Center
Best Sports Facility: Kinder Farm Park
Best Youth Sports League: Green Hornets

BEAUTY & FITNESS

Best Fitness Club: Park Fitness
Best Hair Salon/Barber Shop: Split Ends Beauty Spa & Wellness
Best Martial Arts Program: Kwon's Taekwondo
Best Place For A Massage:
 Face It! Spa and Wellness
Best Nail Salon: VIP Nail Studio
Best Spa: Face It! Spa and Wellness
Best Weight-Loss Program: Park Fitness

HEALTH

Best Medical Practice:
 Inspire Integrative Medicine
Best Physician: Dr. Mariaileen Sourwine,
 Inspire Integrative Medicine
Best Women's Specialty Practice:
 Inspire Integrative Medicine
Best Chiropractic Practice: Fare Chiropractic
Best Dental Practice:
 Severn River Dental Health Center
Best Orthodontic Practice: Spivak Orthodontics
Best Eye Care/Ophthalmologist:
 Severna Park Eye Care
Best Audiologist: Hearing Solutions
 Audiology Center
Best Pediatric Practice: Annapolis Pediatrics

Best Pharmacy: Park Pharmacy
Best Physical Therapy Practice:
 FX Physical Therapy
Best Mental Health Care:
 Brady Mental Health & Wellness
Best Veterinary Practice:
 Severna Park Veterinary Hospital
Best Senior Living Facility:
 Brightview Severna Park
Best In-Home Health Care: Lean On Dee
 Senior Home Care Services
Best Health Care Provider Outside Severna Park, Arnold and Millersville:
 PT Solutions — Glen Burnie

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Best Accountant: Cassilly & Appel Group
Best Insurance Agent: Moran Insurance
Best Investment Adviser: Jason LaBarge —
 LaBarge Financial
Best Lawyer: Rachel Muñoz —
 Muñoz Estates & Trusts
Best Mortgage Lender: Main Street Home Loans
Best Real Estate Agent: David Orso — Berkshire
 Hathaway Home Services PenFed Realty

HOME SERVICES

Best Fence/Deck Contractor:
 Fence & Deck Connection
Best Cleaning Service: CheckMark Power Washing
Best Home Improvement Contractor: Landmark Roofing
Best HVAC Contractor: Cornett Heating & Cooling
Best Electrician: HGW Electrical Construction
Best Interior Designer: Severna
 Park Kitchen and Bath
Best Kitchen/Bath Remodeling Service:
 Severna Park Kitchen and Bath
Best Landscape/Lawn Service:
 Homestead Gardens
Best Pool Service: Goudy Pools
Best Plumbing Contractor: Dwyer Plumbing
Best Home Service Outside Severna Park, Arnold and Millersville:
 Himmel's Landscape & Garden Center

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Best Auto Repair: Severna Park Automotive
Best Bank: M&T Bank
Best Car Wash: The Great American Car Wash
Best Dry Cleaner: Admiral Cleaners
Best Marine Repair: South Shore Marine
Best Pet Care: Fieldstone Animal Inn

RETAIL/SHOPPING

Best Overall Customer Service: The Cottage
Best Art/Photography/Frame Shop:
 Side Street Framers & gift gallery
Best Bicycle Shop: Pedal Pushers Bicycle Shop
Best Consignment Shop: Savvy Consignment

Best Clothing Store/Pop-Up Shop: The Cottage
Best Florist: Wildflower Stem + Sundry
Best Garden Center: Homestead Gardens
Best Gift Shop: The Cottage
Best Grocery Store: Harris Teeter
Best Hardware Store: Park Hardware
Best Home Décor: The Cottage
Best Jeweler: Traynham's Jewelers
Best Liquor Store: Dawson's Liquors
Best Toy Store: Franklin's Toys

ENTERTAINMENT

Best Place For Family Entertainment:
 Severna Park Lanes
Best Live Music Venue: Severna Park Taphouse
Best Happy Hour: Park Tavern
Best Place To Watch The Game:
 JB's, Severna Park
Best Provider Of On-The-Water Activities And Experiences: The Point Crab House & Grill
Best Place To Take Out-Of-Towners:
 The Point Crab House & Grill
Best Entertainment Venue Within 25 Miles:
 Rams Head On Stage

FOOD/DINING

Best Restaurant Overall: Cafe Mezzanotte
Best Wait Staff: Cafe Mezzanotte
Best Breakfast: The Breakfast Shoppe
Best Lunch: Park Tavern
Best Dinner: Cafe Mezzanotte
Best Kids' Menu: JB's, Severna Park
Best Barbecue: Adam's Taphouse and Grille
Best Burger: Park Tavern
Best Coffee: Rise Up Coffee Roasters
Best Crab Cake: The Point Crab House & Grill
Best Bakery/Cakes: Nothing Bundt Cakes
Best Dessert: Always Ice Cream
Best Ice Cream/Frozen Treat: Always Ice Cream
Best Pizza: Squisito Pizza and Pasta
Best Salad: Park Tavern
Best Sandwich/Sub: Jersey Mike's Subs
Best Seafood: The Point Crab House & Grill
Best Wings: JB's, Severna Park
Best Fast Food: Chick-fil-A
Best Asian: Thai Paradise
Best Italian: Cafe Mezzanotte
Best Mexican: Mi Pueblo II
Best Gluten-Free Menu: Cafe Mezzanotte
Best Vegetarian Menu: Mezeh
 Mediterranean Grill
Best Caterer: Be My Guest Catering
Best Bar: Severna Park Taphouse
Best Food Truck: Greek on the Street
Best Special Occasion: Cafe Mezzanotte
Best Outside Seating: The Point Crab House & Grill
Best Restaurant Outside Severna Park:
 Two Rivers Steak & Fish House

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Notice: We Do Not Sell Plaques!

We do not sell plaques or any other products in conjunction with the Best Of awards. Every year, we announce the Best Of Severna Park winners in the April edition and the awardees are proud to display their accomplishments in the form of a plaque. Many third parties know this and make their living off selling

plaques, trophies or other items to awardees. While we have no problem with a reputable company making money in this way, we have a problem with them representing themselves as the Severna Park Voice.

If you would like to purchase a plaque, we recommend that you shop local and support Victory Awards & Promotions in Severna Park.



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Former WBAL Talk Show Hosts Launch “Free Range Politics” Podcast

New Weekly Podcast And Digital Platform Focuses On Local And National Issues

Veteran broadcasters Yuripzy Morgan and Torrey Snow are co-hosting a new weekly podcast, “Free Range Politics.” The duo said their podcast includes political commentary and “healthy discussion regarding the most vital issues facing our country,” as well as current events impacting local communities across Maryland.

“Free Range Politics” debuted on March 23, with new episodes releasing weekly. The podcast features candid discussions on political issues in Maryland and beyond with regular guests, including newsmakers, political insiders, elected officials and others who join the spirited discussion.

Beyond the weekly podcast, “Free Range Politics” will include short-form video content, community engagement, and a growing presence across social media platforms, creating multiple ways for audiences to connect with the substantive conversation throughout the week.

“I look forward to connecting and engaging with new and longtime listeners alike as we engage in important conversations regarding the most timely and vital state, local and national issues,” said Morgan, a Severna Park resident. “I am also excited about the freedom that this new platform provides.”

Snow is excited to have the new podcast as a platform to educate the community on issues impacting their lives.



Severna Park resident, attorney and political analyst Yuripzy Morgan and “Free Range Politics” co-host Torrey Snow are engaging in candid discussions on political issues in Maryland and beyond with regular guests.

“I love laying out the facts and pushing for accountability from those entrusted with public resources,” Snow said. “Free Range Politics’ lets us do exactly that, and Yuripzy and I look forward to honest discussions that challenge the status quo and allow our listeners to come to their own conclusions about the facts.”

Meet The Host: Yuripzy Morgan

As an attorney and political analyst, Morgan is the former host of “The Yuripzy Morgan Show” on WBAL NewsRadio and currently serves as a legal analyst for WBFF TV, WBAL, and other regional news outlets, offering her insight on law, politics and current

events. Her commentaries have also appeared in The Washington Post and The Baltimore Sun. In 2022, she served as the GOP nominee for Maryland’s third congressional district.

The daughter of immigrants from Mexico and El Salvador, Morgan grew up in East Texas with her parents and four younger siblings. She earned dual degrees in biology and history from the University of Texas at Arlington before earning her law degree from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. As an attorney, Morgan focuses on estate planning, probate, criminal defense and business organization.

Meet The Host: Torrey Snow

Snow is the former host of WBAL NewsRadio’s afternoon drive program, “The Torrey Snow Program,” which ran from 2020 to 2025. In 2025, he joined The Baltimore Sun as an editorial board contributor and weekly political columnist. After earning his bachelor’s degree in theology, he moved to Maryland in 2006. He started his career in education before transitioning to a career in IT management.

Snow has been involved in his community, volunteering in underserved neighborhoods and serving with community organizations including the Anne Arundel County NAACP. His civic engagement includes running for the Anne Arundel County Council and accepting appointments to civic boards, such as the Odenton Town Center Advisory Board and the Anne Arundel County Charter Revision Commission. In 2020, then-Governor Larry Hogan appointed Snow to the Maryland Commission for African American History and Culture.

Snow currently serves as the national clergy director for the Center for Urban Renewal and Education (CURE) in Washington, D.C., where he works to connect members of the clergy serving in underserved communities with key national policymakers. Snow and his wife, Joanna, have been married for 19 years and have four children.

“Free Range Politics” is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, YouTube and all major podcast platforms. Subscribe now at www.freerangepolitics.podbean.com.

It’s Time Maryland Took Menopause Seriously

Dawn Gile
Senator
District 33



Hot flashes. Sleepless nights. Persistent brain fog. What sounds like the symptoms of a high fever is, for many women, daily life during menopause.

This is a significant public health and economic issue. Menopause can affect workforce participation, mental health, cardiovascular risk, bone health and overall quality of life. Yet too often, women seeking care are dismissed with a familiar refrain: it’s just part of getting older. That response is not only outdated; it is harmful.

In the past year, there have been meaningful advances in how the medical community understands and

treats menopause. In October 2025, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration removed its longstanding “black box warning” on hormone replacement therapy, correcting earlier interpretations of the 2002 Women’s Health Initiative study that overstated risk. The science has evolved. Treatment decisions today are guided by individualized, evidence-based care. Maryland’s policies, however, have not kept pace.

Across the country, states are beginning to close gaps in menopause care through thoughtful legislation. At the same time, women have been speaking out about their experiences: struggling to find knowledgeable providers, facing confusion or denial from insurers, and navigating symptoms that significantly disrupt their lives.

This session, I introduced Senate Bill 892 (SB 892) to address those gaps. The bill is cross-filed in the House by Delegate Heather Bagnall,

and we have worked closely with partners including the Maryland Commission for Women and House leadership, including Speaker Joseline Peña-Melnik, to align this effort with House Bill 1365 and move a coordinated, statewide response.

At its core, this legislation does two things. First, it strengthens provider education. Too many women report that when they seek care, they encounter clinicians who are not adequately trained in menopause management. SB 892 requires health occupations boards to establish continuing education standards so providers are equipped with current, evidence-based knowledge. This is about ensuring that when women walk into a doctor’s office, they are heard, understood and treated appropriately.

Second, it addresses insurance coverage. The bill requires insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and HMOs to cover the evaluation and management of menopause and related symptoms. For many women, cost is a real barrier. Some pay out of pocket. Others forgo care entirely. That should not be the case for a stage of life that affects half the population.

The consequences of inaction are real. Gaps in care and coverage can lead to worsening health outcomes, from untreated mental health challenges to increased long-term risks related to heart and bone health. Women should not have to fight their insurers or navigate this transition alone.

This is also about dignity. Menopause has long been stigmatized or ignored in public discourse. By addressing it directly, we send a clear message: women’s health matters at every stage of life.

Maryland has the opportunity to lead by modernizing its approach, aligning policy with current science, and ensuring that women have access to the care they need. SB 892 is a step in that direction. I am grateful to the constituents who shared their stories, the advocates and stakeholders who helped shape this legislation, and my colleagues in the General Assembly working to move it forward. We can, and should, do better for women in Maryland.

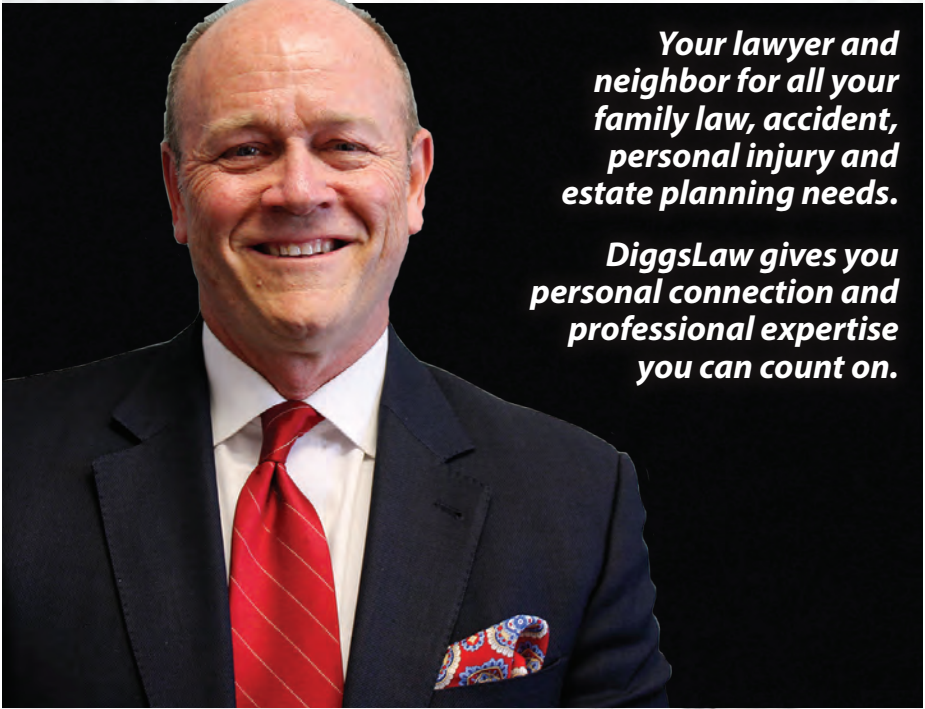
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Letter To The Editor: Religious Educational Freedom Threatened By Proposed Maryland Law

I love America. Our country has its faults to be sure, and it has a history that is filled with good, bad and ugly, but I love what this nation stands for and the freedoms we get to enjoy. Freedom isn't free; it was afforded to us and our children by the blood shed for over two centuries by men and women so that we could hold to our views and live them out peaceably. Sometimes we may think that freedom is guaranteed, but it is not, and in the case of my family, we know that personally.

I'm a first-generation natural born American, descended on one side of the family from Cuban and Colombian grandparents. The story goes that my Cuban grandmother, as a young woman, traveled to Columbia for mission work that was expected to last a few months. During those few months, Fidel Castro took over the island of Cuba, made it communist, and cut it off from the rest of the world. My grandmother couldn't see her family again for nearly a decade.

If my grandmother had not left her native Cuba during that small window of time, I would likely not be here. Yet, by God's grace, my Hispanic grandparents immigrated to the United States on July 4, 1976, and have cherished the freedoms from tyranny that have come with living here ever since.

As a passionate lover of history, I can attest to the rare exception to the general rule that this nation is in the scheme of empires and nations where peaceful transfer of power and the freedoms we enjoy are not typical. Authoritarianism, rule by force and revolutions with bloodshed are the norms.

Yet even as America approaches its 250th birthday, never have we seen threats to our freedoms and republic with hints of authoritarianism from both the far political left and far political right like we have seen in our politics for the last several years. Ronald Reagan once said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction." I believe if we do not pay attention to guarding the freedoms we enjoy, we will lose them.

A pivotal moment has arrived for those of us who value the freedom to choose which school we send our children to, and particularly for those of us who choose to send our children to schools with values and religious beliefs that align with our own.

The broadly worded law would potentially allow parents and students to sue a private school for simply adhering to its beliefs if it's perceived as discrimination by them, and they would have the backing of the state in doing so. It would be a major step toward imposing the ideology of the state onto a private religious school.

When I first heard about this bill, I assumed it would apply only to private institutions and schools that received state funds, but it would not. This would absolutely constitute an attempt by the state of Maryland to infringe upon the religious freedom of private schools and entities, and whether you are religious or not, whether your

kids attend public or private schools, we should all be concerned by this attempted overreach.

In the years since COVID, parental freedom and involvement in choosing the school that our children attend has become more precious and more pronounced, and we should all let our voices be heard whenever there is any incremental step toward threatening the freedom to make those choices.

The legal costs that could be incurred by these private schools would be devastating, with claims motivated more by rejection of beliefs than actual injury. The Maryland Civil Rights Commission could mirror Colorado's, bringing baseless cases against religious schools that refuse to acquiesce with mainstream culture, especially beliefs on sexuality and gender.

As a pastor, Christian, citizen and Maryland resident for life, and most of all, parent, I felt compelled to speak out and speak up. I encourage you to prayerfully consider contacting your senator before it's too late. Religious schools should not have to choose between being able to operate and being able to adhere to their sincerely held beliefs.

We must move away from the politics of bullying the other ideological side into submission that has become increasingly the norm in our country and now threatens to become the norm in Maryland over this issue. For the Christian, remember that we are called to have courage, to stand up and speak up for what we believe, to always do so in love, and to hold true to the hope we profess, no matter what the cost.

"Stand firm and hold to the traditions you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter."

(2 Thessalonians 2:15)

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free ... it expects what never was and never will be."

- Thomas Jefferson

Stephen Mitchell
Senior Pastor, Trinity Bible Church

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Letter To The Editor: "This Isn't About Vanity"

A Breast Cancer Survivor And The Maryland Bills Fighting To Redefine Care

Editor's note: These bills passed and await the governor's signature to become law.

When I was diagnosed with HER2+ breast cancer in 2025, I prepared for the physical fight — surgeries, chemotherapy, the unknown. What I wasn't prepared for was how much the thought of losing my hair would take from me before treatment even began.

People often call scalp cooling "cosmetic." But in Maryland, lawmakers are beginning to recognize what patients like me and others have always known: it is anything but.

More Than Hair — A Question of Access to Care

Chemotherapy-induced hair loss is not a trivial side effect. It is one of the most visible and emotionally devastating parts of cancer treatment. It strips away privacy and identity at a time when patients are already at their most vulnerable.

For some patients, the fear of hair loss is so overwhelming that it influences treatment decisions. That alone should force us to reconsider how we define "medical necessity."



Because when a side effect impacts whether a patient will undergo life-saving treatment, it is not cosmetic — it is clinical.

The Science Behind Scalp Cooling

Scalp cooling systems are U.S. Food and Drug Administration-cleared medical devices designed to reduce hair loss during chemotherapy by constricting blood vessels

and limiting the amount of chemotherapy that reaches hair follicles.

This is not a beauty treatment. It is a medical intervention grounded in science. And yet, for years, access has depended largely on a patient's ability to pay out of pocket — often thousands of dollars.

Maryland Steps In: SBo272 and HBo393

That reality is exactly what two Maryland bills aim to change. Senator Dawn Gile (District 33) and Delegate LaToya Nkongolo (District 31) are sponsoring Senate Bill 0272 and House Bill 0393, which are companion bills introduced in the 2026 Maryland General Assembly legislative session that would require many health insurance plans in the state to cover scalp cooling for cancer

patients undergoing chemotherapy.

The legislation mandates that insurers, HMOs and nonprofit health plans that already cover chemotherapy must also cover scalp cooling systems used to preserve hair during treatment. If passed, the requirement would apply to policies issued or renewed beginning January 1, 2027.

These bills represent a critical shift: recognizing scalp cooling not as an optional add-on but as part of comprehensive cancer care.

During 2025, the Maryland Health Care Commission evaluated whether Maryland should require insurance coverage for scalp cooling, analyzing medical effectiveness, social impact, and financial cost. It revealed that scalp cooling is a clinically supported treatment that reduces chemotherapy-induced hair loss by limiting drug exposure to hair follicles, that hair loss is one of the most feared side effects of chemotherapy, and that the cost to insurers is very low, with the estimated premium impact being in the 0.00%-0.05% range. Pennies per member per month. Costs are comparable to a prosthetic wig, which is already covered by insurers in Maryland.

Why This Legislation Matters

Right now, too many patients are forced into impossible choices:

- Pay out of pocket to preserve a sense of identity
- Or endure one of the most visible markers of illness without support

That is not equitable care.

By requiring insurance coverage, Maryland is acknowledging that the psychological and emotional toll of cancer treatment matters. It is recognizing that dignity is not a luxury.

And importantly, these bills align with growing medical consensus. Even organizations like the Oncology Nursing Society have supported insurance coverage, noting that scalp cooling should be considered medically necessary — not cosmetic.

My Experience

When I chose to use scalp cooling, it wasn't about trying to look good. It was about trying to feel like myself in a moment when everything else felt out of control. It allowed me to walk into a room without immediately being identified as "the cancer patient." It gave me a sense of normalcy during one of the most abnormal times of my life.

That is not vanity. That is survival.

A Turning Point

Maryland's SBo272 and HBo393 are more than insurance bills. They are statements about how we value patients. They say:

- Emotional well-being matters
- Identity matters
- Access to supportive care should not depend on income

Cancer takes enough from us. The ability to preserve a part of ourselves — when science allows it — should not be dismissed or denied. Because this was never about hair. It was about humanity.

Rossalynn Ripper
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In Competitive Girls Field, Falcons Aim To Reclaim Crown

By David Bashore

For the fourth straight time, Severna Park and Marriotts Ridge contested the 3A girls lacrosse state championship game.

Much to the Falcons' chagrin, last year evened the series at two titles apiece. Now, they look to go one up again, aiming for their third title in four years and their 17th in program history.

They've got plenty of talent back to make that charge, and they're off to a good start. On a beefed-up schedule, Severna Park is 3-3 heading out of spring break. They opened the season with a 14-8 win over 2025 4A state finalist Urbana, followed by a 9-8 victory over 2025 2A runner-up Glenelg and a 13-2 win over Crofton.

Severna Park returns do-it-all senior and Florida signee **Maria Bragg**, as well as Davidson-bound defender **Bella Mazzola**, two steady midfielders in senior American signee **Gracie Ciuba** and junior George Washington commit **Ava Deegan**, and junior goalie **Lucy Davis**, who has committed to Butler.

Those five headline a returning group that will be supported by standout athletes thrust into new roles, like sophomore attacker **Molly Koistinen**.

"We've got a lot of speed across the field, which lets us push tempo and pressure opponents," said Severna Park head coach **Annie Houghton**. "With several versatile utility players who can step into multiple roles, we have the flexibility to adapt and do whatever the team needs to win."

The teeth of their loaded schedule game over spring break, where the Falcons fell 11-9 against Stone Ridge, 8-6 against St. Mary's, and 11-6 to Our Lady of Good Counsel. Stone Ridge and Good Counsel are reigning Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland conference champions, and St. Mary's is currently ranked in the national top 25.

Bragg currently leads the team with 15 goals and 10 assists through six games, while Deegan and **Ella Worthington** have each scored seven. Adding to the fanfare of a season opener, the Falcons' first goal of the season went to senior **Quinn Allison**, who missed the last two entire seasons due to injury. She has four goals on the season in limited action.

Severna Park's tough start was not done yet: they had a rematch with Marriotts Ridge on April 8, followed

quickly by a showdown with five-time defending 4A champ Broadneck on April 14.

"These games will challenge us and help prepare our team for the intensity of postseason play," Houghton said.



Top: Reese Johnson avoided a stick-check attempt and looked to pass during Severna Park's 14-8 season-opening win against Urbana. **Bottom:** Quinn Makarovich hurled a shot at the goal.

Bruins Girls Look For Sixth Straight Title

When longtime head coach **Katy Kelley** stepped down after Broadneck claimed a fifth straight 4A girls lacrosse state championship, the transition ap-

» Continued on page 20

Title Return Is The Goal For Bruins Boys Lacrosse

By David Bashore

For three straight seasons, Broadneck's boys lacrosse team has made the 4A state championship. The last two, they've come up achingly short

of adding to the title they won in 2023.

With depth of talent coming back, they're aiming for a fourth straight trip to the final, and they hope, a bookend championship.

Through the first two weeks of the season, the Bruins have faced a challenging slate and come through with a 3-2 record. Their losses came in a season-opening 13-5 defeat against regional power Springfield (Pennsylvania), and a 6-5 decision against James W. Robinson (Virginia) in a cross-border battle over spring break. The wins came over South River (17-3), Marriotts Ridge (16-6) and West Potomac (15-2) in the second half of the Maryland-Virginia crossover.

The Bruins have talent in spades: they return leading scorers **Wyatt Hicks** and **Brady Cornett**, both sophomores, as well as a pair of Division I-bound seniors in the midfield in **Wyatt Shaw** (Harvard) and **Carson Pierce** (Mercer). There's also junior defender **Grayson Boone**, committed to Michigan, and senior Archbishop Spalding transfer **Luke Doyle** helping in the rearguard.

Randolph Macon signees **Keaton Walker** (faceoff specialist) and **Aiden Gillette** (midfielder), and Salisbury commit junior midfielder **Jack Deitch** are among the depth pieces that will help Broadneck succeed in defense and transition, two areas of strength highlighted by head coach **Jeff McGuire**.

Broadneck's testing schedule continues with games at Stephen Decatur on April 7 and Severna Park a week later, followed up by a home matchup with Cape Henlopen (Delaware) on April 22.



Photos by Fincham Photography

Top: Midfielder Duke Sealey fought his way toward the Urbana goal during Severna Park's 8-7 overtime loss. **Bottom:** Tyler Lawhorne scooped up the ball to take possession for the Falcons.

Falcons Drive For No. 10 Begins

A season-opening matchup between the reigning 3A and 4A champions lived up to the hype and gave Severna Park a valuable lesson.

The Falcons had two-time defending 4A champ Urbana on the ropes in the season opener, but they let the Hawks off the hook as Urbana rallied from down three goals to tie it in the final minute and win it in overtime, 8-7.

After that, though, Severna Park ripped off four straight wins and exited spring break at 4-2. The Falcons topped Glenelg 16-6 and Crofton 11-2, before beating a pair of Virginia schools in a spring break challenge. They topped Battlefield 11-2 and James W. Robinson 6-2, before succumbing to Severn School 11-8 to wrap the break.

The Falcons graduated a stable of

» Continued on page 20



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Bruins Softball Starting Off On Right Foot

With Broadneck graduating so many players from the past two seasons' worth of tournament runs, the future might have been in question.

That future appears to be promising. The Bruins racked up four straight wins to start the season, anchored by stellar pitching from **Rylan Crisafulli** and backstopped by an offense that picks it up when needed. They opened the season by topping Old Mill (7-2), Annapolis (8-0), Crofton (2-1) and Glen Burnie (10-0). That run ended with a 1-0 loss to Northern, putting them at 4-1 coming out of spring break.

In the Crofton game, **Corinn Bennett** laid down a bunt to score **Dianna Owens** in the eighth inning to snatch the victory and dramatically clinch a no-hitter for Crisafulli, who allowed three baserunners (a walk and two errors) and fanned 12 in eight hitless innings. In five games, the junior hurler has allowed six hits and one earned run while striking out 61 in 28 innings pitched. **Keira Plumley** and **Izzy Barrass** have combined to toss the other seven innings, allowing two earned runs while striking out 14.

The offense has come in fits and starts, but the Bruins' recipe has had success so far: death by a thousand singles. Broadneck has just five extra-base hits to go with 30 singles.

Leading the charge at the plate have been a trio of batters: Bennett is batting .471 with two doubles, a triple, five runs, and four RBIs; **Cayleigh Biermann** is batting .462 with four runs and three RBIs; **Maddie Madairy's** .571 average leads the team, to go with three runs and two RBIs.

Broadneck has a busy week, with four games in five days. They play Huntingtown on April 6, North County the next day, and Southern the day after that. Lastly, it's an early-season measuring stick game against perennial power Northeast on April 10.

Falcon Girls Leaning On Experience Early

The core of this iteration of the Severna Park softball team is entering a third season together. That experience, they hope, is starting to pay off. So far, so good, but a setback against longtime power Northeast reminded the Falcons there is still work to do.

The team exited spring break having won three games against Crofton (10-0), North County (8-2), and Severn Run (16-0), in addition to the 8-3 loss to Northeast.

BHS Baseball Aiming To Rebound In 2026

By David Bashore

When we last saw the Broadneck baseball team, they were licking fresh wounds from a devastating and controversial exit in the 4A state semifinals last May.

Though they graduated several key players from that 23-2 squad, there's hope that the Bruins will be in the mix again to make a deep run in 2026.

Broadneck returns two-time all-county shortstop and Georgetown commit **Avik Cherry**, along with sophomore third baseman **Max White**, and the duo will help knit together an infield unit that could be one of the best around. Outfielders **Aiden Casey**, **Tripp Zwerlein** and **Cooper Mengel** are back as well, giving the offense a chance to be truly dynamic, according to head coach **Matt Skrenchuk**.

Where the Bruins are less certain is in the pitching department. Mengel and **Jack Miteff** have pitching experience, but the rest is yet to be determined. Skrenchuk called the bulk of his staff "a lot of guys who have been waiting their turn but now need to prove they can get guys out consistently."

Through seven games so far, the Bruins have been mostly good. They come back from spring break with a 5-2 record, including wins over Old Mill (12-2), Annapolis (8-3), Glen Burnie (5-1) and Chopticon (5-4), mixed around a 9-3 setback against a strong-looking Crofton squad.

The victory over Chopticon came in a walk-off fashion, when Mengel scored on an error from a **Bodhi Samson** ground ball in the bottom of the seventh inning. Mengel had tripled in **Ty Schauppner** to tie the game a batter earlier.

In addition to the Chopticon game over spring break, Broadneck also

played Governor Thomas Johnson and Urbana in a one-day event, the latter a rematch of last season's state semifinal game. Urbana took that game 11-4, but the Bruins rebounded to hammer Johnson 13-1.

Through seven games, the Bruins have gotten contributions up and down the lineup. Leadoff hitter Zwerlein leads the team with eight hits, while White and Nate Sanchez have a team-best



Photos by Dennis McGinley

Above: Andy Blanck fielded a grounder and, off balance, fired it to first base. **Left:** Shortstop Avik Cherry applied the tag on a Chopticon baserunner.

seven runs apiece. Cherry's .412 batting average is best on the squad, while Mengel leads the team in extra-base hits (five) and RBIs (nine). Cherry and Samson have plated six runs each.

On the mound, Schauppner has a 2-0 record with a 1.11 ERA in a team-best 12 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings pitched. Miteff has been solid in three appearances, picking up a win and allowing one earned run and striking out five in eight innings of work, while **Landon Gossard** picked up the season-opening victory over

Old Mill. Zwerlein also has a victory on the mound.

Out of the bullpen, **Jonah Lucas** has stepped up, fanning eight batters and allowing four baserunners in 4 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings pitched.

After early week contests on April 7 and 8 against North County and Southern, respectively, the Bruins have back-to-back litmus tests when they square off against Pasadena powers Northeast (April 10) and Chesapeake (April 13) in succession.

Up And Down Start For Falcons Baseball

Under the leadership of new head coach **Pete Buck**, the Severna Park baseball team is still looking to find their groove in the early part of the season.

After a 9-2 season-opening loss to Crofton, they won 10-1 over North County, suffered an 8-7 loss to Northeast, enjoyed a 12-2 win over Severn Run, lost 7-6 to Washington and 8-3 to Huntingtown, and rebounded with a 4-0 win over McDonogh.

Dylan Phillips has powered Severna Park's offense with a .619 batting average, six extra-base hits and 10 RBIs; **Evan Boucher** has hit two home runs and added eight RBIs; **Charlie Delobe** has contributed two home runs with five RBIs; and **Logan Clarke** owns a .353 batting average.

On the mound, **Eric Benner** has started 2-1 with a 2.23 ERA and 23 strikeouts in 15 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings pitched. In two appearances, **Reese Davis** owns a 1-1 record with 13 strikeouts in 8 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings pitched. **Teddy Uy** has a 2.33 ERA in six innings pitched.

After a game at South River April 7, Severna Park will host Glen Burnie on April 13, followed by Chesapeake on April 17.



Photo by Fincham Photography

Eric Benner has provided strong pitching for Severna Park with a 2-1 record, 2.23 ERA and 23 strikeouts over 15 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings pitched.

SPHS' All-Time Leading Scorer Leads Navy Women's Lacrosse To National Ranking

By Kevin Murnane

Last year, former Severna Park High School lacrosse player **Alyssa Chung** finished her freshman year at the Naval Academy with 66 goals and 15 assists and was named Patriot League Rookie of the Year and All-Patriot League first-team while playing attack.

Chung's offensive onslaught continued this year and has powered Navy to being ranked No. 5 in the Division I national lacrosse polls as of April 3 as they went undefeated through their first 11 games.

She was a two-sport athlete for the Falcons and gave up field hockey her senior year to concentrate on lacrosse.

"Alyssa only played two and a half seasons because of her injuries, yet she still stands out as our all-time leading scorer with 150 goals and holds the single-season record with 75," said Falcons girls lacrosse head coach **Annie Houghton**. "It really makes you wonder what the numbers would look like if she had been healthy for all four years."

Chung moved to Severna Park when she was 5 and started playing lacrosse with the Elvaton Recreation Association before switching to the Green Hornets.

"I began taking lacrosse seriously in middle school," Chung said. "My older brother, Cian, also played lacrosse and taught me about stickwork and how to shoot."

Chung continued to gain more confidence in her stickwork by playing club lacrosse with the M&D Lacrosse program. Those skills helped the Falcons make it to the 2023 Class 3A state championship, and Chung was named the Capital Gazette girls lacrosse Player of the Year after her junior year.

With that sensational junior year and accolades, major women's lacrosse programs tried to recruit Chung to bring her scoring skills to their campuses, but her childhood dream was to attend the Naval Academy.

"I always wanted to go to Navy even before playing lacrosse," Chung said. "I always wanted to serve my coun-



Alyssa Chung

try, and my dad was in the Army for 20 years, so I know how important our military is to our country."

Chung's exposure to the Naval Academy began as she attended Navy lacrosse camps and gained knowledge about the game while becoming familiar with the coaches and campus.

"We're so fortunate to have had Alyssa in those camps and discover that the Naval Academy was the right fit for her," said Navy women's lacrosse head coach **Cindy Timchal**. "Alyssa has incredible lacrosse skills, is a great finisher, and has an outstanding lacrosse IQ. She's also a left attacker that gives us a competitive edge and balances out our offense."

Chung's superb stickwork around the goal has been a vital part of Navy's high-octane offense. Chung had 23 goals through seven games in March and had a season high of seven goals against Villanova on February 14. "Seeing Alyssa thriving at the Naval Academy both on the field and in the classroom is incredibly rewarding," Houghton said. "What makes her even more special is her love for her country. She is incredibly proud to represent the United States Navy, and I would love to see her one day wearing the USA jersey in the Olympics. She would represent our nation just as proudly as she represented our program."

In addition to striving for championships on the lacrosse field, Chung aspires to go to flight school in Pensacola, Florida, after graduation and commissioning.

Read the full story at www.severnaparkvoice.com.

Bruins Look For Sixth

» Continued from page 16

peared clear. With so many returners, it made sense for someone on the current staff to keep things as seamless as possible.

Caitlin Gogoll took the reins, and the Bruins haven't missed a beat. They're 4-1 through a tough stretch to start the season after beating reigning 3A champ Marriotts Ridge 8-7 in the season opener, topping South River 14-9, and outlasting two-time defending Delaware state champion Cape Henlopen 8-6 over spring break. They then topped reigning 1A champion South Carroll 10-6 before falling 14-11 to 2025 2A runner-up Glenelg in an event at Glenelg.

The Bruins return attackers **Avery Katzen** and **Charlotte Robertson**; midfielders **Ella Trout**, **Nora Lopes** and **Ceci Facciponti**; defenders **Naomi Doyle** and **Nya Williams**; and goalie **Molly Robison**.

Broadneck has two more big tests coming up: against reigning 2A champ Manchester Valley on April 8, and a showdown with Severna Park on April 14.

Falcons Drive For No. 10

» Continued from page 16

talent, but the pipeline is never barren. They return key scorers **Ben Ruppert** and **Tyler Lawhorne**, as well as attacker **Landon Williams**, midfielders **Duke Sealey**, **Dash Havens**, **Colin Whitacre** and **Will Mazcko**, and defenders **Joey Viskocil**.

The Falcons have 15 players committed to college programs. Mazcko is headed to Utah; Sealey and Whitacre to Salisbury; Williams, Lawhorne, Viskocil and **Brayden Arnold** to York; and junior defender **Lincoln Fox** is committed to UMBC. **Ben Dryer** is off to Hampden-Sydney, **Davis Bates** to Stevenson, **Sean Burkhardt** to Rhodes, **Ben Kreis** to Roanoke, **Connor Rayburn** to McDaniel, and **Josiah Renzo** to Montevallo, while junior **Brayden Cox** is committed to St. Mary's College.

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STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

JOE BRENNER

Broadneck High School | Lacrosse, Soccer
By David Bashore

For those following Broadneck athletics, most might know **Joe Brenner** as Joe the starting goalkeeper on the boys soccer team. Or maybe Joe the lacrosse player, since he's played virtually his whole life.

Inside the school, though, students encounter Joe the club president, Joe the honor society member, Joe the art student, Joe the mock trial leader. In the community, it's Joe the leader of the homeless campaign, Joe the problem solver, Joe the fundraiser.

As Broadneck boys lacrosse coach **Jeff McGuire** said, "Joe does it all."

The well-rounded Broadneck senior certainly aims to leave his mark wherever he can.

At school he has a 4.2 weighted GPA, has taken — or is in the process of taking — 11 AP classes, is in five academic honor societies (NHS, Rho Kappa, math, art, English), and has started one club (pickleball), led two others (Travis Manion, mock trial), and is active in even more.

One of his proudest accomplishments in his high school career has been as a part of invigorating a mock trial program that didn't fare so well in the beginning.

"We get the case book on Halloween and it's 200-300 pages of information, affidavits and exhibits. We went 0-6 my sophomore (year), last year we went 2-4, and we had a winning record this year and made it to the county finals," Brenner said. "To turn that around felt huge, going from kind of a losing program to the place where we might have to have tryouts for the team next year. We were up there competing with schools that have (mock trial) as a class, so that's a credit to everyone involved."

Brenner is involved in his community as well: he has helped organize a clothing drive and fundraiser to benefit the homeless community each year, after a neighbor



Photo by Dennis McGinley

who had spearheaded it moved away. He is active with the Travis Manion Foundation, presiding over the club at Broadneck and helping in the 5K run in Annapolis. With Brenner being the son of a Navy veteran, it comes naturally that he would want to serve in whatever capacity he can. He has two nominations to the United States Naval Academy, and if that doesn't pan out, he still has his eyes on service somewhere.

"Being a military kid, I feel like that helped me and want to lead in that, bringing the military side and remembering the first responders," he said. "I just want to serve in some capacity and help my community."

As part of his community, Brenner didn't want to miss his senior lacrosse season, though his development as a goalkeeper and his love for soccer has grown in leaps and bounds since he took up the sport as a freshman. He went from barely playing on JV, even as a sophomore, to being in full-fledged competition with good friend and keeper-mate **Dalton Bashore** for the gloves in 2024.

When Bashore was ruled out with a bone bruise from colliding with the goal frame, it was Brenner's time to shine, and he took that opportunity with both hands. He parlayed that experience into his club season, where he began thinking about the possibility of playing soccer in college, rather than lacrosse.

"I was just grateful to be on the team every year — lacrosse I kind of knew I would make it, but soccer, I was worried about it," Brenner said. "I was just happy to be on the team and I didn't have a lot of pressure on me. Then Dalton got hurt and it was just me — and that was the time to step up if there ever was one. ... I wanted to play for coach McGuire, and he has a special bond with seniors, so I wanted to be a part of that."

Whether it's soccer, lacrosse, school, service, or spending time working on his car, Brenner thrives in doing as much as he can. That should serve him well as he pursues an education in engineering, architecture or another field. Not knowing may bother some people, but Brenner has become comfortable living in that tension.

"I think I like being different. I'm the only club soccer player on my lacrosse team, and the only male athlete in my AP art class," Brenner said. "I don't want to get the attention of everyone by being different, but I just like being me."

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Winter College Report

MEN’S

BASKETBALL

Brendan Abell — Severna Park

Penn State-Altoona

A sophomore forward, Abell made 15 appearances in reserve action, averaging just under two points per game in five minutes of action per outing.

Jordan Brown — Broadneck

Roberts Wesleyan (New York)

After spending a postgrad year at the Darrow School, Brown was a mainstay in his freshman season for the Redhawks. He started 26 of 27 games and averaged a team-best 34 minutes played, averaging 12.8 points, four rebounds and three assists a night. Roberts Wesleyan won six of their last nine games to reach the East Coast Conference’s championship game, and Brown was named to the all-tournament team.

Jacob Randall — Severn

University of Chicago

A freshman, Randall appeared in spot duty across four games, totaling two points, one rebound and one assist in nine minutes.

MEN’S

INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

Sam Blake — Severna Park

United States Coast Guard Academy (Connecticut)

A freshman, Blake ran a variety of distances for the Bears, shining in the 200, 400, and 800, where he set personal bests in all three categories. He also helped the 4x400 relay team and distance medley relay teams, the latter of which resulted in a new program record time.

Collin Fitzgerald — Broadneck

St. Mary’s College

A junior sprinter, Fitzgerald was part of the United East Conference championship-winning 4x400 relay team, also finishing second in the 200 meters and fourth in the 400 meters at the conference meet.

MEN’S

SWIMMING AND DIVING

Liam Cahill — Severna Park

La Salle (Pennsylvania)

A junior diver, Cahill finished 14th in the 1-meter competition at the Atlantic 10 championships. His season best result was third place in the 3-meter competition at Bucknell in January.

Patrick Ciorna — Severna Park

Loyola

A freshman, Ciorna swam a variety of races for the Greyhounds, settling on the backstroke and butterfly, where he qualified for three finals at the Eastern College Athletic Conference open championships in February.

Nathan Decker — Broadneck

Towson

A sophomore transfer from Utah, Decker swam freestyle and medley for the Tigers. He helped the 800 freestyle relay team to second in the Coastal Athletic Association championships and qualified for the 200 individual medley B final at the College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association of America national invitational championships.

Dean Doubek — Broadneck

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (Massachusetts)

A junior freestyle and butterfly specialist, Doubek helped the Engineers to a third-place finish in the New England Women’s and Men’s Athletic Conference meet. He placed eighth in the 100 butterfly and 50 freestyle, ninth in the 100 freestyle, and helped the 200 and 400 freestyle relays teams to fourth and fifth place, respectively.

Owen Mahoney — Broadneck

Salisbury

A freshman distance freestyler, Mahoney finished third in the 500 and fifth in the 1,650 during the New Jersey Athletic Conference championships, helping the Sea Gulls finish second at the conference meet.

Matthew Tilghman — Broadneck

Franklin and Marshall (Pennsylvania)

A junior freestyle specialist, Tilghman placed in the top 15 in four events at the Centennial Conference championships: the 400 individual medley, 500 and 1,650 freestyle, and the 400 freestyle relay.

MEN’S

WRESTLING

Liam DeBaugh — Broadneck

Garrett College

A sophomore, DeBaugh appeared in 16 matches for the Lakers, posting an 11-5 record.

William Martin — DeMatha

Roanoke (Virginia)

A freshman, Martin reached the 184-pound final at the Old Dominion Athletic Conference championship meet, helping the Maroons to the team conference title.

Branden Whyte-Taylor — Broadneck

McDaniel

A freshman wrestling at 125 points, Whyte-Taylor appeared in 15 matches, going 9-6.

WOMEN’S

BASKETBALL

London Best — Broadneck

St. Mary’s College of Maryland

A freshman, Best started 22 of 29 games for the Seahawks, providing a steady backcourt presence as the team went 23-6 and won their first United East Conference championship to qualify for the NCAA Division III tournament for the first time since 1999. Best averaged 2.2 points, 2.5 rebounds, 1.3 assists and 1.4 steals per contest.

Ginger Kerdock — Broadneck

Cedar Crest (Pennsylvania)

A sophomore transfer, Kerdock started 25 of 27 games for the Falcons, averaging 6.9 points, five assists, 4.9 rebounds and 3.1 steals per contest.

Makenzie Wharton — Broadneck

Mary Washington (Virginia)

A sophomore transfer, Wharton appeared in 23 games for the Eagles, averaging 4.2 points and 1.8 rebounds per contest.

WOMEN’S

INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

Avery Arizzi — Broadneck

St. Mary’s College

A senior intermediate runner, Arizzi won the conference meet in the 800 meters and helped the 4x400 relay finish first as well. She also finished second in the 400 meters.

Natalie Bowman — Severna Park

Flagler (Florida)

A freshman distance runner, Bowman placed 13th in the 800 meters at the Peach Belt Conference meet, where the Saints finished second.

Brenna Brown — Broadneck

St. Mary’s College

A freshman thrower, Brown featured in two meets, setting a personal best in the weight throw at Ursinus College on February 7 and placing fifth in the shot put at Christopher Newport University on December 6.

These athletes from the Severna Park and Broadneck area showcased their skills at the college level this winter.

Charlotte Crabtree — Broadneck

St. Mary’s College

A freshman distance runner, Crabtree scored in three meets, placing sixth in the 1,000 meters on January 17 at Roanoke College, fifth in the distance medley relay at St. Thomas Aquinas College on January 9, and fourth in 5,000 meters at Christopher Newport University on December 6.

Ava Zimmerman — Severna Park

Johns Hopkins

A freshman middle distance runner, Zimmerman ran the 400 and 800 for Hopkins, as well as the 4x400 relay. Her season bests were a fifth place in the 400 at Catholic University on January 17, fourth in the 800 at George Mason University on January 31, and fifth in the 4x400 relay at the Fasttrack Nationals on February 6.

Jillian Zukley — Severna Park

St. Mary’s College

A junior thrower, Zukley won both the shot put and the weight throw at the United East Conference meet, helping the Seahawks to the conference team title.

WOMEN’S

SWIMMING AND DIVING

Ashley Connor — Archbishop Spalding

Marist (New York)

A freshman individual medley and backstroke specialist, Connor placed second in the 200 individual medley at a meet at Colgate in November for her best result of the season.

Caitlin Deitch — Broadneck

Lehigh

Deitch was selected for the Patriot League swimming and diving academic all-league team and received second-team all-Patriot League honors. At the Patriot League championships, the senior placed 11th in the 100-yard butterfly, seventh in the 100-yard freestyle final, and fifth in the 200-yard butterfly. She was in Lehigh’s fourth-place 800-yard freestyle relay, third-place 200-yard freestyle relay, and second-place 400-yard freestyle relay.

Ella Deitch — Broadneck

Sewanee: The University of the South (Tennessee)

A sophomore, Deitch was named Southern Athletic Association swimming and diving all-league first-team, and she appeared in various events for the Tigers. She claimed victory in the association’s 1,650-yard freestyle conference championship race, placed second in the 400 individual medley and took eighth in the 500 freestyle, scoring 48 points for her team. She set a Sewanee school record in the 400 individual medley with a time of 4:34.07.

Amberlynn Gong — Severna Park

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

A freshman butterfly specialist, Gong helped MIT win its 15th straight women’s conference championship and qualified for the NCAA Division III national championships in three events, finishing 39th in the 200 butterfly, 27th in the 200 individual medley, and 15th in the 400 individual medley.

Chloe Lan — Broadneck

Hamilton (New York)

A sophomore butterfly and freestyle specialist, Lan anchored Hamilton’s 200 freestyle relay team to qualification for the NCAA Division III national championships, where they placed 16th.

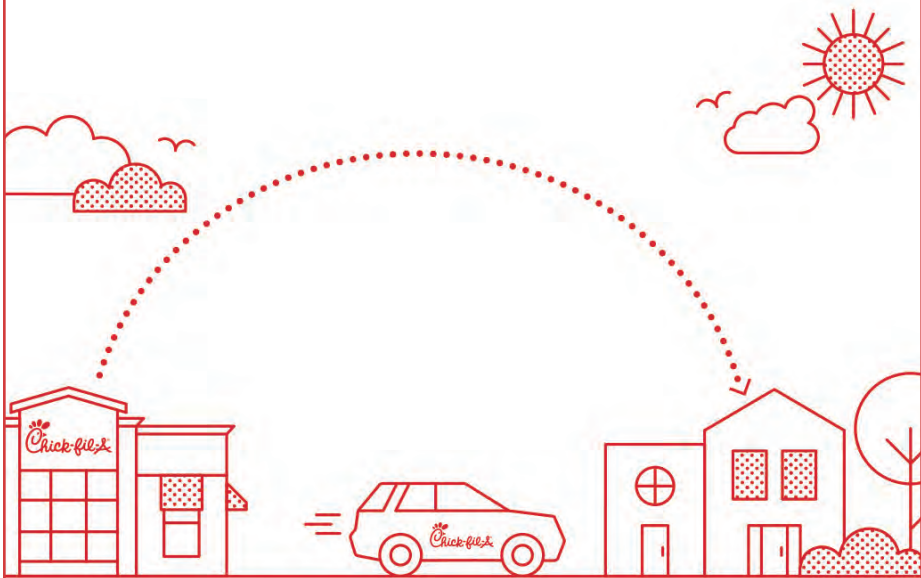
Amber Martin — Broadneck

United States Air Force Academy (Colorado)

A junior butterfly and freestyle specialist, Martin competed in eight races over the course of the season. Her most complete meet came in November where she posted five season-best times at the Phil Hansel Invitational in Houston.

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Green Hornets Basketball Rec League Champions

The following Green Hornets boys basketball teams capped their seasons with championships.



Third- And Fourth Grade A Bracket Champions: Suns

HEAD COACH: Timmy Connolly | **ASSISTANT COACH:** Mike Dabbs

Nail-biting wins and tough losses defined the Suns' season. Point guards **Charlie Deitz** and **Turner Mundorf** set the pace for the Suns on offense, while **Harrison Karsner** and **Toby Judkins** secured countless rebounds and were critical to the team's success down the stretch. Standout performances by **Bennett Kanoff** and **Curtis Dabbs** in the playoffs helped propel the Suns to the championship. Gritty defense and clutch plays by **Jameson Tallon**, **Jake Stair**, **Ben Skube** and **TJ Connolly** ensured the Suns pulled out close games throughout the year.

Third- And Fourth-Grade B Bracket Champions: Celtics

HEAD COACH: Meredith Carter | **ASSISTANT COACH:** James Woody

A few tight losses did not stop the Celtics from keeping their eye on the prize. The team followed those losses by coming together and playing as a unit. "Yes, they were aggressive, passionate, but most importantly, they relied on each other to get it done, and I'm so proud of their accomplishment," Carter said.



Fifth- And Sixth-Grade A Bracket Champions: Cavaliers

HEAD COACH: Jon Craft | **ASST. COACHES:** Michael Boosinger and Daniel D'Orlando

The Cavaliers finished the season on top, winning a championship after a competitive battle against the Pelicans, who played an excellent and hard-fought game. "The Cavaliers embraced a team-first mentality all year — sharing the ball, defending with purpose, and supporting one another every step of the way," Craft said. "The coaches couldn't be prouder of what these young athletes accomplished."

Fifth- And Sixth-Grade B Bracket Champions: Bucks

HEAD COACH: Tim Berger | **ASSISTANT COACH:** Ryan O'Donnell

The Bucks defeated the Magic 20-13 to win the B Division fifth- and sixth-grade championship. **Ryan Berger** and **Grady O'Donnell** showed off strong all-around games and veteran leadership. **Connor Higdon** was a key scorer and three-point threat. **Thomas Peery** and **Sylas Savaliski** provided athleticism on offense and smothering defense, as did **William Chekan**. Big men **Mack Glynn** and **Elliott Dorn** cleaned up on the boards and scored at opportune times. **Liam Balonis** and **Everett Bailey** contributed consistently, and they provided clutch buckets when it mattered, including in the championship game.



Seventh- And Eighth-Grade Champions: Celtics

HEAD COACH: Josh Cornett | **ASSISTANT COACH:** Tony Stemwrick

For the Celtics, the championship was a byproduct of selfless play and a shared goal. "I've coached a lot of teams over the years, but this group was special," Cornett said. "This was by far the least stressful and most rewarding season I've ever had. These young men showed up, worked hard, trusted each other, and grew as players and as teammates." Cornett left his team with a parting thought. "I'm proud of every one of them," he said. "What a season. What a group. What a finish."

High School Scrub Champions: Nuggets

HEAD COACH: Stacey Bergstrom

The Nuggets topped a field of 30 to win the 2025-2026 scrub championship. They were led in scoring by senior **Jacob Broadwater** during the regular season, with junior **Myles Goger** taking over in the playoffs, scoring more than 20 points multiple times. Senior **Jake Burns** delivered clutch shooting and two dramatic buzzer-beaters, while seniors **Reid Bergstrom** and **Matt Williams** anchored a suffocating interior defense. Sophomore **Griffin Bergstrom** led the team in assists. Despite Broadwater spraining his ankle mid-run — and miraculously returning for the championship — the Nuggets survived undefeated throughout the playoffs, including a semifinal Burns buzzer-beater while playing three-on-five, due to injury and foul trouble. Additional contributors included **Ben Morgan**, **Marcos Garganos** and **Peter Acosta**.



GH Girls Basketball Champions

The following Green Hornets teams clinched championships at the end of the winter sports campaign.



First- And Second-Grade
Rec League Champions: **Team Basagic**

HEAD COACH:
Justin Basagic
ASSISTANT COACHES:
William Fletcher
and Joey Atas
PLAYERS: Genevieve Atas, Emmeline Basagic, Claire Doot, Scarlett Fletcher, Hunter Hall, Aubrey Herring, Corbyn Lee, Campbell Nobles, Natalie Pavan, Isabelle Perovich, Lucy Reed

HEAD COACH:
Robert Laffey
ASSISTANT COACHES:
Jim Riley and Paul Shettel
PLAYERS: Heidi Borcz, Lucia Catrambone, Isla Chando, Joanna Gilmore, Willa Higgs, Reese Laddbush, Joey Laffey, Harper Pollard, Isabella Riley, Teagan Ruggio, Tessa Shettel



Third- And Fourth-Grade
Rec League Champions: **Team Laffey**



Fifth-And Sixth-Grade
Rec League Champions: **Team Freiss**

HEAD COACH:
Brian Freiss
ASSISTANT COACH:
Chris Baranowsky
PLAYERS: Aubrey Baranowsky, Mariner Carr, Annalynn Doot, Lanah Dorsey, Hadley Freiss, Magnolia Howard, Fareeda Kosakul Phohirun, Harper Sanborn, Mia Ventrudo, Emerie Wires, Olive Wires

HEAD COACH:
Kortny Hall
ASSISTANT COACH:
Meaghan Twigg
PLAYERS: Alison Bloxom, Kaitlyn Bloxom, Allie Greenwood, Emma Greenwood, Emerson Hall, Annabelle Marshall, Hadley Monroe, Callie Morton, Aneri Patel, Kennedy Wiles



Seventh- And Eighth-Grade
Rec League Champions: **Team Hall**



Scrub League Champions: **Team Cliffe**

HEAD COACH:
Dawn Cliffe
ASSISTANT COACH:
Mark Cavanaugh
PLAYERS: Naomi Baker, Teagan Cavanaugh, Elsa Cliffe, Avery Fairbanks, Hunter Flynn, Ella Gold, Charlotte Mazzola, Lola Phippen, Marin Schaffer, Emily Willis

HEAD COACH:
Chris Gilliam
ASSISTANT COACH:
Lindsey Gilliam
PLAYERS: Harper Bloomfield, Mia Carpenter, Layla Curry, Kennedy Gilliam, Leah Haborak, Hadley Howells, Adaline Lee



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Dance Back To The '80s With BHS Production Of "Footloose"



Photo by Judy Tacyn

Preparing for "Footloose" the musical, students rehearsed the "Let's Hear it for the Boy" scene.

By Judy Tacyn

Big-city teen Ren McCormack moves to rural Bomont, Utah, and quickly learns he's far from the nightlife of Chicago. Looking for some action in the sleepy town, he discovers that dancing and alcohol are banned. Now in his senior year of high school, Ren wonders, what kind of a senior prom doesn't have dancing?

From April 23–25, students at Broadneck High School will dance and sing their way into your hearts with the musical "Footloose," derived from the 1984 soundtrack and box office smash hit that launched the careers of Kevin Bacon and Sarah Jessica Parker into the stratosphere.

"Footloose" is a fun show based on a movie with one of the best soundtracks ever, but of course, it's also a story with important themes and complex characters, which made

it a good challenge for our students to push themselves," said Dylan Roche, the musical's director. "If a show is both fun and challenging, then it's the kind of show we want to do."

Jack Jones, a junior who plays the main antagonist, Rev. Shaw Moore, agreed. "Footloose may seem like just a fun show because of the dancing and the singing, but there is a deeper theme that everyone experiences," Jones explained. "People need to come to the show because there is a very important story about freedom and expressing yourself, grief, mourning and being OK with loss."

Anchoring the poignant story is the iconic '80s pop music. Even if audiences haven't seen the original movie, they will surely tap their feet and sing along with the music. Six of the nine songs on the "Footloose" soundtrack were on Billboard's Hot 100 Top

» Continued on page 31

Grant Enables Students To Help Children Celebrate Birthdays

By Judy Tacyn

Fond childhood memories often include birthday parties when one child gets extra attention, presents and a cake. It's a day that most children and their parents look forward to with excitement.

However, if a family is among the one in 10 in Anne Arundel County that experience food insecurity (according to www.feedingamerica.org), a parent's priority is providing a meal; a party or a cake is a luxury that may not be affordable.

Recognizing this gap exists even among Arnold and Severna Park neighbors, a group of Magothy River Middle School National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) members applied for a grant to

help children have the happiest birthdays possible and ease a stressful burden for their parents.

During NJHS meetings, students discussed nonprofit organizations they would like to support. This year, members chose to focus their efforts on helping children in need. After a brainstorming process, the idea of creating birthday boxes emerged as a meaningful way to make a difference.

"The birthday box project for children in need was chosen to remind young people that they matter and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect," said Christine McCallister, Magothy River Middle's NJHS sponsor. "Everyone involved hopes the

» Continued on page 34

Photo courtesy of Magothy River Middle School

Eighth-graders (l-r) Alexa Canty, Elizabeth Edwards, Claire Pierpoint and Maggie Stauffer secured a grant to offset the cost of birthday boxes.



Celebrate "Seussical Jr.'s" 25th Anniversary At SPMS



By Judy Tacyn

Pack your imagination and punch your ticket to the magical and invisible world of Whoville in "Seussical Jr.," the spring musical to be performed at Severna Park Middle School April 24–26.

A favorite production for audiences of all ages, "Seussical Jr." is an adaptation of "Seussical," first performed on Broadway in 2000. The story weaves a handful of Dr. Seuss' (Theodor Geisel) beloved stories into an enchanting musical with underlying themes of the power of imagination, having the courage to do what's right, and a person is a person, no matter how small.

"From the opening number

of 'Oh, The Thinks You Can Think,' the student actors are dancing around this colorful, wondrous world of Seuss stories and encouraging everyone to stretch their imaginations," said April Gianvittorio, parent producer. "Then as the story progresses, Horton discovers the tiny world of Whoville on a speck of dust and hears the residents calling out for help. Although so many characters try to distract him and convince him to abandon the Whos, he follows his heart and tries to help."

As expected, the "Seussical" costumes are as vibrant and lively as the characters who wear them. The costume team infused color and whimsy into

each character, including the Who families, jungle animals and classic Seuss characters like the Cat in the Hat, Horton the Elephant, and the Grinch.

The primary set is a large stationary piece on the stage with several smaller moving pieces like a bathtub, a field of clovers, a piano, a helicopter, and large flats that look like the spines of the Seuss books included in the musical. Every set piece was meticulously crafted and painted by parents and students. With a little imagination, the audience will be pulled deeply into the tiny world of Whoville.

"One thing that I appreciate about this group is their ability to just go for it!

» Continued on page 35

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Sophomore Falcon Combines Passions For Music, Mental Health In Pursuit Of Girl Scout Gold Award

By Meredith Winter

For Severna Park High School (SPHS) sophomore Ella Rice, selecting an area of focus for her Girl Scout Gold Award project was not a challenge.

For years, she has been passionate about the topic of mental health because she has witnessed friends and family members struggle with it, including a loved one who died by suicide. Ella shared that she has wrestled with mental health as well.

So, for her Gold Award project — equivalent to an Eagle Scout project for Boy Scouts — Ella has planned a mental health workshop and talent show featuring student performances and a mental health professional as speaker. Titled the Beacon Festival, the concert-style event is slated for April 26 and will be held at the Severna Park Elks Lodge.

A member of Girl Scout Troop 531, Ella shared the inspiration for her project. “Sometimes it’s just helpful to know that you have a group of people who support you, and one of the best ways to bring the community together is through events,” she said. “And I think music is a really great way to relieve stress and you know, express yourself.”

She would know: Ella participates in SPHS’ bands and orchestra and sings in her church choir. She is a percussionist and plays a variety of instruments, including the snare drum in the marching band.

“I love music, and it was kind of like bringing my two passions together into something that would help the community,” she added.

Ella’s friends from school and scouting have stepped up to perform during the Beacon Festival, and she plans to contact the middle school to invite younger talent to participate as well. Along with a friend, Ella will emcee the event.

She recalled that last year SPHS hosted a mental health assembly with clinical social worker Tory Huesgen as speaker. Ella found her speech to be eye-opening. While planning her Gold Award project, Ella reached out to Huesgen, who agreed to speak at the Beacon Festival.

“My goal with (having a) mental health speaker is trying to provide some ways that the people watching the concert can realize signs of stress, or when to help anyone they love that’s

struggling, but also recognize ways that they can improve their own stress,” Ella said.

“If we talked about mental health and its issues more frequently, people would probably be less afraid to speak up about what they’re going through,” she added.

Ella chose the name “Beacon” because she hopes the concert will be a beacon of light in the community and provide an opportunity to slow down in a fast-paced world. She hopes attendees will enjoy the opportunity to connect and be present for one another.

Following the event, Ella will propose an extensive summary of planning and executing her 80-hour project for review by the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland that will hopefully result in her receiving the prestigious Gold Award. But for Ella, the road to helping her community

with mental health will not end there.

“This isn’t going to be a one-time thing. I’ve had some of my friends who are freshmen or younger (say), ‘Hey, this is a great idea. I want to continue this after you graduate.’ So we’re hoping for this to be an annual thing,” she noted.

Ella joined the Girl Scouts when she was in second grade. Over the years, she has enjoyed working at cookie booths, going on trips to Washington, D.C., mentoring younger scouts through projects and camps, and partnering with a fellow scout two years ago to earn her Silver Award through a project that was also focused on mental health.

“Ella has been fantastic,” said Elisabeth Latone, one of the leaders for Troop 531. Although Latone is officially Ella’s advisor for the project, she said, “She’s just been very much taking the lead, which is the idea with the Gold Award.”

Latone added, “One of the things that she’s identified is the need for mental health support and awareness within the community. And so, by organizing this concert, I think that’s a really fun way to get the community involved and talking about the issue.”

Ella is grateful for the support of her parents, younger brother who is a freshman at SPHS, friends and fellow scouts in bringing her Gold Award project to life.

The Beacon Festival is free and open to all, and will be held Sunday, April 26, at 5:00pm at 160 Truck House Road in Severna Park. Registration is not required.



Ella Rice

SPHS Students Wow Audiences With “Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival XXXVII”

Photos by Meredith Winter

Stars shone brightly. Applause thundered. Talent rained down onstage for two weeks in March as the cast and crew of Severna Park High School’s (SPHS) “Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival XXXVII” performed hit songs united by the motif of weather. “Storm The Stage” was this year’s theme, and students did exactly that to sing, dance and play their hearts out. Now in its 37th year, “Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival” included performances by unified students, or those in SPHS’ Alternate Curriculum classes, during both Saturday matinees.



Dance Back To The ‘80s With BHS’ “Footloose”

» Continued from page 28

40 hits, including “Footloose” and “Let’s Hear It for the Boy,” which both went to No. 1.

Teagan Yokanobich, a junior who plays the outgoing and confident Rusty, appreciates the opportunity to experiment with how her character acts in different situations. Yokanobich has been in chorus since elementary school and likes the song-and-dance-heavy production because it allows her to stretch her vocal skills.

“We’re fortunate at Broadneck to have a phenomenally talented group of students — I can’t say enough good things about not only their natural skills but also their work ethic. Many of them are professional to their core,” Roche said. “They enthusiastically give everything they have to every re-

hearsal and are always receptive when we’re pushing them to try harder. This has not been an easy winter, and we’ve missed so many rehearsals because of the weather, but they’ve risen to the challenge of making up for lost time, doubling down on their efforts in rehearsal, and putting in the work by themselves at home. I can’t say enough good things about them.”

Best friends Robert Herzog, a junior, and Jaxson Kiger, a senior, play onscreen best friends Ren McCormack and Willard Hewitt. They feel the entire cast has great talent and chemistry and have thoroughly enjoyed the making of “Footloose,” promising audiences will feel their bond, and their love of this production.

“I don’t think I’ve ever met a more talented cast than the one we have here, or people with more

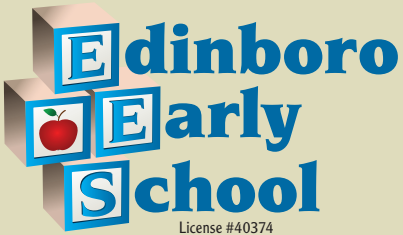
passion for theater,” Jones said. “The casting is just perfect! Each actor is perfect for their role. When I am not in a scene, I like to sit back and watch these incredible actors. They are very inspiring.”

The audience will dance and sing in their seats as they await the climatic prom scene, and Roche promises the anticipation will pay off.

“‘Footloose’ transcends its ‘80s setting. Every generation of young people has to learn to stand up for what they believe in and assert themselves,” Roche said. “That was true in the ‘80s, and it was true a generation later when I was a teenager, and it’s true a generation later today.”

In addition to Roche, the musical is produced by music director Andrew Lincoln and teacher adviser Natalie Quandel, who also serves as choreographer.

Tickets are now on sale at cur8.com/projects/2240.



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Educator Of The Month

Jen Lee Folger McKinsey Elementary School



By Zach Sparks

Jen Lee is a former chiropractor, so it should have come as no surprise when she pursued another career focused on helping people after taking time away to raise her children.

Now a fourth-grade teacher at Folger McKinsey Elementary School, Lee started as a substitute. The school's principal at that time suggested that Lee get her teaching certificate, and she is now in her eighth year as a certified teacher and 17th year in education overall.

"As a substitute, I was very fortunate to be in a lot of the classrooms and got to see a lot of the inquisitive-based teaching," she said. "By having purposefully led questions, we can guide students so they become active thinkers."

That is her goal whether a lesson is focused on math, science or another subject.

"I want students to understand that life is full of problems and problems to be solved," Lee said. "I want them to have a great curiosity of things around them."

Lee's desire to support students goes beyond the classroom, as noted by Folger McKinsey Elementary School Principal Jason Otte.

"Mrs. Lee is an amazing teacher that works incredibly hard both during the school day and after the school day ends for extracurricular activities," Otte said. "She facilitates additional activities and events such as the science fair, SeaPerch, etc. The Folger community is fortunate to have such a dedicated professional serving students and families!"

As the staff member who oversees the school's SeaPerch program, Lee is teaching nine kids how to

design underwater remotely operated vehicles. Instead of starting the kids with the first and most challenging task, the circuit boards, which require soldering, she gives them another assignment first to build their skills and confidence.

"I pride myself on taking one thing that is challenging and breaking it into simpler steps," she said. "... so, as kids build the frame, they think, 'I can measure a pipe. I can build a pipe, and I can build it like it's a LEGO.' Then we go from there."

Lee tells the kids that even engineers often fail before accomplishing their goals. "Mistakes are where learning grows," Lee said.

Participating students also hone their science skills through the Terrapin Education and Research Partnership (TERP). Lee has a group of 10 students this year to collect weekly growth data and take care of the habitat their terrapin lives in.

"They're empowered and impacted at the same time," Lee said of her students learning about conservation.

A former student informed Lee that he wants to be an environmental scientist, reminding the teacher how impactful hands-on lessons can be for young learners. Even if they have not made the same decision yet, the current fourth-graders are loving the TERP program, and they voted to name their terrapin Taco.

"We are a democracy, after all," Lee said with a chuckle.

Lee has also been busy with Folger McKinsey Elementary School's science fair, which started in February with a dedicated group of volunteers helping the kids narrow down their projects.

"The kids who do it provide some pretty amazing projects," Lee said. "I enjoy seeing the science fair foster connections between the students and the world around them."

As an example, she cited three girls who play lacrosse and measured types of lacrosse sticks made for boys, girls and goalies.

"All of the sticks had a different pocket depth and the girls had a device to measure the speed (of a ball thrown with each stick)," Lee said.

The top three finalists in grades three, four and five will advance to the county-level competition in May.

Through the hands-on science fair, the TERP and SeaPerch programs, and classroom learning, Lee hopes the kids experience a world full of wonder.

"I'm a curious person by nature and I always want to learn," Lee said. "I wanted to give these lightbulb moments to others, and I want them to see they have so much potential in them."

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Eagle Scout Project Enhances Outdoor Space At NAPS



Photo by Judy Tacyn
Will Drafterman, pictured with his father, Scott, will receive his Eagle rank award on April 19 at Troop 832's Court of Honor.

By Judy Tacyn

Boy Scout Troop 382 out of Asbury United Methodist Church in Arnold will hold a Court of Honor for William Drafterman, a Broadneck High School junior, who will officially receive the rank of Eagle Scout on April 19. For his Eagle project, Drafterman led a team to create six circular picnic tables at the Naval Academy Primary School (NAPS), where he was a student from kindergarten through fourth grade.

"I think I always had the idea of doing a project at the school. There were a couple things I could have done, but ultimately, I wanted to give the kids and teachers a nice place outside," said Drafterman, who noted it was important to give back to the NAPS students who are primarily children of active-duty service members.

In April 2024, Drafterman began the often long and meticulously detailed process of choosing a project and documenting the execution of every facet. He worked closely with Robyn Green, NAPS head of school, to come up with a project that would have a lasting positive effect on the students and staff.

"Will toured our school and we came up with the idea to place four picnic tables in the front of school and another two tables behind the school to improve our outdoor spaces," Green said. "Throughout the project, he was very communicative, prepared, prompt and professional."

Drafterman calculated that he needed to raise approximately \$2,000, which he did through a GoFundMe. He recruited 10 scouts and six adults to help with the construction, which included building platforms to level the ground where the tables would be placed. To make sure that build day would go smoothly, Drafterman and his father, Scott, assembled one of the circular picnic table kits at home so that he'd be able to best lead his team through the build.

All of the work was completed in August 2025, just in time for students and staff when they returned to school.

"Our entire school thoroughly appreciated the hard work of Will and the scouts to beautify our campus," Green said. "The tables are used as places

where students can eat their lunches, play, create or gather during recess, and when warm, serve as outdoor classrooms."

Former cubmaster and advancement coordinator Joseph Gryder said, "I have been Will's scout leader since he was in fourth grade. In that time, I have watched him grow and deal with the hardship of so many youths to do scouting and school online, emerging out of the social seclusion we all had to endure, and blossom into a responsible young man dedicated to helping others and preserving our natural world for future generations."

Drafterman served in multiple roles in the troop and with younger scouts, including being responsible for the troop's camping equipment serviceability and cleanliness, and patrol level management responsible for the education of future scouts. It was in these capacities that he recognized an interest in serving outside the troop to work at Camp Rodney, the largest scout camp in Maryland. He taught merit badges last summer and served as a role model for many young scouts, male and female.

"His willingness to teach others and support the central goal has always helped him to stand out amongst his peers as he provides them insight and alternatives for issues that arise both in and out of scouting," Gryder added. "I was able to directly observe this not only in the troop setting but on several high-adventure activities he participated in, including sleeping on a frozen lake at minus 38 degrees in Minnesota and paddling down the New River for more than 40 miles over just five days."

Drafterman loved his time in scouting, especially camping and completing all four high-adventure bases. After high school graduation, Drafterman plans to study parks and recreation or natural resources in college.

"Will represents everything that our society expects of an Eagle Scout, and a scout in general," Gryder said. "This is especially true when we look at how he always deals with people with respect and dignity. He strives to help those around him when he can and represents the qualities we all want to see in our fellow citizens."

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Students Help Children

» Continued from page 28

initiative helps children feel valued and recognized on their special day.”

To execute the birthday box project, students developed a structured process for collecting and assembling items. Additionally, eighth-graders Alexa Canty, Elizabeth Edwards, Claire Pierpoint and Maggie Stauffer successfully secured an \$800 grant from the Kindness Grows Here organization. The funding is used to purchase essential items.

Each birthday box includes simple but meaningful items, such as a homemade card, cake mix, icing and small gifts designed to bring joy and a sense of celebration. A can of soda is also included because it can be used as a replacement for oil, eggs or butter, as those simple ingredients can be a luxury for families.

“While modest, these gestures can have a powerful impact, boosting morale, self-worth and hope,” McCallister added. “The project also highlights the broader value of community service, encouraging kindness while reminding volunteers that giving back can be just as rewarding for those who give as for those who receive.”

The birthday boxes were delivered to the St. Vin-

cent de Paul food pantry at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Severna Park. Despite being open only eight hours per week, the pantry serves 40 to 50 households weekly with food, fresh fruits and vegetables, cleaning supplies, hygiene items and more.

Pantry manager Kathy Middel said the birthday boxes are welcome additions to the food shelves. In just a few weeks, pantry volunteers gave more than 30 boxes to appreciative neighbors. “One mother proudly told us a story of her daughter earning an award and her desire to do something to recognize her hard work,” Middel shared. “We offered her a birthday box, and she was thrilled to be able to celebrate her child with something she would not have otherwise been able to afford.”

At Magothy River NJHS meetings, students assemble and donate the birthday boxes on a weekly basis. Participants create handmade cards and prepare gift bags during advisory periods, taking an active role in each step of the process. Students also assist with loading the donations for delivery, and many say they are proud to contribute to an effort that makes a meaningful difference in their community. The Magothy River community has also supplied gift wrap and gift bags.

Canty said this project is especially important to her because she can only recall two birthday parties

in her childhood. “I know some parents do not have the luxury of spending a lot, if any, money on birthday parties, and it can definitely embarrass the parent,” she said. “Being able to provide the essentials for a child humbles me. This experience is something that makes us feel good to the core.”

Pierpoint said, “I believe (not being able to provide a birthday party) can make the parents feel like they aren’t doing enough for their children, even though they are. Parents work very hard to make sure their children have food and a warm place to sleep. (This project) means a lot because we get to be a part of helping their children have an amazing day and be celebrated.”

McCallister added that within Anne Arundel County Public Schools, middle school students are encouraged to develop empathy through Second Step, a social-emotional learning curriculum. The program covers key topics such as bullying prevention, friendship skills, problem-solving, emotion management, academic success, impulse control and personal safety, helping students build the values that guide service projects like this one.

There are 130 NJHS members working on this project. The team of empathetic and generous students expects to create between 150 and 200 birthday boxes before the end of the school year.

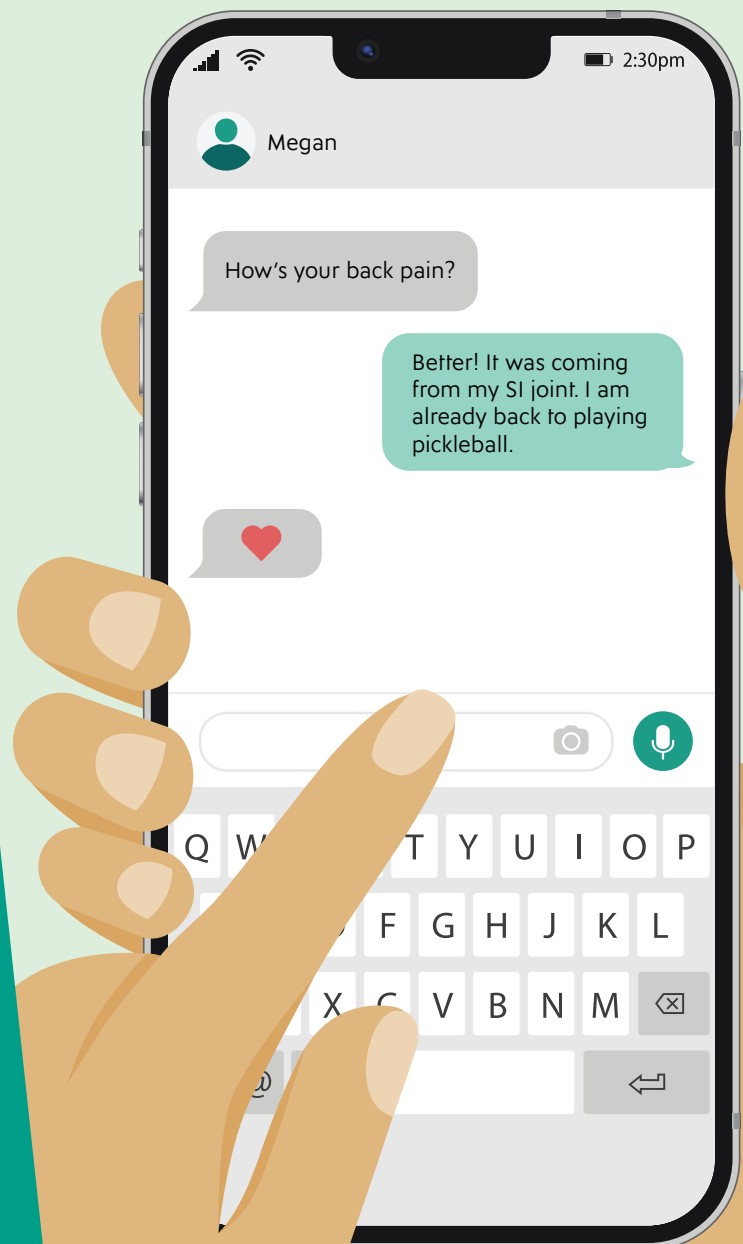
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“Seussical Jr.” At SPMS



Photo by Judy Tacyn

(L-R) Sophie Miller, Kate Hibbard, Harry Freire and Ana Gianvittorio donned their Seussical costumes at SPMS.

» Continued from page 28

“After our director set the vision, the kids and the parents just jumped in and started working hard,” Gianvittorio added. “Most of these adults are not theater professionals, but you would think they were! Parents and students had the confidence to jump in and commit to the funny characters, to build and paint these huge set pieces, and create the magic that you will see onstage.”

Gianvittorio promises the talent and enthusiasm of all 42 students involved will be evident. “I think kids really identify with the theme of doing what’s right and also enjoy the chaos of a Seuss story,” she said.

Kate Hibbard, an eighth-grader, plays nerdy Gertrude with a droopy single tail feather, a Dr. Seuss character who debuted in 1958. “Gertrude is a bird who doesn’t get noticed by someone she really loves,” Kate said. “I like playing her because it’s relatable for kids. Everyone wants to be noticed sometimes.”

She added that her fellow cast members sing in harmony very well together, and when they sound good, everyone feels good. She hopes audiences think they sing well, too!

The loveable Horton the Elephant, a character who first appeared in 1940, is played by seventh-grader Sophie Miller. “He’s a lot of fun to play because I get to use a wide range of my voice, which I don’t always get to do in other productions,” Sophie said.

Harry Freire plays Jo-Jo the Who, who was introduced in 1954. Although the sixth-grader has experience in the local theater scene, he really likes performing at the middle school. “It’s really fun to perform with people you’ve grown up with, and the talent here is amazing!” Harry shared. He believes younger kids who are now reading Dr. Seuss books will enjoy seeing the characters come to life onstage.

Ana Gianvittorio plays the Cat in the Hat, first introduced by Dr. Seuss in 1957. The eight-grader has the unique role of playing the iconic character who serves as the show’s narrator. “It’s really fun to play the Cat in the Hat because everyone knows he’s a silly and fun character!” she added. “This show will be fun for children and adults because most people have read the Dr. Seuss books or seen the movies. I think people will really enjoy our musical.”

Tickets for Severna Park Middle School’s “Seussical Jr.” are available at gofan.co/app/school/MD79851_1.

Q. Question of the month

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS DISCUSS CREATIONS AHEAD OF CHILDREN’S BUSINESS FAIR

Kids ages 5-16 are getting ready to share their creations with the community. The Maryland Curiosity Lab is partnering with the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce to host its fourth annual Acton Children’s Business Fair on April 11. With the event only days away, we posed the following request to these young entrepreneurs:

“Tell us about your product or service and why you feel there’s a need for it.”



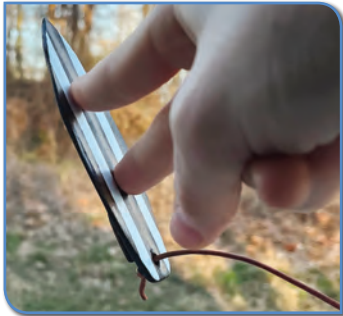
I’m doing a game where people pick a sea creature with a color on it and they match the color to win a piece of candy. I’m going to have different kinds of candy for people to win. I think little kids will like it because they get the chance to choose their candy depending on the color that they choose.

Kieran Butler, age 7



My business is called Eva’s Cupcake Bar. I am making vanilla and chocolate cupcakes with different toppings, fillings and sauces. There are preset flavors to choose from, or you can make your own. I started this business because I enjoy baking, and I like offering different custom options to people, which has been a theme in my past businesses.

Eva Donkoh, age 13



Whittle & Co. Surfboard Company crafts miniature hand-carved wooden surfboards designed to

surf the air outside the window of your car. Each surfboard is hand-carved, stained and painted in classic surf patterns, bringing life-size realism and quality to a miniature scale. This product is designed to bring joy to customers. I will be satisfied if it brings just a little more happiness to a few people’s lives. As someone who pays a lot of attention while going on daily drives around town, I have noticed that far too many people who are not behind the wheel (or are behind the wheel) spend their time staring down at an iPhone. The addiction to technology that the general population has is something that has always depressed me, and I hope that my surfboards will get more people off their phones in the car and get them back to enjoying the real world in front of them.

Liam Dowling, age 16



At The Trinket Tavern, founded by Brynn and Daphne, we mainly work to make DIY jewelry. Along with reusing “trash” to make wearables, we also have stickers, various crochet items, pins and henna tattoos (all designed and created by us). To combat the mass consumerism in our generation, we reduce the amount of mindlessly bought items by collecting found materials. Whatever you find at The Trinket Tavern is either handmade or once seen as trash and then made into something usable! There are many trinkets to choose from, and you can feel like you’re doing the right thing while wearing our handmade jewelry.

Brynn Goad, age 15, and Daphne Mays, age 13



I’m running a stand called The Pretzel Boss. I am making pretzel logs with pepperoni and cheese and another kind with ham and cheese, as well as ice cold drinks. I think people will need energy to walk around at lunchtime, so they will appreciate the food.

Max Lester, age 10



I am really excited to sell my dog treats at the business fair. I think that most dog treats in stores right now can be very bad for your dog since they are usually made in big factories that don’t care about your dog’s needs. Instead, I’ve made all of my dog treats at home with care and attention, and I am very hopeful to see how my old customers and maybe some of my new ones react to the new flavors I just made.

Keely Hardgrave, age 13



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Colleen Kiley
Luminis Health



Protein is popular. Grocery store shelves are packed with protein bars and high-protein cereals, fast-food chains are pushing protein-heavy menu items, and even coffee shops are blending protein powder into lattes.

Keep in mind, you only need 0.54 grams of protein per pound of body weight. That means an average 150-pound adult needs about 81 grams of protein every day.

If you're struggling to hit your daily protein goal, you may consider protein powder.

Do you need protein powder?

Your first source of protein should be healthy, whole foods such as lean meat, eggs, nuts and lentils. Protein plays an important role in building and repairing muscles, supporting immune function and helping you feel full longer after meals. It also helps maintain healthy skin, hair and nails, and provides energy for your body throughout the day.

Most people meet or exceed their recommended daily protein intake with their normal diet. However, if you're falling short of your daily protein needs, supplements like protein powder can help.

What is protein powder made of?

Powdered protein comes from different sources, including:

- Casein (the main protein found in cow's milk)
- Hemp seeds (considered a high-protein food)
- Peas (high in protein, fiber, iron and other nutrients)
- Soy bean (considered a complete protein)
- Whey (a byproduct of cheese making)

How much protein powder should you have per day, and when?

Most people do not need more than one to two servings of protein powder per day.

Simple ways to take your protein powder can include:

- Incorporate it into pancakes, waffles or baked goods
- Make a shake using milk or water
- Use it in a smoothie

Most people meet or exceed their recommended daily protein intake with their normal diet. However, if you're falling short of your daily protein needs, supplements like protein powder can help.

You should spread your protein intake throughout the day. If you're having a protein shake to support your workout recovery, it's best to drink that shake shortly after your workout.

Can protein powder make you gain weight?

Depending on the protein powder you choose and how you use it, protein powder may make you gain weight. Not all protein powders are the same, and those that are high in calories or added sugar can lead to unintended weight gain. Look for a powder that helps you stay under the American Heart Association's added sugar recommendations:

- 24 grams per day (women)
- 26 grams per day (men)

Can kids have protein powder?

While protein powder is generally safe for children, most kids don't need it. Children may need supplements if they are:

- Experiencing growth delays or another medical condition
- On a restrictive diet or have significant food sensitivities or allergies
- Underweight

Speak with your child's pediatrician to learn if you want to use a child-safe protein powder.

The next step for your nutrition plan

Every person's protein and nutrition needs are different. Start the conversation with a registered dietitian at Luminis Health who can help you create a personalized plan to support your energy, muscle health and long-term wellness.

Colleen Kiley is a lead diabetes educator for Luminis Health.

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The Latest Strength Training Research, Simplified

Joe Bocek
Park Fitness



One of the bigger fitness trends right now — and with good reason — is strength training (also referred to as resistance training or weight training).

Recently, the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) updated its position stand on resistance and weight training. This is the first major update since 2009, so it's kind of a big deal.

If you aren't familiar, ACSM is one of the most respected organizations in the fitness world. The organization sets evidence-based guidelines, certifies professionals, and influences industry standards. In short, it's a major authority in fitness.

Updating its position stand is important because, with the rise of social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook and Instagram, there is a lot of varying information out there — and sometimes those pieces of information seem to contradict each other.

Having trusted governing bodies like this helps cut through the noise and allows the average person working on their fitness to save time, energy and even money.



This update is based on over 15 years of new research, including more than 130 systematic reviews and data from over 30,000 people. The biggest takeaway: resistance training works.

Some of the other takeaways highlight what doesn't matter as much as we once thought, while others reinforce things we've already known. So, without further ado, here are some of the main takeaways from the new ACSM position stand:

If the goal is strength, heavier weights still matter.

For strength gains, you need to do a few challenging sets per exercise, train at least twice per week, and use relatively heavy loads.

This also means that as you get stronger and adapt to your training, your weight needs to increase along with your progress (as you get stronger, the weight should gradually get heavier).

If you want more muscle, total volume matters most.

Sets and reps matter, and how much total volume you complete across the week is more important than exactly how you structure it.

You don't need huge amounts of training.

Even small amounts of resistance training can produce meaningful progress. This is especially important for those just getting started, as many feel they need the "perfect" or most intense program to see results.

Consistency is king.

The best workout is the one you'll actually do and stick with. This may be the biggest takeaway: the focus should be on participation and consistency, not chasing the "optimal" program. You don't need the most "advanced" types of training to get results.

So why does all of this matter?

Resistance training remains one of the most powerful tools we have to improve muscle function, overall health, and healthy aging. Remember, it matters more to get started with something now than to wait for the perfect plan.

And if you're unsure where to begin or how to progress, talk to a trusted fitness coach or personal trainer.

Now go lift some weights!

This branded content is brought to you by an expert in his or her respective field.

Filmmaker Follows Cross-Country Dream, Finds It At Home

By Judy Tacyn

Following his 2004 graduation from Severna Park High School (SPHS), Dan Gvozden was a bundle of enthusiasm filled with unbridled creativity ready to take on the filmmaking world. After two decades that have taken him from Maryland to New York to Los Angeles and back, Gvozden has returned to a place that has always been home.

He spent his first two college years at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County before transferring to New York University's (NYU) prestigious Tisch School of the Arts.

"I felt a little out of place, not because I was in New York City coming from a small town, but as a film student I was a complete novice," Gvozden recalled. "I didn't feel like I had the skills to compete with other students. Filmmaking was all very fun, but there was a level of professionalism I hadn't been exposed to that other people had been marinating in their entire lives."

He persisted, did well, and graduated from NYU in 2008 when the U.S. economy was in recession. He took on small projects and jobs for the next year, uncertain about his future and that of filmmaking.

"I got a call from my parents in March 2009 telling me about a rash of teen suicides in Severna Park that included a very close friend," Gvozden said, adding he learned the SPHS administration was looking to do something, anything, to help. With no clear career path in sight, he said, "I became motivated to use my newly acquired skills, because I knew I could be doing something proactive for the community I love."



With experience from New York City and Los Angeles, Severna Park native Dan Gvozden returned to Maryland with filmmaking knowledge and passion that he now shares with students.

Gvozden hopped on a bus to Baltimore, and over the 200-mile trek wrote the script for a public service announcement (PSA) called "The Empty Seat." He spent the next several months assembling approximately 500 volunteers and putting the PSA together. "It's still the project I am most proud of as a filmmaker," he added.

The PSA was filmed at Severna Park High School and Severn School. It was picked up and shared by Lady Gaga and other celebrities, and high schools continue to this day to use it as a template for their own schools. It has been viewed more than 1 million times on Gvozden's YouTube channel.

"That PSA is still being taught in at least 10 statewide curriculums for teen suicide awareness," Gvozden said. "There are many copycats, so it's been doing the good it was intended to do for a very long time. The community of Severna Park made it happen, and that's what still makes it special to this day."

Hollywood was still calling, so Gvozden decided to give Los Angeles a try. His BWI — LAX flight had just touched down when he got a call from Severn School inviting him to teach film.

"I went to college with the plans of learning about art, film, and education and combining that into a career," Gvozden said. "I just couldn't have imagined how that would play out."

Without a film department, syllabus or resources, the young man who called himself a filmmaker was now a teacher just two days before the start of the school year. He spent the next five years building a strong film program at the private school.

» Continued on page 42

Hatton Regester Green Concerts To Feature New And Familiar Musicians On A Newly Built Stage

By Meredith Winter

April showers bring May flowers, and if they aren't too soaking, a new gazebo should sprout up at Hatton Regester Green in the weeks ahead, too.

If the weather is favorable between now and the beginning of May, the Friends of Anne Arundel County Trails' annual spring concert series will christen a newly constructed covered stage at the beloved green space in the heart of Severna Park.

Friends board member David Greene, who oversees the concert series, shared that the original gazebo at Hatton Regester Green lasted a long time — more than 30 years — but was rotting and looking ragged. With input from the Friends, the Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks has designed and begun construction on a new venue in its place. Weather permitting, it is expected to be ready for the concerts that kick off on Sunday, May 3.

"The new venue will be in the same footprint as the gazebo but will be more of a stage. It will be a bit more open on the front and a solid back for better acoustics," Greene shared. "We're really excited and so grateful to the county Department of Recreation and Parks."

Heath Neiderer, Recreation and Parks' chief of marketing and communications, added that the new venue will have a slightly different configuration to not only provide more room for the performers but also create a better viewing experience for attendees.

Neiderer shared that Recreation and Parks has close relationships with the friends groups, who bring things to their attention — in this case, that the Hatton Regester gazebo needed more than a little TLC — and Recreation and Parks then conducts inspections, prioritizes projects, and includes them in their budget.

The concert series will feature these local artists:



Seth Mitchell Band

May 3: Seth Mitchell Band

New to the concert series, this group is led by Anne Arundel County resident Seth Mitchell and is a bluegrass ensemble known for innovative acoustic music that blends traditional roots with a fresh new-grass-inflected modern sound. They perform original music and arranged covers of rock, pop and other genres ranging from the '60s to today. The band's "crackling banjo, groovy rhythm section, spunky mandolin and searing fiddle drive a rhythm-forward backdrop for songs that boldly showcase songwriting craft and emotional depth of storytelling," according to a bio provided by Mitchell.

May 10: Sparks & McCoy

No strangers to Hatton Regester Green, the duo of Edward Sparks and Steve McCoy have been performing together for 42 years as of 2026. » Continued on page 40



Sparks & McCoy





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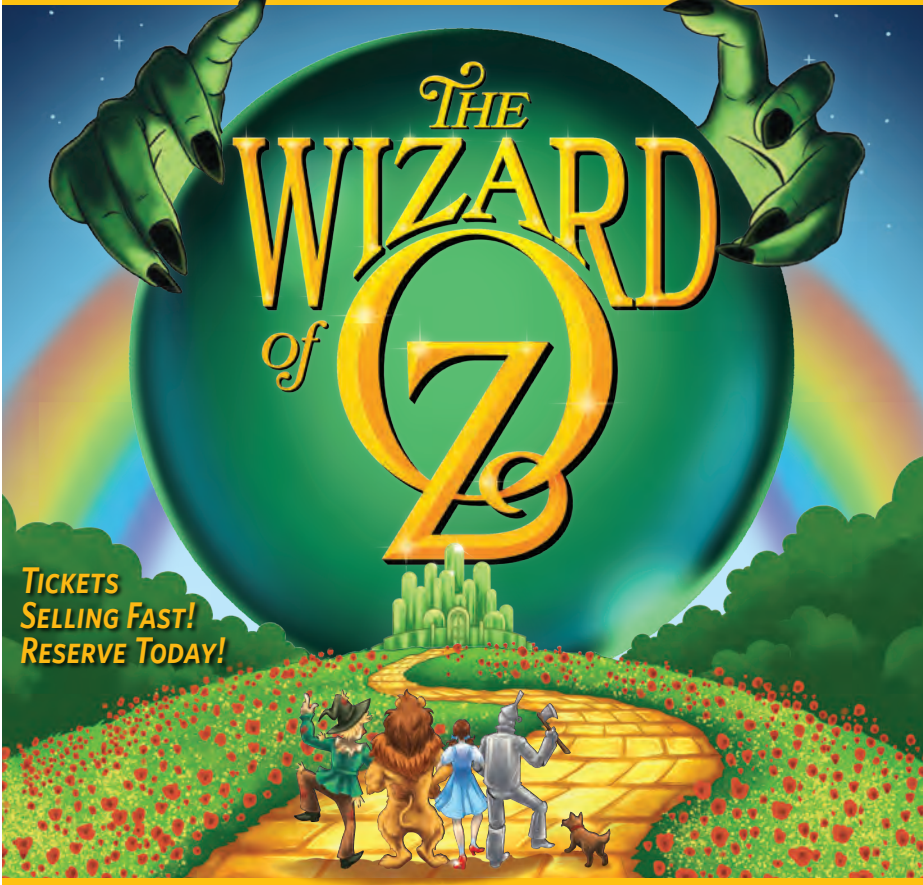
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Hatton Regester Green Concerts To Feature New, Familiar Musicians

» Continued from page 38

Switching between six- and 12-string acoustic guitars, bass, harmonica and piano, all backing up rich harmonies, they create a wall of sound that might be hard to believe is from just two people. Sparks & McCoy specialize in classic rock with covers of oldies favorites including The Beatles, the Eagles, James Taylor, Cat Stevens, CSNY, Jim Croce and others. Sparks noted, "It's on Mother's Day this year, so treat your mom to an afternoon of music from her generation!"

May 17: Jeff Herbert

Jeff Herbert has participated in past Hatton Regester concerts and brings a unique blend of sound as a solo performer through vocals, guitar and bagpipes. Herbert describes himself as a folk artist covering singer-songwriter artists from the '70s. He is a charter member of the Washington, D.C. Fire Department Pipes and Drums Band and plays weekly at The Irish Inn at Glen Echo and the beer garden at Old Angler's Inn in Potomac, Maryland.

May 24: Ginger and the other Dave

Severna Park residents Dave Nolte and Ginger Hildebrand perform around the area as the duo Ginger and the other Dave because Ginger and her husband, David, perform together as professional colonial musicians.

Nolte, a guitarist, brings an eclectic



Jeff Herbert

blend of old and new with classics from Van Morrison, Motown and Sinatra as well as more recent hits from Counting Crows, Bruno Mars, U2 and John Mayer. Ginger sings and plays the guitar, though for most performances with "the other Dave" she plays the fiddle, creating a unique sound and vibe.

May 31: Guava Jelly

Lead singer-songwriter Bridgette Michaels transforms familiar songs into island-inspired celebra-



Ginger and the other Dave

tions for the Caribbean-influenced and family friendly group Guava Jelly. The trio, which includes Dawn Madak and Mike Edillon, infuses authentic rhythms and dynamic percussion into every show. The band's high energy creates an infectious groove, inviting listeners to let their worries float away as they are transported to a sun-soaked paradise by vibrant, feel-good music.

Through grant funding provided by the county, all concerts are free and will take place on Sundays from 4:00pm-6:00pm. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets as bench seating is limited. In the case of inclement weather, updates can be found at www.friendsofaatrails.org.



Guava Jelly

"The new venue will be in the same footprint as the gazebo but will be more of a stage. It will be a bit more open on the front and a solid back for better acoustics."

— DAVID GREENE
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Follow The Yellow Brick Road To Toby's



Photo courtesy of Jeri Tidwell Photography

Join Dorothy, Toto and her friends as they trek to the Emerald City to find brains, heart, courage and the true meaning of home in the Toby's Dinner Theatre production of "The Wizard of Oz." Dorothy (played by Emily Signor) and her dog, Toto (portrayed by Moritz Vincent-Lowry), star in the Toby's adaptation. The show is onstage until June 7. For more information, visit www.tobysdinnertheatre.com.

AACC Presents "This Murder Was Staged," Where Even The Audience Is Suspect

By Judy Tacyn

Imagine being cast in a play with a cantankerous director, who, on opening night, turns up dead on-stage! A hilarious whodunit investigation ensues where the entire theater becomes a crime scene; even the audience members are suspects! Don't worry, Arnold resident and first-time full-length director Andrew Agner-Nichols isn't injured in the making of his debut, but a murderer is on the loose!

Expect side-splitting humor in the face of a tragedy, and twists and turns to keep you guessing right 'til the last scene. "This Murder Was Staged," written by Patrick Greene and Jason Pizzarello in 2024, comes to the Robert E. Kauffman Theater in the Pascal Center for Performing Arts at Anne Arundel Community College April 10-19.

"Switching from the stage to the director's chair has been a great experience so far, thanks to an amazing cast and a phenomenal assistant director, Oliva Co-meau," said Agner-Nichols, who has had leading actor roles and smaller production director roles. "You don't realize how many answers you have to have ready as a director until you jump in. We have an excellent team that helps keep me on track and be prepared."

The murder mystery takes fun jabs at anyone who's ever been behind the curtain with over-the-top theater "real life" characters amped with stereotypes.

"It's a little love letter to theater," Co-meau said. "It's really entertaining for people inside the theater world but also outside the theater world. I think there is something for everyone. And there is a murder to solve."

The end-of-January snowstorm, performance changes, and scheduling issues all threatened the on-time delivery of the show, but Agner-Nichols said the entire crew took a the-show-must-go-on attitude to produce a comedic show.

"The curve balls have been many, but the team has been terrific. I'm grateful that things have gone as well as they have," Agner-Nichols said. "Our time together has gone by so quick. I am amazed with our cast and their level of memorization and work. They are doing a stellar job and I'm incredibly impressed with our actors."

Severna Park High School graduate James Reed Estepp plays Carl P. Custodian. "This isn't the biggest role I've ever had, but it is certainly the most fun role!" Estepp said. "The script is hilarious, and the cast does its best not to break character ... but the writing is just too good! The audience will love it."

Broadneck High School alum Aryana Chamberlain shares the stage with Estepp as Mrs. Constance Flugelbert, a crotchety old woman quite set in her ways. "I love the relationship this character has with the other actors in the show," Chamberlain said.



Severna Park resident James Reed Estepp (right) plays Carl P. Custodian. He shares the stage with Arnold resident Aryana Chamberlain, who plays Constance Flugelbert.

In just her third AACC production, she is thrilled to perform a production so new and unseen and is excited to bring it to life for the community. "Andrew and Olivia (the directors) are immensely talented directors," she said. "This is my most favorite production of my career."

Everyone is invited to a company talkback on Sunday, April 12 following the 2:00pm matinee. Tickets are available at eventbrite.com/cc/aacc-performances-2606819 or on the AACC website at aacc.edu/campus-life/attend-a-performance.



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PROJECT HAIL MARY

IS A HOPEFUL SCI-FI BLOCKBUSTER



Photo courtesy of Amazon MGM Studios

Based on an Andy Weir novel, “Project Hail Mary” follows Ryland Grace (Ryan Gosling), a disgraced molecular biologist turned middle school teacher who is enlisted by a multi-national organization to combat a problem that threatens to destroy all life on Earth.

By Audrey Ruppert
Film Critic

It is in our nature to focus on the negatives in a world that is so chaotic, divisive and plain stupid at times, but we have to remember that humans are capable of incredible things when they work together. “Project Hail Mary,” the adaptation of Andy Weir’s novel of the same name, is this exact sort of uplifting story. We’ve seen a few in this vein before, of people from all walks of life coming together and using the scientific method to solve a problem and save lives;

Ron Howard directed “Apollo 13,” a true story, and Andy Weir also brought us a fictional account in “The Martian.” While in the same lineage, “Project Hail Mary” takes this concept to the next level.

The story follows Ryland Grace (Ryan Gosling), a disgraced molecular biologist turned middle school teacher who is enlisted by a multi-national organization to combat a problem that threatens to destroy all life on Earth. He is the only person on Earth fit for the job, so he must rise to the occasion despite his numerous reservations.

He befriends an alien from another solar system who is facing the same threat in his world, and together they attempt to save their respective species through careful reasoning, mutual cooperation, and a genuine care for each other.

This film is simply a delight; there’s no other way to put it. The director duo, Phil Lord and Christopher Miller, have a great track record with humor (“21 Jump Street”) and visual creativity (“The LEGO Movie,” “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse”). “Project Hail Mary” is both of these things, as well as incredibly touching. The extensive use of practical effects is obvious, with CGI supporting the story rather than dominating the screen.

The chemistry between Ryan Gosling and a faceless alien made of stone is something to behold — and I have no doubt part of that was due to the alien being a human-controlled puppet, rather than graphically generated. The score was also notable and genuinely made me question whether Harry Styles’ “Sign of the Times” was written just for this film, even though I objectively knew that wasn’t the case. While most of the acting takes place between Ryan Gosling and a prop, there was strong support from Sandra Hüller and a few other actors. Despite the runtime of two hours and 36 minutes, the film never lags and is very well paced.

The world-building is also meticulously thought out. So often, aliens in cinema are just humans with face paint or prosthetics. Even franchises like “Avatar,”

which bother to introduce different atmospheres and anatomies to their alien worlds, still resemble something that is familiar to the human eye. Weir has truly created something alien.

While much of this world-building isn’t explained in detail (the book and interviews with the author give much more insight), Weir’s attention to detail shines through in the film adaptation. Yes, there are some science mistakes that even an uneducated eye like mine could spot. Nonetheless, I could forgive it because largely, the suspension of disbelief is well maintained and things like a centrifuge being unbalanced really don’t detract from the overall message of the story.

Thematically, it is well composed; we are asked what it means to have no one to live for, and conversely, what it means to sacrifice everything for those we love and care for. Most importantly, we are reminded what we are capable of if we put our differences aside, employ empathy, and engage in rational problem-solving.

“Project Hail Mary” looks good, sounds good, and feels good. What else can you ask for? I recommend seeing this one in cinemas, not just because it is beautiful on the big screen but also because we truly need to back quality, original blockbuster films on the rare occasion they are given to us. If you’re sick of the same five franchises being revived 1,000 times every summer, support unique and well-produced projects like “Project Hail Mary.”

Filmmaker Follows Cross-Country Dream, Finds It At Home

» Continued from page 38

While still trying to shop the PSA and in lieu of having the finances to make his own movies, Gvozden started to write about movies as a way to stay engaged in film culture. He wrote as a film critic for the Severna Park Voice and other publications for several years, and he was the founding programming director of the now highly acclaimed Annapolis Film Festival. But Hollywood was still calling.

In 2014, Gvozden headed back to Tinseltown to attend University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) as a student in the cinema and media studies master’s degree program. He continued his film criticism, which allowed him to work with Stephen Farber, then president of the Los Angeles Film Critic Association.

“Stephen Farber is one of my film critic idols,” Gvozden said. “He gave me great feedback on my writing and introduced me to all of my favorite critics.” Gvozden added that during this time, he met celebrities, watched movies before

they were released, and wrote film critiques for several Los Angeles papers.

He returned to education with a faculty position at Sierra Canyon School, a Los Angeles middle and high school filled with celebrity children whose parents include accomplished filmmakers. In his seven years there, he took the small film department to the peaks of high school filmmaking both nationally and internationally.

In 2024, following the birth of his son, Gvozden and his wife heard another calling, and this time it was back to Maryland. Armed with experience in a

myriad of film industry niches, having built two successful high school film programs, Gvozden had a vision to combine his skills and love for education and do something completely different.

Now residing in Catonsville, with the expectation to join his pediatrician parents and siblings in Severna Park one day, Gvozden opened The Backlot, a school for people wanting to get into the filmmaking industry.

“I want students to have access to every opportunity in high school filmmaking that I wish I had in high school,” Gvozden said, noting that there are many tools available in 2026 that didn’t exist in early 2000s.

“I loved Severna Park High School; it’s part of my DNA and still my favorite learning experience,”

he added, while recalling a single film editing machine in a closet used for an entire film class taught by a Family and Consumer Sciences educator. “We didn’t have phones that could make a decent video. Our editing equipment would

crash if we needed to edit something for longer than five minutes.”

Based on his cross-country experience, Gvozden knows a real hunger for filming resources and education exists. He chose Catonsville for his school due to its proximity to Baltimore and surrounding counties. His goal is to prepare talented, creative individuals for film schools so they don’t feel overwhelmed or out of place.

“Those schools are filled with kids from New York and LA, but why not Maryland, Baltimore and Severna Park?” Gvozden asked. “The tools are accessible and available. (Students) just need training and a place to go.”

The Backlot opened in January and offers private lessons, summer camps and classes for people of all ages. Gvozden hopes to partner with schools to share his experience on how to build a thriving film program.

To learn more about Gvozden’s newest endeavor, visit www.thebacklotmd.com. The PSA that started his career can be found on YouTube.

“Those schools are filled with kids from New York and LA, but why not Maryland, Baltimore and Severna Park? The tools are accessible and available. (Students) just need training and a place to go.”

— DAN GVOZDEN

Her Song Traveled The World *Now She's Ready For The Journey*

By Judy Tacyn

Last summer, Arnold resident and Key School seventh-grader Audrey Meigel traveled to Florida to attend a scouting competition for aspiring actors, singers and models, and came home with many new contacts and sky-high goals.

Audrey met and ultimately partnered with NI Music Group, a Los Angeles- and Chicago-based company that specializes in developing emerging talent. Within months, she had two feel-good, dance-inspiring teen pop music songs reminiscent of the early career of Taylor Swift.

Her first two songs, "Just Through Hearts"

and "Summer Kissed Breeze," were recorded at Studio City Sound last December in Los Angeles. She also made a music video, and she and her family received a crash course on how to market her music to the world.

Released February 6, "Just Through Hearts" has now been heard in more than 60 countries according to Spotify data. "Summer Kissed Breeze" will be released April 10. Audrey wrote the majority of the lyrics and collaborated with a songwriter and producer at NI Music Group to pull the lyrics together with music.

Audrey is a well-rounded artist. She has been playing the guitar for two years, taken voice lessons for three years, and is now teaching herself to play the piano.

"I think it's very important to be able to play multiple instruments because they are very important to the mood of the song," Audrey said. "A guitar can sound upbeat, while a piano might fit better with a more serious song."

In addition, Audrey is an accomplished gymnast and feels that her athletic ability will enhance her stage performance and endurance. She also

has modeled and feels that it will help her with interviews and stage presence.

In June, Audrey and her mother, Jennifer, who is also her manager, will head to Florida to record at least eight more songs over the course of five days in the studio. The completed 10 songs will be released on her first album later this year.

She taps into the often-changing moods of a 13-year-old girl to write her lyrics. "Lyrics come to me kind of like a mood swing,"

she said. "I'm happy one minute and the next I want to cry, and that's what happens!"

Once the album is out, Audrey hopes she will be picked up by a record label.

"I want to try to make a career out of this and be able to perform and show off my music," she added. "Music is definitely something I want to do with my life if I have the opportunity and I am able to. I want to take this as far as possible."

Her inspiration comes from the music of Olivia Rodrigo, Taylor Swift, Benson Boone and Gracie Abrams. "Just Through Hearts" is a song about a best friend who moved away, and "Sun Kissed Breeze" celebrates the joy of a carefree summer.

Audrey will make her local live debut at O'Loughlin's Restaurant in Arnold on Saturday, April 11, at 6:45pm. All are welcome to attend.

Check out Audrey's music and career on Instagram and TikTok at @audrey.meigel, and YouTube at @audreymeigel.



Photo courtesy of Andy Rooney

Audrey Meigel will make her local live debut at O'Loughlin's Restaurant in Arnold on April 11, one day after the release of her second pop song.

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Annapolis Ballet Presents "The Firebird"

Greater Annapolis Ballet (GAB), a local nonprofit dance school and youth ballet company, invites the community to experience the enchantment of "The Firebird" on Saturday, April 11, at the Chesapeake Arts Center. Performances will take place at noon and 4:00pm.

Set to Igor Stravinsky's iconic score and inspired by Russian folklore, "The Firebird" tells the story of a mystical creature whose power brings both blessing and challenge. This visually stunning production features dynamic choreography, custom-designed costumes, and a talented cast of young dancers from GAB's pre-professional division.

Perfect for families, arts lovers, and first-time audience members alike, "The Firebird" offers an engaging and accessible introduction to classical ballet while showcasing the artistry and dedication of local youth performers.

As a nonprofit organization, Greater Annapolis Ballet is committed to providing high-quality dance education and performance opportunities to students of all ages. Proceeds from this production support the school's programs, training and community outreach initiatives.

Tickets are on sale now and are expected to sell quickly. For tickets and more information, visit www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/firebird-spring-performances.



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I still carry the same passion for finances that developed as a child watching my grandmother. If you're looking for financial advice, consider working with a human financial advisor who cares about you and will work tirelessly to help you achieve your financial dreams. You deserve it.

AI won't replace my job, but a human using AI could. That's why at LaBarge Financial, we're using it in ways to make our work more efficient and capture information that we can use to better serve you. Someone can only best treat you if they have all the information, and AI is one tool to help capture those important details. Our philosophy is that people come first, money second, and that sets us apart from artificial intelligence.

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1 AI doesn't understand your financial situation and your goals.

AI doesn't have the same nuanced understanding of your finances that financial advisors have. It can't determine how each of your factors influences your financial goals, like traveling during retirement, planning long-term health care, and passing down your legacy to your family. AI can be a very useful tool for doing research or generating ideas, but it cannot be used blindly.

Relationships are crucial to financial planning. At LaBarge Financial, while we use AI for simple tasks like notetaking, there's always a human on the other end of the screen interpreting the information and using our human touch to create a custom financial plan that's right for you.

2 AI lacks professional experience.

Experience matters in the financial industry, and I've worked in this field for 20 years.

Experience sets professionals apart from artificial intelligence. Past experiences help guide in-

Chamber Update

Liz League
CEO
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our directory at www.gspacc.com.

Echoes of Nature

www.echoesofnature.org

Echoes of Nature (EON) cares for over 100 animal ambassadors, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates, which play a vital role in EON's educational initiatives. Programs cater to schools, early childhood centers, senior centers, birthday parties, and community events across Maryland and northern Virginia, providing workshops, wildlife encounters, and fundraising activities. Don't miss its first fundraiser at Homestead Gardens on April 22 from 5:30pm-7:30pm.

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www.theupsstore.com/8133

The UPS Store in Pasadena offers a wide range of products and services. This store is locally owned and operated and conveniently located at 8131 Ritchie Highway. While the UPS Store has your local packing and shipping experts, it is also your local print shop, and offers secure mailbox and package acceptance services, document shredding, office and mailing supplies, faxing, scanning and more.

STEM Space

www.thestemspace.org

At STEM Space, the team is dedicated to providing high-quality STEM and technology education in a hands-on, small-group environment. Guided by experienced instructors from diverse backgrounds, STEM Space creates a supportive area where curiosity thrives, perseverance prevails, and future innovators are inspired.

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Baltimore Insurance Network

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Vivi's Chicken n' Mac

www.vivischicken.com

Welcome to Vivi's Chicken n' Mac, which redefines comfort food with a twist! As the latest venture from the Monte Restaurant Development Group, Vivi's takes pride in serving bold and flavorful chicken tenders, delicious sandwiches, mouth-watering mac 'n cheese, and fresh salads — all accompanied by signature sauces that elevate every bite. The eatery offers carryout, delivery, catering, and a VIP loyalty program, and it supports community fundraisers!

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» Continued on page 47

RIBBON CUTTINGS



Haven & Hue Hair Co. Celebrates Grand Opening



Severna Park's newest salon marked its official opening in mid-March with a ribbon-cutting ceremony hosted by the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce. Owner McKenzie Redmond is an experienced hair color specialist and hair extensions expert who works with women ages 20-50 – moms, professionals, and women with big dreams who want beautiful hair that matches their lifestyles. Services include lived-in color, dimensional blonding, grey blending, and hidden hand-tied extensions. Haven & Hue Hair Co. is located at 844 Ritchie Highway, Suite 105. Learn more at www.havenandhuehairco.com.



Skinlogic Unveils New Wellness Center

During an evening of giveaways and a ribbon cutting hosted by the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce, Skinlogic celebrated the official opening of its new wellness center, a place "dedicated to your full-body reset, inside and out." Sessions are crafted to help detoxify, restore balance, ground the nervous system, and promote internal health. Start in the infrared sauna, move into the eucalyptus steam room, experience endorphin release in a cold plunge, and calm the body in a grounding vibrational therapy bed. Skinlogic is located 770 Ritchie Highway, Suite W19. For more information, go to www.skinlogic.org.

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Chamber Update

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This group will help you build the kind of strength that supports everyday movement. Instead of sticking to one traditional style, these fitness classes in Severna Park combine elements of reformer and mat Pilates, tone, and yoga exercises with dumbbells, Pilates rings and other equipment.

Friends of Elizabeth Adams
www.adamsajudge.com

Elizabeth Adams is running for a circuit court judge position in Anne Arundel County.

Our Successful Women in Business group joined the Greater Crofton Chamber and the Southern Anne Arundel Chamber for a beautiful lun-

cheon at the **Walden Country Club** to celebrate Women's History Month. In addition, **Neighborhood Barre in Severna Park** held a free class for Women's History Month. Everyone enjoyed an incredible workout!

Our Monthly Mingle was held at **The Lodge in Pasadena**. Formerly a Green Turtle restaurant, this space has an elegant and comfortable style that is the signature of owner Titan Hospitality.

Our Business "Bites" brown bag lunch featured Dr. Sean Duffy, owner of **Compass Direct Care**, who delivered a presentation on "Frontline Medicine Evolved." The public is welcome to join us at the Severna Park Community Center for these engaging and educational talks.

We held three ribbon-cutting celebrations in March, starting with the grand opening of **Elephant in the Room**. Owner Jeremy Allen described the restaurant as a comfortable com-

munity gathering place where people can enjoy Southern comfort food with a Maryland twist.

Next was **Skinlogic's** celebration of its expansion of the med spa to include a wellness space that features an infrared sauna, a eucalyptus steam room, and cold plunge therapy.

We welcomed **Haven & Hue Hair Co.** to Severna Park with a ribbon-cutting celebration. This business specializes in hair extensions and color and brings a wealth of experience to the salon.

We cannot wait for the Severna Park launch of the **Children's Business Fair**, to be held at Park Plaza on April 11 from 1:00pm-4:00pm. Come meet our youngest entrepreneurs and business owners!

Please follow us on Facebook, check out www.gspacc.com, and join our email list to stay in the loop for all the things happening. Email me at ceo@gspacc.com.

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