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JUNE 2026

STATE CHAMPS

Four Local High School
Teams Capture State Crowns



For Severna Park tennis, this year marked a first: winning the overall team title.

Another spring season is in the books. Three teams from Severna Park and one from Broadneck have secured their spots in the Maryland athletic record books with state championships.

Severna Park's lacrosse teams both added to already impressive resumes on May 19. The boys earned a 15-2 victory over Towson in the Class 3A finals, pushing their championship streak to 10 and giving them 15 crowns in program history. Also competing in Class 3A, the girls won their third championship in four years, and their state record-extending 17th in program history, with a 9-8 win over Marriotts Ridge.

For Falcons tennis, this year marked a first for the program: winning the overall team title. In the track finals, Severna Park's 4x800 relay team of Collin Denton, Reilly Caldwell, Chase Johnson and Brenden Woods outpaced the field to win their event, and Broadneck's Cooper Rivas added an outdoor state pole vault title.

The Bruins softball team did not let the rain, and corresponding postponement, derail their 4A title hopes. Broadneck prevailed in a 1-0 extra-inning victory on May 25 for their first softball title since 2010.

To read about each team's exciting finish to the 2026 season, turn to the sports section on page 23.

Photo by Fincham
Photography

Dash Havens
(left) and **Will Mazcko**
celebrated a
goal during
the Falcons'
state title win over
Towson on May 19.

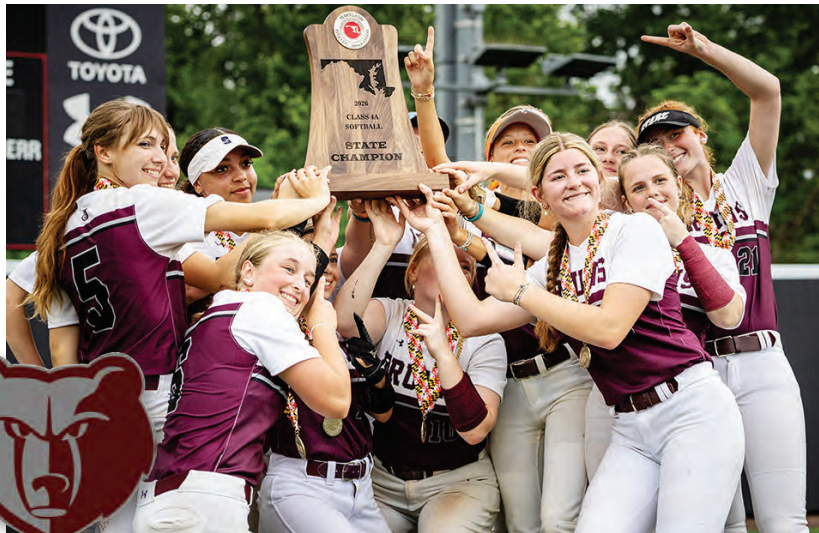


Photo by Alex Bardakh

In the 4A softball final on May 25, the Bruins prevailed 1-0 in eight innings.

The Falcons dogpiled after time expired in their one-goal win over Marriotts Ridge in the girls lacrosse finals on May 19.



Plebes No More

SPHS Class
Of '25 Grads
Complete
First Year At
USNA

By Meredith Winter

It's a grueling finale to a grueling year: Members of the United States Naval Academy's (USNA) fourth class form a human pyramid to climb a greased 21-foot obelisk with the objective of replacing a plebe summer hat with an upperclassman's hat at the top. The Herndon Climb has been a tradition since 1940 and marks the official end of plebe year for academy freshmen.

The USNA class of 2029 completed the task in 2 hours and 17 minutes the day after Sea Trials, a 14-hour training exercise that pushes physical and mental challenges to their limits. Two Severna Park High » Continued on page 10

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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.

Kathi Burroughs Is BHS Softball Super Supporter

By Judy Tacyn

If being a physician assistant in emergency medicine at MedStar Union Memorial Hospital isn't stressful enough, Kathi Burroughs played a key role in Broadneck High School's girls softball season and is celebrating their Class 4A state championship victory, a title the team won on May 25 defeating Urbana High School 1-0 in extras innings. "Watching every one of these girls is like watching my own daughter, so it is very stressful!" she shared.

Following her daughter Alex's softball career has led Burroughs to roles she couldn't imagine a decade ago. Always up for anything, Burroughs has settled into her current role as the Bruins softball team photographer, social media manager and school food pantry coordinator. She even plans her emergency room shifts around softball games and practices and never misses a chance to profile the team and players on social media.

"Kathi is the first person to ask, 'How can I help and what do you need?'" said head coach Stephanie Millard. "Her dedication, creativity, and unwavering support help showcase our team both on and off the field, and we are beyond grateful for everything she does for the Broadneck High School softball program."

Burroughs shared, "I've always helped out volunteering in youth sports and in Anne Arundel County



Photo by Judy Tacyn

Physician assistant Kathi Burroughs devoted her time this past season to being the Broadneck softball team's photographer, social media manager and food pantry coordinator.

Public Schools in any way I could. But I really love being around these amazing athletes."

Her daughter Alex, a junior and the starting center fielder for the Bruins, joined the varsity softball team last year as a sophomore on a team with 12 seniors. With that many graduating players and their parent volunteers departing, Burroughs was able to jump into several crucial roles for the team this season.

"I was asked if I could take some pictures. Next thing I know I am the team photographer!" Burroughs said with a laugh. "Then someone said, 'Can you put together some

promotional flyers to advertise our games?' and I became in charge of social media."

Following direction from the school, this season the softball team asked spectators to bring donations to games for the Broadneck food pantry, and Burroughs served as pantry coordinator for the team as well.

Creating flyers, leaderboards and player profiles for social media has provided Burroughs a fun, creative outlet to get students and the community excited about the wild ride this year's softball team has been on, and she loves profiling the girls so that the community can get to know them.

"It's really fun to put something together on social media, know the work that I put into it, and then see it get shared," said Burroughs, who also works the concession stand when not taking photos. "I think the girls like what I'm putting out on social media because they let me take their photos — even my own daughter!"

Broadneck softball looks to be a dominant powerhouse again in 2027 with only two graduating seniors this year, so expect to see Burroughs as close to the field as possible for at least another season.

"I've been with most of these girls since they were 8 and 9 years old, so I am not going anywhere yet," Burroughs stated. "I just love being around them and watching them play. I'll be back again next year!"

Severna Park Health Association Supports Local Groups

With a mission to support health-related nonprofits and charities, the Severna Park Health Association (SPHA) made a handful of donations this spring. SPHA gave \$5,000 to each of these three beneficiaries: HeartSmart, Serving People Across Neighborhoods (SPAN) and the nursing program at Anne Arundel Community College.

HeartSmart was founded in honor of former Anne Arundel County Councilman Cliff Roop, a Severna Park resident who died of a heart attack in 2000. The foundation donates automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, to public and nonprofit buildings so people with minimal training can treat victims of sudden cardiac arrest.

SPAN is a food pantry and financial assistance network that helps individuals and families get through critical or emergency situations.

At Anne Arundel Community College, the nursing department's vision is to enhance the health and well-being of the community by advancing the profession of nursing through education, scholarships and service.



Above: (L-R) SPHA board member Jon Valett, SPHA President Pat Pyles, HeartSmart representatives Ken Brannan and Karen Booth, and SPHA board member Ted Mathieson met to celebrate the donation for AEDs. Left: SPHA board members Ted Mathieson, Steve Smith, Chuck Horne, Jon Valett, and SPHA President Patrick Pyles, presented a \$5,000 check to Michele Sabeau, SPAN's director of development.



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The Severna Park Voice is published by



Family owned and operated since 1981

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Beware Of Nonlawyers Acting Like Lawyers



Rachel Muñoz, Esq.
Muñoz Estates & Trusts



Many people don't realize how much legal guidance quietly goes into a well-prepared estate plan.

From the outside, it can seem like estate planning is just filling in blanks on a few forms. But in reality, these documents control some of the most important moments in a person's life — who can step in during incapacity, who receives assets after death, how loved ones are protected, and how smoothly things transition for a family during difficult times.

Unfortunately, many families are given bad estate planning "advice" from someone who is not actually licensed to practice law. Sometimes the advice comes from well-meaning individuals in related professions. While many professionals play an important role in helping families plan financially, there is a difference between financial guidance and legal advice.

Estate planning is not a one-size-fits-all process. Every family is different. Every set of assets is different. Every relationship dynamic is different. The right plan for a retired widow is not the same as the right plan for a blended family, a business owner, parents with young children, or someone caring for a loved one with special needs.

Estate planning involves complex legal considerations, including state-specific laws, probate procedures, tax implications, property ownership rules, beneficiary designations, incapacity planning, and family protections. Maryland law is different from Virginia law. Florida law is different from Maryland law. Documents that work perfectly in one state may not work properly in another.

Even small mistakes in wording, signatures, witnessing requirements, or titling of assets can create expensive and heartbreaking issues later when families are already under stress.

One of the most overlooked parts of estate planning is the guidance and conversations that happen beyond the documents themselves. A good estate planning attorney is not just drafting paperwork. They are asking questions clients may not have thought about before:

- Who would realistically be able to manage finances during a medical crisis?
- Are children or beneficiaries financially responsible enough to inherit outright?
- What happens if a beneficiary divorces, develops creditor problems, or passes away unexpectedly?
- Does the plan actually coordinate with retirement accounts, life insurance, and real estate ownership?
- Are there ways to simplify things for loved ones someday?

Those conversations matter.

This does not mean other professionals are not valuable. Financial advisors, accountants, insurance professionals and bankers are all incredibly important parts of a strong planning team. In fact, some of the best outcomes happen when professionals work together collaboratively for the benefit of the client. But there are legal boundaries that should be respected, and legal advice should come from a licensed attorney who understands estate planning law.

Privacy is another important factor to consider. Conversations with your attorney are protected by attorney-client privilege, which helps families speak openly and honestly about sensitive personal, financial, and family matters. Many people do not realize that the same protections may not exist in conversations with nonlawyers.

Estate planning is one of the greatest gifts you can leave your loved ones. A thoughtfully prepared plan can reduce stress, prevent conflict, protect privacy, and make incredibly difficult times a little easier for the people you care about most.

If you have questions about your current estate plan, are relying on old documents, or have been given advice that you are unsure about, it may be worth having your plan reviewed by an experienced estate planning attorney. A little guidance now can save families significant heartache later.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact Rachel Muñoz at 410-541-0269 or visit www.trustmunoz.com.

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Five Things Every County Homeowner Should Know About Their Property Tax Bill

David Orso

Berkshire
Hathaway
Home Services/
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For many Anne Arundel County homeowners, opening the annual property tax bill can spark confusion, frustration and often a few questions. Property taxes are one of the largest recurring costs of homeownership, yet many residents do not fully understand how their bill is calculated, when it is due or what options they may have to lower it. Here are five things every Anne Arundel County homeowner should know.

1 Your tax bill is based on your home's assessed value — not necessarily its market value

One of the biggest misconceptions homeowners have is assuming their tax bill is based on what their home could sell for today. Anne Arundel County property taxes are based on the assessed value determined by the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT).

The state reassesses properties on a three-year cycle, meaning your tax bill may reflect a valuation that lags behind current market conditions. If home values in your neighborhood have risen dramatically, your assessment may increase gradually rather than all at once. Likewise, if market values have declined, your assessment may not immediately reflect that change.

It is important to review your assessment notice carefully to ensure it accurately reflects your property's condition, size and features.

2 You have the right to appeal your assessment

If you believe your home has been overvalued, you are not stuck with the assessment. Anne Arundel County homeowners have the right to file an appeal with SDAT.

Common reasons to appeal include inaccurate square footage, outdated records, or comparable homes in your neighborhood being assessed lower. The appeals process typically begins with a written request and may include providing recent comparable sales data or evidence of issues with the property that impact value.

The deadline to appeal is strict, so homeowners should act quickly after receiving an assessment notice. A successful appeal can reduce your tax burden for years to come.

3 Tax credits and exemptions may significantly reduce what you owe

Many homeowners are unaware that they may qualify for property tax relief programs.

The Maryland Homestead Tax Credit is one of the most valuable protections available. It limits how much a homeowner's taxable assessment can increase each year, even if market values rise sharply. This can provide substantial savings in fast-appreciating neighborhoods. Make sure you have applied and it is noted on your bill.

Other programs include the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit for income-qualified residents, exemptions for veterans with disabilities, and senior tax relief options in certain cases.

If you have recently purchased a home, make sure your primary residence status is properly recorded so you receive all applicable benefits.

4 Your bill funds more than just county services

A significant portion supports Anne Arundel County Public Schools, including teacher salaries, school maintenance and educational programs. Other portions fund public safety services such as police, fire departments and emergency response, as well as libraries, parks, road maintenance and local infrastructure improvements.

Special taxing districts may also apply depending on your neighborhood, which can add costs for local services such as community improvements or watershed restoration efforts.

5 There is no such thing as a "waterfront tax"

I will often hear homeowners of a water view property say, "You get this amazing view without the waterfront tax." That statement is 100% true because nobody has a waterfront tax. The source of this falsehood is unknown to me, but rest assured, waterfront homes are paying the same rate as non-waterfront homes.

Last but not least, the most common question I am asked is, "Why are bills sent in the middle of the year?" The property tax calendar is July 1 — June 30, not the calendar year. The bill also gives options for full payment or semi-annual payments. Taxes are complicated and it is wise to track your bill closely in a market that has seen major appreciation over the last several years.

David Orso's office is located at 8 Evergreen Road in the heart of Severna Park (the white rancher across from Severn School). Stop by or schedule a private confidential conversation if you are thinking of buying or selling your home.

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

Blue Angels Shred The Skies During Commissioning Week



In late May the U.S. Navy Blue Angels left spectators awestruck during their annual flight demonstration to celebrate Commissioning Week at the United States Naval Academy. Although the elite naval aviators were not accompanied by their iconic C-130J Super Hercules transport affectionately known as Fat Albert — it is undergoing maintenance in England — the performance featured a new-to-the-show aircraft: An F35, widely considered the most advanced fighter in the world. The F35B is classified as an STOVL (short takeoff and vertical landing), and the jet's pilot demonstrated its ability to hover in place at a low altitude over the Severn River.



Photos by Meredith Winter



Faith And Vocations Grow In Severna Park

By Judy Tacyn

Ancedotal stories of Christians returning to their faith or non-Christians exploring the faith have circulated in the news recently, and organizations like the Pew Research Center, the Worldwide Christian Database, and top universities like Harvard are earnestly tracking data and studying the results to identify trends, causes and effects, and forecasts.

For Catholic churches in the area, the number of newly initiated Catholics continues to grow significantly year-over-year, but as the Rev. James Proffitt, vicar for clergy for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, explained, there is another important trend occurring: more young men are discerning the priesthood.

"Right now, there are five young men from St. John the Evangelist, and one from Our Lady of the Fields (in Millersville) in priestly formation for the Archdiocese of Baltimore," Proffitt said. "For the first time in recent memory, the Archdiocese of Baltimore is ordaining more priests than retiring them. Over the next two years, 17 men will be ordained priests, but that doesn't mean we have 'extra' priests; it means we will have more priests to help meet the growing needs of our parishes and schools."

On May 16, Archbishop of Baltimore William Lori ordained 12 men to the diaconate at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore. St. John the Evangelist parishioner Rev. Mr. Benjamin Oursler, former pastoral year seminarian at St. John the Evangelist Rev. Mr. Michael Moore, and Our Lady of the Fields parishioner Rev. Mr. Andrew Chase were among the 12 who will serve as transitional deacons for one year in preparation for a June 2027 ordination to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

St. John parishioners Rev. Mr. Stephen Kirby and Rev. Mr. Russ Sullivan, and former pastoral year seminarian Rev. Mr. Connor Schmidt are three of seven men who will be ordained to the priesthood on June 20. In addition to Oursler, Kirby and Sullivan, St. John parishioners Colin Lukas and Matthew Sitzwohl are also in priestly formation. Lukas graduated from St. John Paul II Seminary in Washington, D.C. in May and will enter



Photo by Judy Tacyn

Seminarian Matthew Sitzwohl, and newly ordained Deacon Andrew Chase, Deacon Michael Moore and Deacon Benjamin Oursler celebrated the ordination of 12 men to the diaconate on May 16 at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore.

Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, this fall, and Sitzwohl has completed his first year at St. John Paul II Seminary. A sixth parishioner, Brother Steven Sharpe, is a member of the Servant Priests and Brothers of the community Home of the Mother, an international order of missionaries.

Proffitt was the pastor at St. John the Evangelist for 10 years until 2019, and knows these men well, most of them since they were children.

"I believe what we are seeing in Severna Park is a normalization of priesthood consideration. St. John has a very good, solid sacristan program where from a very young age, boys are given the opportunity to grow in leadership, faith, reverence and community," Proffitt said. "Families are strong in their faith and supportive of vocation discernment. Whether the boys enter the seminary or they bring their faith into their communities, I am continually impressed by their maturity and zeal about their faith."

Kirby, who will be ordained a priest next month, was first active in the Mass liturgy as a member of the children's choir, an altar server, and ultimately a sacristan.

"As a child, I was inspired by the music of the Mass,

and learned how to praise God with song," Kirby said. "Of course, I loved serving and being a sacristan. That community is very supportive, as is all of my St. John family, which continues to pray for me and my brother seminarians."

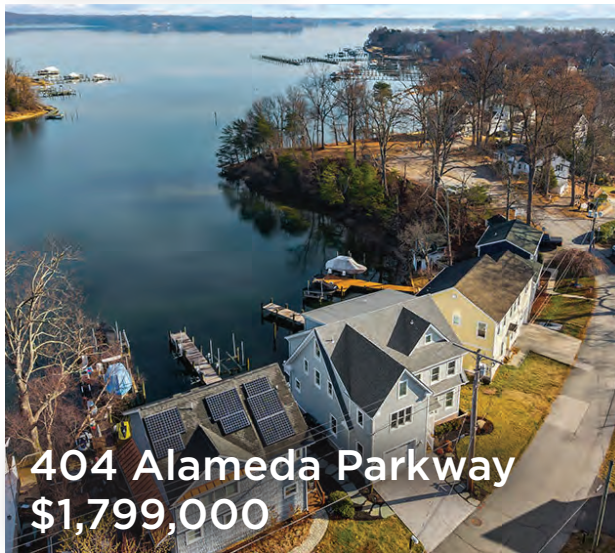
The Rev. Erik Arnold, pastor at St. John the Evangelist since 2019, feels one of the biggest reasons for the number of men from Severna Park considering the priesthood is that although they come from an affluent area, St. John families are cultivating the faith at home.

"We have parents that are teaching and showing their children that the deepest joy and fulfillment we can experience comes from something bigger than just having a comfortable life around us. That kind of home environment is good soil for the seeds the lord is planting to grow," Arnold said.

"Another big factor is that with so many young men following the lord's call into ministry, it's become real and visible for our younger youth and children. Our kids are growing up seeing people that they've known over the years entering seminary and suddenly it has become a real option for them as well," Arnold continued. "It's not something distant or foreign, but familiar. And that familiarity helps remove some of the doubts or worries one might have. None of us are perfect; we all come from real families, with real issues and struggles, but when we see someone else responding to God, even with their own imperfections, it gives us confidence to follow the lord as well."

For Oursler, a lifelong member of St. John, faith began in the home, which proved to be the soil for him to flourish.

"Growing up in St. John the Evangelist parish family has been one of the most significant blessings of my life. The parish has truly been home for me," Oursler said. "I am deeply indebted to the numerous clergy who have served here, and in a particular way, our former pastor, Fr. Jim Proffitt, who hired me as a sacristan and offered the possibility to get to know parish priests, as well as our current pastor, Fr. Erik Arnold, for his supernatural fatherhood and priestly witness during these years of seminary. Most of all, I thank the innumerable parishioners who have prayed for and encouraged me along this journey. It has not been in vain."



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EHVFC Hosts Intensive Extrication Training



During a training exercise at Earleigh Heights Volunteer Fire Company, participants worked in teams to stabilize vehicles, safely remove doors and roofs, and carefully extract victims using hydraulic rescue tools.



Maryland firefighters gathered during a May weekend for a hands-on training exercise designed to sharpen life-saving skills and improve response times during vehicle accidents. The training, hosted by the Earleigh Heights Volunteer Fire Company (EHVFC), focused on advanced techniques used to rescue victims trapped in wrecked vehicles — a critical component of modern emergency response.

Preparing for High-Stakes Emergencies

Extrication training is essential for firefighters, as motor vehicle collisions remain one of the most common emergency calls nationwide. During the session, crews practiced scenarios involving severely damaged vehicles, simulating real-world crash conditions. Participants worked in teams to stabilize vehicles, safely remove doors and roofs, and carefully extract victims using hydraulic rescue tools commonly referred to as the “jaws of life.”

“This type of training is vital,” said EHVFC Assistant Chief Craig Blake. “Every second counts in an accident, and we need to ensure our firefighters can perform efficiently, safely and with precision.”

Hands-On Learning with Realistic Conditions

To create a realistic training environment, donated vehicles were placed in various positions — on their sides, upside down and tightly compressed — to mimic complex crash situations. Firefighters donned full protective gear, utilizing cribbing tools to stabilize vehicles before cutting into metal frames.

Instructors emphasized proper communication among team members and coordination with emergency medical services (EMS). This integrated approach ensures that while firefighters focus on freeing victims, medical personnel can begin stabilizing patients as quickly as possible.

“We’re not just lifting heavy vehicles,” Blake said. “We’re working around patients who may have serious injuries, so every move must be con-

trolled and deliberate.”

Safety and Technology Advancements

Training also highlighted evolving vehicle technologies. Modern cars often include reinforced steel frames, airbags and electric components, including hybrid and electric vehicle systems that pose additional hazards during rescue operations.

Firefighters learned how to identify these features and adjust their techniques accordingly. Special attention was given to lifting heavy vehicles off of passenger vehicles, avoiding crushing the passenger vehicle and the occupants entrapped.

“Vehicles are constantly changing, so our training must evolve as well,” noted EHVFC Fire Chief Dave Crawford. “Our goal is to stay ahead of those changes to provide the safest and most effective rescue possible.”

Community Impact

While the training primarily benefits emergency responders, the ultimate goal is improved outcomes for the community. Faster, more efficient extrication can significantly increase survival rates and reduce the risk of further injury to accident victims.

Residents who observed the training expressed appreciation for the department’s commitment. “It’s reassuring to see how much preparation goes into what they do,” said local resident Emily Harper. “You hope you never need them — but if you do, you want them ready.”

Ongoing Commitment to Excellence

EHVFC plans to continue conducting regular extrication drills throughout the year. Officials encourage community support, including donations of vehicles and volunteer participation, to help sustain these critical training opportunities.

“As firefighters, we train the way we fight,” Crawford said. “The more realistic our training, the better prepared we are to serve our community when it matters most.”

Competition Awards \$75,000 To Eight AACC Student-Run Businesses



Eight AACC students earned a total of \$75,000 in the college’s annual business pitch program.

By Judy Tacyn

Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) held its 22nd annual business pitch competition and award ceremony on April 28. A total of \$75,000 was awarded to eight student small-business owners or hopefuls who successfully pitched their business plans to judges. The prize money awarded will be used to invest in the students’ companies.

“(This) competition is part of AACC’s proud tradition of preparing the next generation of entrepreneurs,” AACC President Dawn Lindsay said in a statement. “Together, we celebrate the innovation and dedication that drives small businesses, which play such an important role in strengthening our local community.”

Contestants also received invaluable feedback from the judges panel of representatives from SCORE, the Central Maryland Chamber of Commerce, M&T Bank, TEDCO, AutoTag Connect (a 2018 business pitch competition award recipient) and the Philip E. and Carole R. Ratcliffe Foundation, which provided funding for the competition.

Julie McVearry earned the top \$25,000 award to relaunch M Café Luxe, a food truck that will offer high-quality healthy food options. As a young mom with children involved in multiple sports across many locations, McVearry was tired of drive-thru dinners and concession stand staples. The cash award will allow her to make upgrades to her current truck, as well as develop an app where customers can track her location, next stops, and place orders online.

Her truck is stationed in Pasadena, where her route will begin, and several times a week will swing through Severna Park, south along Route 2, to Arnold and eventually down to Edgewater. Regular stops will include medical facilities, high schools, parks, sports facilities, farmers’ markets and more.

“I believe there are a lot of people with passions and ideas who simply don’t know how to bring those thoughts to fruition,” said McVearry, a nursing student and mother of five. “This process really helped me bring my business into focus, and the funding was a great incentive.”

Arnold resident and Broadneck High

School senior Nehemiah Robison also attends AACC as a business student. He earned \$15,000 to expand his business, Trident Detailing and Christmas Light Installation. The young entrepreneur has worked several kinds of part-time jobs and already knows that he wants to be his own boss. With his award, he will purchase a used van and customize it with tanks and equipment to make his current business more efficient.

“The mentoring I was provided during this process was phenomenal,” Robison said. “I learned how to organize my thoughts, refine my pitch, and really dig into the financial and promotion aspects of my business.”

The first round of the competition required students to submit a 10-page business plan with comprehensive requirements including a three-year financial projection. Coaches provided feedback to help the top eight students prepare for the live pitch in front of judges. Students had only two minutes to pitch their businesses, followed by a five-minute question-and-answer session with the judges. After all students made their pitches, the judges scored them using a rubric and conferred to determine the winners.

“This annual program is so much more than a competition,” said Stephanie Goldenberg, academic chair of the Entrepreneurial Studies Institute at AACC. “We hope that students take this experience beyond college to become business advisors and collaborators with other entrepreneurs. There is much to learn from each other no matter what business they’re in.”

2026 Business Pitch Competition Winners

- \$25,000 to Julie McVearry, M Café Luxe LLC
- \$15,000 to Nehemiah Robison, Trident Detailing and Christmas Light Installation
- \$8,000 to Daze Creamer-Ellecamp, Aspen’s Alternatives
- \$7,500 to Kenneth Thomas Jr., Obsessive Custom Detailing (OCD) LLC
- \$6,500 to Evan Smith, GoThrift
- \$5,000 to Brey’n Loving, Scribe Media House
- \$5,000 to April Mills, Bamboo Baby LLC
- \$3,000 to Genevieve Laskey, Live Your Mission Consulting



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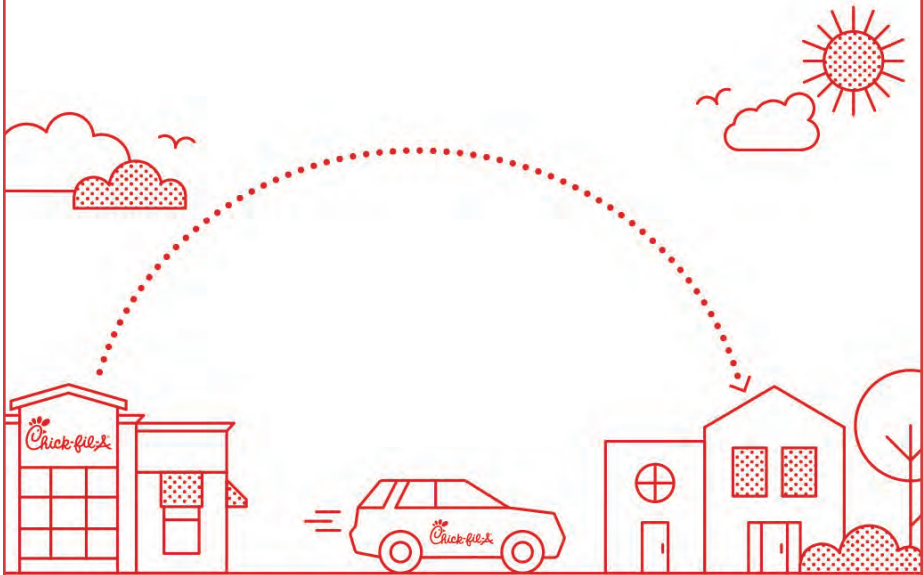
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Plebes No More: SPHS Class Of '25 Grads Complete First Year At USNA

» Continued from page 1

School (SPHS) class of 2025 graduates were among the plebes to complete these feats in mid-May.

One of those former Falcons, Cooper Alahverdian, said he had a lot of fun working with friends and classmates during the Herndon Climb.

"It was a lot harder than I thought it was going to be," he said. "I was second row up. I was holding some people up and (being held) up. I fell a couple times. ... I think it was a good culmination of everything we learned this year with teamwork and just grinding through."

Friend and fellow SPHS grad Colin Marsh sustained an injury and pushed his hip flexors too far during Sea Trials, so he played a support role during the Herndon Climb, helping participants strategize from the sidelines.

"I played my part the day prior for my company, and unfortunately, I wasn't able to do something that I've looked forward to my entire year, but it is what it is," Marsh said. "Everyone plays their part."

Alahverdian and Marsh have known each other since middle school and became closer friends during high school. Because they were in different companies at the Naval Academy, they didn't have many opportunities to interact during plebe year but nonetheless were in it together from day one. Marsh shared that they were in line together on Induction Day.

Plebe summer and the ensuing year are notoriously challenging as first-year students are indoctrinated in the traditions of the Naval Academy and balance rigorous coursework with tire-

less drills and stringent restrictions for day-to-day life.

Glad to have the year behind them, Alahverdian and Marsh are grateful for what they've learned and are looking forward to the years ahead.

"I think I grew a lot in character and as a person, in my values," Alahverdian said, adding that at times he felt lonely and missed his family and his church, St. John the Evangelist.

"I had church on the weekends (at the academy) and that was the best part of my week, just to go to church ... (because) I didn't have everything else I usually had at home. So, God was what made me feel like me. That was just really powerful for me," Alahverdian shared, adding, "It made me realize how much I rely on my family and how much I love them."

At the beginning of his plebe year, Marsh said he had a lot going on in his life and not a lot of people with whom to process those things. "Going into next year and the years after that, I'm really looking forward to just being someone that is there for the plebes — and not necessarily like I'm going to ream them out about some little thing, like still hold them to the standards — but have them genuinely know that I'm there for them and for anything that they ever need," he said.

Alahverdian and Marsh came to the academy from different backgrounds and for different reasons, but they share a common goal upon commissioning.

Marsh's father and uncle are USNA class of 1994 and 1996 graduates, respectively. His uncle was a subma-

rine officer then became a JAG (Judge Advocate General's Corps), and his father has spent his career as a helicopter pilot, flying "Bravo" and "Romeo" Seahawks. Having grown up around the Navy, Marsh always knew that he wanted to be involved as well.

Though no one in Alahverdian's immediate family was in the military, his great-grandfather served in World War II and his grandfather flew planes, sparking Alahverdian's lifelong aspiration to fly.

"My family on my dad's side, and my mom's side partly, were immigrants and then my dad's parents escaped communism in Bulgaria and Armenia and came here," Alahverdian shared. "I have a really deep patriotism and wanted to serve. I wanted to be able to give back, and I felt in debt to how much they had to go through to be able to give me the freedom that I enjoy."

Both midshipmen have fond memories of growing up in Severna Park and attending SPHS. Alahverdian is originally from Long Island, though he's lived in Severna Park since he was 4 years old. Marsh moved to the area from Florida during fourth grade.

At SPHS they both participated in Project Lead The Way, an engineering track that Marsh said helped prepare him for the academy. He was on the Falcons' cross country, indoor track and tennis teams.

Alahverdian also participated in athletics, playing JV soccer and being a cross country and track runner as well. He shared one of the things he's most proud of during his years at SPHS is helping start a chapter of Fellowship

of Christian Athletes.

This summer Marsh is teaching STEM camp at the academy and will spend a month in San Diego, California, for PROTRAMID, a training program in which he will spend a week each rotating through submarines, aviation, the Marine Corps, and surface warfare on ships. Alahverdian has already begun summer training on ships in Virginia and Georgia.

Though they have a long road ahead before commissioning, they both hope to take to the skies one day.

"I 1,000% want to go aviation right now," Marsh said.

Alahverdian echoed, "I want to be a Navy pilot, definitely. That's my number-one thing."

Acknowledging the difficulty of becoming a pilot, he's optimistic. "In the end, I think if I work hard enough and hopefully, you know, God's on my side, I can achieve that," he said.



Above: Marsh (left) and Alahverdian displayed their acceptance letters to the Naval Academy at SPHS' 2025 awards night. **Below:** Alahverdian posed for a photo with USNA Superintendent Lieutenant General Michael Borgschulte after the Herndon Climb.



Colin Marsh (left) and Cooper Alahverdian are 2025 SPHS graduates who recently completed their plebe year at the Naval Academy. During the Herndon Climb, Marsh provided strategic support from the sidelines due to an injury, and Alahverdian (pictured with his hand on the monument) helped complete the feat on a lower level of the human pyramid.



Anne Arundel Women Giving Together Awards Grants

As it celebrates 20 years of collective giving and community impact, Anne Arundel Women Giving Together (AAWGT) is proud to announce its 2026 grant recipients, awarding a record-setting \$262,913 to 13 nonprofit organizations serving women and families throughout Anne Arundel County.

This milestone year marks two decades of trust-based philanthropy and transformative investment in the community. Since its founding, AAWGT has awarded more than \$2.4 million in grants to local organizations working to improve the lives of women, children and families across Anne Arundel County.

The 2026 grants were awarded following a thoughtful and extensive member-driven review process that reflects AAWGT's enduring commitment to impactful, lasting change.

2026 AAWGT Grantees

- **Anne Arundel County Public Library Foundation Inc.:** \$18,000 for Discoveries Pantry, providing essential diaper, menstrual and hygiene support for women and families, helping more than 4,500 women and families access critical daily essentials.
- **Charlene's Circle of Support:** \$25,000 for Kinship Support Hub, empowering caregivers and youth impacted by mental illness, substance use, or incarceration.
- **Charting Careers:** \$25,000 for Building Pathways of Support for Women and Families, providing mentoring and life-enriching opportunities for youth and families.
- **Education Foundation of Anne Arundel County Public Schools:** \$25,000 for an after-school transportation pilot at Tracey's Elementary School to expand student access to enrichment programs and ease child care burdens for working families.
- **Joy Reigns Lutheran Church:** \$14,204 for the 2J2 house life skills program, helping mothers build parenting, financial literacy, and wellness skills for long-term self-sufficiency.
- **Little Yellow Bird Foundation:** \$25,000 to provide dental and emergency care for underserved women and families.
- **Path Project Inc. (Path to Hope):** \$25,000 for legal counsel and representation for low-income immigrant women and children.
- **Rise and Shine Inc.:** \$20,000 for workforce training and employment opportunities for women facing significant barriers to employment.
- **Seafarers Foundation Inc.:** \$25,000 for the summer youth program, providing educational services, water safety instruction, and

maritime experiences.

- **Seeds 4 Success: Lifelong Learning Inc.:** \$25,000 for expanded mentorship programming supporting both children and caregivers.
- **The Blue Ribbon Project:** \$6,800 for the She Matters Initiative, delivering essential gender-specific care items to adolescent girls in foster care.
- **Touchstones Discussion Project Inc.:** \$21,460 to expand transformational programming for incarcerated women in Maryland correctional facilities.
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness Anne Arundel County:** \$7,449 to support mental health services for women and families impacted by mental illness.

For 20 years, AAWGT has empowered women to create meaningful change through collective action and community investment. For more information, visit www.givingtogether.org.

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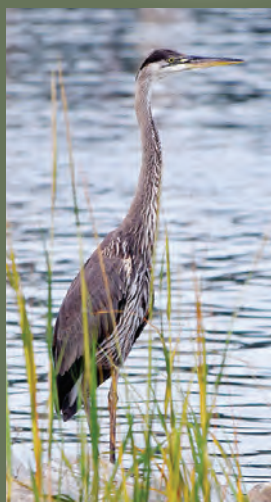


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POLITICS & OPINION

Meet The Candidates

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Dave Crawford, Republican



Dave Crawford is an Anne Arundel County native — born and raised here — who has spent 40 years running real businesses and 35 years serving this community. He is not a career politician. He is a proven leader with a record that voters can look at and judge for themselves.

Over his career, Crawford has managed a \$90 million operating budget as a district manager, secured nearly \$10 million in grants for the community, and led 145 emergency responders as a volunteer fire chief. He has managed teams, balanced books under pressure, and delivered results in environments where excuses do not matter and performance does.

Crawford and his wife, Lori, are deeply rooted in Anne Arundel County. Lori has worked in Anne Arundel County Public Schools her entire career, making education a personal priority — not a talking point — for their family.

Crawford is running for county executive because Anne Arundel County's challenges are operational, not ideological — budgets, infrastructure, public safety and schools. He believes county government is about competence: safe neighborhoods, reliable services, responsible budgeting and schools families can trust. The county needs a manager, not a politician, and Crawford's 40-year career is the relevant qualification.

His campaign is guided by six principles: protect taxpayers, respect working families, back first responders, demand accountability, support schools, and keep county government grounded in real-world results. He is not asking voters to take a chance on him — he is asking them to look at his record.

James Kitchin, Democrat

The Voice could not reach James Kitchin before the deadline.

With County Executive Stuart Pittman's administration, Kitchin served as community engagement officer and director of community engagement and constituent services before becoming the special assistant to the county executive, engaging with community leaders on major policy initiatives.

According to Kitchin's campaign website, his priorities are improving schools, fixing roads, protecting the environment and keeping communities safe.

Kyle Nembhard, Democrat

The Voice could not reach Kyle Nembhard before the deadline.

He is a professional city and regional planner with 20 years of experience. His career accomplishments include winning tens of millions of dollars in federal grant funding for the state of Maryland through strategic planning and positioning of major capital projects.

According to Nembhard's campaign website, he is focused on managing growth by balancing infrastruc-

ture with smart development. He believes in transparency, accountability, and fostering an inclusive environment for all residents.

Allison Pickard, Democrat



Councilwoman Allison Pickard is leading the charge to move Anne Arundel County forward. From building new schools to improving infrastructure, investing in first responders, and tackling environmental challenges, Pickard delivers results for our neighbors and families.

Pickard's parents raised her to value public service. Her father served in the Army and her mother was a nurse. As a longtime volunteer at Glen Burnie's Oakwood Elementary, Pickard dedicated her time to give her kids and the community a school they could be proud of. Anne Arundel County Public Schools awarded her the Volunteer of the Year award in 2013 for her work there.

Just three years later, Pickard flipped her county council seat from red to blue to serve our community. She is a strong proponent of collaborative leadership, and her record reflects a commitment to community-first policies, sustainability and equitable growth. She is running for county executive to continue to build on the progress made here in Anne Arundel County.

As your next county executive, Pickard will be laser-focused on tackling the affordability crisis facing families across Anne Arundel County. With the harmful policies of the Trump administration hurting Maryland and our residents, a strong local government and our Democratic coalition are more important than ever. She leads the strongest coalition of Anne Arundel leaders — from Congress, to the State House, to the county council and school board.

Pete Smith, Democrat

Anne Arundel County is my home, the place I love and where I am raising my kids. I am running for county executive to address our challenges, including threats from the federal administration and a county government that isn't as responsive as it must be and is standing in the way of economic growth.

My commitment to community service comes from my backstory, similar to the challenges so many face today. I was raised by a mom who dropped out of high school and had five kids before age 19. My family moved every year, and we grappled with poverty and eviction. Mentors saved my life: a cop who gave me a lifeline instead of arresting me in seventh grade; and teachers in chess club and debate class.

I joined the Marines out of high school and spent 28 years on active duty and in the reserves. I was deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, and have been a senior manager with U.S. Cyber Command, leading intelligence budgets and big programs.

In 14 years on the county council, I built a record I am proud of. I have cast the deciding votes to fully fund our schools, and I also cast the key vote to create the largest environmental plan in county history.

My cottage home legislation will create \$200,000 homes affordable to teachers and seniors.

As county executive, I will prioritize economic growth to fund schools, public safety, and the environment, and I will change the regulatory attitude from "no" to "yes." I will rebuild our police and fire departments, and I will fight a cruel agenda in Washington that is gutting the federal workforce.

In my administration, county government will be a force that brings communities together. We've had too much division. It is time for unity and progress.

COUNTY COUNCIL

DISTRICT 5

Amanda Fiedler, Republican

The Voice could not reach Amanda Fiedler before the deadline.



(Incumbent)

Born and raised in Arnold, Fiedler resides just 10 minutes from her childhood home. As a lifelong resident of Anne Arundel County, she attended schools in the Broadneck feeder system, graduating from Broadneck High School before

attending Salisbury University (then Salisbury State University), where she earned her Bachelor of Arts with a journalism track.

After working for several years in local newsrooms, including WUSA in Washington D.C., Fiedler shifted her career focus to politics and media. She is now a senior media buyer for a firm based in Alexandria, Virginia, where she has worked since 2010.

Fiedler has served on the Anne Arundel County Council since November 2018 and is "known for her responsiveness, accessibility, swift action, and thoughtful considerations and discussions she gives to residents on any issue, big or small," according to her website.

Natalie Ogilvie, Democrat

The Voice did not receive responses from Natalie Ogilvie before the deadline.

Ogilvie is a mom, a small-business owner, and the secretary of the Anne Arundel Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee. According to her Facebook page, she is running because "our community deserves leadership that is proactive, responsive, and focused on solving the problems families are dealing with right now."

One of her top priorities is improving access to more efficient transportation, services and permitting. She also said the county should protect the environment while planning responsibly for growth. Lastly, "We cannot balance our books by cutting the people who hold this county together. That means protecting funding for our teachers, firefighters, and police officers and ensuring essential services remain strong," she said.

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Meet The Candidates

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SHERIFF

Jim Fredericks, Republican



I am a lifelong county resident and a modern law enforcement leader with the experience, education and commitment to public safety you deserve. For more than 38 years, I have been married to my high-school sweetheart, and we have three children and five grandchildren. My dedication to the safety of our

communities isn't an interest in being another elected official; it's a commitment to making Anne Arundel County the safest place for our families, friends and neighbors to grow and thrive.

Does experience matter? Yes, but not any experience; the right experience. My knowledge of law enforcement and protecting our communities comes from working my way through the ranks of the Anne Arundel County police department, earning your trust, and ultimately being elected as your sheriff from 2018 to 2022. My career spans 30 consecutive years of service in our county, having developed incredible relationships with community and business leaders.

Being a modern sheriff requires vision, leadership and an understanding of how our county functions. As your sheriff, I secured a large, new sheriff's office facility, with modern canine, training, dispatch, and warrant service capabilities. I instituted innovative warrant reduction programs that reduced outstanding warrant numbers by more than 10%.

In that same time, I worked with the county council to create more new deputy positions than in the previous 20 years combined. My administration enhanced community engagement through mobile technology, advanced new technologies for courthouse security, and fully implemented the agency's body worn camera program.

In the next four years, I will leverage new partnerships to fulfill staffing needs of the circuit court, further reduce outstanding warrants, and implement new strategies to not only move the sheriff's office forward, but to ensure the safest Anne Arundel County for our citizens.

James McNeill, Republican

The Voice could not reach James McNeill before the deadline.

According to his website, McNeill is a lifelong resident of Anne Arundel County, a former law enforcement officer and a dedicated community member with over two decades of public safety experience. Having served in multiple policing roles, volunteered within local agencies, and operated as a small-business owner, he brings a practical, ground-level understanding of both law enforcement and the community it serves. A husband of 38 years and father of three, McNeill is running a grassroots campaign focused on transparency, accountability, and strengthening public safety through experience, collaboration and modern solutions.

Everett Sesker, Democrat

The Voice could not reach Everett Sesker before the deadline.

(Incumbent) He was raised in Edgewater, surrounded by a large extended family who values community and making the world a better place. In 1990, Sesker joined the Prince George's County Police Department, starting a 22-year stint protecting the citizens of that area.

After serving the citizens of Prince George's County and retiring as a major in 2012, Sesker was appointed by Governor Larry Hogan as the executive director of the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission in 2017. Sesker ran for Anne Arundel County sheriff in the

2022 election. During his term in office, he has worked diligently to modernize equipment, reorganize bureaus to increase efficiency and effectiveness, and establish pathways into the communities that the sheriff's office serves.

STATE'S ATTORNEY

Anne Colt Leitesse, Democrat

The Voice did not receive responses from Anne Colt Leitesse before the deadline.

(Incumbent) A career prosecutor for over 30 years, Colt Leitesse first served as state's attorney in 2013 and was elected to the office in 2018 and 2022. She has spent her career fighting for justice and protecting citizens' rights.

According to her campaign website, she speaks out against "the abuses of ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and accountability during these troubling times of federal overreach."

Carolynn Grammas, Democrat



I have served the people of Anne Arundel County as a career prosecutor for over two decades. Throughout my career, I have prosecuted violent crimes, homicides, sexual offenses and vehicular manslaughter cases, and served as deputy chief of the district court, while mentoring

younger prosecutors. I have built my career on integrity, preparation, fairness and treating victims and their families with dignity and respect.

My decision to run for state's attorney is deeply personal and grounded in my belief that the mission of justice in Anne Arundel County must be restored without compromise. Early in my life, my best friend was murdered. I sat through the trial beside her family and saw firsthand how important it is for victims to be heard, informed and treated with compassion throughout the legal process. Before becoming a prosecutor, I also trained in the public defender's office, where I learned the importance of ensuring prosecutions are fair and justice is applied equally to every person. Both experiences shaped the prosecutor I became.

Residents of Anne Arundel County are familiar with the ethical concerns and highly publicized prosecutorial problems that have occurred during the current administration, as reported by the Capital Gazette, Baltimore Sun and other outlets. If you are unfamiliar with those issues, I encourage you to visit my website at www.votegrammas.com. I am not a politician. I am running because I believe the state's attorney's office must return to ethical leadership, professionalism and strong courtroom prosecution. Prosecutors must receive proper training, mentorship and accountability so they can effectively try cases and secure convictions that are lawful, sustainable and just. Victims deserve an office that communicates with them, respects them, and fights for them every day. I am proud to have the support of law enforcement, public defenders and members of the defense bar.

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 30 SENATOR



Jessica Haire, Republican

I'm running because I believe public service is about listening, being present in our communities, and solving the real problems impacting families every day. From

rising utility bills and traffic congestion to the need for safer roads, stronger infrastructure, and responsible budgets, we need practical, evidence-based solutions that improve quality of life.

I'm a civil engineer, government contracts attorney, former Anne Arundel County councilwoman, and a mom. Throughout my career, I've focused on improving our communities while respecting taxpayer dollars and delivering results.

During my time on the county council, I was proud to lead more bipartisan legislation that became law than any other council member. I worked to advance Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts, improve road safety, and modernize infrastructure in our communities. That experience reinforced my belief that progress comes from listening, focusing on facts and working collaboratively.

As your state senator, my priorities will focus on affordability, economic growth, and infrastructure improvements that strengthen District 30.

At the end of the day, you deserve leadership in Annapolis that gets back to the basics — leadership that listens, puts communities first, and focuses on results over politics. That's the kind of state senator I will be: approachable, responsive and committed to working together collaboratively.

Shaneka Henson, Democrat

The Voice could not reach Shaneka Henson before the deadline.

(Incumbent) Henson was born and raised in Annapolis and attended Coppin State University, where she graduated in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice. Henson continued her educational pursuits and attended the University of Baltimore, receiving her Juris Doctorate in law.

Before joining the Maryland legislature, Henson spent 10 years as a practicing attorney for the Maryland office of the attorney general and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). She continues her passion for the law as a principal attorney in her firm, Johnson Legal Group LLC.

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 30A DELEGATE

Dylan Behler, Democrat



(Incumbent) Dylan Behler is a lifelong Marylander and Anne Arundel County resident who proudly serves as delegate for District 30A. Behler entered public service because he believes government can be a force for good and help solve the challenges Marylanders face every day. That

belief comes from lived experience — without programs like Medicaid, Free and Reduced Meals in school, and Pell Grants, he would not have had the same opportunity to succeed as a first-generation college student.

Before becoming a delegate, Behler dedicated his career to public service. He served as chief of staff to then-State Senator Sarah Elfreth, where he helped draft and pass more than 80 pieces of legislation while also helping constituents navigate state government and access critical services. He later served as legislative director at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, where he worked to restore the Chesapeake Bay, strengthen climate resilience, and support Maryland's rural economies.

Now in the House of Delegates, Behler is focused on lowering the cost of living for Maryland families while standing up for vulnerable communities and protecting Marylanders from harmful federal actions. In his first full legislative session, he passed nine bills and serves on the Environment and Transportation Committee, where he works to address climate change, lower energy costs, and improve transportation infrastructure across Maryland.

» Continued on page 17

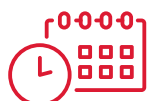
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I am "vetted."

My application is available on my website under the page titled "Transparency." The judges are reluctant to release theirs. I hold the highest rating possible from the state bar.

I am a hometown girl.

I am the only candidate in the race that was born and raised and lived my entire life in Anne Arundel County.

(The other three may live here now, but they're not from here.)

I was not rejected by the voters.

(Ginina was.) In the last election cycle 427,353 votes were cast against her. The Governor is telling the public those votes don't matter. They are the people's voice and that should be respected.

(From SBE: primary - 100,992 votes cast against her; general - 326,361 votes cast against her)

I have over 25 years of experience.

I have handled several thousand cases in Anne Arundel County courts. *(Criminal Prosecution, Criminal Defense and Civil Cases)*

My career is one of public service.

I was an Assistant States Attorney for Anne Arundel County and I was an Assistant County Attorney with the Anne Arundel County Office of Law. There isn't anyone on the bench with my particular depth and breadth of experience.

I believe in fair justice.

I believe that victims of crimes deserve to have a voice in the courtroom. I am tough on crime and believe in accountability and responsibility.

I care about my community.

I care about the quality of the bench that serves my community. We need and deserve better judges.

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in District 33C!*

Meet The Candidates

» Continued from page 14

Dana Jones, Democrat

The Voice could not reach Dana Jones before the deadline.

(Incumbent) Jones was born, raised and educated in Maryland. Before joining the Maryland legislature, she spent 23 years working with elected officials including serving as a legislative assistant to then-Congressman Benjamin Cardin on Capitol Hill, as a senior researcher at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, senior staff at EMILYs List, and partner in her own national consulting firm.

In 2020, just days after a statewide stay-at-home order was issued due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jones was chosen by the Anne Arundel County Democratic Central Committee and appointed by Governor Larry Hogan to represent District 30A in the Maryland General Assembly. In the six sessions Jones has served, she has passed 41 bills, including The Freedom to Read Act, a piece of legislation that makes Maryland the first state in the nation to protect books from authoritarian bans and protects library spaces and librarians from censorship, punitive action and harassment. Her legislative portfolio also includes expansive work on election law to protect U.S. democracy, broadening access to telehealth services for students, and supporting firefighter and EMS personnel.

Bradley O'Neal, Democrat



My name is Bradley K. O'Neal. I was born and raised in Annapolis, and I am running for the Maryland House of Delegates to serve District 30A.

Annapolis is not just where I live. It is the community that raised me. My life has been shaped by local schools, neighbor-

hoods, athletic fields, small businesses and waterways. As an Eagle Scout, former professional baseball player, banker, local business owner, beekeeper, inventor and graduate with degrees in business administration and economics, I have a background that reflects preparation, discipline and a long-term commitment to District 30A.

This campaign is rooted in the belief that Annapolis should remain a place where working families, seniors, public servants, small-business owners, young adults and long-time residents can build stable lives. Affordability and long-term resident retention would be central priorities.

Maryland must address housing affordability, utility accountability, transportation access, small-business stability, responsible budgeting, and stronger coordination across government so the people who help sustain this community can remain rooted here.

Youth opportunity is another major focus. Maryland should strengthen career pathways, mentorship, youth employment, financial literacy and partnerships that connect education to opportunity. Young people should have real chances to discover their talents, build skills and move forward with dignity and purpose.

Environmental stewardship is personal to me. One of my first legislative proposals is the State Highway Vegetative Management Modernization and Pollinator Coordination Act, a measured effort to use appropriate state highway land as pollinator corridors while protecting safety, access and public dollars.

My reason for running is rooted in love for this community and a responsibility to those who live here. Annapolis raised me. District 30A shaped me. With your support, I will carry that responsibility into the House of Delegates and work every day for the place we call home.

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 31 SENATOR

Nic Kipke, Republican



Nic Kipke is a life-long resident of Anne Arundel County and a class of 1997 graduate of Chesapeake High School. Since 2000, he's worked in the private sector at Reps & Associates, a manufacturer rep firm where he was named vice president in 2014. He lives in Pasadena with

his wife, Susannah, and their four children.

Kipke has been elected to the House of Delegates since 2006, and during that time, he has earned a reputation as an effective conservative leader. In 2025, the Center for Effective Lawmaking released its rankings noting that Kipke was the most effective Republican in the House of Delegates. He was unanimously elected to serve as chairman of the Anne Arundel County delegation, and in 2013, he was selected by his Republican peers to become the minority leader, making him the highest-ranking Republican in the House through 2021.

Despite being the caucus leader, he received the Founder's Award from the House of Delegates in 2020 — the highest award given to sitting members for steadfast commitment to public service and the integrity of the House, an honor awarded by the speaker of the House.

Kipke has passed significant state laws repealing an onerous fee to protect small businesses. He cut the cost of permit fees for replacement wells, expanded access to addiction and behavioral health treatment to adolescents, prohibited welfare cards from being accepted at Maryland casinos, sponsored pharmaceutical reform initiatives, showed reciprocity with other states in offering complimentary hunting licenses for former prisoners-of-war or disabled veterans, and championed election fraud prevention legislation, among other issues.

He is a fellow of the University of Maryland Carey School of Law's public policy conflict resolution program and is an opioid policy fellow of the National Conference of State Legislatures. He serves on the board of Providence of Maryland, helping people with disabilities gain employment in the community.

Brent Mulrooney, Democrat



Brent Mulrooney is a 35-year-old who currently works in national security. Additionally, he is currently serving in the Air Force Reserves as a cyber operator. He has dedicated his life to protecting this country and decided to run for office to bring back trust in our government. Too many

people do not trust their elected officials and for good reasons. Mulrooney is here to change that!

Mulrooney wants to be a servant of the people and ensure the government dollars are well spent to uplift the citizens of Maryland. He has lived his life in a way that he has always put integrity first and service before self. These are the core values he lives by. He has experience working in U.S. Air Forces Central, where he identified large problems and curated long-term solutions through proven planning processes. This experience he brings to bear will be paramount to developing and implementing a plan to solve problems, such as the exorbitant electricity costs in this state. Bringing in this experience will help solve problems for today and tomorrow.

He is always thinking about the future and developing ideas to work through issues. He holds two bachelor's degrees in Arabic and cybersecurity. He also holds a Master of Business Administration degree and is a Mensa member.

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 31 DELEGATE

Joan Barone Cole, Democrat



Anne Arundel County is where my husband and I have planted our roots and where we see our family's future. A Millersville resident and the daughter of a veteran and postal worker, I was raised with a deep respect for public service and a strong middle-class

work ethic. My husband and I have been married for 36 years, and our two adult children and son-in-law live nearby.

My commitment to this district is personal: I have navigated eldercare for my 96-year-old mother and supported my brother through a major health crisis. I understand the financial and emotional pressures families face, and I am running to help ensure our community remains a place where young families can thrive and seniors can retire with dignity.

As a first-generation American and college graduate, I believe deeply in the power of opportunity. I earned a Bachelor of Science in management science and operations management from SUNY Geneseo and later completed my Master of Business Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater while raising my children full-time. Balancing family responsibilities with graduate studies strengthened the discipline, focus and problem-solving skills I will bring to the House of Delegates.

My career has centered on practical problem-solving and community advocacy. I have worked for both small businesses and large corporations in customer-focused roles requiring communication, organization and results under pressure. I also spent years as a stay-at-home mother, gaining firsthand experience with budgeting and rising household costs. In public service, I served as a local group co-lead for a national safety organization in Anne Arundel County, expanding the local leadership team from three to 15 members and working extensively with elected officials and the legislative process. Together, these experiences have prepared me to be an effective, results-oriented advocate for District 31.

Brian Chisholm, Republican

The Voice could not reach Brian Chisholm before the deadline.

(Incumbent) First elected in 2018, Chisholm has proudly represented District 31 in the Maryland House of Delegates since 2019. According to his website, he is guided by unwavering core values of integrity, transparency and accountability, and is deeply committed to serving with honesty and openness. Every action he takes is focused on faithfully representing the priorities and values of the community he serves.

Mike Jacobs, Republican

The Voice could not reach Mike Jacobs before the deadline.

Jacobs was born and raised in Anne Arundel County, and for more than 30 years, he has given back to his community as a small-business leader, youth coach and volunteer. From coaching local sports to supporting responsible growth, he has maintained a focus on preserving the community's values while preparing for the future.

According to his Facebook page, he is running for office because he believes that District 31 deserves strong, commonsense leadership that puts families, public safety and the community first.

» Continued on page 18



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Meet The Candidates » Continued from page 17

LaToya Nkongolo, Republican



(Incumbent) I am a wife, mother, small-business owner, mental health expert and community leader who has spent nearly two decades serving families in Anne Arundel County and across Maryland. Raised by a single mother in low-income housing, I understand the challenges many families face, and those experiences inspired me to dedicate my life to helping others succeed through education, mental health advocacy, and strong community partnerships.

That same passion for service has guided my work as a state delegate. During the 2026 legislative session, I passed more bills than any Republican in the House of Delegates because I believe real leadership requires collaboration, respect and a willingness to work across the aisle for the good of the people we serve. I know how to bring people together and find common-sense solutions without compromising my Christian, conservative values.

I am running to retain my seat because Maryland families deserve strong, principled leadership that puts people first. I believe in protecting parental rights, improving educational outcomes, supporting public safety, strengthening our economy, and ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed regardless of their background.

For 28 years, I have advocated for children, families and communities in need. Whether through my work in mental health, education or public service, my mission has always been the same: to empower people and improve lives. As your state delegate, I will continue fighting for practical solutions that strengthen our communities, support working families, and create greater opportunities for future generations. Together, we can continue building a safer, stronger and more prosperous Maryland.

Heidi Schmidt, Democrat



Heidi Schmidt is a mom, small-business owner, community leader and a resident of Pasadena, Maryland. She's running to represent District 31 in the Maryland House of Delegates because our communities deserve leadership that listens, leads with integrity, and puts people over politics.

Born and raised in Vermont, Schmidt was the first in her family to go to college. Her parents instilled in her a deep respect for service, sacrifice and hard work. Schmidt's passion for public service was sparked by her public school education, which gave her opportunity and drive, and helped her see firsthand how government can be a force for good.

Schmidt earned a degree in political science from Northeastern University, interning in both the Massachusetts State House and U.S. Congress as a part of her co-op education. After graduation, she moved to Washington, D.C. to work in public policy, where she met her husband and built a career in communications and marketing. They married in 2009 and moved to Maryland shortly after.

Service runs deep in Schmidt's family. Her grandfather, father, brother and husband have all served in the National Guard, a legacy she carries with pride along with a deep commitment to those who serve our great nation.

Schmidt has spent 20 years working in marketing and communications. In 2020, she launched her marketing agency focused on helping small and mid-sized businesses show up with clarity and confidence. She knows firsthand what it means to build something from the ground up.

In addition to running her business, she has served on the board of the Pasadena Business Association, represented District 31 on the Anne Arundel County Democratic Central Committee, and serves on the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women. She has also volunteered with local schools, youth programs and community organizations.

Ryan Shaban, Democrat



I'm Ryan Shaban. I live in Glen Burnie with my wife and two daughters, and I'm running for House of Delegates in District 31 as a Democrat.

I spent 13 years in the Army Reserve, first as a convoy gunner deployed to Afghanistan under Operation Enduring Freedom, then as a badged counterintelligence special agent with a Top Secret/SCI clearance.

In my civilian career, I'm a senior cyber supply chain risk management consultant with a published contribution to a national federal enterprise security document. I'm finishing a Master of Business Administration at Purdue University Global.

I'm running because District 31 deserves a delegate who tells the truth even when it's inconvenient and builds accountability into the job from day one rather than waiting to be required to.

» Continued on page 20

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Letter To The Editor

What Happens When Youth Sports Drift From Development To Outcome And How Communities Like Ours Can Correct It

Youth sports are meant to develop skills, character and a love of the game. But in many cases, that focus is drifting toward outcomes. The games get louder. The stakes feel higher. And the experience for kids begins to change.

It is not unique to one team or one game. It is a broader pattern that many of us in Severna Park, including within programs like the Green Hornets, have started to feel.

Competitiveness is a good thing. Kids should learn how to win, how to lose, and how to push themselves. But when the environment begins to prioritize results above all else, it quietly reshapes behavior, especially on the sidelines.

You start to see more arguing over calls that will not matter in the long run. More intensity directed at outcomes that do not define a child's development. More moments where the adults become the center of the game, when they should never be.

And kids notice.

They notice how coaches and sideline adults react under pressure. They notice what gets celebrated. They notice what gets corrected and how.

In some cases, the shift is subtle. A close call turns into a prolonged argument. A routine play becomes a point of tension. Moments that could be used to teach the game instead become moments where the adults take over.

In a recent game, an 8-year-old player was hit by a pitch and the opposing coach's first reaction was not concern. It was debate over the call. The young pitcher handled it with more composure than the adult who walked to home plate to check on the batter.

What is often lost is that youth sports were never meant to be a performance stage for adults. They are a training ground for kids, not just in skills but in character.

And this is not just a one-off observation. In conversations with coaches from neighboring communities, including programs across Anne Arundel County, there is a growing perception that some of our leagues have become overly outcome-driven, where competitiveness can overshadow sportsmanship.

Reputations like that do not form overnight. And while they do not define everyone involved, they are worth paying attention to.

There are exceptional coaches, thoughtful parents, and great kids throughout this community. Most of them are. But culture is not defined by the best moments. It is shaped by the patterns.

The good news is that patterns can be reset.

It starts with a simple reframing. Winning is a byproduct. Development is the goal.

When coaches model composure, kids learn composure.

When parents emphasize effort, kids value effort.

When the environment prioritizes safety and respect, kids carry those standards forward.

Encouraging competition does not require sacrificing sportsmanship. Teaching kids to play hard does not require modeling intensity that crosses a line. And building strong programs does not require building a reputation that others begin to question.

Communities like Severna Park care deeply about youth sports. That is part of what makes them special. But that same passion needs to be channeled in a way that protects what youth sports are meant to provide.

Because years from now, the kids will not remember the score.

They will remember the tone.

They will remember the pressure.

They will remember whether the game still felt like it was theirs.

And if we get that part wrong, it will not matter who won.

Carrie Hankey
Severna Park parent and youth sports coach

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Meet The Candidates » Continued from page 18

My three priorities are energy independence, fiscal accountability, and real public safety.

On energy: Maryland is paying private utilities that answer to shareholders instead of ratepayers. I'm introducing the Maryland Energy Independence Corporation to put state-owned rooftops and facilities to work generating power Maryland keeps and controls, funded by private investment, with returns flowing back to ratepayers.

On accountability: Maryland has no independent inspector general with real authority over elected officials. I'll introduce legislation to create one, and I'll maintain a public log of every vote, every lobbyist meeting, and every position change from day one, before any law requires it.

On public safety: crime in this district is driven by concentrated poverty, not insufficient punishment. I'll invest in vocational training and workforce development because that's what the evidence says actually works to reduce crime, not more incarceration.

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 33 SENATOR



Dawn Gile, Democrat

(Incumbent) Serving as the state senator for District 33 has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I bring a practical, bipartisan approach to the work and focus every day on delivering results for our community. Since taking office, I have focused on affordability, public safety, health care, consumer protection, education and support for veterans and military families.

Over the past legislative sessions, I have sponsored and passed more than 50 bipartisan bills and local initiatives. My work has included pass-

ing one of the strongest consumer data privacy laws in the country, working to lower prescription drug and energy costs, strengthening protections for children, expanding access to mental health care, supporting Maryland small businesses, and improving protections and services for veterans and military families.

As chair of the Anne Arundel County Senate delegation, I have worked to support public schools, improve public safety, strengthen our local economy, and bring millions of dollars in capital funding back to District 33 for local schools, parks, libraries, nonprofits, environmental initiatives and community organizations. Constituent service and accessibility are central to my work. My office helps residents navigate state agencies, resolve problems, and address the everyday challenges facing Maryland families.

Outside the Senate, I am an attorney, the spouse of a retired Army veteran, and the mother of three daughters. I am also proud to have earned the support of educators, labor organizations, environmental groups and community leaders across Anne Arundel County and Maryland.

I am seeking another term to continue delivering practical leadership and responsive constituent service for the residents of District 33 and Anne Arundel County. I remain committed to protecting our quality of life, strengthening our economy, supporting our public schools, and ensuring our community continues to have a strong voice in Annapolis.



Amy Leahy, Republican

As a decades-long resident of Anne Arundel County, I have never been inclined to run for elected office. But this year, something changed. I was witnessing a shift in representation by our current senator that made me realize the need to focus on more important things than tampons in boys' bathrooms or how pennies are to be dealt with: whether to round up or down.

We have seen outrageous increases in our electric bills, thanks to policies promoted and made into law by the Democratic-controlled legislature, and their

shutting down of power plants in favor of green energy. One of the top Fortune 200 companies in Maryland, Constellation, is considering moving its company — and its thousands of employees — out of Maryland because of the policies here. And all the while, Democrats have wasted time and effort and your money in attempts to gerrymander out of office the only Republican congressman in Maryland. Families are smarter than to think getting rid of a congressman is more important than being able to afford to live in this state we call home.

I have spent most of my adult life trying to make our community better. I worked for Anne Arundel County while raising my three children who attended Severna Park schools. I volunteered in the schools, led a Girl Scout troop, maintained a garden on the B&A Trail Park, and am a past president of the Severna Park Republican Women's Club, where I am still an active member.

I currently serve as the vice president for public affairs on the Greater Severna Park Council, being pegged for this upon retiring as the constituent services representative for this area while working at Anne Arundel County. I have also served on the Citizens Advisory Committee for Plan 2040, testified before the county council and state legislative committees on proposed bills.

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 33B DELEGATE



Chuck Cook, Democrat

My wife, Jessica, and I have been married for 26 years, and we have three children. Originally from Salisbury, we made Crofton our home in 2016. My professional background is in labor policy and working with Maryland's unions and working families. For most of the last 10 years, I served as the legislative director for the Maryland state and D.C. AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations), advocating to the Maryland General Assembly for pro-worker and pro-working family legislation. Currently, I serve as senior advisor

to Maryland's secretary of housing, concentrating on policies related to housing and community development.

I'm running for the House of Delegates in District 33B because I don't think there are enough working people in the General Assembly who can represent our interests, and I aim to be a voice for workers and their families. I also believe that the best bulwark against an out-of-control and corrupt federal administration is a strong state government with representatives who will fight to defend the citizens and residents of this district, county and state. Working people make Maryland happen. They deserve a voice in government, someone who will work for them, and a life as free as possible from the chaos and corruption coming from this administration in D.C.

Stuart Schmidt Jr., Republican

The Voice could not reach Stuart Schmidt by deadline.

(Incumbent) The son of a utility lineman (dad) and Anne Arundel County Public Schools teacher assistant (mom), Schmidt believes hard work and education are foundational. For the past decade, Schmidt has proudly called Crofton home, where his family are active members of Crofton Athletic Council, American Legion, and Kiwanis and Elks clubs, and attend Mid Atlantic Community Church.

A devoted husband and father, Schmidt built his career in the corporate world at Perdue and Mountaire Farms on the Eastern Shore, spending many days on farms, working with growers on efficiency and productivity. He then obtained his Maryland real estate license in the early 2000s and started a small business, giving him firsthand experience with the challenges that local families, business LLCs and entrepreneurs face every day: balance sheets, profit and loss statements, budgeting, payroll, etc.

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 33C DELEGATE



Heather Bagnall, Democrat

(Incumbent) In 2018, Heather Bagnall, a theater maker, arts educator, nonprofit administrator and playwright added delegate to her resume, bringing a love of arts, lived experience with the health care system, and a "yes and" mentality to the Maryland General Assembly.

Bagnall has served as chair of the Anne Arundel County delegation, chair of the Public Health and Minority Health Disparities Subcommittee, and in December, she was appointed chair of the Health Committee.

She's recipient of the Department of Defense Citation of Achievement, Maryland Association of the Deaf Distinguished Service Award, and Legislator of the Year for the American College of Emergency Physicians, Maryland State Dental Association, and Mental Health Association of Maryland.

Bagnall has brought in record funding for local projects and sponsored and co-sponsored legislation to protect essential care; integrate mental health into primary care; protect reproductive freedom; improve management, coverage and training for peri/menopause; address pediatric overstay; increase home and community-based behavioral health; and increase quality of care and oversight for nursing homes and assisted living facilities across Maryland. She passed the Public Health Reform Act, ensuring Maryland continues to lead in advancing population health.

The delegate has also sponsored local legislation including the Mental Health Access Initiative, which reduced a barrier for adolescents accessing mental health services and, with Senate partner Dawn Gile, innovative school schedules, and the sexual abuse and sexual misconduct model response policy, ensuring clear communication and data preservation across school systems.

She is a vocal proponent for the needs of her district, holding informational town halls and sharing resources with the local chamber and business community, and she is a regular sponsor of community events. People, process and pragmatic problem solving are her passions, ensuring people have what they need when they need it, her mandate, and the residents and needs of District 33C, her guiding star.

Kristin Norris, Republican

The Voice could not reach Kristin Norris by deadline.

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X-Men: Severna Park Claims 10th Straight Boys Lax State Title

By David Bashore

The 3A boys lacrosse state championship game on May 19 had all the makings of a blockbuster.

It was Towson's third straight attempt to knock Severna Park off the perch. The Generals were the higher seeded team, and they leaned into the villain arc Severna Park so publicly embraced in 2025.

Then the Falcons did what the Falcons do best: jump all over opponents from the opening faceoff and delete all drama from the equa-

tion. They scored early and often at Stevenson University, invoking lacrosse's mercy rule on Towson in the third quarter en route to a 15-2 victory that pushed their championship streak to 10 and gave them 15 crowns in program history.

"Our defense looked great, our attack, everyone was pitching in," said Severna Park coach **Bob Zichelli**. "The big thing was winning those face-offs early, and we dominated between the restraining lines."

The face-offs set the tone for the entire night. **Davis Bates** seemingly couldn't lose a draw, which allowed the Falcons to set up their offense and run through most of the playbook. That helped the Fal-

cons get rolling early, unlike in the semifinals against top-seeded Sherwood, where they struggled for momentum until a dominant second half to pull away for the win.

"We knew we couldn't come out slow like we did against Sherwood. We started that game so poorly, and the offense wasn't clicking," said **Duke Sealey**, who scored the opening goal less than two minutes in on the way to a hat trick. "But Davis was killing it right away tonight, and that gave us the juice to get going early."

This wasn't a team itching to let everyone know about it, but don't mistake less bark for a gentler bite.

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Duke Sealey fired in one of his three goals in the championship game.



Photos by Fincham Photography
The Severna Park boys lacrosse team celebrated a 10th straight state championship victory, toppling Towson 15-2.

Falcon Girls Reclaim 3A Lacrosse Title

By David Bashore

In the final seconds of the 3A girls lacrosse state championship game, Marriotts Ridge had the ball and a plan, setting off in search of a late equalizer against longtime foe Severna Park.

The Mustangs had beaten Falcons goalie **Kelsey Begin** over her shoulders with regularity in the contest. With the chips down, they took one last dip into that well.

The ball hit net — but this time, it was the mesh attached to Begin's stick and not to the goal frame.

Defender **Bella Mazzola** and midfielder **Maria Bragg** raced to embrace each other, and the Falcons' bench erupted. Time had yet to expire, but all Begin needed to do was move behind the cage and bleed off the last few seconds. Everyone knew that Severna Park had their title back.

The horn sounded, and the Falcons raced off to celebrate their third championship in four years, and their state record-extending 17th in program history, with a 9-8 win over Marriotts Ridge at Stevenson University on May 19. The win avenged not only an earlier-season 10-6 loss to the Mustangs but also an 11-10 setback in the 2025 3A title game.

"Redemption is sweet," Bragg said. "I was thinking about (last year's) team the whole game, and nobody wanted to feel like that again."

As can be expected between longtime rivals — this was the fourth time in five years these two teams contested the 3A state championship — the battle was cagey from beginning to end. Five times Marriotts Ridge took the lead, and five times the Falcons pegged them back.

Coming out of halftime, Severna Park trailed 5-4, but

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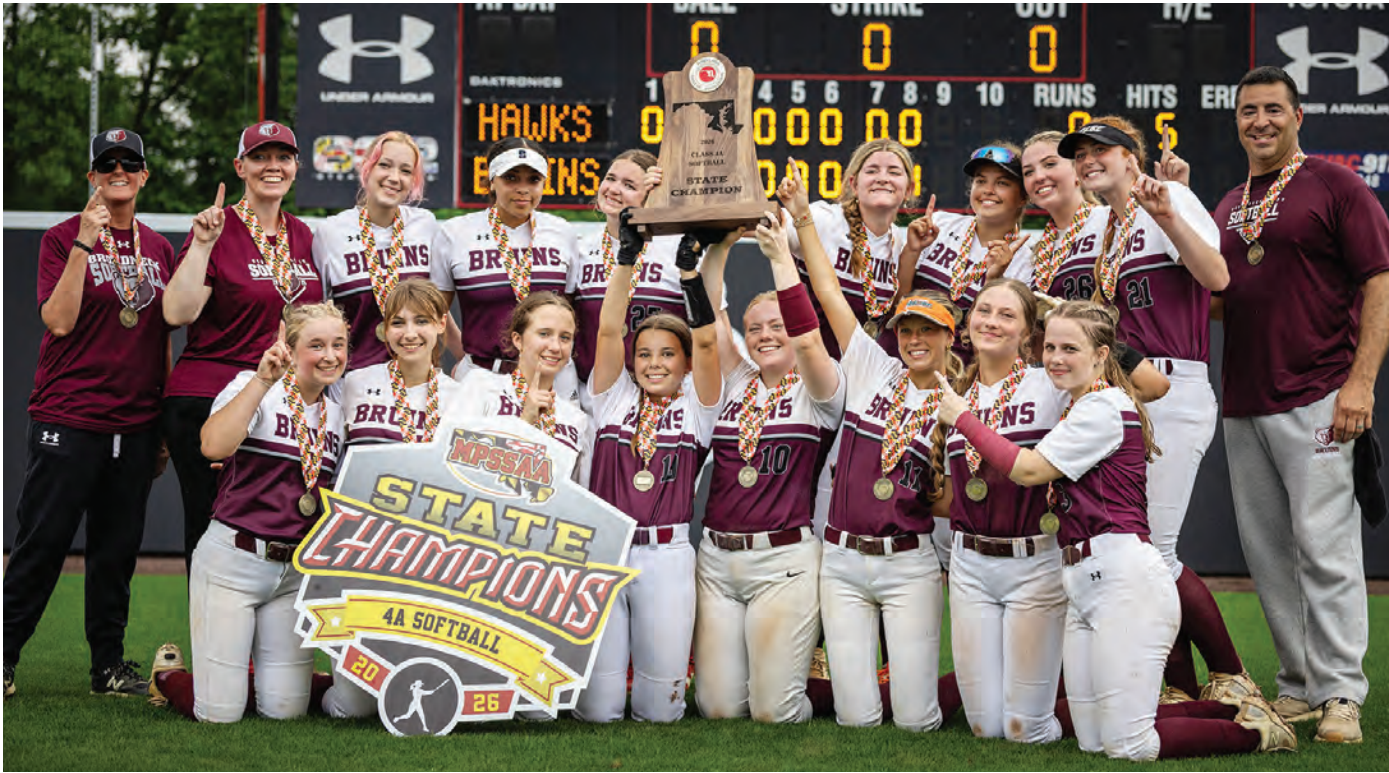
Maria Bragg scored four goals and quarterbacked the Falcons' offense in their championship victory.



Photos by Fincham Photography
The Severna Park girls lacrosse team celebrated winning their third state championship in four years.



Bruins Claim Softball Title On Daring Extra-Inning Call



Photos by Alex Bardakh

The Bruins softball team defeated Urbana 1-0 in an extra inning to win the 4A state title on May 25.

By David Bashore

Locked in extra innings of a scoreless 4A state championship softball game on May 25 at the University of Maryland, both Broadneck and Urbana scrutinized every moment in search of even the slightest opening.

A fresh-faced JV callup spotted it and went for broke.

Zoe Pittinger noticed an off-balance Urbana fielder and raced around third base, scoring all the way from second on a sacrifice bunt in the bottom of the eighth inning to give Broadneck a 1-0 victory and their first softball title since 2010.

Leading off the eighth with Pittinger as the international tiebreaker runner at second base, **Rowan Hass** deadened her bunt attempt just in front of the pitching circle. The third baseman fielded the ball, allowing Pittinger to reach third easily, but the throw forced the first baseman to stretch toward the outfield to ensure Urbana at least got one out on the play.

That was all Pittinger needed to see,

and the sophomore — called up to varsity specifically for her pinch-running speed — didn't hesitate. Head coach and third-base coach **Stephanie Millard** saw the same thing and was frantically signaling for Pittinger to keep running, but Pittinger never even looked at her.

In a scene reminiscent of the kamikaze ending of the movie "Major League," Pittinger never broke stride rounding third base. By the time the first baseman steadied herself and fired home, it was too late to throw out the speedy runner, who slid through just ahead of the tag as her teammates poured out of the dugout in jubilation.

"I just looked (at the situation) and decided to take off," Pittinger said. "I just had to get down, and when I saw (the umpire) say 'Safe,' everyone was screaming."

The ending was a fitting punctuation to a game that had ebbs and flows aplenty, despite being scoreless until the final play. Three times Broadneck third baseman **Corinn Bennett** flashed the leather, logging two outs

in the seventh inning and another in the eighth that handed Broadneck the chance to win.

With Urbana holding a runner at third and nobody out, the Hawks attempted their own bunt, but it was right to Bennett. She faked a throw to first base and baited the runner at third to come off the bag, allowing Bennett to fire to the covering shortstop **Faith Palmer** for the out.

That was as close as Urbana came to ending a sterling run for Broadneck pitcher **Rylan Crisafulli**. The junior standout struck out 10 and scattered five hits, bringing her total to 76 strikeouts and 10 hits allowed in 36 scoreless playoff innings between the region and state tournaments.

"We've asked her to do some things that a lot of pitchers can't do, and only some can, and she's risen to it," Millard said. "That just speaks to how much she's grown this season. She set big goals this season, and we backed her, and she hit every one of them."

Crisafulli finished the season on a tear. In the state quarterfinals, she no-

hit North County for the second time this season, having also done so in county play. In the semifinals, she took a perfect game into the seventh inning against Richard Montgomery before yielding a one-out bunt single.

Against Urbana, there were more balls put in play and more baserunners than she had been used to, but she put faith in her defense to rise to the occasion, and they did. The only miscue was an outfield misplay that allowed a single to stretch to extra bases, but that threat was extinguished moments later when Crisafulli induced a ground ball to Palmer.

It was fitting, then, that Crisafulli's spot in the batting order provided the winning run. She was the final out of the seventh inning, and Pittinger ran for her at second base to start the eighth. With help from a young supporting cast, the Bruins collectively got that run home.

Broadneck called up three JV players for the playoffs to provide speed and depth, in case of emergency. That added to an already youthful squad — utility player **Diana Owens** and **Jeanette Deeb** are the team's only seniors — that was on a timeline for making noise in 2027, not 2026.

But they didn't feel like the moment was too soon.

"Early in the season, I was unsure about how it was going to play out, throwing strikes and having them hit so much," Crisafulli said. "But as we got more into the season with hitting the ball and fielding the ball, I felt a lot more confidence in myself and in the team. ... A lot of folks doubted us, but I believed in us. I thought with our defense and getting our bats on the ball, we could go far."

Left: Rylan Crisafulli threw an eight-inning shutout against Urbana, pushing her scoreless inning streak to 36 2/3 innings to close the season. Below: Zoe Pittinger scored the game's only run from second base on Rowan Hass' sacrifice bunt in the bottom of the eighth inning.

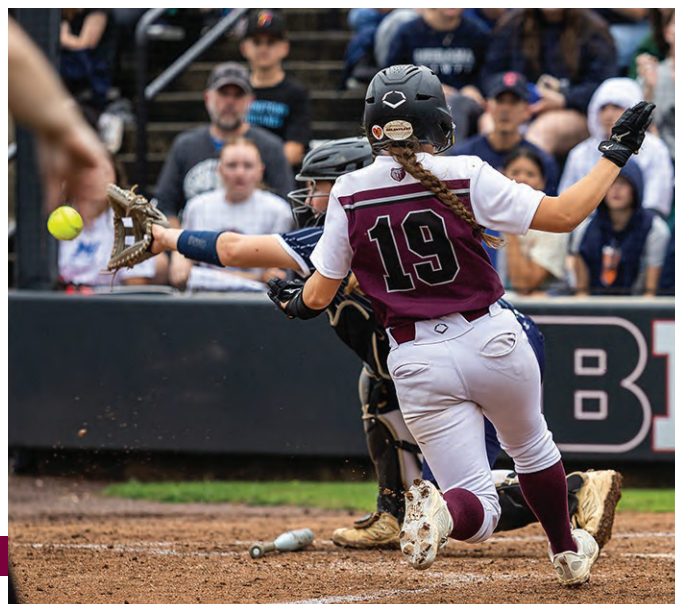


Photo by David Bashore

(L-R) Corinn Bennett, Zoe Pittinger, Izzy Barrass and Rowan Hass celebrated Pittinger's state championship-winning run.

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Severna Park Brings Home Tennis State Titles

By David Bashore

Severna Park's tennis team claimed dual 3A state championships during the state meet over Memorial Day weekend, placing four entries in the finals and winning the overall team title for the first time in program history.

All five of the Falcons' state qualifying entries reached the semifinal round at least, and all five placed in the top three of their respective competitions.

The boys doubles duo of **Koby Bragg** and **Gavin Gerard** scored victory in their bracket, defeating their opponents from Marriotts Ridge in straight sets, 6-3, 7-5. Three other entrants earned runner-up finishes: **Brynn Bilnoski** in girls singles, twin sisters **Emerson** and **Ava Scott** in girls doubles, and **Ty Maddox** and **Lily Wells** in mixed doubles.

Rounding out the scoring for Severna Park was boys singles entrant **Colin King**, who won the 3A third-place match. The Falcons scored 25 team points, beating Thomas S. Wootton's 21. It rounded out a season of dominance where Severna Park's 11-senior-strong contingent won the in-season county champi-

onship, the postseason county championship, and the regional championship to go with their state honors.

"Our players work year-round. ... They are dedicated and the hard work paid off. We have an extremely competitive bracket," said Severna Park coach **Emily Bear**. "Our team has amazing camaraderie and a support system of parents who contribute tremendously to our success."

In the 4A ranks, Broadneck settled for second by a single point in the team standings, scoring 12 points to Winston Churchill's 13. The teams flip-flopped from last season, when Broadneck won by a single point, and the two teams shared the title two years ago.

Hadley Crooks and **Gigi Garner** claimed victory in the girls doubles, defeating their opponents from Richard Montgomery 6-2, 6-4. The mixed doubles pair of **Anissa Jean-Claude** and **Ryan Sar** placed second in their competition on a super tiebreak 10-8, after they had split the two full sets with their opponents from Quince Orchard.



Above: The Severna Park boys doubles duo of Koby Bragg and Gavin Gerard scored victory in their bracket, defeating their opponents from Marriotts Ridge in straight sets, 6-3, 7-5. **Top Right:** In their first year on the tennis team, twin sisters Emerson and Ava Scott finished as runners-up in girls doubles. **Bottom Right:** The mixed doubles team of seniors Ty Maddox and Lily Wells came in second place.



Falcon Boys 4x800, Broadneck's Rivas Claim Individual Boys Track Titles

Severna Park Girls Second At State Meet

By David Bashore

Two local entrants topped the charts at the 4A state track and field championship meet, held at Morgan State University over Memorial Day weekend.

Broadneck's **Cooper Rivas** added an outdoor state pole vault title to his indoor crown from the winter season, clearing 13 feet, 6 inches on his final attempt to win the title by six inches.

Severna Park's 4x800 relay team of **Collin Denton**, **Reilly Caldwell**, **Chase Johnson** and **Brenden Woods** outpaced the field to win the race, clocking a time of 7:54.74.

The Falcons scored team points in seven total events, placing eighth in the team standings. Woods came in second in the 1,600 meters and eighth in the 3,200, while **Collin Blain** was eighth in the 300 hurdles. **Matthew Williams** finished joint-third in the high jump and fifth in the triple jump, while **Christopher Robinson** picked up a couple of points by finishing seventh in the pole vault.

Broadneck was 21st in the team standings, with **Myles Bryan** joining Rivas as scorers when he finished seventh in the triple jump.

In the girls competition, Severna Park distance runners carried the Falcons to a second-place finish in the team standings.

The Falcons scored in just five of the 18 events, but their depth shone through as they piled up points in those events to finish in a three-way

tie for second behind runaway winner Woodlawn.

Grace Redmond finished second in the 1,600 meters and fourth in the 800, while **Siena Pegues** finished third in the 800-, 1,600- and 3,200-meter events. **Josie Kamas** finished fourth in the 3,200 and sixth in the 1,600; **Harper Wallace** was eighth in the 800; and **Lexi Fitzsimmons** came home eighth in the 3,200.

Redmond, Pegues, Wallace and Fitzsimmons combined for a second-place finish in the 4x800 relay.

The 800 and 1,600 were particularly wild events. In the 800, the top nine finishers all set new personal records at the state meet, while seven of the top nine in the 1,600 did the same, and the two who didn't still logged their best time of the season.

In addition to the distance races, pole vaulter **Alexa Holt** placed seventh to grab a couple more precious points. For Broadneck, **Nkechi Streete** finished second in the triple jump, and **Abby Shown** matched that result in the discus throw. **Sedona Clarke** placed third in the high jump, **Dana Doubek** and **Brielle Butitt** were fourth and fifth in the pole vault, and **Ashtyn Coates** was eighth in the 400 meters.

For relays, the quartet of Streete, **Jayla Johnson**, **Hailey Pietro** and **Naya Sam** finished sixth in the 4x100, while **Chandler Scott**, **Sophia Hickey**, **Taylor Anthonis** and **Jeannette Manseau** teamed up to place eighth in the 4x800.

Broadneck finished eighth in the team standings.

4A State Track and Field Championships

BOYS

400 meters: 9. Jaxon Bradley, Severna Park, 49.74; 11. Ashton McGhee-Rivero, Broadneck, 50.41

1,600 meters: 2. Brenden Woods, Severna Park, 4:15.32

3,200 meters: 8. Brenden Woods, Severna Park, 9:28.64

300 hurdles: 8. Collin Blain, Severna Park, 39.90

4x400 relay: 14. Severna Park (Chase Johnson, Reilly Caldwell, Collin Denton, Jaxon Bradley) 3:24.27

4x800 relay: 1. Severna Park (Collin Denton, Reilly Caldwell, Chase Johnson, Brenden Woods) 7:54.74

High jump: T3. Matthew Williams, Severna Park, 6-00

Pole vault: 1. Cooper Rivas, Broadneck, 13-06; 7. Christopher Robinson, Severna Park, 12-00; 12. Reece Heckert, Severna Park, 11-00

Long jump: 10. Matthew Williams, Severna Park, 20-07; 16. Myles Bryan, Broadneck, 19-02

Triple jump: 5. Matthew Williams, Severna Park, 44-04; 7. Myles Bryan, Broadneck, 43-04; 11. Ashton McGhee-Rivero, Broadneck, 42-10.50

GIRLS

400 meters: 8. Ashtyn Coates, Broadneck, 58.65

800 meters: 3. Siena Pegues, Severna Park, 2:14.53; 4. Grace Redmond, Severna Park, 2:15.05; 8. Harper Wallace, Severna Park, 2:18.89

1,600 meters: 2. Grace Redmond,

Severna Park, 4:58.81; 3. Siena Pegues, Severna Park, 4:59.34; 6. Josie Kamas, Severna Park, 5:02.39

3,200 meters: 3. Siena Pegues, Severna Park, 10:46.50; 4. Josie Kamas, Severna Park, 10:51.75; 8. Lexi Fitzsimmons, Severna Park, 11:21.25

300 hurdles: 12. Naya Sam, Broadneck, 47.67

4x100 relay: 6. Broadneck (Jayla Johnson, Hailey Pietro, Naya Sam, Nkechi Streete) 48.68

4x200 relay: 10. Broadneck (Hailey Pietro, Ashtyn Coates, Hannah Traylor, Nkechi Streete) 1:45.56

4x400 relay: 11. Broadneck (Sophia Hickey, Natalie Crooks, Jeannette Manseau, Alyssa Queen) 4:02.14; 14. Severna Park (Ella Davaud, Sarah Murphy, Ciara Cronin, Harper Wallace) 4:05.47

4x800 relay: 2. Severna Park (Harper Wallace, Grace Redmond, Lexi Fitzsimmons, Siena Pegues) 9:21.54; 8. Broadneck (Chandler Scott, Sophia Hickey, Taylor Anthonis, Jeannette Manseau) 9:52.40

Discus: 2. Abby Shown, Broadneck, 123-00

High jump: 3. Sedona Clarke, Broadneck, 5-04; 11. Natalie Glesmann, Severna Park, 4-10; 12. Dana Doubek, Broadneck, 4-10

Pole vault: 4. Dana Doubek, Broadneck, 11-06; 5. Brielle Butitt, Broadneck, 11-00; 7. Alexa Holt, Severna Park, 10-06

Long jump: 11. Nkechi Streete, Broadneck, 16-06.50

Triple jump: 2. Nkechi Streete, Broadneck, 39-06.75

Falcons Baseball, Softball Bow Out In Region Semifinals

By David Bashore

The Severna Park baseball team had high ambitions heading into the 4A East I region semifinals. They were the top seed and facing a North County team they had run-ruled just days prior.

All that left the Knights with, though, was the knowledge they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. That paid dividends as they ambushed their way to a 7-6 victory in eight innings to stun their hosts and trip up the Falcons at the first playoff hurdle.

North County swung for the fences early and often, building a 4-1 lead after three innings. They pushed it to 6-3 in the sixth, before the Falcons rallied with RBI hits by **Matt Zimmerman** and **Charlie Delobe**. **Reese Davis'** second home run of the day tied the game with one out in the bottom of seventh and forced extra innings, but North County's **Jacob Brune** answered with his second homer of the day in the top of the eighth to provide the winning margin.

The Falcons finish their season with a 14-8 record, and they will say goodbye to 10 seniors from this season's team: **Davis, Zimmerman, Dylan Phillips, Logan Clarke, Evan Boucher, Brody O'Brien, Eric Benner, Teddy Uy, Brady Talbot** and **Kyle Witte**.

Softball Falls At Decatur

Having netted the third seed in the 3A East II region playoffs, the Severna Park softball team blew out Old Mill 15-1 in the quarterfinals before bowing out 2-1 at Stephen Decatur in the semis.

In the win over Old Mill, **Morgan Rausch** had three hits, while **Allie Moran** and **Lucy Benner** each added two. In the circle, **Quinlyn Bary** and **Abby Trust** combined to strike out 10 and allow just one hit.

Against Decatur, the Falcons took a fifth-inning lead when **Austyn Lundfelt** singled in **Jodi Deaton**, but the Seahawks rallied with one in the sixth and one in the seventh, both runs scoring on errors.

The Falcons finish their season with a 14-6 record and will graduate four seniors from this year's squad: **Lundfelt, Taylor Moran, Kate Edwards** and **Norah Cornwall**.

Severna Park Claims 10th Straight Title



Dom Markovich (left) and Brady Daniels celebrated a goal during the Falcons' state championship victory. Both players scored twice in the game.

from the Urbana game when we were up and they came back," said senior attackman **Tyler Lawhorne**, whose natural hat trick in the second quarter put the game out of reach. "We just wanted to leave no doubt, and the captains held us accountable."

Lawhorne led all players with four goals, while Sealey had three. **Dom Markovich, Ben Ruppert** and **Brady Daniels** each added a pair, while there were also goals for **Dash Havens** and **Will Mazcko**.

Mazcko's pole goal demonstrated that everything truly was breaking the Falcons' way in the championship game. After Daniels and **Brady Distler** were denied in quick succession in front of goal, the ball kicked out high and about 20 yards from goal. With the longest stick on the field, Mazcko reached up to secure the ball and, in one fluid motion, pivoted and put a shot right on target past the unsuspecting goalie.

"I realized when I picked it up that the goalie was screened, and I just shot it across the pile and it went in," Mazcko said.

It was a moment representative of a dominant night in all aspects for the Falcons, and a fitting way to send off their 24 seniors: **Markovich, Daniels, Ruppert, Havens, Mazcko, Lawhorn, Bates, Sealey, Blake Howell, Hayden Fox, Joey Viskocil, Connor Rayburn, James Sullivan, Cole Cavanaugh, Ben Dryer, Renzo Angeles, Colin Whitacre, Dylan Tieff, Ben Kreis, Zach Simpkins, Jack Crutchley, Bodie Eisenberg, Landon Williams** and **Sean Burkhardt**.

"We had a lot of tough games that didn't go our way the whole time earlier in the season," Mazcko said. "We learned from those and battled back so that when we got here, we could come here and dominate."

» Continued from page 23

This iteration of Falcons lacrosse didn't exhibit as much bravado as in years past, but they turned out to be every bit as ruthless on the field.

Their 13-goal victory matched the largest margin in the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) era (since 1990), and they came within minutes of posting the first MPSSAA championship game shutout. Towson's goals both came in the game's final five minutes, when the clock was rolling and the subs were flowing freely.

Asked how they sustained intensity and energy despite the one-sidedness of the title game, the Falcons hearkened back to a season-opening loss to Urbana, where they had a big lead late and squandered it before losing in overtime.

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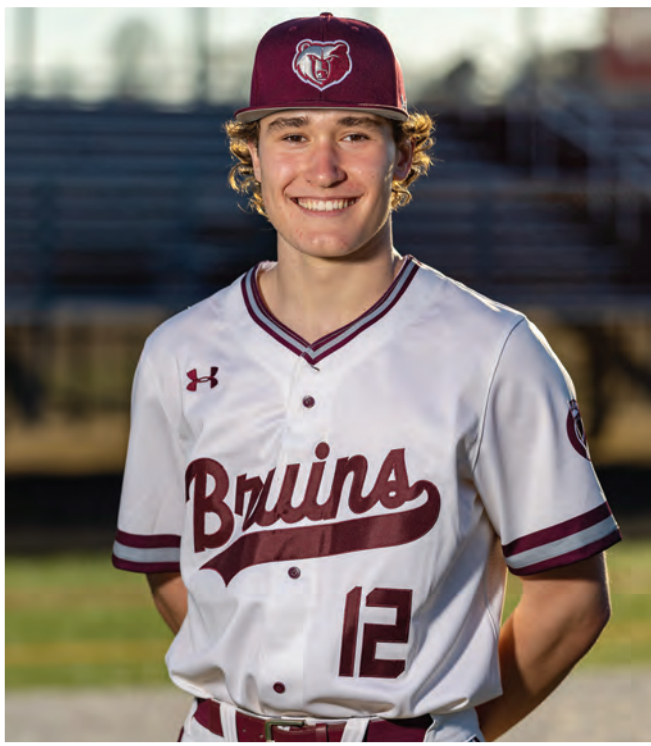


Photo courtesy of Legacy Studios

LOGAN SABO

Broadneck High School | Baseball, Swimming

By David Bashore

Logan Sabo only recently decided what he wanted to study in college. But his educational career has helped him establish principles and rhythms that will serve himself and others long after his time at Broadneck High is done.

The senior has dabbled in a variety of things and had his fingerprints on seven programs this academic year: three honors societies, the ambassadors club, orchestra, and the Bruins' baseball and swim teams.

Through all of that, he maintained a 4.0 unweighted GPA (4.49 weighted) and has accepted a spot in the honors college at Auburn University, where he will study aerospace engineering.

"Math and science has always been my thing, but as I moved through high school, I had no idea what I wanted to study until the middle of last year," Sabo said. "I took AP Physics (as a junior) and I think that's the best class I've taken in high school, the most fun I've had and the most I felt I got out of a class, and that sparked my love."

Though Sabo didn't know it, the groundwork for studies in engineering was laid long ago. His father, a mechanical engineer, works for himself, so Logan grew up around it. Couple that with an entrepreneurial spirit of his

own and, along with some disciplines started long ago, he's well on his way.

He's an officer in each of his honors societies: math, Spanish and science. He plays the cello in the school orchestra, and he played a support role at first base and in the bottom half of the batting order for Broadneck's state semifinal team.

He reads every night — Tolkien's "The Two Towers" is on his nightstand currently — and balances his time, dedicating it to school, sports, and the business he runs with younger brother Liam called Bay Hills Mega Men, through which they do local services in the community. If he had more time, Sabo would learn to cook beyond a proficient level.

Between donating a portion of business profits to support the Light House shelter in Annapolis and volunteering his time at Tyler Heights Elementary School, Sabo is stretching himself well beyond simply rescuing wide throws at first base.

"This year has been a little time-consuming. I've been able to manage it, but I think I'm doing the perfect amount of things to balance sports, school, clubs and everything like that. I want to start developing consistency for college," Sabo said. "My goal was to do a wide variety of things because I'm trying to explore what I want to do. With that variety, I can specialize now that I'm ready to move on, but I was just looking to get into everything that I could."

"I think I'm doing the perfect amount of things to balance sports, school, clubs and everything like that. I want to start developing consistency for college."

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Broadneck Girls Lax Falls To Urbana In Quarterfinal Classic

Loss Ends Bruins' Title Streak At Five

By David Bashore

Broadneck's run of five straight girls lacrosse state championships ended in the 2026 4A state quarterfinals, as the Bruins fell 8-7 to eventual state champion Urbana on a last-second goal.

Instead of the teams meeting in the state final like the two previous seasons, the seeding chart and a coin toss put the Bruins and Hawks together in the quarterfinal round.

Urbana controlled most of the game, though Broadneck had chances to get back into it. The Bruins were denied on free position attempts in the dying seconds of each of the first three quarters. Urbana's knockout punch came in the last seconds of the fourth.

After Broadneck had clawed back from a three-goal deficit to tie the game, the Bruins netted a turnover in the final minute and had the opportunity to take the lead on the game's final sustained possession, but the shot was saved and play quickly went the other way.

In the ensuing chaos, Urbana got a free run right down the middle of the defense, and the Hawks took that opportunity with just nine seconds remaining, settling the game and ending Broadneck's reign atop Maryland 4A girls lacrosse.

Broadneck finishes the season with a 12-6 record and will graduate seven seniors: **Nya Williams, Anna Claire Tighlman, Alyssa Lewis, Charlotte Robertson, Madison Luckett, Nora Lopes** and **Riley Gillins**.



Photo by Dennis McGinley

Avery Katzen (2) drew multiple fouls in attack against Urbana in Broadneck's state quarterfinal matchup.

Archbishop Spalding Baseball, Softball, Golf Teams Clinch State Championship Titles



Above: Archbishop Spalding baseball earned the MIAA A Conference championship title against Mount St. Joseph.

Below: The Cavaliers softball team won 4-3 against John Carroll to secure the IAAM A Conference championship victory.

The Cavaliers wrapped strong seasons with state championship victories in baseball, softball and golf. Archbishop Spalding's baseball team ousted Mount St. Joseph in a two-game series, 10-3 and 4-3, to secure the MIAA A Conference championship title and ended their season with an overall record of 26-8. The Cavs softball team topped John Carroll 4-3 to win the IAAM A Conference championship, putting a bow on their 11-4 season. The Spalding girls golf team also won the IAAM B Conference championship.



Photos courtesy of Jeffrey Burke

Bruin Boys Reach Fifth Straight State Final

By David Bashore

In the aftermath of the 4A boys lacrosse state championship game, Broadneck coach **Jeff McGuire** balanced perspectives: the Bruins continued one of the most successful runs in program history by reaching the title game for a fifth straight year, but for the third time running they were left scratching their heads.

Urbana took the trilogy title match just like they had the previous two, beating Broadneck 14-3 to put a bow on the high school lacrosse season in Maryland.

Keaton Walker's faceoff prowess was one area of dominance for the Bruins, who controlled 15 of the game's 21 draws. But Urbana's quick start, scoring the game's first seven goals, meant the game was over as a contest practically as soon as it started.

"They're a very skilled, talented team, and the more talented team won tonight," McGuire said. "At the same time, I feel like we made some uncharacteristic plays, and it felt like the first Severna Park game. They get two goals, three goals, and you finally get one, but you look up at the scoreboard and it's 7-1, and you're like, 'How did we get here?'"

Wyatt Hicks, Aiden



Photos by David Bashore

Above: Wyatt Shaw (6) took the ball upfield during Broadneck's state championship game tilt with Urbana. **Below:** Aiden Gillette (18) scored one of the Bruins' three goals in the state final.



Gillette and Pierce Joyce netted the goals for the Bruins.

The loss served as a rough end to a run that saw Broadneck reel off four straight double-digit victories in the playoffs. They beat Annapolis 16-3 and Glen Burnie 22-2 to win the 4A East I region championship, before taking out Bethesda-Chevy Chase 23-7 in the quarterfinals and blanking Montgomery Blair 21-0 in the semis.

Despite the third successive title game defeat, the Bruins sent their seniors out in the final game possible for the fifth year running. They'll bid farewell to 13 seniors, including Walker, Gillette, **Chris Fraser, Matthew Shafer, Brady Dement, Wyatt Shaw, Carson Pierce, Jack Josephs, Luke Doyle, Joe Brenner, Evan Zelinsky, Oliver Szurek** and **James Banwell**.

"This program works hard and we have a real family environment, and to put the seniors on this stage is a great thing," McGuire said. "It can get frustrating if you think about it being one (championship) out of five, but if that's the only way you measure success, we're not coaching for the right reason. ... And as I said a couple of years ago, if 15-5 is a bad year, then you're in a pretty good place."

BHS Baseball Returns To State Semis

By David Bashore

This time last year, the gap between region championships and state tournament appearances for the Broadneck baseball team was 30 years.

They weren't keen to wait as long for the next one. The 2026 Bruins matched their immediate predecessors, winning county and region championships on the way back to the state playoffs.

Behind a four-RBI effort from **Logan Sabo** and a three-RBI performance from **Bryce Watt**, the Bruins topped Severn Run 10-4 to return to the state semifinals for the second straight year.

Broadneck sent all nine batters to the plate in the first inning and pushed across five runs, giving **Jack Miteff** plenty of support as he picked up the win.

"We know that one through nine we can hit," Sabo said. "I could tell it was going to be a good day in my first at-bat, when I had a bad swing but remembered all the things my coaches told me, and the next swing, it clicked."

Things came together for a Broadneck squad that had to reshape its pitching staff and the batting order, with just a handful of returning players boasting significant varsity experience. They parlayed that into another county championship, won 4-0 over

Severna Park when they jumped on the Falcons in the first three innings and rode the strong pitching of Miteff and **Tripp Zwerlein** to finish the game.

"My goal was to just get through four innings no matter what," said Miteff, who made it through five scoreless in the county championship. "When your

guys start hitting one through nine, it lets you settle in and throw strikes."

That early action wound up being Broadneck's undoing in the state semifinals against Urbana, where the Bruins lost 5-0. The Hawks got all five runs in the first three innings, and

Broadneck couldn't figure out a way to consistently solve Urbana's pitching.

Broadneck's four losses on the season came to two teams: they lost to Crofton twice toward the beginning and the end of the regular season, while they also were beaten by Urbana during spring break and in the state semifinals. They avenged the Crofton losses by beating the Cardinals 3-2 in the region final to earn their fourth state tournament appearance in program history.

The Bruins, who finished with a 21-4 record, will graduate seniors Miteff, Sabo, Zwerlein, **Aiden Casey**, **Bodhi Samson**, **Luke Smith**, **Jonah Lucas**, **Landon Gossard** and **Alex Barrett**.

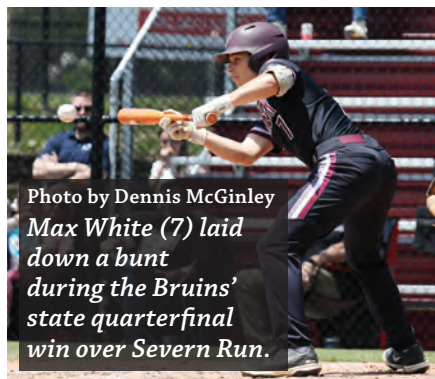


Photo by Dennis McGinley
Max White (7) laid down a bunt during the Bruins' state quarterfinal win over Severn Run.

Falcon Girls Lax



Kelsey Begin made a key save at the end of the game to preserve the Falcons' win.

» Continued from page 23

four straight third-quarter goals and a defensive effort that kept Marriotts Ridge off the board for more than 16 minutes handed the Falcons a lead they would never yield.

"It turned into a mental battle," Mazzola said. "But we knew we could all take a deep breath together, and we can look to the left and the right of each other, and we can realize we're doing it for something more than just ourselves."

Bragg scored four goals in the game and had two assists as well. **Quinn Makarovich** netted twice, while **Gracie Ciuba**, **Teagan Cavanaugh** and **Ava Deegan** also hit the goal column.

There were performances aplenty in the entirety of the playoffs. Deegan netted five times in a 13-3 semifinal win over Linganore. Cavanaugh made her mark in the county championship win over Broadneck. Mazzola and Co.

kept things tight in the back night after night, and the Falcons rolled through three goalies with equal confidence. But it was the Florida-bound senior's virtuoso performance that willed the Falcons to ultimate victory one more time.

All of the Falcons did their part, but as much as the team has required from Bragg, she seemed to give even more on the big stage: drawing the entire side of defenders to herself so Makarovich could roll into empty space like a basketball pick-and-roll for the decisive goal; scoring; harassing opposing players to chop the ball free; draining time simply by running around with the ball; and sitting a defender down on her backside from a head fake-and-turn.

"A phenomenal player. She does everything, but at the same time she's a humble player. We did something in the middle of the season, and when it was her turn, she said she wanted everyone to know she loves assisting sometimes even more than scoring," Severna Park coach **Annie Houghton** said. "She's the epitome of a team player, all over the field. She wanted it for the team, not just for herself, but when she gets out there, it's like a great white shark, so watch out."

Bragg is one of 11 seniors the Falcons send off at the pinnacle of high school lacrosse: joining her in graduating are Mazzola, Ciuba, **Quinn Allison**, **Brooke Klima**, **Reese Johnson**, **Naomi Batty**, **Brooke Vaught**, **Megan Krause**, **Lizzy Thompson** and **Addison Ensor**.

"I love this team and this family and this school so much," Bragg said. "I just gave it my all for everyone. I always try to give my best, but it's really good to go out this way."

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Severn River Swimming Association Is Looking For More Teams And Swimmers

Association Wants To Promote River Swimming And Camaraderie

By Kevin Murnane

Many older Severna Park residents remember when the summer neighborhood swim meets took place in the Magothy and Severn rivers.

During the 1950s, the Severn River Swimming Association (SRSA) had numerous neighborhoods competing including Sherwood Forest, Round Bay, Olde Severna Park, Pines On The Severn, West Severna Park, Epping Forest, Linstead and Winchester-on-the-Severn.

By the 1970s, neighborhoods on both rivers built outside pools and neighborhood swim contests moved to those facilities instead of the rivers.

However, there are four Severn River communities that have held on to those traditions and still use the river for their meets. Organizers are hoping that more communities will join the league.

“Our association wants our neighborhood children to build confidence swimming in the river, become better swimmers, and have fun,” said Round Bay adult sponsor David Matthews.

The league hosts meets from mid-June to late-July. Swimmers range from 5 to 18 years old and compete in every stroke technique: freestyle, breast, butterfly and backstroke. They practice multiple times during the week and have meets on Saturday mornings.

“My wife and I are the adult sponsors and organizers in Round Bay, and for the Saturday meets, we try to make it a carnival atmosphere



Photos courtesy of Lee Kriel Photography

Four Severn River communities are continuing a longtime tradition, using the waterway for their summer swim meets.



with grilling of hot dogs and hamburgers, snow cones, and enjoying the friendly competition between neighborhoods,” Matthews said.

One of the league’s benefits is that families who are new to the community can meet their neighbors in a fun environment and begin new friendships.

“We moved into Round Bay when I was 7 and joining the team was a great way to meet new friends,” said Mari Matthews, who is now the swim team’s head coach.

“We moved from Alexandria and at first I was reluctant to swim in the river, but I will always remember my first meet when one of the neighborhood moms swam with me to make me feel safer,” Mari recalled.

Mari is a rising junior at Severna Park High School, and this will be her second year as a coach with Round Bay; last year, she was an assistant coach. Mari’s younger brother, Charlie, will be an assistant coach this year.

“We really have fun with the drills we use, and it’s all about getting the swimmers to learn better techniques and to get comfortable in the river,” Mari shared.

To ferry swimmers to meets, the SRSA utilizes boats to cross the Severn.

“The kids love those trips across the river, and it really builds friendships and memories,” David Matthews said.

The swim meets highlight neighborhood pride as all of the timers, turn-judges, grilling staff, and set-up and clean-up crews are volunteers.

Matthews hopes that by continuing the decades-old tradition of having swim meets in the Severn, more neighborhoods will join the league and enable younger residents to become more confident swimmers.

If a community would like to join the SRSA, a representative can email David Matthews at matthewsdavidbiz@gmail.com.

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Green Hornets Girls Lacrosse Teams Win County Championships

The Green Hornets Middie A and Junior A girls lacrosse teams won Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks championships in mid-May.

For the chance to become champs, the Green Hornets Junior A team faced off against South River and won 11-5. Seventh- and eighth-graders made up the Junior A team. The championship group featured players **Claire Crivella, Lucy Distin, Grace Distler, Ella Doss, Emerson Elliott, Josie Garrison, Moira Hines, Caroline Johnson, Elise LaChapelle, Hayden Ledsome, Harper Makarovich, Harper Manlapaz, Emma Osborne, Lillian Petrick, Eliza St. John, Ella**

Strom, Ryan Sutton, Lea Trippett and Sophia Zimmerman. The team was coached by **Eric Distin, Glen Doss and Mike Osborne.**

The Middie A team beat SMA 11-5 to capture their crown. Comprised of grades five and six, the team included **Abby McCarthy, Addy Lee, Aria Dayton, Hannah Beam, Harper Agee, Hayden Parme, Julia Mello, Lily Rohe, London Wheeler, Lyla Giel, Mabry Stevenson, Mackenzie Goller, Madi Duffy, Perry Bates, Peyton Menefee, Poppy Vetter, Ryan Deluzio and Zoe Russell.** Coaches **Cheyenne Lee and Jillian Beam** led the Green Hornets Middie A squad.



A group of seventh- and eighth-graders play for the Green Hornets Junior A team, which beat South River 11-5 for a championship.



The Middie A team secured a title by defeating SMA 11-5.

Green Hornets 2016 Boys Select Soccer Seizes Division Championship



The U10 Elite Division championship winning team included (l-r) head coach **Tony Malcolm, Leo Malcolm, Ethan Phippen, Mitchell Baker, Oliver Taddeo, Cal Viera, Brody Bombard, Liam Harvey, Hudson Merriman, Vincent Marino, Jason Blanco** and assistant coach **Mat Merriman.**

In their final tournament appearance, the Green Hornets 2016 boys select soccer team played in the Soccer Association of Columbia Memorial Day tournament and won the U10 Elite Division championship in dramatic fashion.

Led by head coach **Tony Malcom** and assistant coach **Mat Merriman**, the boys battled top teams from the region and advanced to the division champi-

onship. At the end of regulation time, the score was tied 1-1 and the teams immediately moved to penalty kicks to decide the victor. The 2016 boys were flawless in their execution, not missing a single penalty kick as they won 7-6.

"They showed grit and determination, playing through less-than-ideal weather conditions, while showcasing skill and tenacity defeating top teams in the elite bracket," Merriman said.

Green Hornets "White" Capture HOCO 2032 B Division Title



The team beat Team Ville 8-3 to win a boys lacrosse championship in May.

For the Green Hornets 2032 boys lacrosse team, championship weekend from May 17-18 started with a 9-4 win over True Chesapeake in the semifinals of the Howard County Lacrosse league, which includes teams from all across the region. The win was on the shoulders of first-time goalie **Tate Barksdale**, who had eight saves in his inaugural game.

The championship game against Team Ville was a dominant effort with the Hornets jumping to an 8-0 lead before finishing the game with an 8-3 win. Scoring in the game was paced by the attack play of **Clyde Baker, JP Burleson, Carson Corey, Wyatt Rubiano** and **Ryan Scollard.**

Between the lines, the midfield play of **Aiden Ortel, Kellen Clay, Joey Potocek, Jude Earhart, Owen Bergman, Frankie Barr** and **Andrew Adams** controlled the ball with great faceoffs, ground balls, and transition play. The defense was anchored by goalie **Grady Shadowens**, who returned for the championship game. The close defense of **David Morris, Porter Mecone, James Hillyer** and **Kieren Sowa** held the Ville's attack in check throughout the game. **Oliver Groves** was a menace all day as the long-stick midfielder.

The team is coached by **Keith Baker, Chris Ortel** and **Brian Scollard.** Equipment managers are **Reece Ortel** and **Mitchell Baker.**





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SPES Variety Show Puts The Fun In Fundraising

By Judy Tacyn

Severna Park Elementary School (SPES) students stepped onto the biggest stage of their lives — the theater at Severna Park High School — this spring as they danced, sang, played instruments, performed magic tricks, and so much more in the 20th annual variety show to benefit the Rebecca Fortney Breast Center at Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center (LHAAMC).

First-time parent directors Monica Gentilcore and Kristen Berthelotte said friends, family and the community came out to applaud 134 performers, including 13 SPES staff members and teachers, for the event that raised \$5,381. Additionally, 30 student alumni served as backstage and front-of-house crew, a testament to the event's popularity. The proceeds were presented to the Rebecca Fortney Breast Center and hospital staff on May 19 by four fifth-grade event emcees: Thomas Peery, Lawton Bloomfield, Stella Pinning and Zoe Gentilcore.

More than 20 years ago, former SPES parent Loretta Wilson envisioned an event to give every stu-

dent a "shining-star moment," and the variety show was created with proceeds to benefit the breast center. Sadly, Wilson died from breast cancer before the first event was held. Since then, two other SPES moms, Jennifer MacFarland and Jennifer Sovern, have also died from breast cancer.

Fifth-grader Andrew Kraft loves performing at the variety show with his twin brother, Cameron, and his friends, and not just because they dance and sing onstage. "Of course, it's fun to perform something silly with my brother and buddies," Andrew explained, "but what really feels good is knowing that our fun is helping to raise money for a very good cause."

All students are invited to present a proposal to the directors for a 90-second performance. Forty-nine acts were submitted.

"The trickiest part as a director is to keep things moving as quickly as possible and keep the kids focused," Gentilcore said. "Ninety seconds may seem like a very short amount of time, but it's just long enough to show a little jewel of an act onstage."

New this year was an all-fifth-grade act of 34 students who performed the finale, entitled "Evolution of Bobcats," their own special take on the evolution of dance. The act was choreographed by Gentilcore.

Addy Merkel and her fellow fifth-grade friends danced a fun number to NSYNC's 2000 hit "Bye Bye Bye" as a farewell song to the elementary school they love.

Jennie Merrill, an SPES teacher for the past 27 years, has been involved with the variety show since its inception.

"It's my favorite event of the year because it reminds us that every child has a talent to share," Merrill said. "Sometimes the quietest child steps onstage and sings the most beautiful song or tells jokes that make our sides hurt. We never know what they have hidden inside them."

To prepare for their performances, students rehearse and receive feedback. They learn how to be onstage and hold a microphone.

Gabby Fitzmaurice has a unique perspective as both an SPES parent and director of donor engage-

» Continued on page 37



Teen Gets Her Hands Dirty, Promotes Watershed Stewardship

By Margaret Bates

Brigid Barry is a Severna Park High School junior with two passions: business and conservation.

The 17-year-old owns a jewelry business and makes earrings from recycled aluminum cans. She became dedicated to environmentalism after realizing her customers were drawn to sustainable businesses.

"I took AP Environmental Science ... I cared so much," Barry said. "I did a program at the Columbia Climate School under professionals in the field about how to promote this sustainability."

In January 2025, Barry started training with the Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy (WSA), a program usually reserved for adults due to its rigorous requirements. But Barry's passion and experience convinced WSA Director Suzanne Etgen to admit her. Barry graduated as a steward on May 6, although she will finish her capstone project, a native pollinator garden, this fall at Quiet Waters Park in Annapolis under the supervision of Terryl Acker-Carter.

Barry praised the WSA program, saying, "(They) made it easy to learn with in-depth classroom instruction and by being shown onsite how to better understand the geography of river degradation."

In addition to her capstone project and her field work analyzing river runoff in local neighborhoods, Barry has served on a team constructing a conservation garden for a Cape St. Claire resident. She also helped conduct a site clean-up at Christ Our Anchor Presbyterian Church in Annapolis. Barry was especially glad to give back to the church as "they'd given us a place to



Brigid Barry displayed her watershed steward completion certificate in May.

meet and host important events, and we were happy to work with them."

The WSA has also taught Barry leadership and management skills. The program helps the stewards grow as public speakers, workshop providers, and as individuals capable of engaging communities.

"Becoming a person in our community who can lead

others to a sustainable solution is a big part of this ... creating opportunities for communities to come together, especially for underprivileged communities to also be included, since they've often been left out of these discussions," Barry said.

Ever busy, Barry throws herself into the coursework and projects required for WSA training, as her mother, Eileen Wold, noted. "As an observer, I watch her juggle her schoolwork and a lot of responsibility with WSA, and she's doing a great job," Wold said.

Barry admitted, "By budgeting time for the WSA, I've been able to make the most of this opportunity."

She shared advice for Severna Park residents who want to live more sustainable lives. Barry recommends planting native species, ones local to this part of Maryland, in home gardens. She also encourages people to reduce daily consumption by using less water, recycling, buying fewer products, and by shopping secondhand from thrift shops. In addition, she wants other community members to "get their hands dirty" and volunteer for the WSA.

Next year, along with finishing her pollinator project, Barry will apply to college. So far, she's interested in William & Mary and the University of Vermont.

Wherever she attends college, it's clear that Barry is passionate about the environment. "A lot of teenagers are scared we won't have a future because of climate change, but things will get better because we care," Barry said. "We'll do something. I have faith in humanity."

To learn more about the WSA program, visit www.aawsa.org/watershed-stewards.

Young Entrepreneur Makes Junior Achievement's 18 Under 18 List



By Zach Sparks
zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Kiriakos "Rocco" Katsikides has proven to be one smart cookie. Thanks to his baking business, the Severna Park High School student just made Junior Achievement of Central Maryland's 18 Under 18 list for 2026.

Coordinated in partnership with Baltimore magazine, the 18 Under 18 initiative recognizes students across the region who are launching businesses, advocating for their communities, and leading with purpose well before graduation. Honorees attended an awards ceremony in May.

Rocco started Colossus Cookie Company as a seventh-grader in Texas and continued to grow his operation after moving to Maryland in June 2024.

"I always enjoyed baking when I was younger and realized I could share the love," Rocco said.

His offerings include chocolate chip, Reese's Pieces, cookies and cream, churro, seasonal pumpkin spice and sprinkles. Customers can find the treats around town at The Station on the B&A Trail, at

Kiriakos "Rocco" Katsikides showed off his Colossus Cookie Company treats.

Garten restaurant and at community events such as the Acton Children's Business Fair.

Not only is Rocco an entrepreneur; the ninth-grader is an honor roll student who plays club soccer and is active in community service through the Greek Orthodox Youth of America.

When it comes to business, Rocco is dreaming big. His goal is 10 stores. It's not a half-baked idea, but it will require a step up from his current set-up.

"It's a cottage kitchen in a small, dedicated part of the house," he said of his current baking space. "I want to have my own commercial kitchen."

"I want to expand and keep sharing the love more."

Student Serves As Mascot For Chelsea Football Club



Ewan Hardy met Chelsea Football Club mascots Bridget and Stamford.

Ewan Hardy, a fourth-grader at Folger McKinsey Elementary School, had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve as a child mascot for his favorite English Premier League club, Chelsea Football Club, at Stamford Bridge in London this spring.

Child mascots (typically ages 6–14) are the young people who accompany players onto the pitch, or field, just before kickoff — a tradition used by many professional clubs and leagues around the world.

Because Chelsea's mascot program has a long waitlist, Ewan's parents registered him when he was 3 years old. COVID extended the wait even further, so they were thrilled to receive his assignment seven years later: an April 2026 match against Premier League powerhouse Manchester City.

On matchday, as a mascot, Ewan watched both teams arrive at Stamford Bridge and got to greet players from each side. He then watched warm-ups from the field before walking onto the pitch with the team for player introductions. Ewan was paired randomly with Chelsea midfielder Andrey Santos. After the walkout, Ewan joined his parents in the stands to watch the match. Chelsea lost that day, but it didn't dampen Ewan's excitement. He is still talking about the experience and the behind-the-scenes access.

"It was really exciting and I had a lot of fun," Ewan said. "I really liked meeting the players I watch on TV. Out of all the things in the world, I will not forget that trip."

In terms of cost, the program itself was minimal: there was no fee to join the waitlist, and once their son was assigned a match, Ewan's parents enrolled him as a Chelsea junior member (about \$35) and purchased a full home "kit" (uniform) for the walkout. The family covered their travel expenses to London (a trip they had planned and saved for). Match tickets for Ewan and both parents were included.

Tropic Like It's Hot: Oak Hill Holds Silent And Live Auction



Photos courtesy of Fayth Photography Studio

For over 15 years, Oak Hill Elementary School parents and staff have come together to plan a silent and live auction to bridge the gap between school funding and what students truly need. Themed "Tropic Like It's Hot," this year's fundraiser was held at Severna Park Taphouse on May 8 and was dedicated to funding upgrades for every classroom's SMART Board. BITE Dental Center served as the presenting sponsor, Waverly Advisors — Baltimore was the wealth partner underwriter, and several other sponsors contributed. Donations are still being accepted via Venmo @ OHESPTO and on PayPal under the "Oak Hill PTO Auction Donations" account.

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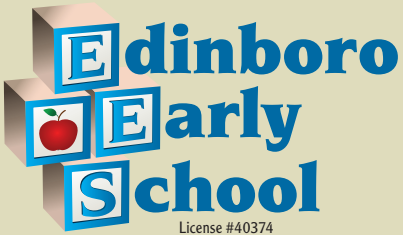
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Educator Of The Month

Liz Hargraves
St. Martins-in-the-Field Episcopal School



By Lauren Cowin

When the middle school students at St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal School enter their history classroom, the lessons go beyond what's written in the textbook.

Their teacher, Lisbeth "Liz" Hargraves, is a former Marine Corps adjutant, and her story is intertwined with the history that she teaches.

Hargraves graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 2004. She and fellow midshipmen were gathered around a single television when the second plane hit the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. She knew her life had changed in that instant.

"I came in completely at peace, and I left the Naval Academy knowing, as a Marine, that I was going to be in a war zone relatively soon," Hargraves said.

She landed in Iraq less than six months after completing basic training.

Today, that time spent in Iraq allows Hargraves to provide firsthand accounts to her students on a host of topics, both past and present. When studying Mesopotamia, she can describe from her own memory the vibrancy of the Tigris and Euphrates river regions, creating a more concrete idea for her students of why that area became the cradle of civilization.

The 26-mile march she endured in training provides context when teaching about battles throughout America's history; Hargraves can recall for her students just how difficult a feat it is to march several miles with gear, and why that might not set up a battalion for success.

Hargraves emphasized the importance of taking her students' questions on military life and current events.

"There's a calm to be felt in history,"

Hargraves explained. "I can come in and say, 'We've done this before, and this is what we do, and we're going to be OK.'"

Hargraves turned to teaching following her military service, after realizing a corporate career wouldn't provide the sense of community and altruism she desired.

A Massachusetts native with family roots that trace back to the American Revolution, Hargraves is a lifelong student of history, and she is intrinsically motivated to ignite that spark in her middle school classroom.

"This is how history is made — by telling stories. Whether they're good or bad, they still need to be told so the next generation can learn," Hargraves said. "Understanding that amazing story helps them understand their place in the world."

Hargraves, who is also a military spouse, taught middle and high school history in California and Texas prior to arriving in Maryland. She even served a stint as a preschool teacher, a move that required some coaxing and prayerful consideration.

"Lo and behold it was the right choice," Hargraves said. "Teaching the littles gave me, I think, an unending amount of patience that has now transferred into middle school."

Choosing to settle in the Annapolis area post-military was an easy choice for Hargraves and her husband, who is also a Naval Academy graduate.

It was important for the family to find a school home for their two sons. They quickly found that at St. Martin's, as well as a middle school history teacher position.

As her first year at St. Martin's wraps up, Hargraves is grateful to have found what she calls a "Disneyland school" for herself and her children — one that provides a collaborative teaching environment and allows for personal relationships with students and their families.

"I know you, I know what your potential is, and you don't get to fall through the cracks," Hargraves shared, describing her approach to her students made possible by the small class sizes at St. Martin's.

Though only one year in, her impact at the school is palpable.

"Liz's enthusiasm for teaching and learning is contagious. She exudes professionalism, humility and a sense of humor," said Kathy Mahar, interim head of school.

Hargraves enjoys the challenge of teaching middle school students and looks forward to following her sixth-graders all the way through eighth grade.

"If you can impact them in middle school, you've impacted them the rest of their life," she said.



C A F E

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Falcons Give Back Through Leadership Projects

Severna Park High School (SPHS) Leadership Institute students partnered with charitable organizations for service projects this spring. The Leadership Institute is a program designed to instill the characteristics needed to excel in the classroom, the community, and in life. Students learned about needs in their communities while becoming more effective leaders with the following projects.

Healing Together

MaryGrace Blank and Grace Wong
SPHS seniors Blank and Wong partnered with the Ronald McDonald House of Maryland charity to raise resources for critically ill children and their families.

The Ronald McDonald House's services for families include providing free or affordable places for them to stay while their child receives treatment, as well as meals and other supports.

To accomplish their goal, the pair planned and executed a donation week at their school, collecting monetary and physical donations. With the help of 12 junior leadership students, they were able to decorate donation boxes as well as movie night bags, and they counted and sorted aluminum soda tabs to donate. Thousands of soda tabs were collected and donated as well as 100 pantry items.

Shine The Light

Tommy Osborne, Jackson Eaton and Andrew Webster

Osborne, Eaton and Webster partnered with the Light House shelter in Annapolis to support people facing homelessness in the community. Along with their fellow Leadership Institute students, they raised money and made lunches: turkey and ham sandwiches with snacks and water. Additionally, they made kindness cards and donated everything to the shelter.

The trio decided to get involved with the Light House shelter after hearing personal stories — including an anecdote from a resident, Crystal — and knew that they wanted to make a difference for the people residing at the shelter or benefiting from their services.

They raised \$450, volunteered for a total of 15 hours, and created \$100 worth of lunches.

Leaders & Readers

Isabel Luznik and Rio Miguez
Longtime friends and SPHS seniors

Luznik and Miguez partnered with the Maryland Book Bank for their Leadership III capstone project, Leaders & Readers. They sought to promote literacy in their home state, collecting books for distribution in areas of need.

Growing up, Luznik and Miguez were avid readers and spent their childhood immersing themselves in many books. They still enjoy reading and firmly believe that literacy is vital to the development of one's mind. They chose this project because they wanted to help their community and teach others about the importance of the skills that come with reading.

Luznik and Miguez have collected over 100 books and counting and raised over \$200. Additionally, with the help of their group and peers, they have also exceeded their goal of 14 volunteer hours by making handmade bookmarks for the bank.

Helping Hands

Owen Lynch and Rylan Andrulis

Helping Hands, led by Lynch and Andrulis, launched with a goal of furthering SPAN's mission to provide food and financial assistance to individuals and families facing emergency situations within Anne Arundel County.

Helping Hands' goal was to fill the gaps in SPAN's food pantry and inspire others to contribute. Throughout the spring, students gathered food donations from many sources — whether it was door-knocking or running food drives. Students learned the impact of how much even a small donation can make.

Over the semester, the project netted over \$300 in donations ranging from canned food and condiments to hygiene products and toiletries, as well as \$200 in monetary donations.

Kinder To Kinder

Corbin Rolfes and James Sullivan

SPHS students, led by Rolfes and Sullivan, held a volunteer cleanup at Kinder Farm Park this spring. During the cleanup, students ran a self-led initiative and managed to leave the sports fields free of trash, debris and waste.

In addition to members of this leadership project gathering at Kinder Farm Park and cleaning all of the fields in the sports complex, over \$200 was raised through the sale of custom pins. All money will directly benefit Anne Arundel County parks.



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SPES Variety Show

» Continued from page 37

ment and events at LHAAMC. She knows that philanthropy plays a vital role in helping nonprofits like LHAAMC provide exceptional care. At the Rebecca Fortney Breast Center, philanthropic support helps sustain meaningful programs like the nurse navigator program, ensuring patients have personalized guidance, support and advocacy throughout every step of their care journey, and she's thrilled her children are learning to support the community.

"It's always an honor to help connect our community to the meaningful impact they can have on their hospital. Seeing children understand the difference they can make in the lives of others is especially powerful," Fitzmaurice said. "As a Severna Park Elementary School mom myself, having the opportunity to bring together a community I care so deeply about with the passion I have for my work at Anne Arundel Medical Center made this a truly special day."


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Exercise And Aging: How To Stay Fit And Safe

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Millersville



Exercise and healthy aging go hand in hand. While healthy lifestyle choices, such as exercising regularly or following a healthy eating plan, can't reverse aging, they can slow and smooth the process.

Whether you've been exercising for decades or want to make it a new habit, you're never too old to keep moving.

Why Aging Muscles and Bones Need Exercise

The anti-aging effects of exercise extend to your musculoskeletal system. Muscle mass and strength peak by your mid-30s and then enter a steady decline. Known as sarcopenia, age-related muscle loss can reduce your mobility. Strength training, such as lifting weights or using resistance bands, enhances the function of muscle cells and improves the tissues' ability to contract. This can help counter the effects of sarcopenia.

Your bones, too, change with age. You start losing bone mass around age 40, about 10 to 15 years after reaching peak bone mass. If you lose bone mass faster than your body can replace it, you may develop osteoporosis, a condition in which bones become weak and more likely to fracture. Subjecting your bones to force through strength training and weight-bearing exercises, such as walking or playing pickleball, prompts your body to build more bone. As a result, you may be able to reduce your osteoporosis risk.



Strength exercises. Make time for strength training at least two days per week so you can depend on your muscles to support your active life.

Balance exercises. Activities such as standing on one foot while holding the back of a chair or a table can help you become more sure-footed and less likely to fall.

Don't forget to include flexibility exercises. Stretching important areas of your body, such as the back and legs, can make performing daily activities easier and help you reduce your risk of injury so you can enjoy the full benefits of these exercises.

Building a Broad Exercise Base to Fight the Effects of Aging

Whether you're an experienced exerciser or just getting started, it can be easy to fall into a pattern of focusing on one activity or type of exercise, such as running or lifting weights. That's better than being inactive, but it means you're missing out on all the rewards of exercising. To get the most out of physical activity, older adults should incorporate three types of exercise into their weekly workout schedule.

Aerobic exercises. Also known as endurance exercise or cardio training, aerobic exercise can help improve heart and lung function. Great forms of aerobic exercise for older adults include swimming, playing tennis and brisk walking. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise each week.

Looking for more healthy aging exercise tips? Scan the QR code to read the full article from Dr. Negi on the University of Maryland Medical System Health Hub.



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Can Red Light Therapy Help Your Skin?

Virginia Orlov

Luminis Health
Plastic Surgery



If you've shopped for skin care products lately, you've likely noticed red light masks popping up everywhere. Influencers claim these masks can reduce fine lines, fight acne and brighten your skin. But how do they work, and are they as effective as in-office treatments? Let's shine a light on what works and what doesn't.

What is red light therapy?

Red light therapy (RLT) uses low-level wavelengths of red or near-infrared light to stimulate cellular energy, which helps repair tissues, reduce inflammation and boost collagen production. Collagen is the protein responsible for keeping skin firm and smooth, and its natural decline over time contributes to wrinkles and sagging.

Most red light masks are designed to be worn for 10 to 20 minutes, three to five times per week. While some users may notice subtle improvements within a few weeks, consistent use over several months is typically needed for visible, long-term results.

What to look for in a mask

If you are shopping for a red light face mask, here are a few things to consider:

- A flexible design with full-face coverage
- Built-in eye protection
- Automatic shut-off for safety
- Lightweight and portable construction

For best results, use the mask on clean, dry skin and wipe it with an alcohol-free disinfectant wipe after each use. You may also want to choose a device that has been cleared by the Food and Drug Administration, which can provide added confidence in its safety and effectiveness.

How are these masks different from laser therapy?

Red light masks and laser therapy both use light to stimulate the skin, but laser therapy is more advanced. It uses focused beams of light that penetrate deeper into the skin, directly targeting collagen and elastin production. This makes in-office laser treatments more effective for concerns like deep wrinkles, significant sun damage and skin tightening.

Laser therapy may also deliver faster and more noticeable results. However, these procedures may involve downtime, requiring sun avoidance for about 48 hours, and multiple sessions may be needed for optimal results.

Are at-home devices worth it?

At-home red light masks can be a convenient and affordable option for maintaining healthy skin and addressing mild concerns. They are generally safe for most skin types when used as directed, and they can be a helpful addition to your skin care routine.

Think of red light masks as a supplement to, not a replacement for, professional treatments. A consistent routine that includes sunscreen, a gentle cleanser and moisturizers will still play a key role in overall skin health.

The bottom line

Red light therapy shows promise for gradual improvement, reducing mild inflammation, and supporting collagen production over time. These masks, combined with professional treatments like laser therapy, can work together to help you reach your skin care goals.

If you are interested in laser therapy or other cosmetic treatments, visit www.luminis.health/plasticsurgery or call 443-481-3400 to schedule a consultation. Virginia Orlov is a physician assistant for Luminis Health Plastic Surgery.

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“Broadway Songfest” Benefiting SPAN Returns June 7

Severna Park’s Laurette Hankins-O’Connell To Share Popular Cabaret

By Judy Tacyn

After belting out show tunes on famous stages from here to New York and back, and rubbing elbows with Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo and Mikhail Baryshnikov, it’s natural to think that Severna Park native Laurette Hankins-O’Connell would be hard-pressed to choose a favorite performance or venue, but that assumption would be incorrect.

On June 7, Hankins-O’Connell will bring her favorite, most heartfelt gig to life, “Broadway Songfest” and Silent Auction, at St. Martin’s-in-the-Field Episcopal Church. During the show, written completely by Hankins-O’Connell and accompanied by her dear friend, Anita O’Connor, the cabaret singer will share her incredible voice and quirky comedy while spilling the tea on some of the greatest musicals and celebrities of the last six decades.

For the sixth time, Hankins-O’Connell will share her Broadway smorgasbord of singing and stand-up comedy, coupled with a robust silent auction, with the greater Severna Park community, and 100% of the proceeds will benefit SPAN (Serving People Across Neighborhoods).

After decades of performing, and a successful career in development, Hankins-O’Connell wanted to share her self-proclaimed greatest gifts — “singing, talking and fundraising” — to support the community her family has loved for generations. In 2018 she approached SPAN’s director, then Ellen Kinsella, with her idea for a show and was met with a hearty yes.

Hankins-O’Connell’s decision to raise money for the neighborhood her family has long loved wasn’t something she had to think about — you might say her DNA is part of the Severna Park fabric. Her maternal grandparents, Arthur and Lydia Giddings, owned a grocery store in Severna Park in the 1930s. The Cape Arthur community, named after her grandfather, is a lasting testament to the role he played in



(L-R) Music teacher and pianist Anita O’Connor, SPAN Director of Development Michele Sabeen, and cabaret singer Laurette Hankins-O’Connell have teamed up again to bring “Broadway Songfest” to Severna Park to benefit SPAN.

the development of Severna Park. Her mother, Kathleen Giddings Hankins, so loved the community that she worked as the associate editor on the award-winning “Severna Park Reflections – An Album of Memories” book published in 1996.

Hankins-O’Connell attended Duke University following her graduation from Severna Park High School. While assisting a friend with set production, she had an opportunity to sing — something she didn’t know she could do — and that led to roles in “A Little Night Music,” “Applause” and “Company” at Duke.

After returning to Maryland, she played Gypsy Rose Lee in Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre’s production of “Gypsy.” She appeared in featured roles in two productions at the short-lived Heritage Equity Dinner Theater in Severna Park before moving to the Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre in Woodbridge, Virginia.

Hankins-O’Connell moved to New York City, where she became a member of Actors’ Equity, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), and the Screen Actors Guild. She performed in

the Equity summer tour of “The Student Prince,” in the Equity Coachlight Theatre’s production of “South Pacific,” and worked in commercials, films and television. She was a featured soloist in the AFTRA Variety Showcase in New York City’s Nat Horne Theater.

Alongside performing, Hankins-O’Connell had a prolific career in development and fundraising. She retired in 2022. Of her development career, she said it was her “way to do some good while having some fun!”

She debuted her one-woman cabaret, “It’s the Journey: Life a La Carte,” in 2010. She performed similar shows around Maryland. Six years ago, she brought her Broadway-themed cabaret to Severna Park to benefit SPAN.

“Laurette’s concert is amazing,” said SPAN Director of Development Michele Sabeen. “SPAN has been open for 36 years because people like Laurette come together to serve our community. What she’s doing is a beautiful example of using one’s gifts, time, energy and talent to help neighbors.”

Sabeen said “Songfest” is SPAN’s second largest fundraising event of the year behind the annual Turkey Trot. More than \$11,000 was raised last year for SPAN’s emergency crisis fund. While many people may think of the food pantry first, SPAN also provides financial assistance for evictions, medical bills, prescriptions and utility turn-offs.

The year’s event will include the one-of-a-kind performance with a silent auction of items donated by local businesses and individuals. Hankins-O’Connell is also an accomplished photographer and will have signed photographs available to bid on. Themed baskets, gift cards to local businesses and restaurants, professional sports items and experience vouchers are available. The bidding is now open online, and you do not need to attend the concert to bid.

Tickets for Songfest are \$25 at www.spanhelps.org. Online bidding is open at 3zauctions.com/spanauction2026. Auction bidding ends at the conclusion of the performance.

“Star Wars: The Mandalorian And Grogu” Misses The Mark

By James Buxton | Film Critic

After seven long years away, “Star Wars” is finally back on the big screen. Kind of.

“The Mandalorian and Grogu” is technically a movie, released in theaters and even given an IMAX release, but every part of it feels weirdly beholden to its origins as a TV show. Despite the film clocking in at well over two hours, there’s rarely a moment where it doesn’t feel like an extended episode from the middle of the first season of the show.

Gone are the galaxy-defining stakes of movies past — replaced by a handful of isolated adventures in which the titular Mandalorian and Grogu go about their day, catching bad guys and meeting an appropriate number of goofy aliens. Like the TV show, it’s undeniably a fun time that the whole family can enjoy, but as the flagbearer of the “Star Wars” franchise’s grand return, it’s very lackluster.

The movie attempts to bridge the gap between continuing the story that began on Disney+ in 2019 and being a clean entry point for fans whose only exposure to our two leads is the near-endless advertising over the last few years. On both counts, it’s a struggle.

As the former, there’s very little to work with. There are virtually no



Photo courtesy of Lucasfilm

(L-R) Mandalorian (played by Pedro Pascal) and Grogu return for a new adventure in the newest “Star Wars” film, based on the Disney+ TV series.

returning supporting characters, and Mando’s story, which ended with him choosing to settle down with his adopted son, isn’t explored any further.

As the latter, it assumes a certain knowledge that casual fans simply won’t have, replacing Mando’s usual crew with characters from other shows. His pilot Zeb, an undoubtedly fun addition regardless, originated in a cartoon that ended a decade ago, and no attempt is made to explain who he is beyond what he does here. Further key characters from the Boba Fett miniseries, as well as the animated “Clone Wars” movie and TV show from 2008, add even more homework for fans hoping to get the full experience. It’s an odd balance that doesn’t prioritize either audience, and in the process, it loses them both.

But if you’re not bothered by that, and the inclusion of half a dozen deep lore

characters doesn’t upset your enjoyment, then there is a lot to love here. The opening sequence, which sees Mando take down a series of AT-AT walkers first seen in “The Empire Strikes Back,” is spectacular, and immediately promises the audience that yes, despite how it may seem, this is a real “Star Wars” movie. While there may not be any lightsabers onscreen this time, a first for the franchise, the creative team makes up for it with some really solid blaster action, and a higher proportion of quirky aliens than we’ve seen since the cantina.

Pedro Pascal does a praiseworthy job alongside his body doubles, but the real star of the show here is Grogu, known to most of us as Baby Yoda. While Grogu was always a real draw for this series, the movie steps things up considerably. The puppetry work onscreen is second to none, and the best they’ve done since

the original Yoda. Despite being made of plastic and felt, he’s so characterful throughout, and every connection he makes has as much chemistry as you’d expect from human actors. The way he interacts with the Anzellans, a team of tiny, cheerful spacefarers last seen in 2019’s “The Rise of Skywalker,” is a clear high point of the movie.

Truth be told, there’s very little bad with this movie on a technical level, but there’s just not a whole lot of good either. If you’re a “Star Wars” fan who is desperate to keep up with the lore and never miss a beat, this could still be an easy skip. Nothing of note happens on a personal or galactic scale, and if a fourth season of “The Mandalorian” ever materializes, there isn’t a whole lot you’d miss by not seeing it.

As a slick, action-packed sci-fi romp, it’s perfectly serviceable, but given the increasingly dismal placement of “Star Wars” in today’s pop culture landscape, it needed to be a bit more than that. A decade has passed since Disney first brought the franchise back, and there’s a new generation of kids who need to be introduced to that galaxy far, far away. If this is that introduction for today’s young people, I can’t see the series continuing as it has for much longer.

Anxious About Your Retirement Fund? Three Tips To Take Control Of Your Future

Jason LaBarge
Financial Advisor
and President
LaBarge Financial



Many online “experts” say to aim for \$1 million, but the amount needed in retirement is not one-size-fits-all for families. But there are a few strategies that may help you make sure your retirement fund is large enough and may last through your golden years.

Understand Your Day-To-Day Expenses

Retirement expenses are different for everyone. The goal is to determine how much money you’ll need to live comfortably before you can set an accurate savings goal and income strategy.

First, you need to take a look at how much you’re spending before you retire. This includes a mortgage, utility bills, groceries, gas, emergency expenses and more that will continue into your retirement.

Once you determine a monthly budget for your daily expenses, the rest of your retirement fund can be used for those larger expenses outside of the day-to-day, like travel, home upgrades, medical expenses, or fixing your boat to head out on the Severn River with your grandkids.

Consider Your Income Streams

Establishing a steady income is crucial for anyone who wants to live a long and happy retirement.

To do this, we use our red money, green money philosophy. “Red money” refers to investments that carry risk, like stocks and mutual funds, while “green money” is guaranteed income, like Social Security, pensions and some annuities.

Green money is important to ensuring you have a steady stream of income that can help you pay the monthly bills. You can spend all of your savings, but as long as you still have a consistent income coming in, you should be able to cover your expenses.

However, you shouldn’t have every dollar saved allocated for income because that limits your long-term growth. For the other expenses that will come up, your red money is invested with a bit more risk, but it has the chance to provide more growth opportunity. That money could be stashed within an IRA or 401(k) account and accessed when needed for a trip, emergency expense, home upgrade or more.

Plan For A Long Life

People are living longer than ever before, and that means you should be prepared to live a long retirement. You should aim to have enough money saved to ensure your needs will be met even if you live until age 90.

Along with people living longer, health care costs continue to rise. About 70% of people over the age of 65 will need some form of long-term care, and it could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. You should have a long-term care plan, and assets like long-term care insurance or annuities can help with this expense.

We didn’t have time to dig into other considerations, including how taxes impact retirement or income distribution strategies. We can evaluate those in more detail in a future article, but the takeaway is that it’s important to have a comprehensive retirement plan.

Retirement is one of the most important stages of your life, and if you still feel anxious about your future, consider seeking help. No one wants to run out of money, and any leftover funds can be passed down to the next generation.

A financial advisor can help you map out your golden years and craft a plan that prepares your money to last through retirement.

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June Chamber Update

Liz League
CEO • GSPACC



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Orchid Bay Designs is a woman-owned small business based in Severna Park. It provides graphic design, UI/UX design, content and social media marketing, as well as cloud and software engineering services. The team collaborates with clients to create customized solutions that are visually compelling and engaging, while reflecting their vision and communicating their story.

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REPS Performance

www.repsperformance.com

REPS Performance is a 10,000-square-foot strength, conditioning, sports performance and recovery facility in Severna Park. REPS provides coach-led training for youth athletes, adults and teams through structured programs focused on strength, speed, power, durability and long-term health. With turf, racks, recovery amenities and onsite physical therapy, REPS helps members train with purpose, build confidence, and perform at a higher level.

Allcraft Roofing

www.allcraftroof.com

Allcraft Roofing is a Severna Park-based residential roofing company specializing in roof replacements, siding and gutter systems. These specialists help homeowners protect and improve their homes through quality craftsmanship, honest communication, and reliable service. From storm damage assessments to full exterior renovations, the team is committed to delivering dependable results and a smooth customer experience from start to finish.

RS Plumbing LLC

www.rsplumbingllc.com

RS Plumbing LLC is a family-operated plumbing company based in Davidsonville, proudly serving Annapolis, Glen Burnie, Severna Park, Crofton, Pasadena, Bowie and surrounding areas. Founded three years ago by a Master Plumber with over 23 years of hands-on industry experience, the company is built on craftsmanship, reliability and quality results. From apprentice to Master Plumber to business owner, the founder brings deep expertise and experience to every project.

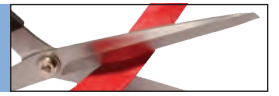
Deshaies Electrical Services

www.deshaieselectricalservices.com

Deshaies Electrical Services offers expert residential and commercial electrical work, including new home wiring, lighting installs, electric vehicle charger stations, hot tub wiring, generator installations, electrical repairs, ceiling fans, home automation, panel upgrades and more. The business has served Anne Arundel County since 2011 and has over 200 five-star reviews. The licensed, highly trained team delivers prompt, honest service.

Our Spring Local Fun Festival was held on May 2 at Park Plaza and
» Continued on page 46

RIBBON CUTTINGS



FS8 Brings Functional Strength Workouts To Park Plaza

Specializing in a mix of Pilates, tone and yoga workouts, FS8 celebrated a grand opening with support from the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce on May 9. FS8 trainers shared how their workouts get people feeling their best using science-backed movements that build flexibility, stability and strength. The business is located at 570 Ritchie Highway, Suite H. Learn more at www.fs8.com/studio/severnapark.

June Chamber Update

» Continued from page 45

featured over 70 exhibitors and many wonderful sponsors! We had eight gold sponsors who donated funds to their charities of choice at the event, as follows:

- **Landmark Roofing** donated to the **National Alliance on Mental Illness**
- **Checkmark Power Washing** donated to the **Katherine's Light Foundation**
- **Lean on Dee Senior Home Care** donated to the **Alzheimer's Association**
- **SERVPRO of Annapolis/Severna Park** donated to

the **Caring Cupboard**

- **Prime IV Hydration & Wellness** donated to the **Earleigh Heights Volunteer Fire Company**
- **Kitchen Tune-Up** donated to the **Earleigh Heights Volunteer Fire Company**
- **The Severna Park Elks** donated to **SPAN**
- **The Severna Park Voice** donated \$3,000 to the **Walk the Walk Foundation**

What a great reminder of the importance of supporting our local small businesses, which we can count on to donate to local charities, back our fundraisers, and step up when

it counts. Supporting them isn't just shopping locally — it is by extension supporting charities that serve our communities.

We had four ribbon-cutting celebrations in May. First was the opening of the **Severna Park Farmers Market**, which featured several new vendors. Then we cut the ribbon on the new **Fred Astaire Dance Studio** in Severna Park. This was followed by an evening of dancing with their professional instructors.

Next, we celebrated the grand opening of **FS8** in Severna Park. This woman-owned business fuses Pilates, tone and yoga into one workout. Finally, we celebrated the grand opening

of **Muñoz Estates and Trusts'** new, beautiful location in Severna Park.

Our Successful Women in Business coffee was held at **Wish List Boutique** in Severna Park. We enjoyed coffee, conversation and shopping the great clothing selection.

The annual Independence Day parade is next month, and we are still accepting applications and sponsorships to celebrate the 250th birthday of our country. Please visit our website for more information and an application if you plan to participate.

Follow us on Facebook, check out www.gspacc.com, and join our email list to stay in the loop. Email me at ceo@gspacc.com. Thanks for all you do to support our local businesses!

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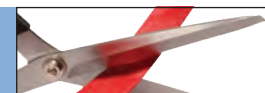
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RIBBON CUTTINGS



Muñoz Estates & Trusts Moves Into New Space

Rachel Muñoz and her husband, Andrew, invited the community to a ribbon-cutting event at their new office at 1061 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard on May 6. To them, estate planning and administration aren't just services — they are passions. With a blend of legal knowledge, empathy and personalized service, they seek to help clients every step of the way to create peace of mind for today and security for tomorrow. Learn more at www.truamunoz.com.



Fred Astaire Dance Studios Gives Guests A Reason To Twist And Shout



"Some people seem to think that good dancers are born," Fred Astaire once observed. "All the good dancers I've known have been taught or trained." That spurred the formation of Fred Astaire Dance Studios, which its namesake co-founded in 1947. The newest studio location marked its grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 1. The Ritchie Highway studio caters to all ages looking to improve their dance skills. For more information, visit www.fredastaire.com/severna-park.



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