

Severna Park Supports
Special Olympics
Maryland
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>> Page 36



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SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1981

SEVERNA PARK, MD

FEBRUARY 2021

Vote For The Best Of Severna Park!

The *Voice* wants to know which businesses, restaurants, services and venues have become your favorites over the past year. Just fill out the survey and return it to the *Voice* by **Friday, March 26**. We will then tally the votes and announce this year's winners in our April 8 edition.

You may cast your ballot online at www.severnaparkvoice.com/bestofsevernapark.

The Rules

- Nominees must be located within the *Voice* distribution area zip codes — 21146 (Severna Park), 21012 (Arnold) and 21108 (Millersville).
- Entries must be made on original newsprint — no photocopies, faxes, scans or emails — and must be mailed to the *Voice* (one entry per household).
- Mailing of multiple ballots will not be accepted. Voters must fill in nominations for at least 10 categories for the ballot to be valid. If you are nominating a business that has multiple locations, please specify the exact location.
- Entries should be mailed to Severna Park *Voice*, P.O. Box 608, Severna Park, Maryland, 21146.

The Dates

Deadline for entry is Friday, March 26. We will print a reminder in the March issue of *The Voice*, and the winners will be announced in the April issue.

Turn to page 8 for the 2021 Best Of Severna Park ballot.

Severna Park Loses An Icon, Lil Shelton



By **Conor Doherty**

She was the titan of Maryland field hockey. A figure whose greatness on the sidelines transcended not just field hockey, but all other sports. You only need to look at the numbers to see Lillian "Lil" Shelton's success

in coaching.

Shelton passed away on January 24 at age 90 after having a stroke. The head coach of Severna Park field hockey from 1975 to 2011, Shelton led the Falcons to 31 county titles, 29 regional titles and 20 state championships. No

coach in any sport in Maryland's history comes close to matching that many titles. Her career record was 544-66-10. She is a member of the Hall of Fame at Severna Park High School, Anne Arundel County and the National Field Hockey Coaches Federation.

But for the girls who Shelton coached, the impact went far beyond wins and titles. "She created a mutual connection of love and respect between each and every player," said Kiersten Kozireski, who played under Shelton from 2007 to 2010. "She paid attention to her sideline athletes the same way she did her top scorers."

Adley Bearsto, an SPHS athlete from 2009 to 2013, said Shelton appreciated the present moment.

"Many times, I looked over at Shelton during practice and she would look so content as she watched us dribble, jog, sprint across the field," Bearsto said.

Shelton's daughter Lorie Hankins played for her mom on Severna Park's
>> Continued on page 12

Restaurants Fight For Survival Amid Lockdown

By **John Singleton**

For years, big box stores have been accused of unfair advantages. During COVID, as the stocks of multinational corporations like Walmart and Amazon have reached all-time highs, local businesses have felt the brunt of the government's coronavirus restrictions.

"There is no scientific data behind the prejudicial way small business has been treated over the past 11 months," said Donald Kelly, owner and operator of Park Tavern. "Mom-and-pop shops don't have deep pockets and we don't have high-priced lobbyists to curry favor with politicians."

In mid-December a small group of Severna Park restaurant owners joined forces to protest the sweeping orders of County Executive Stuart Pittman to ban all indoor dining.

"It broke my heart to tell my staff a week before Christmas that we were closing on Wednesday at 5:00pm," said Charlie Priola of La Posta Pizzeria & Italian Kitchen.

The human cost of these orders motivated entrepreneurs to resist in a
>> Continued on page 7



Photo by John Singleton

Charlie Priola, owner of La Posta Pizzeria, observed an empty parking lot at noon on Wednesday, January 27.

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Margueritte Mills
**Volunteer
Of The Month**

Volunteer Connects Others To Community Service Opportunities

By Haley Weisgerber

Julie Shay was a physical therapist before she took time off to raise her family. She had every intention of returning, until she discovered her true calling: coordinating a group of neighbors to serve their community.

In 2006, Shay founded Good Neighbors Group (GNG) to demonstrate that one person can make a huge difference in the community.

"The GNG is a resource to help people find ways that they can help one another, for the sake of supporting our community, environmentally and socially," Shay said.

After functioning in Shay's neighborhood for a time, she set up a network of people around Severna Park who were interested in helping.

"The idea still stands that reaching out and taking care of your neighbor, or doing something for your neighbor, really does cure a lot of ills that society has," Shay said. "So, I think that's the image that I had when I was getting this started."

Today, the organization has more than 625 people on its email list and almost 450 people have liked the Facebook page. Although social media was not so widely used when GNG began, Shay said it has helped her to spread the word about the work she is doing in the community. Overall, Shay said that people want



Julie Shay was named the February Volunteer of the Month for her work with Good Neighbors Group.

to help but usually do not know where to begin. GNG connects them with those opportunities.

"I think that people often feel overwhelmed by the issues that exist, like poverty, food insecurity, housing and various things like that," Shay said. "I mean, where would you even start? So, what I found is that when I specifically break those things down, it's incredible to see what we can do."

Shay and the GNG host a variety of events throughout the year including the Severna Park Earth Day Festival, Eek-o-tober, and ongoing donation and recycling services. In February, GNG held its annual S(o)uper Bowl food drive. Shay acts as the bridge between 10 neighborhoods on the

Broadneck peninsula and 39 neighborhoods in Severna Park, and the various food pantries. Depending on the neighborhood's location, donations will go to SPAN, the Annapolis trio of pop-up pantries, My Brother's Pantry and Asbury Church Assistance Network (ACAN.)

While Shay is undoubtedly an important asset to the organization, she credits her board members and volunteers with making GNG a success.

"I have an amazing board of eight other people besides myself who I can't believe want to do as much as they do," Shay said. "They energize me and they are so motivating. And then there's people who just rise to the occasion in the community. It blows my mind."

Shay said that her work with GNG has proved that the greater Severna Park community is a community full of people who want to make a positive difference.

"I really want people to be more aware that these people are here in our community, and they're quiet," Shay said. "I would say it's a really good-hearted community. And I would like us to get branded that way."

Shay encourages members of the community to help in any way they can. More information is available at www.goodneighborsgroup.org or on the Good Neighbors Group Facebook page.

Know Your Roads: Green Means Co.

Do you know that the signs of roads you travel have more than one meaning? Blue signs and roads identified by numbers indicate non-county roads. Green signs indicate roads that the Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works (DPW) has the authority to maintain. The county DPW fixes potholes, cleans storm drains, plows and treats roads, cuts grass and

does other work on most county roads.

Anne Arundel County's roadway system measures 1,825 miles long. Because it's hard for DPW crews to be everywhere at once, DPW is asking residents who spot an issue to call 410-222-7321. DPW also has an interactive map to further help you identify county roads.

Here's the annual DPW schedule:

December through February:

DPW's Bureau of Highways focuses on emergency patching of potholes and snow removal on county roads.

March through May: DPW continues with emergency patching of potholes and begins mowing grass and cleaning storm drains.

Year-round: DPW crews collect litter, repair and replace signage/signals, and trim and remove trees.



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Best Real Estate Agent

Thank you for deeming us the best. Keep your fingers crossed and look for the list of winners in the April 8 edition of the Severna Park Voice.

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Businesses Partner To Raise \$35,000 During Plunge Fundraiser



Left photo courtesy of Kyler Wilson
Bottom and right photos by Zach Sparks



By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

When Maryland residents learned they would not be able to descend upon Sandy Point State Park and charge into the freezing-cold Chesapeake Bay for the Polar Bear Plunge this winter, many of them took Special Olympics Maryland's advice by planning low-scale, socially distanced events of their own.

Perhaps the biggest event was held in Severna Park on January 30 as Garry's Grill and numerous other businesses partnered in support of the cause.

Garry's Grill owner Eddie Conway set up a tank last June to raise funds for Special Olympics Maryland, and this time, he had a grander idea: get businesses to take one slot each from 8:00am to 4:00pm and raise at least \$200 during their 30-minute session.

"It was like a legal Ponzi scheme," Conway joked.

Collectively, the businesses from Severna Park and beyond raised \$35,086.

"It's definitely the highest total for a one-day event this year, as far as we know," said Frank Farrell, vice president of development for Special Olympics Maryland. "There are some events that we might not know about. It's remarkable what they raised."

By comparison, this year's top corporate

plunge team raised about \$30,000 over the span of several weeks, Farrell said.

"It was great to see that people understood that the plunge is more than a party at Sandy Point," he said. "It's our biggest fundraiser and is critical to our mission of supporting our 8,716 athletes."

Conway had plenty of support in coordinating the successful fundraiser on January 30. Savvy Consignment owner Stacey Cassidy and her team raised \$3,100 and Cassidy was dunked more than 15 times in 30 minutes.

"After being in business for almost 12 years, I am blown away by the community involvement and support," said Cassidy, who was proud to be involved. "I had the support of my family, employees,

friends, customers and people I didn't really know."

The Matt Wyble Team of CENTURY 21 New Millennium committed to an hour sponsorship because, as Wyble noted, "it's such an awesome cause."

"Hats off to Eddie Conway and his entire staff at Garry's Grill for hosting such an amazing event, especially on such short notice," Wyble said. "Honestly, Eddie and I commented during the event that we are both so lucky to work and live in such a great community. To raise over \$35,000 in less than three weeks is yet another example of this amazing place we call home!"

As someone who has supported Special Olympics Maryland over the years, Severna Park Lanes owner Mike Hall did not hesitate to get involved.

"It was a great day for all who participated and came out for the event," Hall said. "Everyone was worried just how cold the tank might be. Actually, it was better to be in the tank than sitting on platform."

The mild temperature was by design; Conway had heated water in the tank to keep participants from getting sick.

Other participants in the Severna Park plunge included George's Mixes, Allied Power Washers, Rita's Italian Ice, FX Physical Therapy, The Big Bean, Mahon Landscaping, Coerver United, Larry Sells Consulting, Special Olympics Dance

Group, Kaycie Quinones and friends, and Rockwell Fitness.

Across Maryland, Farrell said 11,000 people plunged last year, raising roughly \$3.5 million. An estimated 4,200 people have plunged so far during the "virtual" plunge this year, but the average amount of money raised per person was higher this year, showing that "people took it seriously."

As of February 7, Special Olympics Maryland had raised \$1.8 million of its \$2 million goal for the 2021 plunge.

"It was so heartwarming to see so many people adopt this plunge," Farrell said. "For many people, it's a rite of passage to do the plunge at Sandy Point. Certainly, people would not have done this on their own if they didn't feel tied to our mission and the athletes."

Hall expressed optimism that the event will continue for "many years to come."

"Even in a pandemic, you can't stop communities coming together to help one another and a great cause," Hall said. "We are all blessed to be a part of a community that comes together in support of one another."

Conway is grateful for all of the participants and those who donated.

"I could have done this event myself, but we're stronger together," Conway said. "What we were able to accomplish, it was so much better by including the whole community."

Ben Oaks Community Takes The Plunge

Maryland's Polar Bear Plunge is usually held at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis, but without the in-person event this year, Ben Oaks neighbors rallied at their community beach to support Special Olympics athletes on January 30 at noon.

The community's grounds chair, Bill Sturgeon, posted a notice on the community website roughly two weeks before the plunge date. On January 30, 13 people jumped or dipped into the Ben Oaks pond, and 40 people donated to the cause, raising roughly \$2,300 for Special Olympics Maryland.

"It was surprisingly warm when I got out," Sturgeon said. "It's shocking when you get in, but not as bad as I thought it might be. This pond, there's ice on the river, but there's no ice on the pond. Part of that is because it's fed by an underground stream and that water comes out at about 55 degrees."

Ben Oaks had donations ranging from \$25 to \$500. Liam Kelly, who maintains the pond, was one of those generous donors.

"Special Olympics, I helped them out in college, and my extended family really liked the idea of me getting cold," said Kelly, who moved to Ben Oaks about a year and a half ago. "It's a community where everybody helps maintain the property, which helps foster that [sense of camaraderie]. It's certainly the only reason you jump into a freezing-cold pond."



Photos courtesy of James Kegley Photography

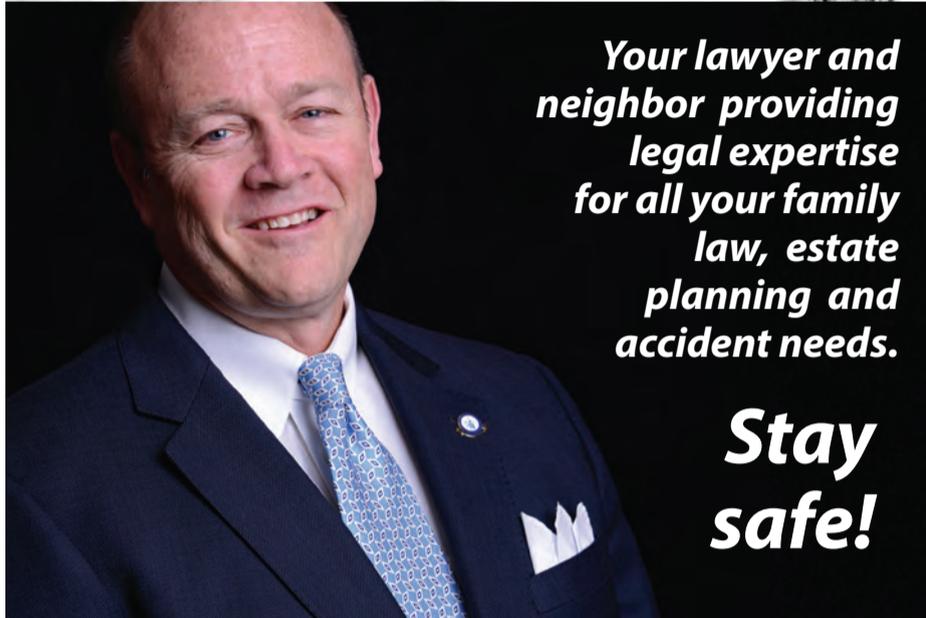
On January 30, 13 people jumped or dipped into the Ben Oaks pond, and 40 people donated to the cause, raising roughly \$2,300 for Special Olympics Maryland.



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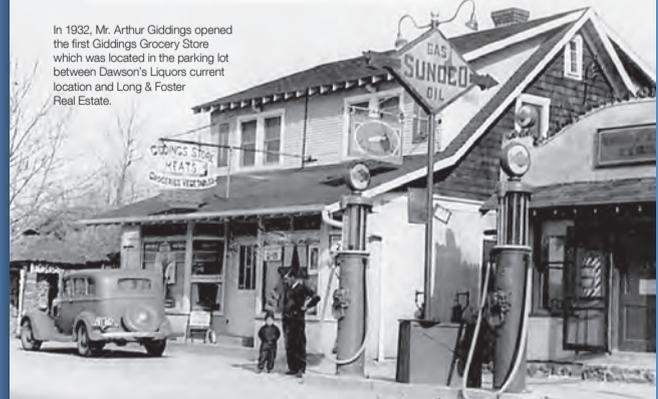
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2021

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Restaurants Fight For Survival



» Continued from page 1
multitude of ways.

“Avoiding layoffs was a priority,” confided Kosmas “Tommie” Koukoulis, owner of Café Mezzanotte. “Our servers are full-time professionals with families.”

Presenting their case before Anne Arundel County Circuit Court judge William Mulford, Priola and Joe Lefavor of Adam’s Taphouse and Grille worked with Annapolis attorney Ed Hartman. Online, Kelly took his fight to Facebook, aggressively refuting Pittman’s “Dining Out is High Risk” campaign. Despite the odds, just hours before Pittman’s orders were to take effect on December 16, Mulford issued a temporary restraining order halting the county executive’s restaurant ban.

“Thank God for judge Mulford!” Priola said. “Then on Tuesday, December 29, the lawyers for the county executive called us and said they were willing to negotiate and agreed to allow limited indoor dining. Defying the county executive’s order was never taken off the table. We could have been fined. They could have revoked our liquor license. They could have locked me up.”

According to Hartman, no evidence was presented during the proceedings “that a single person contracted or spread the coronavirus at any restaurant in Anne Arundel County. Further, the assertion that hospitals were overwhelmed was not supported by credible testimony. The projections were off by a factor of nearly 10. Initial projections of 13,000 hospitalized (statewide) never materialized; the testimony was that the current number of coronavirus patients in hospitals was around 1,700.”

Since the two-day court hearing and Pittman’s subsequent decision to sign an executive order maintaining indoor dining at 25% capacity, that number has been bumped to 50% capacity. Pittman said he had county residents’ best interest at heart.

“I believe we demonstrated to the court that the county’s decision was based on our strong desire to save lives and protect public health and was neither arbitrary nor capricious,” Pittman said after the hearing. “However, the prospect of a sudden and disruptive closure of indoor dining prompted me to evaluate the best course of action at

this time.”

Even with restaurants remaining open, the human devastation continues.

“We’re seeing anxiety and economic fear skyrocket among staff,” Kelly said.

Koukoulis expressed the same concerns, saying, “As a restaurant family, we’re working twice as hard for half as much. We’re not only running a restaurant; we’ve become health inspectors, counselors for people losing their jobs, while desperately trying to preserve relationships with vendors that are financially devastated.”

But local business owners count the community of Severna Park as a saving grace and source of much-needed humor during this unprecedented time.

“As part of the agreement, county officials asked us to participate in contact tracing efforts,” Priola said. “On the first night of handing out the forms, seven clients listed their name as ‘Steuart Pittman’ in an act of protest.”

Critics of Pittman cite his lack of private sector experience. Raised on his family’s farm in Davidsonville, he graduated from the University of Chicago in 1985 before working as a community organizer in Chicago. With a background in nonprofits, he has been employed in neighborhood organizations including the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN).

In a December statement, Pittman said his actions prioritized public health above all else.

“Hospital beds are a precious community asset, not only for COVID patients, but also for the rest of us who may well need them in the coming months,” Pittman said. “We will look back on this winter and ask ourselves if we could have done more to save lives.”

Restaurant owners feel there is a way to keep people safe while still supporting the local business community. Republicans on the Anne Arundel County Council have sponsored reopening legislation that failed along party lines.

“I’ve never been a political person,” Priola said, “but the residents of Anne Arundel County aren’t going to rest until we get leadership that gives its citizens a voice in determining their future.”



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It's That Time: Vote For The "Best Of Severna Park" 2021!

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Above info is required.

The Categories Are:

Food/Dining

1. Best Restaurant Overall _____
2. Best Wait Staff _____
3. Best Breakfast _____
4. Best Lunch _____
5. Best Dinner _____
6. Best Kids' Menu _____
7. Best Barbecue _____
8. Best Burger _____
9. Best Coffee _____
10. Best Crab Cake _____
11. Best Bakery/Cakes _____
12. Best Dessert _____
13. Best Ice Cream/Frozen Treat _____
14. Best Pizza _____
15. Best Salad _____
16. Best Sandwich/Sub _____
17. Best Seafood _____
18. Best Wings _____
19. Best Fast Food _____
20. Best Asian _____
21. Best Italian _____
22. Best Mexican _____
23. Best Gluten-Free Menu _____
24. Best Vegetarian Menu _____
25. Best Caterer _____
26. Best Bar _____
27. Best Food Truck _____
28. Best Special Occasion _____
29. Best Outside Seating _____
30. Best Restaurant Outside Severna Park _____

Beauty & Fitness

1. Best Fitness Club _____
2. Best Hair Salon/Barber Shop _____
3. Best Martial Arts Program _____
4. Best Place For A Massage _____
5. Best Nail Salon _____
6. Best Spa _____
7. Best Weight-Loss Program _____
8. Best Beauty/Fitness Business Outside Severna Park _____

Health

1. Best Medical Practice _____
2. Best Physician _____
3. Best Women's Specialty Practice _____
4. Best Chiropractic Practice _____
5. Best Dental Practice _____
6. Best Orthodontic Practice _____
7. Best Eye Care Practice _____
8. Best Pediatric Practice _____
9. Best Pharmacy _____
10. Best Physical Therapy Practice _____
11. Best Mental Health Care _____
12. Best Speech Therapy _____
13. Best Veterinary Practice _____
14. Best Senior Living Facility _____
15. Best Health Care Provider Outside Severna Park _____

Professional Services

(Please Specify Agent & Company)

1. Best Accountant _____
2. Best Insurance Agent _____
3. Best Investment Adviser _____
4. Best Lawyer _____
5. Best Mortgage Lender _____
6. Best Real Estate Agent _____
7. Best Professional Service Outside Severna Park _____

Best Home Services

1. Best Electrical Contractor _____
2. Best Fence/Deck Contractor _____
3. Best Flooring/Carpet Contractor _____
4. Best Cleaning Service _____
5. Best Home Improvement Contractor _____
6. Best HVAC Contractor _____
7. Best Interior Designer _____
8. Best Kitchen/Bath Remodeling Service _____
9. Best Landscape/Lawn Service _____
10. Best Painting Contractor _____
11. Best Pool Service _____
12. Best Plumbing Contractor _____
13. Best Pest Control _____
14. Best Home Service Outside Severna Park _____

Community Services

1. Best Auto Repair _____
2. Best Bank _____
3. Best Car Wash _____
4. Best Dry Cleaner _____
5. Best Marine Repair _____
6. Best Pet Grooming _____

Retail/Shopping

1. Best Overall Customer Service _____
2. Best Art/Photography/Frame Shop _____
3. Best Athletic Gear Shop _____
4. Best Bicycle Shop _____
5. Best Consignment Shop _____
6. Best Florist _____
7. Best Garden Center _____
8. Best Gift Shop _____
9. Best Grocery Store _____
10. Best Hardware Store _____
11. Best Home Decor _____
12. Best Jeweler _____
13. Best Liquor Store _____
14. Best Pet Supply Store _____
15. Best Toy Store _____

Entertainment

1. Best Place For Family Entertainment _____
2. Best Live Music Venue _____
3. Best Happy Hour _____
4. Best Place To Watch The Game _____
5. Best Place To Take Out-Of-Towners _____
6. Best Entertainment Venue Within 25 Miles _____

Kids' Activities

1. Best Activity Center _____
2. Best After-School Program _____
3. Best Children's Dance Company _____
4. Best Day Care _____
5. Best Music Instruction Program _____
6. Best Party/Special Occasion Venue _____
7. Best Playground _____
8. Best Summer Camp _____
9. Best Sports Facility _____
10. Best Youth Sports League _____

Community

1. Most Desirable Community To Reside _____
2. Best Community Beach _____
3. Best Community Pool _____
4. Best Club/Organization _____
5. Best Nonprofit Organization _____
6. Best House Of Worship _____
7. Best Pastor/Church Leader _____
8. Best School _____
9. Best Marina _____
10. Best Business To Open In 2020 _____



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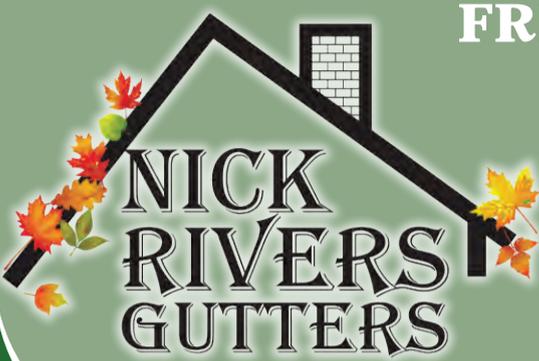
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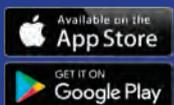
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EHVFC Plans Bull And Oyster Roast

The Earleigh Heights Volunteer Fire Company has been working overtime during this pandemic to answer calls from the community. On March 13 from 1:00pm to 8:00pm, the fire department will have a drive-thru bull and oyster roast to give local residents the opportunity to support their efforts.

Go to www.ehvfc.org/page/bullroast-hold to preorder beef, ham or turkey sandwiches or meals, plus oyster stew

and dessert. Beer supplied by Magothy Wine & Spirits will also be available. An IPA canned right in the store will be featured.

Earleigh Heights VFC also sponsors bingo on Wednesday evenings. Doors open at 5:30pm and the first game is at 7:00pm. A basic bag of nine cards is only \$17. There are bonanza cards, lucky dab cards and early bird cards available.

For more information, call 410-647-1990.

Severna Park Loses Lil Shelton



Former Severna Park High School athletes and friends of beloved coach Lillian "Lil" Shelton gathered at Severna Park United Methodist Church on January 30 for a drive-by tribute.

» Continued from page 1
softball team. "She brought out the best in every player," Hankins said. "She made them work hard but they had fun. She had a great record, yes but her legacy is the values she taught ... [the girls] knew she cared about them as people, not as players."

In 1973, Shelton began her pioneering coaching career as the first softball coach for the Falcons, and two years later, started the field hockey program. "There was no sports for girls in Anne Arundel County when I moved here and I couldn't stand that," Shelton explained in a 2011 interview with the Washington Post. "I felt that the girls were being denied some things that they should have."

From there grew a field hockey powerhouse that became the benchmark for every other team in the county and the state.

Ann Andrews, who became Shelton's first assistant coach in 1986, said that other schools like South River and Broadneck got to where they are now in field hockey because they had to compete with Severna Park. "Arundel, Chesapeake, are right there (as well)," she told the Capital Gazette. "These are the strongest schools in the state because of Lil Shelton driving to make her program so successful."

When Glenelg beat Severna Park in 2010, it represented a milestone for the program that coach Ginger Kincaid had been working toward and led the way to four future state championships for the school. For Kincaid, Shelton served as the measuring stick for how good your season and your teams were.

Wayne Mook saw the effort that went into building the field hockey program. He spent 38 years at Severna Park High School, starting as a coach in

1976 and later serving as the athletic director.

"Coach Shelton was a true inspiration to all the athletes she coached," Mook said. "From providing bagels before school on game days to all the cheers she taught her players, she always inspired her players to play to the best of their abilities."

And Shelton's impact was felt beyond the high school level. She co-founded the SPark indoor field hockey program, the Field Hockey Coaches Association of Maryland and the Maryland State Games. Countless athletes who played for Shelton from Severna Park and throughout Anne Arundel County continued their playing careers at the collegiate, national and even international levels.

"If not for Shelton, I absolutely would not have had the opportunity to play Division 1 hockey at Columbia," said Maeve Doherty. "Into college, I carried with me some of the of the greatest moments of my hockey career because of the dynasty she built."

Perhaps the most enduring legacy Shelton left behind wasn't her titles or wins but the traditions and culture she instilled in her players.

"That value of tradition, of truly committing yourself to the teammates that surround you, and the immense amounts of success and joy that can be found when all that is wrapped into playing a game you love," Doherty explained.

"And yet, despite the pressure of having won 544 games and 20 state titles, she would stop in the middle of practice just to remind everyone to catch the breeze," said Beairsto. "And we would. We stopped what we were doing and standing all across the field, she would guide us to raise our arms and simply catch the breeze."

Unity Bands Supports COVID-19 Response And Research



New Maryland-Based Nonprofit Emphasizes Hope, Fight And Unity

Everyone wants the COVID-19 pandemic to be in the rear-view mirror. People crave for the day when they can attend concerts, sporting events, festivals and family engagements with others. A new nonprofit based out of Anne Arundel County is doing its part to make that a reality.

Unity Bands is an all-volunteer project designed to support COVID-19 response and research efforts and to improve community morale during the pandemic. All proceeds raised from the sale of these customized wristbands and other branded merchandise benefit the University of Maryland Medical Center's COVID-19 response efforts and the University of Maryland School of Medicine's research efforts.

The idea for Unity Bands came to founder John Schirrippa in March 2020 as stay-at-home orders started going into place. An Arnold resident, Schirrippa is a Defense Department civilian and active member of the Annapolis-Anne Arundel County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

"The gravity of the situation hit me when the streets cleared, highway signs urged people to stay at home, and office parking lots emptied," Schirrippa said. "I felt that what we, as a society, had worked so hard for was all in jeopardy, threatened to be taken away by an invisible threat. If you look at the tragedies of our time including natural and manmade disasters, the local communities generally rally together well. People help each other. Differ-

ences are put aside. Resources pour in. And customized images and symbols are created to unify the local community."

While he volunteered with CERT at the Odenton COVID-19 donations center, Schirrippa knew he needed to do more. In November 2020, Unity Bands became a reality. A Brazilian graphics designer created the memorable, green Unity Bands logo representing the nonprofit's ethos: hope, fight and unity. **Hope:** No matter how bad things seem to get, there is always hope, and it is hope that will carry us through to the other side.

Fight: We are at war with COVID-19 and as of February 2021, there is still more fighting to be done. We must continue to fight this disease, and that means taking proper precautions all the time. **Unity:** We are all in this together, which is the reasoning for the green color.

The goals of Unity Bands are to raise \$10,000 for COVID-19 response and research efforts and to create a global sense of unity. As of January 2021, Unity Bands had donated almost \$1,000 to the University of Maryland Medical Center, the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. More than 200 bands have been shipped to nine U.S. states, as well as overseas to Brazil and Italy, with wider reach on the horizon.

For more information, visit www.unitybands.org or find Unity Bands on Instagram and Twitter @unitybandsorg. Unity Bands is also on YouTube.

AAUW Offers Scholarships For Anne Arundel County Women

The Anne Arundel County branch of the American Association of University Women is offering two scholarships for the 2021-2022 academic year as part of its mission to promote education and equality for women.

The Transfer Scholarship offers a one-year financial award to Anne Arundel County women who attended Anne Arundel Community College and are transferring to or continuing at an accredited four-year institution of higher learning. Applicants must have a 3.0 or higher grade point average and present evidence of financial need.

The Woman to Woman Scholarship is a one-year financial award

given to any Anne Arundel County woman pursuing higher education, including women who are adding to their current skills or returning to the workforce as well as high school students entering college. Applicants must explain their career goals and demonstrate professionalism in their current pursuits.

Applications for both scholarships, including details for submission, are available under the "scholarship" tab of the AAUW branch website (www.annearundelcounty-md.aauw.net). The deadline for the Woman to Woman Scholarship is March 12 and the deadline for the Transfer Scholarship is April 6.

To Spread Love This Month, Look Local

By Lauren Burke Meyer

Jackie DeShannon said it best when she sang, "What the world needs now is love, sweet love." While released several decades ahead of our global pandemic, her song still rings true as we approach Valentine's Day. What better way to celebrate Cupid's birthday than to shop or eat local?

CAFE MEZZANOTTE

During Valentine's weekend of Friday, February 12 through Sunday, February 14, experience Cafe Mezzanotte's delicious cuisine by dining in or carrying out. Diners will enjoy a romantic ambience from a masked, strolling accordionist each night, as well as the full menu with special chef's additions and lobster (three-pound) or steak (36-ounce cowboy steak) dinners for two.

On Valentine's Day, brunch and dinner boxes for two are available for preorder. Here's what you can expect in these mouth-watering meals:

Brunch Box: Shrimp cocktail, smoked salmon, bacon-wrapped filet mignon, spinach parmesan frittata, hot Italian sausage, breakfast potatoes, fresh fruit, pastries and chocolate-covered strawberries. Costs \$75.

Dinner Box: Oysters Rockefeller, crab stuffed shrimp, lobster bisque, bacon-wrapped filet mignon, mixed berry salad, fresh pasta, roasted vegetables and chocolate-covered strawberries. Costs \$75.

Optional add-ons: Prosecco 187-milliliter (\$10), lobster tail and butter (\$20) and dessert platter (\$15).

Learn more or order your box today at www.cafemezz.com/whats happening.

THE COTTAGE

Each year, The Cottage staff looks forward to helping customers pick out the perfect Valentine's gifts for their loved ones. Below are just a few gift ideas, and remember that The Cottage offers curbside pickup, as well as free local delivery on orders of \$100 or more. Place your order at www.shopthecottage.com. The staff will gift wrap the item and drop it on your doorstep.

For the jewelry lover, Kendra Scott's new heart collection is something all ages will love. You can also add some gorgeous sparkle with Swarovski or choose a special sentiment with beautiful, handcrafted bracelets from Ronaldo.

Prefer to pamper your loved one? Farmhouse Fresh offers a fabulous array of lotions, serums, masks and foot care products.

Fashion and accessories always make for great gifts. The Cottage has several new brands and styles including Tribal, Free People, Liverpool, Barefoot Dreams, and Hobo, to name a few.

Still stumped on gift ideas? You can never go wrong with a gift card for The Cottage.

Finally, the best place to find all the fun and gift ideas from The Cottage is



Photo courtesy of Homestead Gardens

Love is in the air. Some orchids emit a special perfume and others have adapted a system of entrapment in their petals.

on Facebook and Instagram @ShopTheCottageSP. The team has live events planned and will post all promotions and new arrivals.

HOMESTEAD GARDENS

You can never go wrong with sharing a beautiful flower during the season of love. Homestead Gardens has stunning orchid displays at its Severna Park and Davidsonville locations. Did you know that orchids are one of nature's most spectacular displays of love? Each orchid plant adapts its color, petal shape and even petal size to attract pollinators. Some orchids emit a special perfume and others have adapted a system of entrapment in their petals. A collection of orchids makes a wonderful display in the home. Choose for yourself and gift a romantic variety to someone special. Homestead's orchid display is open during store hours from 10:00am to 5:00pm daily. Gift cards and orchid care information are available.

PEACEFUL PETALS

For anyone who has spotted the adorable, teal Volkswagen flower truck (fondly named JoJo) driving around Severna Park or Annapolis, you'll be pleased to learn that there's a website where you can order flowers for delivery and now a physical store in Severna Park. At the store, you can individually pick out your gorgeous stems or do "grab n go" bouquets for \$35 or \$55.

For the holiday, Peaceful Petals will offer three specials:

Be My Valentine: \$75

You Are My Everything: \$100

I Cannot Live Without You: \$150

Please note: Each bouquet is unique and includes a mix of pinks, reds and whites. Price is reflective of the number of stems used to make it.

Order online at www.peacefulpetals-flowertruck.com/valentinesday2021.

If you're looking for a bonus gift, follow Peaceful Petals on Instagram @peacefulpetalsflowertruck. I can personally say the gorgeous flower photos will brighten your day.

Now, go spread some love today and every day, and don't forget to shop and eat local!

ACAN Uses CARES Act Funds To Help Even More Families With Food

By Laurie Edwards

For more than 17 years, Asbury Church Assistance Network (ACAN) has assisted local families in need by providing access to fresh, healthy food. Because of the pandemic, that need is as great as ever, and federal CARES Act funds have helped ACAN meet that need.

ACAN prides itself on its consistent service of nutritious food delivered in a respectful and dignified manner. Fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, meats, and canned and dry goods are available every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 11:00am until 2:00pm.

"We are not here to judge why you need food; we are here to make it available," said Margo Arnoux, executive director of ACAN.

ACAN is restricted to Anne Arundel County residents and, therefore, requests customers to show a driver's license. Additional verification of need is not required.

In March 2020, ACAN served 234 families, and that number has nearly tripled in the last 11 months. ACAN has been able to fulfill its mission and meet the growing need for food with funding from the CARES Act and assistance from ACAN's community partners.

With funding awarded through Arundel Community Development Services, ACAN was able to put a second van on the road. A van, purchased in part with donations gathered by Good Neighbors Group, sat in the church parking lot for nearly a year and a half due to needed repairs, additional insurance and vehicle registration costs.

"We just had no budget to do the needed work. It is heartwarming to see the 'little van,' which we affectionately call it, the one we had labored and raised funds for, for nearly three years, actually out on the road," Arnoux explained.

Additional funds from the Community Foundation of Anne Arundel County and private citizens support the use of both vans, used widely for food pickup and



Photo by Kristen Murphy

ACAN has reconfigured to a drive-up format. Fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, meats, and canned and dry goods are available every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 11:00am until 2:00pm.

deliveries.

The funding from Arundel Community Development Services also allowed ACAN to reconfigure to a drive-up format as mandated by Centers for Disease Control guidelines and county restrictions. ACAN needed tents and portable tables to bring distribution outside, additional refrigeration and storage areas, and revamped space to prepare food boxes. The Maryland Food Bank and the Community Foundation of Anne Arundel County awarded funds to be used to secure food from Maryland Food Bank's Baltimore warehouse.

"We have found that when there is a need for food, there is likely a need for everything else," Arnoux said.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, ACAN was a self-choice pantry, where customers could select the items they wanted to eat. "We want people to have a sense of dignity and choice in the food they receive," Arnoux said.

Although food is now assembled and placed in the vehicles of customers, ACAN remains true to its mission of choice through the "blessings table." These socially distanced tables allow customers to get out of their vehicles to choose from hygiene items, over-the-counter medications, various artisan breads and overflow produce.

ACAN has successfully met the community need over the past year and recognizes its support from community organizations, corporate entities and citizens. The Maryland Food Bank and area grocery stores, for example, have provided ACAN with 10,000 pounds of food weekly.

ACAN needs more volunteers, especially drivers and anyone who specializes in marketing or social media. The public can also support ACAN by sending donations by mail to 429 Asbury Drive, Severna Park, MD 21146; donating online at www.acansevernapark.org; or texting "give" to 443-233-0870.

Donate In Memory Of Wendi Winters

The world lost Wendi Winters on June 28, 2018. On that day, five journalists who worked at the Capital Gazette newspaper in Annapolis were killed in a shooting rampage. Winters, a self-proclaimed "proud Navy mom," church youth adviser, Girl Scout leader and American Red Cross volunteer, was among those taken too soon.

Winters invested her time helping those in need. She educated the public on the critical need for blood and platelet transfusions for cancer care, sickle cell treatment and other patient care. She also regularly coordinated Red Cross blood drives. On the weekend of February 13, her legacy of service continues. In Winters' memory, give blood and help save lives that Saturday from 8:00am to 4:00pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Annapolis.

The coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented, but the need for blood remains. When you give blood, you are helping heroes on the frontlines to continue helping others in need of lifesaving blood to battle diseases, like cancer.

The American Red Cross needs people of all races and ethnicities to give blood to help ensure a blood supply as diverse as the patients who depend on it.

Make an appointment to donate by downloading the free Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting www.redcrossblood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or enabling the "blood donor skill" on any Alexa Echo device. Blood drives are also essential in helping ensure blood is available for patients this winter. To learn more and sign up to host a blood drive this fall or winter, visit www.redcrossblood.org/hostadrive.

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Heart Foundation. "I couldn't remember doctors appointments or to collect my prescription from the pharmacy. I'd be cooking, and next thing, the kitchen would be filled with smoke because I'd forgotten about it. I'd take out the milk and wouldn't put it back, then look in the fridge and it wasn't there."

At first, she attributed her symptoms to stress, age and fatigue. "My tiredness was through the roof and I couldn't concentrate on anything at all," Campbell said.

"I was so frustrated with myself. Everything I did, I just couldn't remember," she added. "In the end, it was going from bad to worse, so I made an appointment with my general practitioner, who did a memory test and then referred me for an MRI of my brain."

In 2012, Campbell received a diagnosis of vascular dementia from a specialist.

The word dementia describes a set of symptoms that can include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. In vascular dementia, these symptoms occur when the brain is damaged because of problems with the supply of blood to the brain.

Living With Vascular Dementia

Recognizing the signs of dementia can be difficult. Often, patients try to explain away the symptoms or blame them on the process of aging. However, for Dianne Campbell, age wasn't a factor. She was in her 40s when she received her vascular dementia diagnosis.

"It started with small things," said Campbell, 48, in an interview with the British

Is there a link between dementia and heart disease?

Past studies suggest that problems in the vascular system — the heart and blood vessels that supply blood to the brain — can contribute to the development of dementia. Campbell was diagnosed with vascular dementia, which is the second most common type of dementia after Alzheimer's disease.

Vascular dementia is caused by a lack of blood flow to a part of the brain. Blood flow may be decreased or interrupted by blood clots or bleeding because of a ruptured blood vessel. It can also be caused by damage to a blood vessel from other disorders such as:

- Atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries)
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Infection
- High blood pressure
- Other causes, such as an autoimmune disorder

Most forms of dementia slowly worsen over time. Living with any type of chronic illness can be difficult for patients and those caring for them. But help is available.

What support is available?

After your loved one receives a diagnosis, you may have questions about the disease and the types of support available for families. At Lean on Dee Senior Care Advocates, a highly trained team of compassionate caregivers specializes in dementia support services for clients and their families. Lean on Dee's dementia home visit service is designed to promote and maintain the physical and cognitive abilities of clients, while also providing education, support, resources, and respite care for families and caretakers. For more information, call 800-413-8733 or visit www.leanondee.com.

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Nearly 160 years ago, President Abraham Lincoln stood on the Capitol steps of the East Portico to deliver his first inaugural address. Things were not looking good. Though he was the first president from

the new Republican Party founded only seven years before, he'd won with less than 40% of the popular vote. He wasn't even on the ballot in nine Deep South states.

In direct response to his win, seven Deep South states had already seceded, and had elected Jefferson Davis as their provisional president. The outgoing U.S. president, James Buchanan, made no real effort to stop them. Upper South and Border states like Virginia, Maryland, and his birth state of Kentucky were on the verge. (A month later, an island fort in Charleston Harbor was under siege. Lincoln tried to relieve the siege, not by increasing the military complement, but by sending provisions. Confederate forces thus began firing on Fort Sumpter, causing the state legislatures of four more states to vote for secession, starting the Civil War.)

Sabers were loudly rattling but had not been drawn. Traveling through Southern-sympathetic Baltimore, Lincoln changed trains, donned a disguise, and snuck into Washington to evade threatened assassination attempts, for which he was roundly criticized and ridiculed as a coward. Even his luggage was misplaced for some time, with his speech in it. Some in the crowd jeered at him, with one woman vociferously calling him an "ape" and worse.

What do you say to a nation so deeply divided? To a large region of a country so committed to their agenda that they have left rather than submit to a president not of their choosing, and to the remaining majority, many of whom say "good riddance" in response? To presumptively sane people who want to kill you for your political philosophy?

For President Lincoln, though the moral underlying dispute was about slavery, the overarching concern was to preserve the Union. A lawyer and staunch believer in the Constitution, President Lincoln did not believe states could legally secede. Although Lincoln clearly and rightly believed that slavery was wrong and must cease, obviously secession would not lead to abolition in the South.

Permitting secession was also a slippery slope — if a minority of states could leave the Union over a dispute with the majority over slavery, in the

» **Continued on page 18**

The Elusive Vaccination

Dana Schallheim
Board of Education
District 5



The vaccine is finally available!

Well, almost. Teachers are in vaccination group 1B. AACPS has carefully surveyed its entire staff, partnered with the Anne Arundel County Health Department to coordi-

nate vaccinations, and the fire department has generously agreed to administer them. The only remaining piece to this puzzle is the vaccine itself. So where is it?

As of the writing of this column, the Anne Arundel County Health Department was shorted vaccines for the second week in a row in favor of sending them to private partners and to help establish state-run vaccination sites. A decentralized approach. While no one disagrees that administering the vaccine is an all-hands-on-deck operation, the result appears to be the delay in the start of vaccination clinics for our teachers and staff.

According to Becker's Hospital Review, as of February 3, Maryland is ranked 37 of 50 states in terms of vaccine distribution with only 48.42% of its 851,250 doses administered compared with West Virginia, which has administered

80.68% of its 278,400 doses. According to the New York Times, as of February 2, Maryland is ranked 35th of 50 states and the District of Columbia in terms of vaccine distribution with only 7.4% of the population vaccinated with the first dose, and a mere 1.5% have received both doses with only 57% of the doses used. Per the Anne Arundel County COVID-19 vaccination dashboard, only 6.8% of county residents have received their first dose and 1.4% have received both doses, lagging behind the state overall in terms of first doses administered.

Now for some solutions. Teachers and staff who live outside Anne Arundel County can and should register with their local health department in their county of residence. Additionally, anyone who lives or works in Anne Arundel County can preregister on all the following sites:

Anne Arundel County Department of Health

– www.aacounty.org/covidvax

University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center

– www.umbwmc.org/getthevaccine

Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center

– www.living.aahs.org/community-vaccine-clinics

Giant Food

(Annapolis and Glen Burnie)

– www.giantfood.com/pages/covid-info

» **Continued on page 18**

Working With 28. Jun, A United Nations Consultant And Forbes Nonprofit Council Member



By Emet Mihajlo
Arnold Resident

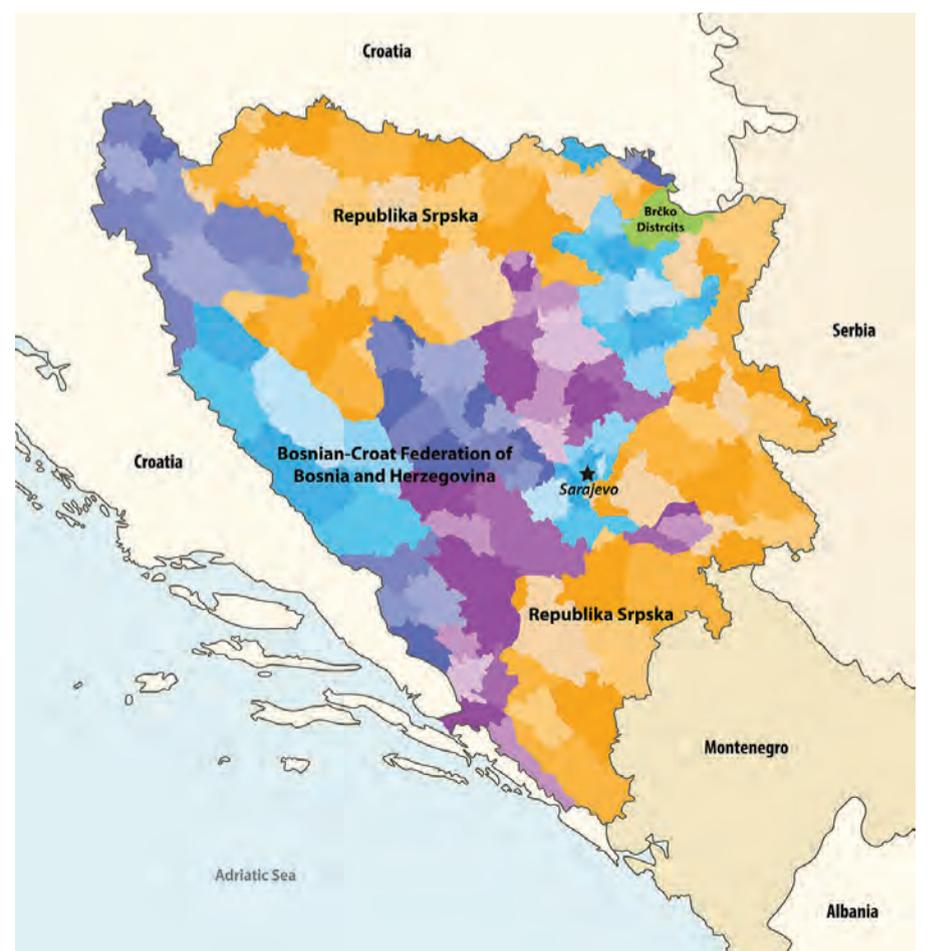
It's common to find ourselves discontent — searching within and asking God for a great mitzvah or life mission. For me, I felt as though my greatest work in life would be my art and film achievements. Having my use of acrylic critiqued by Jemima Kirke, an accomplished portrait painter, seemed to be the capstone award I was waiting for. That idea left quite an empty feeling and I was unable to pinpoint why living my dream

didn't fill the void.

In my late teens and early 20s, I battled addiction after my trust was abused and my innocence was stolen. My way of coping was to dive into creativity. Being a history buff, I was browsing the internet for a subject I could write about for a cathartic narrative feature. Sarajevo seemed to find me. I was researching besieged cities while sitting in the cafeteria of Anne Arundel Community College when I read "The Siege of Sarajevo" and aloud I said, "Oh, Bosnia..." as if one were reuniting with an old friend — one I recall hearing about constantly in my early childhood (late 1990s). Then suddenly, the prettiest voice positively exclaimed, "Bosnia?! I am from Bosnia." Perhaps Amna, whom that voice belonged to, was that old friend from a past life.

Being a detail fanatic, I had to know all of the history if I was going to write a decent script. This led me down a dark path in regard to the crimes committed and the sheer violence that took place. Shocked, horrified and never again was I the same after learning the truth of what happened to Yugoslavia — contrary

» **Continued on page 18**



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President Lincoln

» Continued from page 16

future another minority could leave the Union over another dispute with the majority, and so on, so splintering the United States until there was no Union left and giving each minority a golden opportunity to control the majority by threatening secession.

President Lincoln could have stood on those Capitol steps and urged war with the South to preserve the Union and end slavery. Those were, after all, his ultimate goals. He could have called for the capture and trial of Jefferson Davis for treason. He could even have, like the woman in the audience, pandered to and goaded the mob, attacking secessionists generally or casting aspersions on their honor.

The president did none of this. Instead, he defused the rapid amplification of anger and emotion, and sued for peace. While staying firm to his stance that the Southern states' action was rebellion, a resistance to federal power, rather than secession, he reassured them that he did not plan to force an alteration of their way of life, much less invade. He offered some concessions and confirmed that the Union would not shed blood or instigate violence unless forced to do so. And then he extended the olive branch, proclaiming that "we are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-

stone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

History tells us that Lincoln's first inaugural speech didn't really work — southern distrust of federal power was too entrenched. Nonetheless, we can learn from the man who ultimately was shot for his philosophy: standing firm with the Constitution and your beliefs does not mean it is right, proper, or even particularly helpful to insult or otherwise provoke your antagonists. Instead, appeal to the "better angels of our nature" and find a way to talk, to engage in civil discourse, and persuade with humor, kindness and compassion rather than rage, obstinacy and name-calling. Let's all be Lincolns and strive to find a way to find peace.

The Elusive Vaccination

» Continued from page 16

Without getting into the argument as to whether or not vaccines are a mandatory prerequisite for school reopening, I can share that mentally it sure does help to have cleared that hurdle on the pathway back to a normal existence, especially in the wake of news that several virus mutations, including the South African strain, now exist in Maryland. This is particularly true for our underserved populations, including students served by free or reduced school lunches, English language learners, students with special needs, and other minority groups and under-resourced communities. These groups of students need to be back in school buildings the most and are potentially at increased risk to be disproportionately affected by the virus on all fronts.

We must do better by our teachers, staff and students, all of whom want nothing more than to be back in school buildings and resume in-person instruction. Our school system pivoted on a dime, built a distance learning model from scratch, provided one-to-one tech for students and staff, and our teachers now work harder than in pre-COVID times to deliver instruction and keep our students engaged. Shouldn't their place in group 1B be honored with swift inoculation? Why should the teachers in this county, whether public or private, be left to track down vaccinations on their own instead of moving forward with the plan developed by the county health officer and fire department? Instead, getting vaccinated has turned into the Hunger Games.

Working With 28. Jun

» Continued from page 16

to what we are told to believe. I am a staunch Zionist, so this "mitzvah" was easily relatable. Being of service, which I gained from the recovery world, was now my greatest asset.

In 2017, I began volunteering for the 28. Jun nonprofit organization led by recording artist Filip Filipi and Snežana Dimitrijević. My film career started to become less of a priority as I was reminded of the joy received when we live for others.

"Emet is one of our secret weapons,"

Filipi said. "It only made sense for a staunch Zionist with a full comprehension of what was perpetrated against Yugoslavia to join our team."

I'm one who tries to play surprises on people, but one was played on me when I received my membership card in an unexpected care package put together by Snežana — marking the week 28. Jun became inducted in the Forbes Nonprofit Council. This act further drove me to acknowledge the humility of someone halfway around the world who has bestowed compas-

sion and empathy upon me in the past.

Snježana reminds us of the last queen of Bosnia prior to the Ottoman conquest, Katarina Kosača. Her intense devotion to her faith, family and absolute strangers is a trait reminiscent of a bygone era, usually recorded in history, as is such the case.

28. Jun is a special consultant to the United Nations and is the only humanitarian organization of the Western Balkans recognized by the United Nations.



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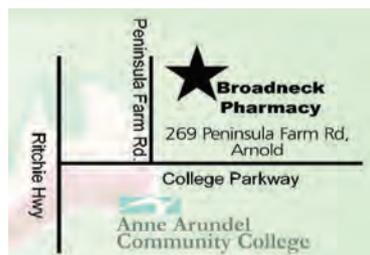


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Letters To The Editor

Many people are confused as to whether or not a pre-existing condition qualifies them or their loved ones for a higher vaccination priority group. Due to the limited supply of vaccines at the moment and people's desperate desire to protect their loved ones, some individuals are calling hospitals and health departments repeatedly hoping to obtain an "answer" as to whether their pre-existing condition qualifies them to move to a higher vaccination priority group.

Simultaneously, as vaccine doses are made available to a wider population, some people attempt to use all the tools (both phone and internet) at their disposal to schedule a COVID vaccine appointment for themselves or their loved ones. These actions are understandable as doses are limited and we all want to protect our loved ones from COVID-19. However, we must consider if these actions accidentally harm the most vulnerable of our society, those without the resources to call repeatedly to obtain vaccine information or appointments and those without the skills or technology to use online tools.

As more vaccine doses become available, health care providers monitoring pre-existing conditions and local hospitals may be tasked with vaccine administration. Thus, if you have internet access, technology skills, or a consistent relationship with a health care provider, consider the following:

1. Do you have the online health records patient portal with your medical providers and/or the nearest hospital? Patients are usually offered this access when checking out after an appointment. Examples of these portals include MyChart for Anne Arundel Medical Center

in Annapolis, or MyPortfolio for the University of Maryland Hospital System's Baltimore Washington Medical Center in Glen Burnie.

2. Does the beloved independently living older adult in your life have access to the online medical records patient portal with their specialists? If you or they do not have one, check the health care provider or local hospital website for instructions to create one. Google "hospital name or care provider patient resources" for instructions.

3. Do you or the beloved independently living older adult in your life know the username/password for the online health records portal? You can't use these tools without it.

4. Once you have obtained access to your online medical records through the patient portal, it is important that you check your personal demographic data. If your landline phone number is listed, but you do not answer that phone, it's time to update those records with a number you will answer. Double check that your personal data is as complete, accurate and up to date as possible.

Every person who can take the steps outlined here will help reduce the burden on health care workers responsible for vaccine administration. The health care provider/hospital's scheduling office can now send an email alerting you to the availability of vaccines, turn on the online scheduler tool, and empower you to schedule your own appointment. Thus, everyone who follows these steps makes it easier for those without internet access to make the call to access the vaccine.

Casey M. Breslin, Ph.D.
Severna Park

It Is Time To Change The Dialogue: Examining Society's Health, Exercise And Beauty Standards

Today is the day I start eating clean. Keto diet. Five-minute fat-burning ab workout. No carbs for the rest of the week. Why did I eat that? I cannot have dessert ever again. I feel like I am going to pass out. Lettuce. No, I need to run one more mile. Skip breakfast. How many calories was that? Ew, look at my stomach. Go to the gym! Whole 30. I need to lose weight. I have been eating so badly. Hacks for easy weight loss. Come on, you need to work hard to get what you want! This is exhausting. And the list continues.

We hear these things all the time, but since when did fat become bad? When did something that people need to survive become the enemy? When did food, a source of fuel, start to require precise mathematical calculations? When was it decided to make a single body type and a model for how the rest of the world should look?

It is not uncommon to see posts on social media about losing weight, eating healthy and working out to get a toned body. Society has made all of these things appear desirable. People, especially teens and young women, believe if they have a flat stomach, big booty, eat only healthy foods and work out all the time, they are applauded and perfect according to society's standards.

Meanwhile, under-eating, diets and hours in the gym have become common; all of these things lead to unhealthy relationships with both food and exercise. People have been looking at eating and exercise in the wrong way. Shifting perspectives can lead to a healthier and happier life.

Moral values have been attached to food items, as they are labeled either "good" or "bad." There are bad connotations associated with foods such as brownies, ice cream and chips. It is important to remember that both apples and chips are simply food items. Eating one food item over another does not make someone a better or worse person. Not only is food fuel,

but food is used to celebrate. Desserts and other treats are consumed during various parties and celebrations, and it is a shame to cut such items out of one's diet because they are considered "unhealthy." In fact, eating healthy entails eating a variety of foods, eating intuitively, and having balance. The body knows what it wants.

When it comes to exercise, there are so many benefits, but these benefits may have gotten blurred. While many people view exercise as a way to lose weight, get toned and "work off" food they have eaten, these are not the true benefits of exercise. First, food does not need to be worked off or earned. Second, exercise has so many benefits that are not related to appearance at all. Exercise releases endorphins, which create positive feelings throughout the body, relieve stress, improve sleep, boost productivity and much more. Exercise, whether it be lifting weights, running, walking, dancing, swimming, or any other form of movement that is enjoyable, should be done for the feel-good benefits and not those that are focused on changing one's physical appearance.

It is understandable that millions of people would fall into society's trap and conform to society's rules to get a desirable body and lifestyle. These ideas are everywhere, but that does not make them right. Society's standards are unattainable. If every person ate and exercised the same, they would all look different. Every person is built differently and made the way that is best and healthiest for them. Trying to change one's natural composition is unnatural and demeaning. Shifting our thoughts to focus on what our bodies do for us and what we do for our bodies will help increase internal satisfaction.

It is time to change the dialogue.

I cannot wait to try that cake; it looks delicious! Thirty-minute Zumba to boost your mood. I can eat pizza and salad and still be healthy. Energizing

yoga. The best hype-up songs for running. I like myself the way that I am! I love feeling strong. Ditch the diet. I do not need to change. My body is perfect the way it is. Having two desserts does not make me a bad person. I will honor what my body wants. I am made in a way that is right for me. Each person is unique. I am so happy!

Madeleine Stern
Broadneck High student
Publisher of the blog
"Real and Relatable"

I wish to thank the Severna Park Voice for the gracious article in the January issue, regarding the AMCade Scholarship Fund. I particularly want to commend the author, Molly Beirsto, for her skillful interviewing and balanced writing — quite exceptional for a reporter still in high school.

Our hope is that many more community service organizations will take advantage of the very flexible opportunities that this fund offers their staff. The application process is not complex, and applications may be submitted at any time, not just designated dates. Further information about the scholarship opportunity and the application are available on the ACDS website at www.acdsinc.org/8219-2 or by calling 410-222-3957.

And, of course, if anyone is interested in making a tax-deductible contribution to this 501(c)(3) fund, please submit it to ACDS, 2666 Riva Road, Suite 210, Annapolis, MD 21401.

Ardath Cade
Severna Park

SPHS Swimmers: Leading In The Pool And Out Of It

By Dave Topp

Leaders from day one. That's how Severna Park coach **John Bachkosky** describes his senior class of swimmers.

The Falcons swim team entered this season with plenty of success to their credit and high expectations to match it. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the county's winter sports season was moved to a virtual format without in-person competitions.

"This is the best group of seniors I would have had," said Bachkosky, now in his third year as head coach.

Colin Dennis, AJ Gillespie and Ben Simpkins spearheaded a group that captured four straight Anne Arundel County boys championships prior to this season.

"We were hoping to wrap it up this year and maybe get some records, but that really didn't end up coming true," Gillespie said.

Meanwhile, **Sabrina Bowes, Kelly List, Eliza Patty, Sophie Patz and Lauren Turk** led an impressive group of girls swimmers. At last year's county championships, the lady Falcons finished in third place.

"Swimming is the thing that I always look forward to," Turk said. "I understood the health concerns regarding getting back in the water, and trying to manage a safe swim season was going to be challenging."

Discussions were held and proposals were made to hold swim meets, but no resolution was found.

"We were looking forward to trying to win counties again and we definitely had a really good chance," Simpkins said.

Despite the disappointment of not having a swim season, many of the Falcon swimmers treasure the lessons learned in the water and in competition.

"I think all the hard work will pay off," said Turk, who hopes to major in nursing or occupational therapy in college. "It might not be immediate, but you'll see it one day, and it's really gratifying to know that all that hard work you put in and everything you worked toward is shown."

Many of the Falcon swimmers share that same appreciation for hard work.

"It's definitely taught me how to work hard in a lot of things," said Simpkins, who plans to major in business in college. "Swimming is a sport you have to work really hard in to be successful. If you miss one practice, you're out of shape and you're already behind. You have to be really dedicated to get up early and go to every practice."

Bowes has been a dedicated swimmer since childhood. Calling herself a "smorgasbord swimmer," Bowes has been on several teams: the Truxtun Park Penguins, North Arundel Aquatic Center, SPY, Eagle Swim Team, the Severn River Sharks and SPRFC Fitness.

Her most memorable moment, though, was the Severna Park girls winning regionals during her freshman year.

"It was exciting to see everyone's work pay off, and the pure joy everyone was feeling was unforgettable," said Bowes, who plans to major in biomedical engineering

» Continued on page 24



Photo courtesy of Laurie Dennis

(L-R) Sabrina Bowes, Colin Dennis, AJ Gillespie, Lauren Turk and Ben Simpkins hoped to swim for Severna Park this year.

From Severna Park To Lexington And Beyond

Infielder Ranked As One Of The Nation's Best

By Alex Murphy

If you ask Jackson Merrill who his favorite baseball player is, the player that he molded his game after most, the answer is a no-brainer.

"Dustin Pedroia," Jackson said. "He was really the guy who I watched the most growing up. He's a guy who always wanted it. He was always in the game, not thinking about anything else."

Despite growing up in Maryland, Jackson has been a lifelong Boston Red Sox fan, following in the footsteps of his father, Josh Merrill.

With the Orioles around a half-hour's drive away, that meant he could see Pedroia and the Red Sox plenty as the two teams played in the same division: the American League East.

Now, the shortstop/third baseman is hoping to become the next Dustin Pedroia or Xander Bogaerts as aspirations of playing college and professional baseball are now becoming a reality.

"It was really the first sport that I picked up on the most," Jackson said. "Once I kept improving in it, I knew it was the sport that I wanted to solely focus on."

Josh played a big part in his son's early development as a player, coaching him from ages 7 to 14 and frequently taking him to local fields to practice.

College baseball ran in the family as Josh played Division III ball, so he not only had a good feel for the game, but he also enjoyed being around it. Jackson gave him the opportunity to stay around the game that much more.

"We would go up to the fields once or twice a week and in between games, throwing him batting practice and hitting him ground balls," Josh said. "He enjoyed going to play, so it was easy on me to take him up there."

Baseball ramped up for Jackson once he began playing 14U travel baseball, which lined up perfectly with the start of his



File photo by Colin Murphy
In his sophomore year, Jackson Merrill broke out, hitting .450 and receiving First Team All-County honors.

Severna Park High School career.

However, that career started on the junior varsity team for the Falcons in his freshman year. As Jackson's body matured, he developed more arm strength, more power and became a faster player.

There was one more thing that Severna Park High School head coach and former 11-year Major League Baseball veteran Eric Milton saw that differentiated Jackson from the rest.

"I always stay longer after practice ends to work on hitting and fielding," Milton said. "I encourage all my players to stay later, but

» Continued on page 24



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The upper level features 5 bedrooms including an owners suite w/a large bath. Large lower level is partially finished & offers lots of storage.

SEVERNA PARK — CAPE ARTHUR

Welcome to this spacious & well maintained home located in the coveted water-privileged community of Cape Arthur. The main level features a generous eat-in kitchen with tile flooring. Imagine relaxing, or entertaining in the family room in front of the roaring raised brick fireplace. This level also features a dining room & living room both with rich hardwood floors and a main level office.



The main level laundry room is a huge convenience. The upper level - featuring 4 generous bedrooms, all with hardwood floors - includes the owner's suite with updated full bath. You'll love the large, level fenced yard and the play equipment conveys! You'll have a clean slate in the unfinished lower level!

SEVERNA PARK — FAIR OAKS



This beautiful home features an eat in kitchen with sliders to the large screen porch, which overlooks one of the best yards in the neighborhood! This level also features a dining room and living room with hardwood flooring and the living room is highlighted by the fireplace. The large picture window bathes the room in sunlight. The family room also features a large picture window, wood floors and built-ins. The upper level boasts four generous bedrooms, including the primary bedroom which features a full bath. The location can't be beat, as this home is located just steps away from the community pool, pavilion, marina, playground, sport court and volleyball court.

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From Severna Park To Lexington

» Continued from page 22

it's organic in the player. Those players that do, you know they're going to be special."

In his sophomore year, Jackson broke out, hitting .450 and receiving First Team All-County honors. That put his name on the map and eyes on him when he stepped onto the diamond.

Early in that season, facing a tough St. Mary's team with players featured at the national circuit, Jackson had a day at the plate, and that passion for baseball fermented into something more for him.

"That St. Mary's team had some of the best pitching I had faced," Jackson said. "I think I ended up going 2-for-4 or 3-for-3 and we won 2-0. After hitting like that, I thought, 'Well, if I can continue to do this, I can keep playing after high school instead of stopping after I graduate.'"

He kept going and kept rising up the rankings, entering the national circuit where he faced the best talent in the country and built his player resume up more and more.

That summer laid out the blueprints for his first collegiate offers and his eventual commitment to play for the Army Black Knights in West Point, New York.

Coming into the 2020 season, Jackson received MSABC Pre-Season All-State honors and was going to be leading the charge on offense for the Falcons, but the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the season before it could start in March.

It altered Jackson's plans dramatically, but he didn't stop improving, working with longtime baseball coach Juan Palacios over the summer as he went to national showcases and pro scout showcases with 5 Star

Carolina and the 5 Star National team.

"We really worked with [Jackson] on his hitting, getting more power, using his lower body more," Palacios said. "He became this really good hitter. His power increased immensely, but his work ethic stood out the most. He was working seven days a week, training three to four hours every day. That's what really made the change on him."

Palacios brought out the best in Jackson, breaking him out of his shell from someone who let his bat and glove do the talking, to someone who was asking questions and being a much more vocal player.

He took off last summer, becoming one of the top infielders in Maryland with even more schools and now professional teams reaching out to him. It was also during last summer that Jackson decided to de-commit from Army West Point and take his talents to Lexington, Kentucky, and the University of Kentucky.

"It was definitely the competition of the SEC and the skill level that set Kentucky apart," Jackson said. "And the coaching staff, they really had the mindset I wanted, a family mindset where we're all together. We're not just here for ourselves."

Now, as his senior season creeps closer, Jackson has his sights set not only on college but possibly getting his name selected in the 2021 MLB Draft.

The buildup of his high school career has led him to this point, so don't be surprised if Jackson Merrill's name is called this summer.

"Baseball is what I want to do," Jackson said. "I want to become a better player and succeed at the highest level."

Leading In The Pool And Out Of It

» Continued from page 22

and do intramural swimming in college.

Patty started swimming for the Shipley's Choice Dolphins summer team when she was 6 years old (she later coached for the team). She started year-round swimming on the SPRFC Stingrays in sixth grade. As she prepares to study marine biology in college and swim for a club team, she is reflecting on her time with the Falcons.

"My most memorable swim accomplishment is probably swimming in the 400 free relay at regionals after a week with the flu and then losing my goggles in the race," she said, "but my relay still managed to make top three and go on to states."

Looking back on their time competing for the Falcons, Gillespie and Simpkins fondly remember playing their part in last season's 200-yard freestyle victory,

which sealed yet another boys county championship.

"That was the most fun I've had in a race probably ever," said Gillespie, who looks to major in engineering when in college.

After advancing from those same county championships, Severna Park was in the state championships. It was there that the rest of the state saw the Falcons combination of talent and character on display. Coaches and officials were asked to vote on the team that showed the greatest level of sportsmanship. The swimmers of Severna Park took home that title by an overwhelming vote.

"For all the county awards or personal records and things like that, that one is the most special to me as a coach because that means that I am helping them create this atmosphere," Bachkosky said.

Public Schools To Resume Athletics

Shared by the AACPS
Communications Office

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) will resume athletics in a hybrid format when it re-engages with fall sports student-athletes starting Tuesday, February 16. Participants in fall sports will take part in a non-competitive, four-week session that will include skills-based practice sessions and virtual opportunities. These sessions will focus on participation and engagement and may include intrasquad scrimmages.

Following the four-week period for fall sports, AACPS plans to conduct a 14-week competitive spring sports season begin-

ning on March 15 as allowed under the plan put forth by the Maryland Secondary Schools Athletics Association. The spring season will consist of three weeks of practices and tryouts followed by up to seven weeks of competition. That would be followed by additional postseason opportunities.

AACPS launched a hybrid athletics program in the fall but shut it down in early November as COVID-19 case rates rose dramatically. The same health and safety protocols will be in place when the program resumes on February 16 as were in place in the fall. Find updated information at www.aacps.org/athletics.

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STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

Claire Kintzley

Severna Park Track And Field

By Kevin Murnane

Severna Park High School athlete Claire Kintzley has continually raised her personal records for track and field events — especially the high, long and broad jump — since her freshmen year, but she also has become a mentor and leader for the cross country and track teams.

“Claire is a great kid, hard worker and is extremely focused on how she can help her teammates,” said Severna Park High School track and field coach Josh Alcombright.

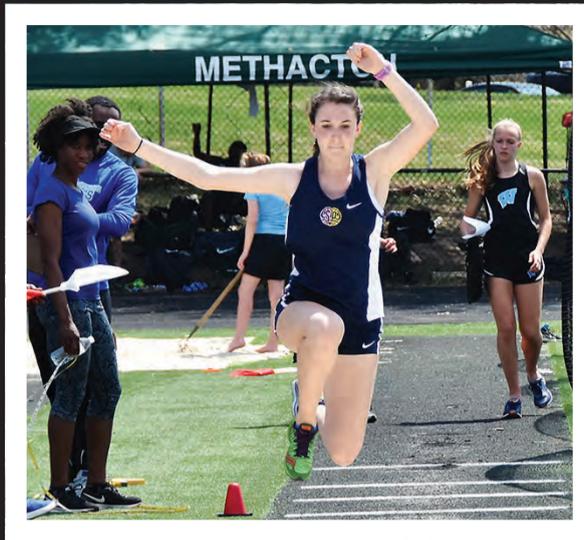
Kintzley was voted captain of the cross country team as a sophomore and captain of the indoor team as a junior.

“She is wise beyond her years and is a great role model for her teammates, and she also comes from a great family,” Alcombright said.

Kintzley started track and field in her freshmen year but had exposure to the sport due her older sisters’ involvement in track. She was also a teammate of her sister, Izzy, who was also a standout at Severna Park.

“I always went to my sisters’ meets and I thought it was the coolest thing ever,” Kintzley said. “I was so impressed by how everyone supported each other and thought it be a great way to meet new friends as I entered high school.”

Kintzley quickly adapted to the rigors of track and field. During her freshman year, she participated in the national high school meet in Greensboro, North Carolina, running in the 4x400 relay with her sister Izzy and Emily Knight.



Claire Kintzley was voted captain of the cross country team as a sophomore and captain of the indoor track and field team as a junior.

“Claire is a talented and versatile athlete and has run middle distance for us as well as led us in the long, broad and triple jumps,” Alcombright said. “I count on Claire’s leadership skills to help us carry out the workouts and spread the messages to the team. She has a bright future in the pentathlon and heptathlon events.”

Kintzley’s latest accomplishments are placing 10th in the high jump in the 2020 state championships and placing third in the triple jump and fifth in the high jump in the 2020 county championship.

“Running is a good release for me and I really enjoy being with my teammates,” Kintzley said.

“

I count on Claire’s leadership skills to help us carry out the workouts and spread the messages to the team. She has a bright future in the pentathlon and heptathlon events.”

— JOSH ALCOMBRIGHT
SPHS TRACK AND FIELD COACH

She refers to her teammates as her community and they have built strong bonds over the years. Kintzley credits her success to the camaraderie she has with teammates and friends.

Since the pandemic, it has been difficult to hold practices and maintain these bonds, but Kintzley and the coaches have used Google Meet and other platforms to plan their workouts. Kintzley hopes they have their spring season and compete in the meets.

“I have enjoyed teaching the younger athletes and being a role model as I have had great mentors since my freshman year, including my sister,” Kintzley said. “We have over 100 athletes, and the coaches have needed me to demonstrate techniques and workouts.”

Kintzley carries a 4.55 GPA and has tutored elementary and middle school students as she is also a “mathlete.” She is involved with Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church and volunteers each summer for Habitat for Humanity, spending up to 10 days helping the less fortunate with their housing needs.

To further demonstrate her strong work ethic, Kintzley is taking classes at Anne Arundel Community College to help with the transition to college academics. She plans to attend the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado, and study computer science.

In partnership with The Matt Wyble Team of Century 21, the Voice’s Student-Athlete of the Month series recognizes the many student-athletes in our area who make an impact not necessarily by way of statistics or stardom, but by their unique contributions. Contact Zach Sparks at zach@severnaparkvoice.com to nominate a young person in our community making a positive impact through sports.

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Teens Take Volunteer Project “Beyond The Bay”



Photos courtesy of Henry Reath/Reath Productions (L-R) Pierce Rizzo, Chase Hilliard, Anna Olbrich and Kaitlyn Mescher showed off their Beyond the Bay T-shirts. The T-shirts depict Baylor the Chesapeake water dog.



By Shelley Mahoney

Kaitlyn Mescher, a senior at Annapolis Area Christian School, and Chase Hilliard, a senior at Severn School, could have easily stayed at home and relaxed — as many teenagers did — when COVID-19 quarantine restrictions started in 2020. The students decided together, however, that they wanted to use their time to make an impact on their community. Mescher and Hilliard both live near the Severn River; they grew up making memories on the water, and they wanted to do something to help preserve the Chesapeake Bay.

“We want to be part of the reason future generations enjoy the bay just as much as we do,” Mescher said.

The teens started a company called Beyond the Bay. They design, print and sell T-shirts, then donate the profits to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. With Mescher’s graphic design abilities and Hilliard’s money management skills, they knew they had the tools they needed to go in together on this artistic and exciting business venture.

“With our combined strengths, we knew we could make a successful company,” Hilliard said.

They got to work. Mescher designed the now-popular character Baylor the Chesapeake water dog, a mascot that could represent the Chesapeake Bay and relate to nearly all Marylanders. Hilliard began working on the finances. The teens

did extensive research and reached out to Brackish Life owner Kyle Poore to schedule a meeting. Poore appreciated their passion and their cause, and he helped them navigate the start-up process, as well as promotion and production strategies.

Much to Mescher and Hilliard’s excitement and surprise, the T-shirts were soon sold out.

“Since we launched our first two designs, we sold out almost immediately, which was something neither of us thought we’d accomplish in such a short time,” Hilliard said. “We’ve placed numerous orders since then and we plan on expanding our brand with a website including more products very soon.”

The T-shirt company now has a wider following, and the teens are working to restock new items to expand their store.

“When starting this passion project, neither of us thought it would come this far, but with the help of friends and family, we have succeeded more than we could have possibly imagined,” Mescher said.

For more information on Beyond the Bay and its new merchandise, follow the company on Instagram at @BeyondTheBayCo. Mescher and Hilliard are hoping to sell many more T-shirts, stating that, “We want to be part of the reason future generations enjoy the bay just as much as we do.”

Student Bakes Sweet Treats For Critical Care Medical Workers



Photo courtesy of Samantha Buckley

Kiley Curran delivered a box of coco bombs to critical care workers at Anne Arundel Medical Center.

By Alyson Kay

A Severna Park High School freshman is making sweet treats for local medical workers who are saving lives through the pandemic.

Kiley Curran has always had a passion for making food.

“I have been interested in cooking and baking since I was very young and I just fell in love with it,” Kiley said.

She started making coco bombs around Christmas in 2020 when a neighbor recommended that she try making them. Coco bombs are hard chocolate shells with hot coco mix inside that dissolve into hot chocolate when placed into a mug of hot water or milk. Kiley makes coco bombs with marshmallows inside. Other versions may have mint and caramel flavors.

Kiley started making and selling them to people in the community. Interested buyers reach out to her mom through Facebook.

“They were a big hit,” Kiley said.

Kiley then had the idea to use the funds from the sales to make more coco bombs to give to critical care doctors and nurses in her community.

“I figured that with my funds from them that I’d buy more supplies and donate to them because they’ve done so much for the community that I thought I’d give back to them,” Kiley said.

Kiley reached out to facilities to inquire about donating coco bombs.

» Continued on page 30

Jeremy Stevens (left) and Josh Lyon, members of the 2018 Severna Park High School graduating class, performed with the University of Delaware drumline during President Joe Biden’s inauguration in Washington, D.C. on January 20. About 35 members total comprised the drumline for the University of Delaware, Biden’s alma mater.



SPHS Grads Perform During Presidential Inauguration

CYSO Welcomes Students To In-Person Rehearsals

The Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra (CYSO) welcomed woodwind and brass students to return for in-person rehearsals February 1.

The CYSO's 31st season started as scheduled in September. In October, the string and percussion students began a hybrid model that included both in-person and virtual rehearsals, with in-person rehearsals being held at Annapolis Evangelical Lutheran Church in Edgewater, Maryland. Due to the lack of safety equipment along with insufficient research done on the spread of aerosols with regard to COVID-19, the CYSO's woodwind and brass students remained virtual at the beginning of the season.

With the support and a generous grant from the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County, the CYSO was able to purchase three paneled standing plexiglass shields to place between the winds and brass students to help mitigate the spread of aerosols. In addition to the shields, the CYSO also provided students with bell covers and special masks made specifically for each wind and brass instrument. The CYSO is taking every safety precaution pursuant to county, state and Centers for Disease Control guidelines to allow for a safe return, however, students and families have the option to attend rehearsals virtually.



The CYSO has provided students with bell covers and special masks made specifically for each wind and brass instrument.

In following guidelines, students are seated at a minimum of six feet apart from side to side with nine feet between the two rows, front to back. Every chair is wiped down with sanitizing wipes. Students arrive masked and forehead temperatures are taken. Hand sanitizer is used, and students who do not feel well are asked to remain at home and attend the rehearsal virtually.

"Due to the pandemic, this season has had its share of challenges,

more so than previous seasons," said Leah O'Brien, president of the CYSO board of directors. "However, with every obstacle presented, the Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra has remained devoted to the students and the mission of providing the highest quality of music education.

"Beethoven said, 'To play a wrong note is insignificant; to play without passion is inexcusable,'" O'Brien added. "Passion and ded-

ication for our students and their continued success is the driving force behind every decision we make. We know the power of music and its ability to heal."

To learn more about the Chesapeake Youth Symphony, visit www.cysomusic.org or call 443-758-3157.

The Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council and the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County.

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ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CAMP GUIDE

The Severna Park Voice will publish its annual camp guide with the March issue. This special edition will highlight summer camps throughout Anne Arundel County.



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Question of the month

Each month, the *Severna Park Voice* poses a question to a local fifth-grade class. This month, students from Ms. Hampton's class at Benfield Elementary answered the question:

If you were the teacher, what rules would you make?

Let kids choose their seats every day. Let them bring cupcakes for their friends. Let kids just have fun and do whatever they want — two hours of recess, bring one-pound slimes to school, buy some good things for a toy chest, and at the end of every day, I would let them choose a prize.

Rowan Berman

We get two hours of recess time. When the second hour of recess goes by, bring the kids cold water bottles. Allow fidget toys as long as they aren't too loud. Friends can sit next to each other. Buy some cool props for theater. Let kids take turns on the piano. Let them watch movies on each last day of the month!

Nevaeh Callahan

One rule would be you get to go into groups and someone would be assigned to be the "teacher." Every week for one or two times, you would be able to pick a book, stress toy, or a charm for behaving! Bad kids won't have any, except for an educational book. Everyone would get a "skip class" pass once every week.

Ashley Coronado

I would have a fidget box that all the kids could play with.

Presley Davis

I would let everybody re-take tests.

Wyatt Donaldson

I would have to make recess longer. Kids need more fresh air and a longer break from learning.

Benfield Elementary School



I would let my students play field hockey, lacrosse and other sports at recess. Teachers say that those sports are dangerous and kids get hurt. But it's a part of life.

Millie Evans

If I was a teacher, I would bring out cold water on hot days, and when it was cold outside, they would give you hand warmers.

Meg Feemster

My rules would be no homework until high school, children pick their seats and children pick their EC-guided reading book of their reading level. I think our education is important, but some things I don't think would make a big difference if we didn't learn. I would really appreciate it if we could learn more about animals and some students' interest in future careers.

Maddie Hale

If I was a teacher, I would give my students a day that they can do whatever they want.

Max Knoepfle

I would make a rule that we would make recess have an extra 30 minutes.

Kaleena Listman

You can redo your test whenever you want, get to choose your own seats every month and get homework passes every marking period. We would have two hours of recess, and can go on your phone when you're allowed.

Alana Martin

I don't know what to do. How about you?

Ares Mason

If I was the teacher, I would make a rule where school wouldn't be a thing.

Liam Morris

My rules as a teacher would be

the following: no homework, two recesses that are each 45 minutes, you can bring a phone or iPad and go on it whenever allowed. You can participate in special challenges once a month to earn cookies and candy, play fun icebreaker games once a day, read for 30 minutes a day, always work hard, be kind, and most importantly, have fun!

Lucy Morrison

I would make a rule for more recess time because it is only 15 minutes. The new recess time would be 30 minutes!

Caleb Newton

If I was the teacher, I would make a rule where people can redeem awards when they do something kind, selfless, etc. Also, people would get a longer lunch period and they would have longer recess. I would also give advanced writing lessons so people could learn more. I would give older kids a snack time because they don't get one, and I would make sure kids are not stressed in the classroom by putting a stress bin up.

Lila Posey

Ultimate recess time and lunch. Allow the kids to sit next to friends and talk. Let kids play tackle football or intensive sports. Let kids play basketball in the classroom. Kids can have soda at school if parents allow them. Kids get ice cream and snow cones on hot days after lunch and recess.

Thomas Regala

Everyone would have an hour-long break after recess and lunch and would have 35 minutes for recess and for lunch so everyone would be happy. Yay.

Ethan Richburg

I would have my class be able to watch YouTube and TikTok and play "Among Us" in the last 20 minutes of class. I also would let the kids take a fidget toy from the fidget bin before class and I would have a class store for dojo points to be spent in.

Abigail Rinick

If I was a teacher, I would make a rule that you can eat while doing school so that they would not be hungry during class. Also, I would make recess one hour so that kids have more time to play.

Isabella Suci

If I was a teacher, I would make a rule for more recess, and at lunch you can sit with your friends at any time. Also, there would be food drives all the time for the less fortunate.

Dominic Tangrea

I would allow pajamas every day, Nerf blasters at recess and all major video game consoles. The bookshelves would be used to store games, classes would be about the history of cool stuff like video games, and Lego online school would be through Discord. There would be Nerf wars on every Friday, spaceships to get to school because it's in space, and pizza samiches (samiches is a funny way to say sandwiches), cookie cake and candy for lunch.

Thomas Wolfe

If I was a teacher, I would let the kids have one hour of lunch and one hour of recess. I would also give prizes out to the people who got A's on a quiz. I would give them homework only twice a week. I would let them have an hour to do whatever they want.

Skylar Yeager

Elementary Students To Return In Hybrid Format

Public School Students In All Grades Back By March 22



Shared by the AACPS Communications Office

Students in early childhood education and prekindergarten through fifth grade whose families selected for them to return to school buildings in a hybrid environment will do so on March 1 under a reopening plan presented by Superintendent George Arlotto to the Anne Arundel County Board of Education at its February 3 meeting.

Under the plan, students in grades six, nine and 12 who are taking part in hybrid learning would return on March 8, followed by students in grades seven, eight, 10 and 11 on March 22. Students at all three levels would attend class in school buildings on either Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday each week. All learning would take place virtually on Wednesday, when schools would undergo a thorough cleaning.

Approximately 34% of elementary school students will return in a hybrid format. That number is 36% in middle school and 39% at the high school level.

On January 14, the Board of Education directed Arlotto to begin the hybrid reopening of schools for as many students as possible by March 1. That is the same timeline that has been publicly urged by Governor Larry Hogan and Maryland State School Superintendent Karen Salmon.

Arlotto also provided the board with the following timeline that will see smaller groups of students come back to buildings:

- **February 11, 2021:** Center of Applied Technology – North; developmental centers (Phase I elementary)
- **February 16, 2021:** Developmental centers (Phase II elementary)
- **February 18, 2021:** Center of Applied Technology – South; developmental centers (secondary)
- **February 22, 2021:** Elementary ED regional centers (Glendale, Odenton and Rolling Knolls elementary schools); J. Albert Adams at Mary Moss Academy (all grade levels); Phoenix Academy (ED elementary students)
- **February 25, 2021:** Secondary ED regional centers (Bates Middle School, Chesapeake Bay Middle School, Chesapeake High School); Secondary autism classrooms (Old Mill Middle School South and Old Mill High School); and Phoenix Academy (alternative education programs and ED secondary students)

School-based staff would return to buildings no later than February 17, with school system central and satellite office staff returning on a similar timeline. Teachers and others involved with instructing small groups of students will return earlier.

More information on the reopening of schools, including safety protocols and other mitigation measures, can be found at www.aacps.org/spring2021.

Student Bakes Sweet Treats For Medical Workers

» Continued from page 26

She contacted Baltimore Washington Medical Center first and arranged to drop off the coco bombs on January 19. She brought 100 coco bombs to the facility. Someone from the center met her outside and took pictures with Kiley and the coco bombs, and those pictures were posted on the facility's Facebook page.

Kiley also contacted Anne Arundel

Medical Center and delivered 100 coco bombs to that hospital on January 28. There, she met with Samantha Buckley, AAMC's stewardship officer, who accepted the treats and spoke about how thankful the staff is for all the community has done.

For Kiley, the best part of donating the coco bombs is seeing how the hospital workers react to getting the treats.

"It makes me happy how they are all happy and getting donations," she said.

Kiley is still selling coco bombs to buy ingredients for the ones she donates. While she hasn't contacted other facilities yet, she intends to continue to do so.

"It feels good to give back to the community and the nurses who have done so much," she said.



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Maryland Earns F Grades In Three Tobacco Prevention Areas

Shared by the American Lung Association in Maryland

Even amid the pandemic, tobacco use remains a serious public health threat. In addition to tobacco-related death and disease, smoking also increases the risk of the most severe impacts of COVID-19, making ending tobacco use more important than ever. This year's "State of Tobacco Control" report from the American Lung Association graded federal and state efforts to reduce tobacco use and calls for meaningful policies that will prevent and reduce tobacco use and save lives. The report found that Maryland had mixed progress on its efforts to reduce and prevent tobacco use, including e-cigarettes.

Tobacco use remains the nation's leading cause of preventable death and disease, taking an estimated 480,000 lives every year. Much like COVID-19, tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure disproportionately impacts certain communities, including communities of color, LGBTQ+ Americans and persons of lower income. To address this critical public health threat, "State of Tobacco Control" provides a roadmap for the federal and state policies needed to prevent and reduce tobacco use.

This year's 19th annual report finds that Maryland has the opportunity to take action and pass policy to increase tobacco product taxes and funding for tobacco prevention and control programs in order to support public health and save lives in



2021. The need for Maryland to take action to protect youth from all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, is more urgent than ever, with the youth vaping epidemic continuing. With one in five teens vaping, children are becoming the next generation addicted to tobacco. Youth vaping and tobacco use overall is largely driven by flavored tobacco products, and the 19th annual report has added a new state grade calling for policies to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes, flavored e-cigarettes and flavored cigars.

"In Maryland, our adult smoking rate is 12.7% and our high school tobacco use rate is 27.4%. The surge in youth vaping combined with the fact that smoking increases the chance of severe COVID-19 symptoms, make it more important than ever for Maryland to implement the proven mea-

asures outlined in 'State of Tobacco Control' to prevent and reduce tobacco use," said American Lung Association's director of advocacy, Aleks Casper.

The 19th annual "State of Tobacco Control" report graded states and the federal government on policies proven to prevent and reduce tobacco use, and found that while Maryland has taken significant steps to reduce tobacco use, including providing access to cessation services, elected officials should do more to save lives and ensure all Maryland residents benefit from reductions in tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke. This is especially the case during the pandemic. The report also explores the fact that tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure disproportionately impacts certain communities,

including communities of color, LGBTQ+ Americans and persons of lower income, and outlines solutions to close this gap.

MARYLAND'S GRADES

"State of Tobacco Control" 2021 graded states and the District of Columbia in five areas that have been proven to prevent and reduce tobacco use and save lives. Maryland received the following grades:

- » Funding for state tobacco prevention programs – **Grade F**
- » Strength of smoke-free workplace laws – **Grade A**
- » Level of state tobacco taxes – **Grade F**
- » Coverage and access to services to quit tobacco – **Grade B**
- » Ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products – **Grade F**

An Early February Health Update



Once Anne Arundel County has enough vaccines for 75-year-olds, it can move to Phase 1C.

During a February 4 video update, Anne Arundel County Health Officer Dr. Nilesh Kalyanaraman provided an update on COVID-19 and vaccination distribution. Here are the



Dr. Nilesh Kalyanaraman

three most common questions the county has received, with responses from Kalyanaraman.

1. What phase are we in?

We're in Phase 1B (as of early February) and are vaccinating 75-year-olds. While the state says we can move to Phase 1C if we're ready, our county hasn't received enough vaccines to vaccinate all the 75-year-olds, or educators, to move into the next phase yet. As vaccine supply grows, we're ready to get more vaccines into arms.

2. How does the preregistration site work?

We're asking everyone, no matter what phase you're in, to preregister. You can do this at www.aacounty.org/covidvax. This lets us know you're interested, and when it's your phase, we'll reach out to you to

give you an appointment to get vaccinated. If you're having trouble using the site, you can call us at 410-222-7256 and we'll help you out.

3. I still have questions about whether I should get the vaccine.

While a lot of people are eager to get the vaccine, many more have questions. There are many trusted places to get information including the Anne Arundel County Department of Health, the Maryland Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and others. Take a look and if you have questions, you can reach out to us or your health care provider for more information.

The case rate is down to 36 from 64 a couple of weeks ago. Hospitalizations have started to go down in the past week. Our percent positivity went down from 9.1% to 7.8%. Our measures are getting better with a case rate that's been decreasing for over two weeks. The restrictions that were put into place in mid-December worked and we avoided overwhelming our hospitals. As these restrictions are relaxed this week, please stay vigilant. The virus is still with us, so stay masked, social distance and avoid gatherings.

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Teacher Publishes Novel Based On Ties To The Community



Maria Grosskettler's novel "Tracks" is available at Old Fox Books in Annapolis.

By Emily Allgair

Despite what was going on in the rest of the world, previous Shipley's Choice Elementary School teacher and current Cape St. Claire Elementary School teacher Maria Grosskettler was able to find a bright light this past fall when her novel "Tracks" was published.

Set in Berlin, Maryland, "Tracks" tells the story of two young teenagers, Natalie and John Paul, and their investigation of suspicious new faces they begin seeing around town. As the kids explore abandoned train stations, old museums, a haunted hotel, and the backstories of the town and its citizens, Natalie and John Paul find themselves solving a 50-year-old missing person case, as well as finding fabled hidden treasure along the way.

With a love of writing from a young age, Grosskettler always knew that she would write a book, just not one about solving mysteries. Inspired by author Carl Hiaasen, best known for his novel "Hoot," Grosskettler expected to write about urban development and the encouragement of sustainability.

"I wanted to write a story about kids who fight back against urban development," Grosskettler said, "but then it was one of those lessons of how stories evolve, and I realized that urban development wasn't the most important part anymore. The most important part was this one character and his story."

When asked how she came up

with the idea of the forgoing character and the setting of this small town in Maryland, Grosskettler explained how her husband, who grew up in Berlin, and his stories of his nutty neighbor "Crazy Ernie" inspired more than just the plot of this book.

"As a kid on the outside looking in, we don't know why these people are the way they are," Grosskettler said, "and so I kind of felt bad, and sort of wanted to recreate Crazy Ernie's story — to give him a good tale to tell rather than have this story of a person who, from a kid's perspective, was probably a little senile and a little crazy."

Berlin natives, like Grosskettler's husband, will likely recognize pieces of the town's charm embedded within the novel. From Berlin's railroads to its peaches, Grosskettler added as many real details as she could, building on the memories that helped influence this story.

Not only does she hope to inspire her audience to not judge someone before learning their stories, Grosskettler also hopes that her students and young readers will be encouraged to go beyond just reading.

"I hope that it just inspires them to write — write as much as they want, write any story that comes to mind," Grosskettler said.

"Tracks" by Maria Grosskettler can be found in paperback and Kindle formats on Amazon, as well as in store at Old Fox Books & Coffeehouse in Annapolis, The Greyhound bookstore in Berlin, and the Ocean City Life-Saving Museum in Ocean City, Maryland.

Dining Out

Cafe Mezzanotte Must Have Happy Chefs



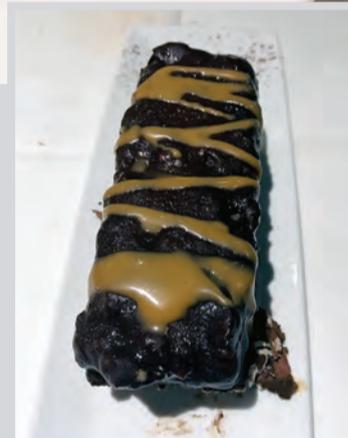
By Mary Cobbler

Looking for a way to woo your lover or win your crush? Take them to Cafe Mezzanotte for a romantic, sense-filling evening, inside or outside. You could also grab a carryout container and enjoy a cozy night at home with some of the best food you'll find in Anne Arundel County.

My dining companion and I made our visit to Cafe Mezzanotte on a gorgeous evening at dusk. We would have loved to have enjoyed our night outside on the patio under a white tent, with pretty hanging lights. Still, even with heaters, the 30-degree evening was a bit too nippy.

Modern and comfortable, the restaurant does an excellent job with ambiance, from the crisp white tablecloths topped with flickering candles to the sultry jazz tunes softly floating through the air. Large landscapes and lovely hanging

» Continued on page 38



Photos by Mary Cobbler

Top: The swordfish Portofino paired a deep-sea briny taste with the smooth cavatelli pasta in a velvety parmesan cream sauce with apple, bacon, and toasted pine nuts. **Middle:** Try the semifreddo candy bar for a sweet ending you'll remember for a long time. The candy bar is drizzled with caramel sauce and sprinkled with pecans. **Bottom:** The patio is filled with white tents for distancing.





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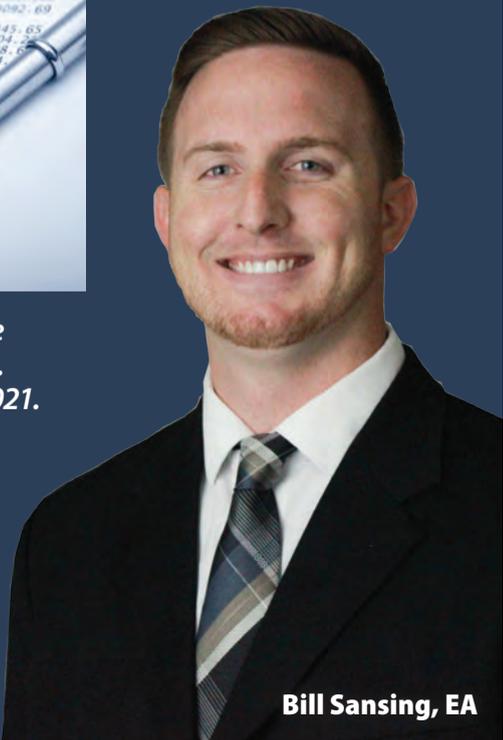
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Skribe Pens "Big Nothing" As A Tribute To His Brother

Musician Discusses New Music, Supporting Health Care Workers

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Singer-songwriter Aaron Yealdhall, known as Skribe, has been using music as a vehicle to reach people all his life. That goal has even more significance now, three years after his brother, Kevin Yealdhall, suffered a stroke and died a few days short of his 26th birthday.

Kevin battled mental illness since childhood, Aaron said, prompting Aaron to write the song "Big Nothing" and release it on what would have been Kevin's 29th birthday: January 14, 2021. The tune not only helped Aaron process the loss of his brother, but it also serves as a metaphorical life raft to anyone who is suffering.

"Music has always helped me through tough times," Aaron said. "Whether it's listening to a song that I connect with or picking up a guitar to cut loose and release stress. You can't drop a heavy topic, like losing a loved one, in casual conversation and expect someone to understand, but you can put it into a song or piece of art and resonate with people who might be feeling alone with their own struggles."

Despite its subject matter, "Big Nothing" is not a gloomy song. The lead guitar (Soren Mattson), bass and slide guitar (Gingerwolf), guitar and organ (Shea



Last summer, Aaron Yealdhall, known as Skribe, played a socially distanced paddleboard yoga concert by Capital SUP in Annapolis. "Big Nothing" was released on January 14. The cover art was done by Robyn Redish.

Springer) and drums (Jondon Stanley) mesh for a bluesy and soothing backdrop to Yealdhall's lyrics as he offers encouragement to anyone plagued by mental illness.

Aaron, Kevin and their sister, Lauren Yealdhall, lost their father to suicide in 2000.

"Kevin was only 8 at the time and it weighed on him heavily growing up," Aaron said. "He put up walls, struggled silently, and sometimes lashed out with self-destructive behavior. Kevin was a deep thinker. He was curious about the universe and dreaming up ways to fix the problems of the world. A passionate, creative spirit full of love but often lost in the fog of depression."

Lauren is advocating for others who are

"lost in the fog." She has spent more than two years educating Maryland lawmakers, trying to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and to spark change.

"I admire her passion and hope that my music can act as a vehicle to help drive her mission," Aaron said.

Aaron is playing "Big Nothing" for anyone who will listen, and he's also looking forward to playing in front of audiences again. With spring approaching, Skribe has a performance at Garry's Grill scheduled for March 19, hopefully on the outdoor patio.

He also started a music video series called "Flying Covers" where he performs covers of his favorite songs live on location. Episode 1 featured a cover of Pujol's "Reverse Vampire," the video shot by

Kavoosi in front of a 900-pound jack-o'-lantern at City Dock in Annapolis. Aaron is eyeing Woods Holy Grounds in Severna Park for the second video.

"That place was a major staple for local music back in the day; lots of memories in those walls," he said. "It would be cool to cover a band that I experienced live there back

in the day."

Skribe has other new music in the works, too. A John Prine tribute EP and new single dropped on February 5 via Bandcamp, which allows listeners to pay what they want for those songs and any songs in the Skribe catalog.

Aaron also hopes to play the next concert held by Burgers and Bands For Suicide Prevention, and he's currently supporting frontline health workers. Accompanied by his dog, Kermit, Aaron makes snack and coffee deliveries to the COVID nurses at Anne Arundel Medical Center every Saturday. Anyone who would like to donate goodies can contact him at skribe45@gmail.com.

"Thanks to all of our health care and frontline workers!" he said.

Find Skribe on Spotify and Bandcamp. For more information, visit www.skribestudios.com.

Those who want to help Lauren Yealdhall advocate for mental health resources can email Skribe with the subject header "Crush The Stigma."

"Crushing the stigma and starting the conversation is the first step," Aaron said.



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“Promising Young Woman” Is A Polarizing Film Condemning Assault



Photos courtesy of Focus Features

The film tells the story of Cassie (Carey Mulligan), who exacts revenge after her best friend, Nina, is assaulted while intoxicated.

WARNING: This review contains spoilers for “Promising Young Woman.”

TRIGGER WARNING: This review and this film deal with serious, distressing topics and will not be suitable for all viewers and readers. Please read and view with caution, particularly if you are a survivor of assault.

By Audrey Ruppert

This was, by far, the most difficult film review I have ever had to write. This film is why trigger warnings exist. I had to pause it several times before continuing. I wish that this was a story about something that happens to only a few people. Sadly, that’s not the case. #MeToo revealed just how many women (and even men, as Terry Crews can attest) everywhere have been subject to this type of abuse. “Promising Young Woman” isn’t mere social commentary about the tangled web of complicity surrounding assault — it’s a tire iron to the windshield.

The film tells the story of Cassie (Carey Mulligan), a woman who dropped out of medical school seven years ago when her best friend, Nina, was assaulted and abused while intoxicated. It is implied that Nina ended her life as a result of the trauma she experienced. Cassie has since spent her nights exacting a kind of revenge on the unsuspecting, problematic men in her town. She goes to nightclubs, pretends to be so intoxicated she cannot stand, and is taken home by men who label themselves as “nice guys.” These “nice guys” will begin to assault her until she snaps out of the ruse, reveals she is sober and terrifies them.

Initially the film almost felt formulaic, a preaching

to the choir of weary feminists. Almost every single problematic line we hear in our daily lives was trotted out for Cassie to suffer through. “Why do you wear so much makeup? Men don’t like that anyway.” “She was drunk. What did she expect? She was asking for it.” “Why don’t you smile? No? Fine, you’re not that hot anyway.”

Part of me felt catharsis, cheering Cassie on as she exacted revenge not only on everyday “nice guys,” but on every person who was complicit in the abuse of Nina. But part of me felt incredibly sad for Cassie, and a bit concerned about the film’s message. I wasn’t sure how helpful it would be to glamorize this type of revenge, no matter how cathartic. It takes many survivors years of therapy to realize trauma is addressable. Survivors can heal, find good people, and come to terms with what has happened to them — they can reclaim what is theirs from those who took so much from them, and live a full life again. Cassie, to the dismay of her family and Nina’s mother, seems to be unable to move beyond the past. She seems trapped rather than liberated by her vigilantism. Her notebook fills endlessly with tick marks of the men she has confronted, page after page, but she is no less empty inside.

That is until she meets Ryan, a breath of fresh air who is played by Bo Burnham. If you’re familiar with Bo, you know he’s a charming, witty feminist — his off-screen persona seems to bleed into the film. So many men claim to be “nice guys,” but Ryan is the real deal. He respects Cassie’s boundaries, moves slowly and doesn’t try to take advantage of her. Finally,

Cassie seems to be healing, moving on, doing better. I thought, “Perhaps this is the director’s message — that there is hope for survivors out there, that you can move on and find peace.” But then Cassie makes a horrifying discovery.

This was where I had to pause the film. The rest of the film — even the controversial twist ending that so many critics are debating — hardly seemed to register after this sucker punch to the gut. The absolute worst fear of many survivors is the feeling that they will never love again. That the moment they show any vulnerability or trust, their trust will be abused, just as before. It’s taken so much work to realize that there are good people and good men in the world; I wasn’t sure it was helpful to tell survivors that there was no hope for healing. A cynical viewer might even remark that this film is a typical feminist diatribe about how all men are bad and none can be trusted. However, Bo Burnham’s comments on the film are instructive here. He said of the movie, “It’s not that all men are irredeemable, but it’s also saying that no men are off the hook.”

I hope that after watching this movie, instead of feeling uncomfortable or defensive, viewers and men in particular will pledge to stop being part of the problem. To confront friends when those friends make problematic comments. To report acts of abuse they witness or know about. To support and believe survivors, no matter how drunk they were or how they were dressed when they were attacked. Only then can change happen in our society, and we desperately need it.

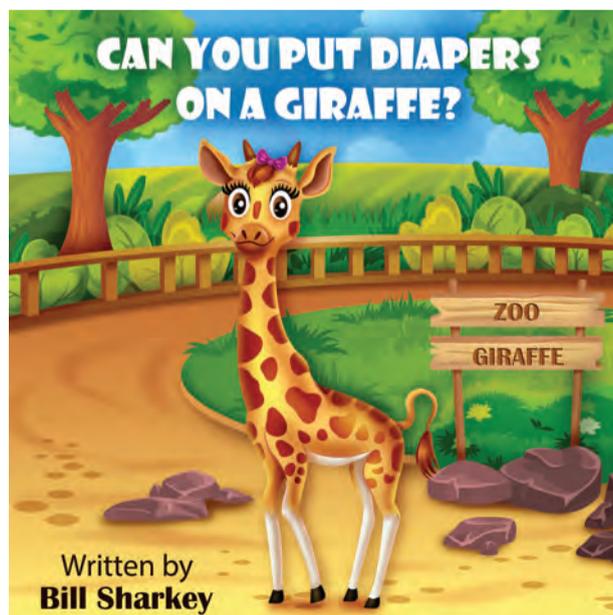
Read the full story at www.severnaparkvoice.com.

Author Continues Humorous Storyline With Second Book

By Laurie Edwards

Arnold resident Bill Sharkey published his second children’s book in November. The book is titled “Can You Put Diapers On A Giraffe?” and introduces the reader to zoo animals while posing this question: could or should a giraffe wear diapers? The new book has the same characters, rhyming verse and colorful illustrations as Sharkey’s first book, “Can You Put Diapers On A Goose?”

Both books explore the elusive question about diapers although the second book was designed to be “a little more educational” to encourage discussion and learning. The books target children ages 2 to 6. Both books are inspired by actual experiences Sharkey has shared with his granddaughter, Reese. For the first book, the author and granddaughter were taking a walk and tried to get close to some geese, but were challenged as the ground was littered with goose poop. Sharkey suggested diapers on the geese would be helpful. The sidesplitting response from his granddaughter, then 3 years old, confirmed the idea of diapers on animals as a children’s book theme. “Can You Put Diapers On A Giraffe?” contains Reese’s reaction to seeing a giraffe in the zoo and its long tongue. “Somebody



once told me, the best kind of books to be written come from real life experience,” Sharkey said with a smile.

Sharkey’s books are self-published, leaving him with the responsibilities of editing, illustrating, printing, copyrighting and marketing. While marketing his first book to a local school, Sharkey realized activities would make the book more useful to teachers and parents. With his second book, Sharkey included a crossword puzzle, a word search, giraffe facts, a coloring page, and a lesson plan for teachers and parents. The addition of educational activities seems natural given Sharkey’s experience as an educator for 40-plus years.

Currently, Sharkey is focused on marketing his books, both online and in local stores. He looks forward to a time when he can return to in-person promotions, such as book fairs and local school assemblies. Although Sharkey claims he is focused on marketing, “Can You Put Diapers On A Giraffe?” has an unexpected ending, leaving a hook for a third book. In addition, you never know where the real-life adventures with granddaughter Reese will lead Sharkey.

Visit www.sharkeybooks.com to view and purchase the children’s books.

Cafe Mezzanotte Must Have Happy Chefs

» Continued from page 33

flowers add to the romantic atmosphere. Setting one foot inside the door reassures you that you are in for a special evening. Our smiling hostess directed us to a table by the window.

The service is always excellent, but our waiter, Jesse, was really the best yet. Professional and friendly, he greeted us, took our drink orders, then returned and shared the evening's specials with perfect recall and pizzazz.

A waitress brought us homemade bread and Mezzanotte's famous dipping oil. We made a valiant effort to limit ourselves to just a few bites, but it's just too good to do that, so make sure you come hungry.

We began our meal with oysters Rockefeller and a rainbow beet salad. You can't beat Cafe Mezzanotte for presentation. The oysters on the half shell arrived warm, with a crispy, baked parmesan topping. Every bite with the oyster fork was a taste sensation — the toasted cheese combined with the taste of the oyster, spinach and bacon all enveloped with the incredible sambuca cream, delivering just a hint of sweetness.

The beet salad, like all of the restaurant's food, was just beautiful (Dwight Schrute would be proud)! There were so many goodies in that healthy salad, all offering a mix of color, texture and taste. Red and

gold beets with their delicate, sweet and earthy flavor, mixed with crispy red onions and young arugula, as well as fennel crema, added a subtle and savory touch. Jerusalem artichoke chips added a tasty crunch. The salad was finished off with rosemary oil, aged balsamic and topped with sheep's milk feta, which by itself elevated the meal (if you're wondering, I'll tell you right now that grocery store feta just doesn't compare). Needless to say, it was a hit!

It was tough deciding on the entree, but my dining companion chose swordfish Portofino. I picked the scallop truca risotto. As it often happens, I preferred my companion's dish. Though the risotto was great, the swordfish was fabulous.

First, the fresh seafood smell of the piping hot swordfish Portofino wafting through the air as it was delivered to our table was a pleasant surprise. It's not too often you get to really enjoy the fragrance of the food. Caught off the coast of Cape May, New Jersey, the center cut fish, with a robust deep sea briny taste, topped a large helping of cavatelli pasta in a velvety parmesan cream sauce with apple, bacon and toasted pine nuts. This mixture was my favorite taste of the night. Sweet, cooked apples with crispy, savory bacon is certainly a combination I want to try on my own.

The risotto featured tiny pasta

infused with the scallops' subtle seafood taste as well as the prosciutto, basil oil, and garlic. Tomatoes and colorful rainbow carrots gave the dish a spring freshness and added texture. This was a flavorful dish that was good at the restaurant, and I even enjoyed eating it cold the next day. The flavors were even more robust since it sat overnight.

OK — the best part of the whole night? You guessed it — the dessert (if you have read my reviews before, you are probably aware of my overwhelming sweet tooth that so often sabotages my healthy efforts). We chose the special: a "semifreddo candy bar" that Jesse sold us by his enthusiasm and eye rolling. Larger than I anticipated, this decadent frozen treat featured espresso cream on the inside (which would be amazing just by itself), topped with rich chocolate and a scattering of pecans, and was drizzled with caramel.

The cost of two appetizers, two entrees and one dessert, without drinks, was about \$90 — and worth every penny.

The restaurant's cozy lounge offers a happy hour menu that will put a smile on your face, and it has a full bar, featuring an extensive wine list, and a menu featuring lobster wrappers, lobster lasagna, pizza and pasta bowls.

If you're still seeking to justify a special night out, note that Cafe

Mezzanotte strives to provide locally sourced and sustainably grown (or raised) ingredients.

Check out the specials online — Monday lobster night; \$10 pasta bowls on Wednesdays, half-price wine on Tuesdays, and takeout specials. There are also some appealing takeout dinner or brunch boxes that will please your paramour. Visit www.cafemezzanotte.com for details and to make a reservation.

Chatting with Jesse, I said the chef and cooks must have a fun time crafting their various unique dishes.

Jesse said, "Oh, they have a blast!" They love taking the ingredients they have and coming up with new dishes. I believe that. I read that food reflects a chef's mood — and so, they should be joyous and the food cooked with love. True? I don't know. Some folks think so, but if so, Mezzanotte chefs are happy people and so are their customers.

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Education Team Allies Is A Facilitator For Parents And Teachers



Photo courtesy of
Maureen Porto Photography

Education Team Allies was co-founded by Beth Nolan in 2019 with a mission to help parents as they navigate the education system.

By Haley Weisgerber

Navigating, let alone comprehending, a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) can be challenging for families. When it comes to understanding the jargon and creating the best plan for a child with an IEP, Education Team Allies can help.

Education Team Allies was co-founded by Beth Nolan in 2019 with a mission to help parents as they navigate the education system.

"The family's voice is extremely important in the conversation around their child's education," explained Nolan. "And oftentimes, the family doesn't know where to begin, what resources are available, the questions to ask or how to express their viewpoints. Lifting their voice in those conversations is something that at times needs support, and Education Team Allies provides that support."

Nolan has a master's degree in teaching from Johns Hopkins University and is a certified special educator in Maryland. She has been a teacher and a school administrator. After working in education for over 20 years, Nolan now focuses her time on being a family navigator. She is a certified Master IEP Coach and an educational consultant.

"I have held several roles at the IEP table — as a teacher, as an assistant principal, as a parent and now as an IEP coach supporting families. I know how tough it can be for parents," said Nolan. "The process is

complicated. One of the things that I know is that navigating any arena is difficult when it's not your primary language, as they say."

One of Education Team Allies' goals is to let families know that they do not have to go through this alone, that it is OK to ask for help.

"In some situations, parents are frustrated because they are not satisfied with the plan that has been developed for their child, but they do not know how to request changes," Nolan said. "And parents may not know all of the services available that they can request. I can help with that."

Having been involved in the IEP process on the school's side of the table, Nolan brings that perspective into the discussion. She said that the school's IEP team is doing the best they can to provide for the student. However, at times there is a gap between a student's needs and services provided by the school. Nolan can help bridge that gap with the team.

"We are there to be facilitators and encourage collaboration. We encourage that every voice is heard while keeping the child at the center of the conversations," said Nolan. "I think that we are able to get further with the school IEP teams, because they see us as constructively adding to the discussion and finding potential solutions rather than someone sitting aside from the team trying to tell them what to do."

Nolan offers a complimentary 20-minute consultation for first-time families to get to know each other and understand their specific situation and individual needs. After that, she offers hourly consultations or full-service consultations, which include a set number of hours that can be redeemed throughout the school year. Education Team Allies can assist with creating a plan of action for a family prior to an IEP meeting, analyzing an existing IEP, and attending meetings to discuss IEP plans in real time. Nolan's goal is to level the playing field for all families.

"Just saying to a school, 'I don't think this is working,' is not as effective as figuring out what is not working, why it is not working, hearing what services the child has a right to receive, understanding the school's perspective and tying all of this together toward finding a potential

» Continued on page 40

Chamber Update

Liz League
CEO
GSPACC



» Please give a warm welcome to our newest members: **Mid-Atlantic Settlement Services (bronze member), Day to Day Fitness, Steven Murphy Real Estate, Premier Insurance Advisors, Junk Car Medics, Avon – Barbara Thomas, and PFS Investments.** And a huge thank you to all our renewing members!

Even though we continue to navigate the COVID crisis, it was so great to start 2021, and as always, we had a very busy month!

The first week of January, we held a legislative leadership breakfast (virtually) with four other county chambers. The **county host sponsor was Gardiner and Appel Group.**

Close to 100 people attended, and we heard from elected officials in Anne Arundel County about good and not so good legislation impacting our job creators. Our chamber is sending regular legislative alerts to members calling for action on bills that will help or hurt small business.

Our Successful Women in Business committee held a virtual coffee to introduce the new committee co-chairs,

mother/daughter realtors **Kelly and Peggie Pendergast of Monument Sotheby's International Realty.** **Nancy Greer of the Jing Ying Institute of Kung Fu & Tai Chi** is continuing in her role as committee chair. We have some great events planned for the year, so please check out our calendar of events at www.gspacc.com.

Our health and wellness committee held a fascinating webinar called "Taming Your Monkey Mind." **Billy Greer of the Jing Ying Institute of Kung Fu & Tai Chi** was our presenter, and he is well-versed on calming techniques as a master in tai chi. The "monkey mind" is that little negative voice in our heads that chatters all the time to undermine our confidence. In this webinar, we learned techniques and practices to "tame" these unwanted thoughts and mental chatter, which so many are experiencing under the stress of the world these days. Billy talked about ways to channel the monkey — give it a banana, give it something else to do, let it play, etc. It was a wonderful and popular presentation that we will host again in the fall.

We held a virtual new officer installation and general membership meeting. **Judge Cathy Vitale** performed the oath of office, and we are excited to announce that our incoming board president is **Dianna Lancione**, owner of this newspaper and **The Voice Media Inc.** We look forward to
» Continued on page 40

Remote Work May Offer Financial Benefits

Brian Conrad
Financial Advisor



» During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have been forced to work from home. But once we've moved past the virus, many workers may continue working from home. More than one-third of companies with employees who started working from home now think that remote work will stay more common post-pandemic, according to a Harvard Business School study. This shift to at-home work can affect people's lives in many ways — and it may end up providing workers with some long-term financial advantages.

If you're one of those who will continue working remotely, either full-time or at least a few days a week, how might you benefit? Here are a few possibilities:

Reduced transportation costs – Over time, you can spend a lot of money commuting to and from

work. The average commuter spends \$2,000 to \$5,000 per year on transportation costs, including gas, car maintenance, public transportation and other expenses, depending on where they live, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. Census Bureau. If you are going to work primarily from home, you should be able to greatly reduce these costs.

Potentially lower car insurance premiums – Your auto insurance premiums are partially based on how many miles you drive each year. So, if you were to significantly reduce these miles by working from home, you might qualify for lower rates.

Lower expenditures on lunches – If you typically eat lunch in restaurants or get takeout while at work, you could easily be spending \$50 or more per week — even more if you regularly get coffee drinks to go. By these figures, you could end up spending around \$3,000 a year. Think how much you could reduce this bill by eating lunch at home during your remote workday.

Lower clothing costs – Despite
» Continued on page 40

New Program Aims To Retain, Expand Minority Businesses

Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman joined Ben Birge, Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) CEO, on January 29 to announce the launch of the Inclusive Ventures Program (IVP). The goal of the IVP is to help small, minority, women and veteran owned businesses in Anne Arundel County by offering a robust menu of resources including education, access to capital and mentorship.

“Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation has once again thought outside the box to create a program that goes directly to the needs of county businesses, this time specifically small minority and women-owned businesses that have been hit hardest by the pandemic economy,” Pittman said. “The mix of mentorship, grant funding, and access to credit for a carefully selected group of entrepreneurs is a winning formula.”

Business owners must apply to the IVP, which has a limit of 10 participants. Upon acceptance, entrepreneurs will take part in the program’s signature component, the Virtual Entrepreneurship Cohort and Seed Fund. This online experience is a three-hour class once a week for six weeks led by business consultant Will Holmes, a recruiter for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program. During the seventh meeting, each participant will

receive a certificate of completion and a \$5,000 grant to be used for working capital.

Participating businesses also receive exclusive, complimentary consultations with legal, human resources and accounting experts such as:

- **Johnetta Thurston** – Founder of JDA Management Consulting who will serve as the IVP’s human resources consultant
- **Carlos “CJ” Santos** – An associate with law firm Nemphos Braue LLC and a board member of the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- **LaKia Bourne** – Owner and CEO of Synergy Accounting Services

Entrepreneurs also may apply for additional funds through AAEDC’s VOLT loan fund and Workforce Training Reimbursement program. AAEDC is a manager of the VOLT Fund, a State of Maryland program that provides low-interest loans from \$25,000 to \$500,000 to qualified small, minority, women and veteran owned businesses. The Workforce Training Grant is a reimbursement to cover 50% up to \$1,000 of a business’ cost in training its employees.

“We know that even before the pandemic that these types of small businesses were already on tenuous footing, with many challenged with

meeting operating expenses,” Birge said. “We believe that the unique features of the IVP, particularly the virtual education component and the grant, will help participating businesses be in a better position to access capital and grow to the next level.”

Interested businesses should apply by visiting the Inclusive Ventures Program page on the AAEDC website. The application period runs through 5:00pm on February 19.

Remote Work May Offer Financial Benefits

» Continued from page 39

the rise in “casual dress” days, plenty of workers still need to maintain appropriate office attire. By working from home, you can “dress down,” reducing your clothing costs and dry-cleaning bills.

As you can see, you may save quite a bit of money by working from home. How can you use your savings to help meet your long-term financial goals, such as achieving a comfortable retirement?

For one thing, you could boost your investments. Let’s suppose that you can save \$2,500 each year by working remotely. If you were to invest this amount in a tax-deferred account, such as an IRA or your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan and earned a hypothetical 6% annual return for 20 years, you’d accumulate more than \$97,000 — and if you kept going for an additional 10 years, you’d have nearly \$210,000. You’d eventually pay taxes on the amount you withdrew from these accounts (and withdrawals prior to age 59 and a half may be subject to a 10% IRS penalty), but you’d still end up pretty far ahead of where you’d be otherwise.

You also might use part of your savings generated by remote work to build an emergency fund containing a few months’ worth of living expenses. Without this fund, you might be forced to dip into your retirement accounts to pay for something like a major home repair.

Becoming an at-home worker will no doubt require some adjustments on your part, but in strictly financial terms, it could lead to some positive results.

For more information, visit www.edwardjones.com/brian-conrad or contact Brian M. Conrad, CFP, at 410-544-8970 or brian.conrad@edwardjones.com.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones financial advisor.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Education Team Allies Is A Facilitator

» Continued from page 39

solution for the child,” said Nolan.

Education Team Allies does not offer legal advice, however, the staff is able to facilitate tough conversations with school administrators and educators about a child’s education.

Nolan said she loves hearing parents say that their students are improving or that her recommendations were adapted into a student’s IEP plan.

“I love being able to make changes with families that help children be more successful, especially when parents tell me, ‘I didn’t even know this was possible.’” said Nolan. “I love watching children have more opportunities because of what we put in place for them. And I feel very fortunate that I get to do what I do every day.”

While Education Team Allies is a relatively new business, Nolan has big plans for its future and for the future of education in the community.

“I think knowing that it’s OK to ask for support, whether it be for your child or yourself, is something that I’d really like to be able to help more families do in our community,” said Nolan.

To learn more about Education Team Allies, visit www.educationteallies.com or email info@educationteallies.com.

Chamber Update

» Continued from page 39

a great year!

This month featured a unique webinar called Passion Beyond Profession. Our committee was **Sarah Taylor and Theresa Connelly from Chesapeake Think Tank, Steve Hardy of Chesapeake Technology Group, Valerie McLaughlin of Emerald Financial Partners, and Susan Murray of RE/MAX One**. Three chamber members presented for 10 minutes on what their passions are beyond their businesses. **Valerie McLaughlin, owner of Emerald Financial Partners**, is a devoted rider of motorcycles, and has traveled all over the country. **Donna Jefferson, owner of Chesapeake Family Magazine**, is doing wonderful work to clean up Spa Creek and restore it to its original beauty. **Patrick Lee of Chesapeake Think Tank** talked about the joys of walking in his neighborhood and reconnecting with nature. The event was sponsored by **PNC Bank** and **Garry’s Grill**. It was great to get to know the business owners in a personal way, and we plan to roll out a series of these webinars.

At the end of January, we held a blood drive at the chamber. The drive was sponsored by **Chick-fil-A of Severna Park** and **Severn Bank**. We had 22 donors who gave the gift of life.

We would love to have you join us, even as a member of the community. You can find out more at www.gspacc.com, email me at ceo@gspacc.com or call 410-647-3900.

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For 30 Years, Fence & Deck Has Built A Strong Community Foundation

By Shelley Mahoney

Fence & Deck Connection is celebrating 30 years of serving the community in Millersville and beyond. The business has completed over 54,000 installations since 1991. Those jobs include decks, fences, screened porches and screened gazebos using first-rate materials.

“This milestone truly represents another evolution in our journey of success,” said Jeffrey Wall, a managing partner and vice president of sales and marketing.

Fence & Deck Connection has won “Best Fence and Deck Company” awards from *What’s Up Annapolis*, *The Capital* and *The Maryland Gazette*. *Severna Park Voice* readers voted for Fence & Deck Connection as “Best Fencing Contractor” for the last five years (plus awards for being the “Best Place to Work” and the “Best Home Improvement Contractor” runner-up). Best of the Best Television has named it “Best of the Best” for the last five years as well. Fence & Deck Connection has accreditation through the American Fence Association and the Maryland Home Improvement Commission, and an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau.

“Our business has grown simply by sticking to what we do best — designing and installing fences and decks,” Wall explained. “Our executive team has stayed in the forefront of our industry, always



Fence & Deck Connection is led by (l-r) co-owner Ben Wolod, managing partner Jeffrey Wall and co-owner Jim Rubush.

looking for ways to streamline our business and internal processes. We have an incredible staff that works day in and day out to help drive our message since our very beginnings: building lifelong clients through our commitment to excellence. Our team of employees truly make the difference!”

In addition to providing excellent service, Fence & Deck co-owners James Rubush and Ben Wolod, along with Wall, have a passion for plugging into the community, in part because of their many personal

connections and deep local roots in the area. A native of Cape St. Claire, Rubush graduated from Severna Park High School and has raised three children near Crofton.

Fence & Deck Connection also supports local charities, including Warrior Events, Wy’s Rides, the Blue Ribbon Project, Team River Runner, and the SPCA of Anne Arundel County. Fence & Deck has also sponsored the WMAR ABC2 news team’s “Built Upon a Dream” project, which has included donations of time, labor and materials to

The Summit School in Edgewater, The Children’s Home in Catonsville, and the Brooklyn O’Malley Boys & Girls Club in Brooklyn.

“Success is more than numbers and sales goals — it’s making a difference in our customers’ lives while doing what we love,” Wall said. “Although success is mostly a state of mind, we measure it by the quality of the interactions with our clients and the impact we can make in the people and communities that surround us.”

As with many companies, Fence & Deck Connection has dealt with setbacks due to COVID-19 restrictions. The team has tried, however, to keep business flowing by coming up with creative solutions. Customers are able to receive estimates for onsite design consultations, but these are now completed outside, or even through Zoom or Google Hangouts. They have also encountered challenges as the pandemic has continued, including delays in receiving county permits and building materials.

The company is working fervently to finding patterns and rhythms that help customers feel safe while getting the high-quality work they’re looking for.

For more information on Fence & Deck Connection, including the charities it supports, or to book an appointment, visit www.fenceanddeckconnection.com or call 410-969-4444.

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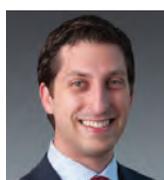
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