



the  
**TALON** JANUARY

**SCRUB  
BASKETBALL**

An inside look at the league that has taken over SPHS.

**PLEDGE OF  
ALLEGIANCE**

Students of all ages have been taking a stand by taking a seat.

**WHY  
STUDENTS  
CHEAT**

The real consequences of academic integrity violations are revealed.



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## TALK TO US



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## COVER PHOTO

The scrub basketball league consists of 320 players, making it one of the largest GSPAA leagues. Last year, the Kings won the championship title in a game against the Bucks. "It's the most important thing that happens in Severna Park," junior Akshay Shah said. Photo by Shelby Chasser.



Every weekend the high school boys scrub basketball team hits the courts. For many years it has been a popular attraction for boys who aren't looking for a big commitment but just looking for some fun. "I love the league and am so excited to play each weekend with my friends," senior Aaron Kent said. Photo by Shelby Chasser.



1 Dr. Segnatelli takes her classes on many field trips to Washington D.C. On Nov. 29, students went on a field trip to the Supreme Court of the United States. "It was really interesting to be in a place so important to our country's history," junior Jared Smith said. Photo courtesy of Katrina Schultz.



2 The SPHS basketball season is off to a good start. Last season, the team had a record of 9-3. "We have a lot of changes in the lineup but I'm really excited for the season," junior Joe Harrington said. Photo courtesy of Eric Bloom.



3 The Winter Dance Show includes performances by Dance Company levels 1-3, as well as other dance classes. Dancers at SPHS practiced for hours on end to deliver a successful Winter Dance Show this year. "The shows are really fun and it's a good bonding experience," senior Genevieve Sampson said. Photo by Alison Edwards.



4 The SPHS wrestling team is off to a strong start this season. Trevor Bryden was recently promoted to head coach beginning this winter. "Wrestling is a good way to stay in shape for other sports and meet new people," sophomore Pierre Auchincloss said. Photo by Samantha Sullivan.

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# Indoor Track Makes the Cut

Will indoor track ever be the same?

by Toni Fiocco-Mizer | Staff Writer

On Oct. 29, 2018, prior to the indoor track season, Coach Josh Alcombright made the announcement that sprinters or jumpers could be cut. "He wanted to make sure that everybody that wanted to run could run," junior Himmat Walha said.

The coaching staff collectively decided on the cuts. "This first year, the coaching team has decided to keep the numbers to a manageable amount of sprint and field athletes so each coach can give the athletes the time they deserve," Coach Jane Hershelman said.

Some students see the cuts as harsh and discouraging. A number of students run indoor track to stay fit and to be part of a team. Junior Lauren Campbell ran track last year

and disagrees with the decision, believing it will negatively impact the climate of the team. "Now with track cuts a lot of people that usually wouldn't do sports can't make it, and it's really detrimental to their high school experience," Campbell said.

Track was a safe place for students seeking a team experience, but with cuts, the sport will have a more competitive and strict nature. "I don't think I will be trying out anymore because a lot of my friends who would usually do, it may not make it, or I wouldn't make it," Campbell said.

On the other hand, some students believe cuts are being made with good reason and will benefit

the team in the long run. Students understand that having a high number of athletes on the sprint team would overwhelm the coaching staff. "The cuts are being made because sprint does not have a coach experienced with large numbers," senior Kyle Jefferds said.

Coach Josh Alcombright said, "We had to cut about 12-15 boys and 12-15 girls in all. We gave kids an opportunity to run with the distance group if they got cut from the sprint group. Some chose that option and others did not."

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Bella Espinoza holds up scissors to highlight the severity of the track cuts. Espinoza has planned on running indoor track and outdoor track in the spring. "I am really excited for this season but bummed because some of my friends won't be doing it this year," Espinoza said. Photo by Toni Fiocco-Mizer.

# Why Students Cheat

The consequences of violating academic integrity.

Cheating takes place in many forms such as hidden notes, using unauthorized online sources or simply looking at a peer's paper. Teachers and administration implemented safeguards as an attempt to lower the amount of cheating. "The amount of information that I am supposed to remember everyday for each class is just an overload," senior Briana DeRosa said. Photo by Carson Whitney.



by Carson Whitney | Business Manager

Cheating is increasing with the internet an easy resource for using someone else's work. Teachers and the administration are looking for new ways to crack down on the problem plaguing the school system. "Over four years, I have seen so many people just not care enough to study and rely on the smart kids for answers," senior Mackenzie Davis said.

Students are faced with a daunting academic course load, and when faced with this pressure, cheating seems to be a more viable option than to study for a test. "Some days all I can do is cram and hope for the best on my test," junior Caleb Robinson said. With constant deadlines and work to complete, students look for easier options, such as SparkNotes, than actually reading and comprehending the assigned text.

Teachers are not easily fooled

by students, contrary to the belief students have that teachers are unaware. "Usually it is the kids who end up telling us," English teacher Paige Chang said. Frequently, teachers are able to figure out who had the extra help on the test through the cheating student openly bragging within the teacher's earshot or honest students coming forward with what they witnessed.

Teachers also have resources to check for cheating. "There are things I typically go to for help like Safeassign, Google and other teachers," Chang said.

When faced with a student who has violated academic integrity, the response varies depending on the severity. "I like to get support from all sides; high school is a learning time," Chang said. If a student violates academic integrity they must be written up, but punishment may vary. Some teachers

prefer to make students submit an essay on the negatives of cheating, while others like to talk with the students, their parents and determine the cause to ensure there will not be a repeat offense.

Cheating is a major offense that can impact a student for the rest of their educational future, even past that specific assignment. "If I learn about it after grades are in, I am thinking about it while writing their letters of recommendation," Chang said. Colleges will see academic integrity violations, which may jeopardize admission decisions.

Although it is important for students to understand the issues of cheating, any offense will negatively affect themselves. Doing the work and receiving a failing grade is a better lesson learned, than putting the future of one's education at risk.



# Issues with Academic Integrity

SPHS's strict academic integrity code may not be as rigidly enforced as implied.

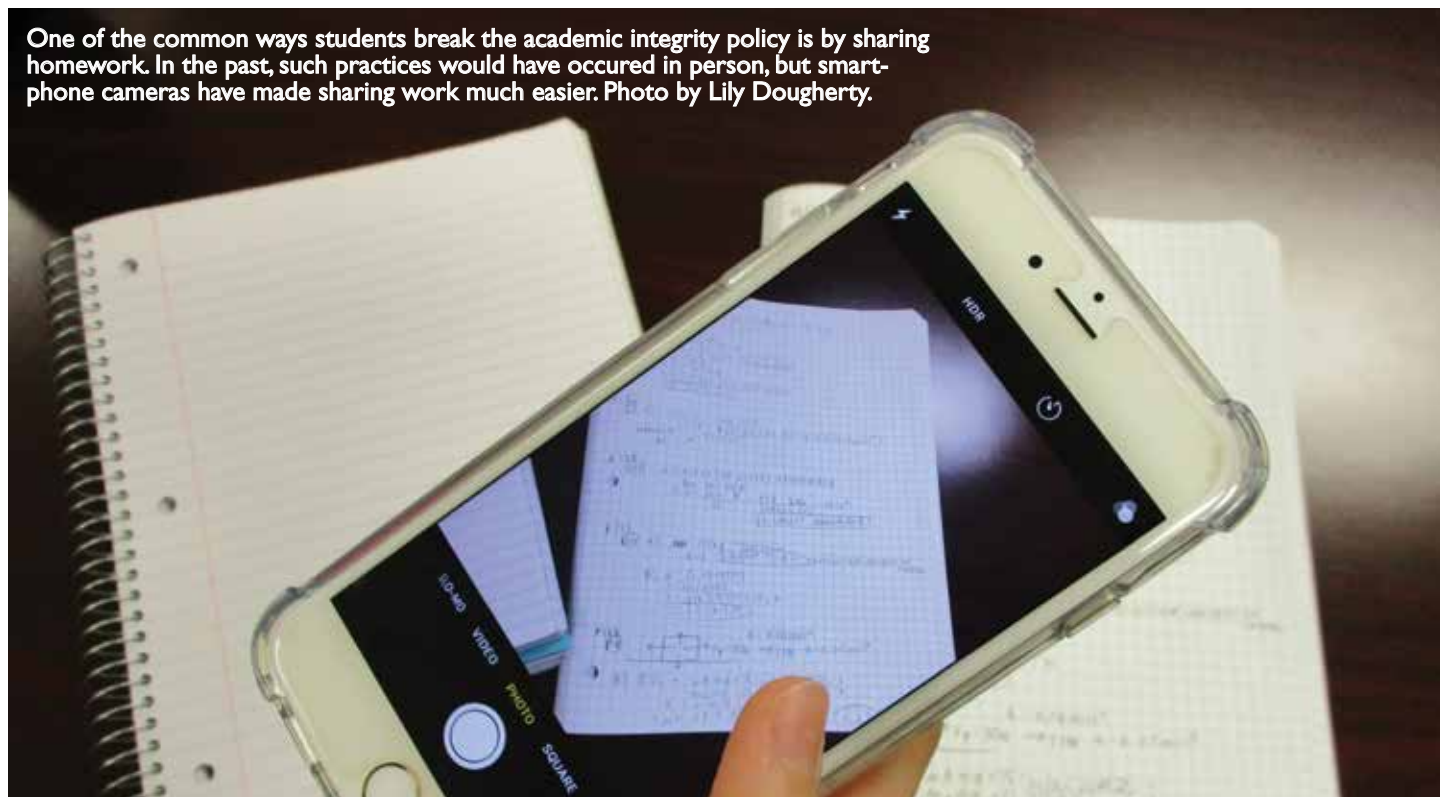
Staff Editorial

The Anne Arundel County Board of Education promotes a code of academic integrity, which is defined as “exhibiting honesty in all academic assignments.” This includes refraining from sharing homework, committing plagiarism, discussing test material and using unauthorized outside information during tests. Breaking these rules can result in referrals, failing grades or even loss of course credit. SPHS supposedly strictly adheres to this policy, but a majority of Talon staff members feel that academic integrity issues continue to pervade our classrooms.

Overall, we feel that the most commonly violated terms of academic integrity are those relating to homework. Many students have observed or partaken in homework sharing, whether by sharing photos of completed homework or working with classmates to finish homework before it is checked. Most of us believe that this is not a major or alarming issue; however, we feel that often too much homework is assigned anyway, so students feel overwhelmed or stressed even with occasional homework collaboration. In recent years, teachers have begun assigning online home-

work through websites such as Delta Math and WebAssign, possibly in an effort to combat sharing, as these programs randomize numbers and problems so that students do not have the exact same homework questions. Breaking academic integrity on tests and assessments like the SAT, ACT and AP is a much less common occurrence. Teachers and administration take such practices very seriously and deliver appropriate punishments accordingly when cheating is discovered.

Do you have an opinion? Want to share an idea for our staff editorial? Go [sptalon.com](http://sptalon.com) to the contact link and submit a letter to the editor.



One of the common ways students break the academic integrity policy is by sharing homework. In the past, such practices would have occurred in person, but smartphone cameras have made sharing work much easier. Photo by Lily Dougherty.

# Questions and Answers:

What do students think of the atmosphere at Severna Park High School?

by Emma Jeter | Staff Writer



Abbie Smith

Smith is a freshman who participates in SPHS theater productions at the school. She is also a member of the Young Democrats Club. Photo by Emma Jeter.

**What teachers do you like the most? Why?** I love my history teacher, Mr. Bryden. He's really cool and he's super interesting. I don't really love history as a subject but he makes it fun.

**What is one improvement that you would make to the school?** More inclusive about theatre and [they don't] really include the theatre people and they make exceptions for people who do sports.

**What do you dislike most about SPHS?** I don't really like Severna Park personally and the cliqueness [of the area].



Hannah Hall

Hall is a junior who has participated in Rock 'n' Roll. She is also the captain of Mock Trial, and a member of Rho Kappa, English Honors Society, French Honor Society and Tri-M Honor Society. Photo by Emma Jeter.

**What teachers do you like the most? Why?** I really like Dr. Segnatelli because she's incredibly smart and really funny. She cares a lot about the material and it really shows in all of her classwork. She also organizes a lot of field trips.

**What is one improvement that you would make to the school?** I would get WiFi in the school because it's unsafe that you can walk into a Starbucks and there will be free WiFi, but you can walk into a public school and there's no WiFi or service.

**What do you dislike most about SPHS?** I feel like everyone cares too much about their grades here. Grades are important but I feel like everyone is just competing and it's a weird environment.



Carter Nagel

Nagel is a senior who works at Nagel Farm Services and goes to Young Life outside of school. He also participates in CAT-South. Photo by Melanie Reynolds.

**What teachers do you like the most? Why?** Mr. Kandra because he's very personable.

**What is one improvement that you would make to the school?** I think we should do the 'Nest' thing that every other school does, just an hour of lunch and free time.

**What do you dislike most about SPHS?** I don't really like the people here because a lot of them are stuck up.



# Taking a Stand

How do students feel about the Pledge of Allegiance?

by Greer Long | News Editor



Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance every morning is a school tradition. Recently, students have been silently protesting by sitting for the pledge. "I'm 16 years old so I can't vote, but there are other things I can do and one of those things is sitting because it's a form of protest," junior Kyra-Leigh Hymons said. Photo by Greer Long.

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Reciting these words every morning is a common practice seen at almost every school in the United States. However, in recent years, silent protests have popped up all over the country. They vary from kneeling for the national anthem at NFL games to sitting for the Pledge of Allegiance during morning announcements at school. People of all ages have been taking a stand by taking a seat.

The majority of students at SPHS stand up, place their hand over their hearts and recite the Pledge of Allegiance with their peers every morning. Although this has been a tradition since grade school, many students feel strongly about displaying their pride for the United States every day. "For my whole life I've been taught to stand for the flag and respect it," senior Carter Nagel said, "It represents the spirit of the men and women who died fighting for our freedom."

Dating back to 1892, the Pledge of Allegiance was published as a symbol of pride for the coun-

try. "I stand proudly for the pledge out of respect for everyone who has fought to serve our country," sophomore Jillian Murphy said.

Several students at SPHS hold a different point of view on this controversial topic, for various reasons including racism and the Black Lives Matter movement. "I don't stand for this country that doesn't stand for me or my race," junior Kyra-Leigh Hymons said.

Another reason students may not recite the pledge is based on the foundations of the United States as a whole. "If you look at American history and current American

politics you find that there's not a lot to be proud of. The very origins of America as a nation...is built off of the genocide, rape, mutilation, murder and massacre of indigenous people, Chicano people and Africans," junior Gordon Mutch said.

There has been a history of legal challenges to the Pledge of Allegiance, dating all the way back to the 1943 Supreme Court case *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*. It was brought about by a group of students who argued that the pledge violated their faith, an issue that is still prominent today. The court ruled that forcing students to recite the Pledge of Al-

legiance violates the First Amendment right to free speech, along with the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. "I'm 16 years old so I can't vote, but there are other things I can do and one of those things is sitting because it's a form of protest," Hymons said.

Challenges to this controversy did not stop there; in September, football players from a high school in California knelt during the national anthem before a football game. The school administration received several complaints from parents, but the school district responded by saying it would not discipline the students, citing their right to freedom of speech protect-

ed by the First Amendment in the Constitution. "I don't feel like I can stand for the flag and recognize the good in America without also understanding the bad that we have, that we've experienced over the course of history," junior Amelia Horrell said.

At SPHS, there is no consequence for students who sit for the Pledge of Allegiance. Although teachers may disagree with a student's decision, they cannot punish that student for expressing his or her beliefs. "I think students should stand out of respect for the country and for the people who served but I understand the value of the protest," Dr. Barbara Segnatelli said.



A protest similar to sitting for the pledge is kneeling for the national anthem. It was sparked by former NFL player Colin Kaepernick in 2016 and has generated controversy ever since. "For my whole life I've been taught to stand for the flag and respect it. It represents the spirit of the men and women who died fighting for our freedom," senior Carter Nagel said. Photo by Shelby Chasser.



## Preaching to the Choir

With the holidays around the corner, festivities can leave students out.

by Melanie Reynolds | Opinions Editor

Around the holiday season, radio stations, commercials and movies are packed with Christmas. While this may put the majority of people in a good mood, for the 31 percent of Marylanders who are not Christian, according to a study by Pew Forum, this can be tiring.

As head of the music department and choir director, Kathleen Gabriele chooses the songs that are sung at the holiday concert. She attempts to make the music as diverse as possible, while making sure the audience knows the songs so they can sing along. "Often multicultural or masterworks are in a different language or present a text that might be different from our own beliefs. It's important to learn and experience music from our choral history," Gabriele said.

Senior Surisitee Motiram identifies as a Hindu and has been singing in school choirs since she was in elementary school. "We have never sung any religious songs that weren't Christian, other than one about Judaism," Motiram said.

December can be especially hard for students like Motiram, who year after year are being taught to sing songs with Christian themes for their chorus classes.

"I would say all except one or two [were Christian songs]," senior Lauren Carlson said in reference to the number of songs sung by the choir during the holiday season.

Gabriele continued, "For the

Holiday Concert, I typically select one Hanukkah song, one winter song, one or two Christmassy/Santa type songs. We end the concert with a Baroque Masterwork - Handel's Hallelujah Chorus."

Of the eight choral pieces performed by the various choral groups this year, five were secular, with songs like "Jingle Bell Rock" and "Overture to Die Zauberflote." There was also a Jewish prayer, "Ose Shalom" and two pieces that have Christian origins, "Mary Did you Know" sung by the Women's Chorus and "Hallelujah!" from Handel's "Messiah." This last piece was performed by the orchestra, all the vocal groups and the school concert band.

Students can choose to sit out of a song, if they feel it conflicts with their faith. "We have to practice these songs every day, so if you account for the fact that I've been in choir since the fifth grade and every year I have to be silent while practicing and performing these songs, the amount of learning time I've had to throw away is mind blowing," Motiram said.

Although students' grades do not suffer if they choose to sit out of a song, it can be embarrassing and hurtful, according to Motiram.

Not everyone feels the same ire towards the song selections, senior Richard Calvo, who considers himself an atheist and who was the student conductor during "Hallelu-

jah!" said, "While I do disagree with the overrepresentation of any religion in a school setting, I try to look at it from a musical setting. Art is a separation from physical ideas. It's meant for the emotional impact. The religious lyrics are simply vessels for the sound I hear from those songs."

There is a balancing game, as the directors have to gather a mix of song selections, keeping in mind various students cultural backgrounds.

Freshman Sarah Morrison and member of the mixed chorus said, "I liked that they have a good mix of Jewish and Christian selections."



School choruses perform shows throughout the year. Some of these songs have Christian themes. "During holiday times, there is a lack of Hanukkah songs; maybe we'll do one, but that's about it," senior Lauren Carlson said. Photo by Melanie Reynolds.



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# Living Summer All Year Round

Junior Marie Hilbert took advantage of an opportunity that has changed the course of her life.

by Emma Jeter | Staff Writer

“Let’s live like it’s summer 365!” the email said. It was from Hollister, and they were looking for brand agents from the Washington, DC area. Intrigued by the offer, junior Marie Hilbert filled out an application and sent in her resume. After a month of waiting, she participated in a Skype interview.

“[During] that month of waiting I was always thinking about [the job opportunity]” Hilbert said. Then, while back-to-school shopping at Marshalls, Hilbert received

a call. It was her now-manager, Sydney, offering her the job as a Hollister brand agent. Hilbert accepted without hesitation.

“I got out of line and I started screaming and jumping around Marshalls. Everyone was looking at me but I did not care. I was there with my really good family friends, too. We were all just hugging and jumping in a circle,” Hilbert said.

The first big event Hilbert went to as a brand agent was HCon, Hollister’s job training in Ohio. She

got to meet her fellow brand agents and stay with them for three days in a hotel. They had the opportunity to meet Abercrombie’s CEO and Hollister’s president while learning about the brands and providing feedback on clothes.

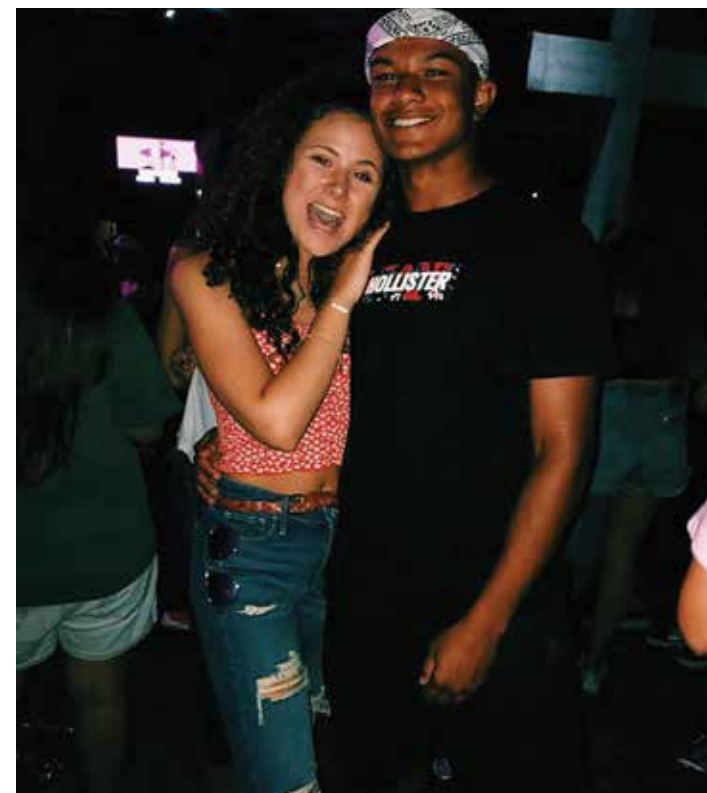
“Last year some of the New York agents went to Pride Festival with Hollister and some of the agents went to Lollapalooza as a Hollister-sponsored event,” Hilbert said. The first music festival Hilbert went to as a brand agent was Trillectro in Washington, DC. She is grateful for all the opportunities that this job provides.

However, being a brand agent comes with responsibilities. “What I do is a real job,” Hilbert said. She is required to post one picture on her Instagram feed and two pictures on her Instagram story pertaining to Hollister each week. She also has to write weekly reports breaking down her analytics, and attend both weekly and monthly meetings with other Hollister brand agents.

“The brand really cares about its consumers’ opinions, and I didn’t even realize that until I became a brand agent,” Hilbert said. Hollister will send her clothes that are part of the new collection, ask-



Fellow DC brand agent Anyé Young [left] and junior Marie Hilbert [right] at the Abercrombie & Fitch Home Office in Ohio for HCon. There, the brand agents learned all of their job responsibilities while roaming the campus and doing photoshoots together. “[HCon] was three days with all of my new best friends. It was a bunch of people like me... who were just outgoing and excited about what we were gonna do here,” Hilbert said. Photo courtesy of Marie Hilbert.



Junior Marie Hilbert [left] and DC brand agent Darian Avery [right] at Trillectro music festival in Washington, DC. They both wore Hollister clothes and talked to other concert-goers about Hollister in order to market the brand. “It’s super cool all the opportunities we have,” Hilbert said. Photo courtesy of Marie Hilbert.



Junior Marie Hilbert modeling Hollister clothes outside, surrounded by school textbooks. Hilbert’s posts have to be bright and colorful with cheerful messages; she has to pay attention to her analytics to plan her posts in advance. “The brand is so ‘living summer all the time’ and making the best out of every moment,” she said. Photo courtesy of Marie Hilbert.

ing her to report what she liked and did not like about the products before they are released so they can make changes that appeal to consumers.

“You see those changes implemented immediately. It’s just the coolest thing; the direct impact I have on the brand,” she said.

Hilbert was recently featured on Hollister’s Instagram. At their last all-team call, Hollister announced that they would be putting brand agents’ pictures on the actual Hollister website.

“We get their clothes that have never been worn before. We

get to take pictures in them and then they’re picking which ones they want on the website,” Hilbert said, “They really like user-generated content.”

Although Hilbert is still unsure about what career she would like to pursue, this opportunity has helped point her in a new direction. “I definitely would kill for a job in social media marketing or fashion marketing and communications,” she said.

Hilbert gets to continue this ambassadorship for the rest of her high school career. Once she enters college, she can continue working as

a brand agent for Hollister’s sister company, Abercrombie. She said this opportunity is opening several doors for her as she makes connections through Hollister, Abercrombie, and their marketing agency, Archrival.

“I really want to be good at my job, I don’t want to be mediocre at it,” Hilbert said, “I strive really hard to be a super good brand agent. I want people to realize how awesome of a brand this is because I feel like it’s just getting started.”

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## SPHS students' burning questions are answered.

by CeCe Streaker | Editor-in-Chief

Throughout each school year, students ask similar questions about SPHS and how it functions. Whether it's about lunches, schedule changes or new rules that are being enforced, the student body is constantly asking "Why?" and "Why not?" Administrators try to answer as many as possible, but not every question is brought to their attention. After interviewing randomly chosen students, a series of commonly asked questions were constructed to ask administration.

**Question.** Why don't we have a free period in the middle of the day to eat lunch, meet with clubs and get extra help from teachers like some of the other schools do?

**Answer.** "Other county schools struggle having their students reach academic success, along with other county schools inability to have

large number of students who are able to stay after school for teacher help days. At SPHS, our teacher help days are full. I also believe an hour would lend itself to other issues that don't exist for us (student misbehavior or misuse of this hour)," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** What is the purpose of the two stations at the entrance of the cafeteria on the right and left hand sides?

**Answer.** "Those stations were included in new school construction, it was provided for us, we didn't necessarily ask for it. The Cafeteria Manager struggles with getting enough workers for the lunch lines, and is unsuccessful in getting additional workers for the stations. We also have a large number of students who bring their own lunches from home so they aren't needed," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why can't we sit on the couches in the science hall during the school day?

**Answer.** "The couches in the Science hallway are placed there as a creative instructional space option to be used for those teachers/students located in that area. In addition, students can't just sit anywhere they want during the school day," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why is there no cell phone service throughout most areas of the school?

**Answer.** "This large 365,000 square foot building is full of steel and bricks and is three stories tall, so the actual building structure impedes the cell phone signal. Nothing has been done in the new building to purposefully block any cell phone signal," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why did the color of the

senior gowns change to all one color this year?

**Answer.** "This year's senior class officers wanted to investigate the possibility of one color. Some of the female students said they weren't fond of the gold color gown, so the class officers were given a sample of a navy blue gown with two gold stripes on the sleeves. They love the new gown. For that reason, we are going with the one gown color," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why can't we use the vending machines throughout the school day?

**Answer.** "AACPS Nutrition policy prohibits it," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why can't we have more school dances other than Homecoming and Prom?

**Answer.** "Prom is the culmination of senior year. Homecoming is sponsored by SGA and is their number one fundraiser for the school year. Prom is sponsored by the senior class and is a celebration of a student's high school career. SPHS is not a "dance club" to host such other non-formal dances. In past years, before my time at SPHS, other dances were filled with major student misbehavior and under-age drinking issues," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why aren't seniors allowed to come in late if they don't have a class first period, why are they forced to aide?

**Answer.** "Many seniors have jobs, internships, AACC classes, extra-curricular activities or are taking multiple courses. Our master schedule is also not built to make such accommodations (having se-

niors come in late). Also, with heightened school security concerns, it would be more difficult to monitor seniors coming into the building at all periods/times of the day," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why can't you leave school for your lunch block and come back in time for your class?

**Answer.** "AACPS policy prohibits this. Lunch period is only 30 minutes long, which isn't enough time to leave campus to get lunch and then come back on time. Historically (many decades ago), when this was permitted in AACPS, student safety became an issue. Also, with heightened school security concerns, the idea is to limit the amount of students coming and going into the school building," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why can't you eat in the library if you spend your lunch period there?

**Answer.** "No food/drink in the Library, Auditorium, Main Gym and other parts of the building that aren't the Café. The areas mentioned above have a lot of furniture that would easily get stained, along with carpeting in the Library. Additionally, eating in those areas creates more of an attraction to mice and other critters," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why are cords only given and allowed to be worn if you are in a honor societies?

**Answer.** "AACPS policy was enacted two years ago to formalize across all county high schools which cords would be issued/recognized at graduations. AACPS decided cords are to be issued for academ-

ic reasons, and wanted consistency amongst all high schools," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** Why can't people drop off fast food for their child for lunch?

**Answer.** "Dropping off lunches is sometimes needed because a student has forgotten their lunch. But please understand this courtesy is for limited times per student for the school year. "Drive by" drop off delivery by parents/alum/friends to students is not acceptable. Additionally to have people drop off food for their child takes away from the supervision of all of our students," Principal Bathras said.

**Question.** How are senior superlatives chosen?

**Answer.** "We have a basic list of superlatives that have been used throughout the years and we vote on them as a yearbook class. Not one person picks them, we all vote collectively," junior and sports editor Ally Gray said.

**Question.** Why are senior quotes not allowed this year?

**Answer.** "We simply don't have enough time or staff. Also, I believe in students' First Amendment rights and I'm not going to censor a kid unless there is a valid reason. A very select amount of students have used senior quotes as an outlet to say something that is not representative of our school. A phrase that's harmless to you or me could bother someone else and it will be printed 1,100 times. The recent Supreme Court confirmation hearing with now Justice Kavanaugh shows us that what you say in print matters and it will follow you," yearbook adviser Valerie Earhart said.



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## The Spirit of Giving Back

Students share heartwarming stories of giving back to their community.

by Amanda Vu | Copy Editor



Whether it's collecting food items for the homeless, cooking a meal for a neighbor or paying for someone's Starbucks drink, simple acts of kindness can bring much needed happiness others. Many students have taken altruistic actions for those who have gone through a tough year. "I think it's important for everyone to do their part and be selfless by giving back to others and recognizing those who are in need," Olivia Fey said. Photo courtesy of Sarah Smith.

**Dinner for Two:** Kendall Atkinson, a junior, wanted to help out a recently injured single parent by putting food on his table. "We made lasagna and casserole for him. He was sort of hesitant when we told him what we were going to do, but when we went through with it, he was super excited."

**Got You Covered:** Geoffrey Biddle, a junior, describes a time when a customer couldn't pay for his food. "One of my customers did not have enough money to cover her transaction, so I went into my wallet and covered the remaining balance. It felt good to help, since you don't know what they might be going through."

**Sandwich Savior:** Sarah Smith, a freshman, and her family makes 20 sandwiches for the homeless every month to give to a local church in Baltimore. "I never got anything in

return besides a thank you from my mom and a good feeling inside, but I'm definitely okay with it because I think it's important to give some of what you have plenty of to those who have almost nothing."

**Apple Pies:** Raquel Smith, a sophomore, remembers when she was 14 and helped a man in need. "I was at McDonald's and saw a homeless man sleeping on a bench. I gave him two apple pies and said Happy Holidays. It still means a lot to me even though it was a while ago."

**Comfort Counts:** Olivia Fey, a senior, dedicates time each week to comfort patients undergoing cancer treatments in the oncology department at the Anne Arundel Medical Center. "I do this because I recognize the impact that this little action can have positively on others, and how much it can turn around someone's day for the better. In the end,

it's about putting your passion for others towards the greater good by benefiting someone or something that you strongly support."

**Pay it Forward:** Chloe Wright, a senior, started paying for the person behind her car after someone paid for her Starbucks drink one time. "It just makes me feel happy that I was able to do something nice for them and then hopefully they'll continue it for the person behind them."

**Christmas Spirit:** Tyler Liberto, a junior, loves bringing Christmas spirit to children who sometimes don't have the chance to experience it. "We visited a hospital around Christmas time and handed out gifts such as scarves and blankets to the people there. It definitely felt good to be able to bring happiness to other people especially during the holiday season."



# Committed Underclassmen

A select few underclass athletes have already committed to play on college teams.

by Carey Cameron | Managing Editor

Every year, the largest stressor of the senior class seems to be college applications. However, there are some students that will not have to face these problems. Some student athletes commit to playing in college before senior year.

The commitment process involves work on the parts of both the athlete and the college coach. Athletes need to facilitate communication to colleges they are interested in and tell the coaches about the games and tournaments they are playing in. Motivated to find talented players, coaches watch their games and tournaments to determine whether they would be a good fit for the team.

“It’s really stressful. You have to email a bunch of coaches every weekend before your tournaments. Some don’t reply, some do,” Jenna King, a junior who is committed to play Division III lacrosse at Gettysburg College, said.

Athletics is not the sole reason many underclassmen choose to commit. Many also decide on a school for its academic reputation as well as its sports teams. Junior Mikie Harmeyer is committed to play Division I lacrosse at the University of Virginia.

“The balance of academics and athletics just felt like a good fit for me. When I got on campus, I just really loved the campus and the

coaches,” Harmeyer said.

Some students commit to a school because they have programs they like and want to be apart of, and the easiest way to do so is to get a guaranteed spot on their sports team. King was looking at Division III schools that would allow her to take lab classes for her potential health sciences major when she decided upon Gettysburg,

“I really enjoyed the coach, I enjoyed the campus, and the academics are great. There’s just a lot of opportunities there that some other schools didn’t have,” King said.

Although the process of finding a team and getting offered a spot is tedious, any athletes say it is worth it in the end to know where you are headed before senior year rolls around. “Now since I know

where I am going, I know what I have to do in order to be successful once I get there,” Harmeyer said.

Junior Lila Slattery committed to Northwestern University for Division I field hockey at the end of her sophomore year, which helped to give her peace of mind when thinking about senior year and beyond. “All my friends have to go on college visits and figure out, ‘Do I like this? Do I not?’ I already have a reassuring factor,” Slattery said.

When the class of 2020 becomes seniors, many will start to freak out over what college they will go to, minus the few exceptional athletes who have already had that taken care of.

Our coverage continues online at [sptalon.com](http://sptalon.com), [@thesptalon](https://twitter.com/thesptalon) on Twitter, [@thesptalon](https://www.instagram.com/thesptalon) on Instagram and [Severna Park Talon](https://www.facebook.com/SevernaParkTalon) on FaceBook



The committing process for student athletes is a long one that involves months of planning. Junior Jenna King on a college visit to Gettysburg College in PA. Junior Lila Slattery started her freshman year. “As the committing process got farther along, it got easier because I narrowed down my schools,” Slattery said. Photo Courtesy of Jenna King.

# Fantasy Football

A group of senior boys turn fantasy football into a lifestyle.

by Shelby Chasser | Editor-in-Chief

Throughout the winter, you can find students in all grades participating in fantasy football, in which participants draft teams that consist of players in the National Football League (NFL) and score points according to the actual performance of their players. Many students play casually in small leagues with their friends, but one group takes it to an extreme.

This league consists of 10 senior boys who started to play their sophomore year: Declan Byrne, Jacob Delaere, Tristan Halloran, Camden Handwerger, Jacob Herman, Josh Horgan, Chris Nanney, Matt Simms, Joey Singleton and Colin Taylor. Every week they get paired up against each other, hoping to outscore their opponent.

With every league there is a commissioner, a person who deals with all league business, player trades and infractions. Until their junior year, Singleton was the commissioner until he was caught in a scandal. “Joey used the commissioner power to cheat in order to help his chances of winning,” the newly implemented commissioner, Handwerger said, “Not only did it not work, he had to quit the league because he was going to lose.”

Although Singleton has said to have been forced out of the position by his opponents, he has claimed that the other players in the league just wanted Handwerger to be the

commissioner instead.

The commissioner is supposed to set a high standard when it comes to playing opponents, or at least a decent one. But, according to half of the members of the league, Handwerger is the worst player. “Camden is the worst player by large gap,” Nanney said, “He traded all of his best players and is consistently the lowest scorer.”

Often you find that many leagues only play for fun, but in this league the loser always gets punished, varying every year. Ironically, Simms claimed his favorite part about the league was punishments, even though he was punished his sophomore year for losing. “I wasn’t allowed to get a haircut from the end of the Super Bowl [February] until the end of the school year [June],” Simms said. “I was very sad that year, but it fueled my comeback season where I finished second the following year.”



“He had a cute little Afro growing by the end of the school year,” Handwerger commented.

Last year, Nanney lost and was punished by having his legs waxed and lines shaved in his eyebrows. “It was unfair since I took Joey’s failing team within the last four weeks of the season,” Nanney said, “Probably one of the worst decisions of my life.”

The loser this year will eat the world’s hottest pepper, according to the Guinness World Records, a Carolina reaper, with only one beverage allowed, milk with laxatives. “I feel horrible for whoever has to do that punishment,” Delaere said, “I just hope it isn’t me.”

Although the punishment at the end of the year may be harsh, the culture of this league is competitive and lively. “Hanging out with everyone is always a good time,” Singleton said.

Fantasy football is a nationally played competition in which you play in small leagues with friends or even strangers. It became popular in 1997 when CBS launched the first free website where you could play fantasy football with others. “The competition is one of the best parts about fantasy football,” Josh Horgan said. Photo by Shelby Chasser.



# Scrub Basketball

An inside look at the league.

by Matt Mangano | Features Editor

Scrub is back for the 2018-2019 season. Last year the Kings won the championship, and teams this season are anxiously awaiting to compete in the playoffs. "In February the intensity goes way up," senior Chris Lim said. Photos by Shelby Chasser.



Brooks Stevens grabs a rebound.



Nathan Carey drives and shoots.



Aaron Kent steals the ball from Nathan Carey.



Mark Sasse goes for a rebound against Chris Flynn.



Tom McGalliard attempts to block Mehul Sachdev.



Jojo Kelliher organizes his team before a game.

Scrub basketball is back in full swing for another promising season. The Greater Severna Park Athletic Association Boys Basketball 14-18 High School (scrub) League consists of 32 teams of 10 kids each, for a total of 320 players, making it one of the largest leagues organized by GSPAA.

The popularity of scrub is best expressed by students from all over Anne Arundel County coming to the Severna Park area to play in the league. Scrub is the talk of the town during the winter sport season, and it invades just about every conversation you hear during the winter.

"Scrub is life," junior Akshay Shah said. "It's the most important thing that happens in Severna Park." Shah has been playing basketball with the GSPAA for the past nine years. This season, he plays on

the Knicks, part of the East division.

Last year, the Kings won the championship title in a game against the Bucks. The team included senior Garrett Edwards. "It felt amazing to be number one," Edwards said of the victory. "Overall, scrub is a lot of fun and well put together. I made a lot of friends and memories along the way."

The league is incredibly competitive, perhaps more competitive than the actual high school league for SPHS. "It's insanely competitive and so much fun for the kids playing and the fans," junior Connor Wildes said.

Some believe that the focus on scrub takes away from the actual SPHS basketball team, including the coach of the varsity team, Coach Pellicani. "Scrub is glorifying mediocrity," coach Pellicani said.

Students who play for the SPHS team are not allowed to play on a scrub team, as enforced by Green Hornets. This causes some players to have to pick between the intense setting of the varsity team, and the more relaxed setting of the scrub league. "I did want to play scrub because my friends play scrub and I've heard it was a lot of fun, but chose to play for the higher level of my school team," junior Orion Young said.

For now, the teams are just building chemistry and having fun until the playoffs roll around in February, when the competition revs up and things get serious for the teams as they try to win the esteemed Scrub Championship title.

Check out [sptalon.com](http://sptalon.com) for updated coverage on the scrub season, and follow us at @thesptalon on Twitter for weekly updates on scrub games

## Top Five Players



DeCicco '19



Kelliher '19



LaRocque '19



Singleton '19



Delaere '19

Headshots by Shelby Chasser and Matt Mangano.

### 1 Angelo DeCicco - Yellow Hornets

With the season revving up, DeCicco and the Yellow Hornets are already looking at the playoff picture. "Playoffs are what matter. That's what this is all about," DeCicco said. He is looking forward to the rest of the season, and dominating the competition.

### 2 Jojo Kelliher - Yellow Hornets

Kelliher is one half of a powerful duo that leads the Yellow Hornets. Kelliher is hoping to have a successful run at the trophy. "Expect big things this year," Kelliher said. The team started out strong in a very competitive Western Division.

### 3 Joey LaRocque - Nets

After a serious injury ended his season last year, LaRocque is making a big comeback and he is ready to play again and lead his team. "I'm not at 100 percent yet, hopefully I can get there this season," LaRocque said, "But scrub is a lot of fun, with the friendly competition, trash talk and just not being stressed about anything else."

### 4 Joey Singleton - Pelicans

Singleton is playing like he has something to prove this season. "I'm averaging almost 30 points a game. I deserve recognition," Singleton said. Singleton is one of the league's leaders in scoring. He leads his team through example, with hopes to make a strong run this February.

### 5 Jacob Delaere - Lakers

Despite being new to scrub, Delaere has already had a big impact on the league. "This is my first year playing and it's a lot of fun because you don't have to worry about getting benched by Coach P. You can do whatever you want," Delaere said. The Lakers are off to a good start with high hopes for a run at the title.





Center Julia Ryan tipping off for the ball.



Forward Jessica Albert shooting a difficult outside shot.



Forward Lena McLaughlin searching for an outlet pass.

# Regional Finals Revenge Tour

After a successful season last year, SPHS girls are looking to have another great season.

by Colin DeFeo | Sports Editor

Two years ago the SPHS girls basketball team had a significant playoff run that included beating Old Mill who had already defeated SPHS twice that season. After the season, five starting seniors were lost: Katie DeFeo, Caroline Duffy, Claire Domshick, Celeste Davis and Kathryn Ryan. However, that didn't hold back the team from success.

"After losing our entire starting senior class two years ago we really had to step up last year and with a little bit of that pressure we grew a lot as a team," senior Rachel Spilker said, "We became super dependent on each other, so I think our chemistry is definitely a strong point coming into this year."

Last year, the girls team made it to the regional finals after beating Old Mill 46-42 in the third round of playoffs. The team lost to North

The girls are working together in order to succeed this season. There are many returning players from last year's playoff run. "Through teamwork, I think our team will be stronger than ever," McLaughlin said.

Point High School in regionals by nearly 20 points. "North Point is a difficult place to play," coach Leo Latonick said. Despite losing, "[it] did not diminish the accomplishments of last year's team. They overachieved by getting back to the regional final for a second straight year."

Teamwork and chemistry will help the team's success. "Our teamwork and team chemistry is great because we have the same team as last year and we really came together by the end of the season last year," senior Julia Ryan said.

Throughout the season the team hopes to reach the regional finals again. "I think everyone is excited for this season and is planning on making it back to regionals but maybe even further than that," senior Rachel Ward said.

Check out [sptalon.com](http://sptalon.com) for updated coverage on all winter sports. Scoreboards are updated weekly

# Key Players



Albert '20

## Jessica Albert, junior

Albert, a long time player with the high school and travel teams, has become an extremely skilled competitor. With the hopes of having another playoff run, Albert is focusing on teamwork because it "is key for us to advance farther this season," Albert said.



Powers '19

## Kelsey Powers, senior

Powers is a defensive star and has greatly contributed in years prior. The focus for her is team which means "working together to complete a main goal," Powers said.



Ryan '19

## Julia Ryan, senior

Ryan is playing her fourth season with the Falcons and has been playing basketball since she was nine. Teamwork is a big focus for Ryan. "A strength for our team this season could definitely be teamwork due to so many returning players," Ryan said.



Spilker '19

## Rachel Spilker, senior

Spilker is committed to Penn State for lacrosse and is a three sport varsity athlete, playing soccer, basketball and lacrosse. Right now basketball is her main focus, "I think we are going to have a great season this year. We have a lot of talent and the best coaches, so I am super excited to see what we can do," Spilker said.



Ward '19

## Rachel Ward, senior

Ward has played competitive basketball for summer teams and travel teams. She is described by some of her teammates as the best shooter on the team. As a senior this is her last SPHS season. "[I'm] grateful I've gotten to play with such a great group of girls throughout high school," Ward said.

Headshots by Shelby Chasser.



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