



SPTALON

February



FEBRUARY

Mental Health

Students advocate for more mental health resources and participate in efforts to obtain them.

Valentine's Day

Find out their love language, don't be basic and make reservations.

Superbowl

The two teams headed to the Superbowl are least favored by students.

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CORRECTIONS, DECEMBER ISSUE

"RECAP FALL SPORTS PLAYOFFS" PAGE 17: It was a successful season for Severna Park's golf team, as they had an individual player win the girls county championship, placed second in the district tournament and qualified for the state tournament. Severna Park's golf team had six players compete in the state final, including four seniors and two juniors, and placed 10th in the state. *Staff inadvertently left off the varsity golf team from RECAP*

"SIGNING DAY FOR ALTHLETES" PAGE 18: Photo Credit: Bridget Riddle *Staff inadvertently credited Theresa Braggs with photo*

TALK TO US

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COVER PHOTO

With Valentine's Day right around the corner and every store filled to the brim with candies and gifts, couple's are quickly getting ready for the sweet hearts holidays, including seniors James Henson and Hailey Guerette. Photo by Flynn Prengaman, Graphics by Maya Jones.



The SPHS improv troupe, named Jeff, has three Improv Nights left this year on March 4, April 1 and May 13. Though the club meets all year round, their shows are open to the public so parents, siblings not at SPHS and anybody else can come. Their shows boast many laughs and are a great way to spend a Friday night. Admission is free, but any donations to the drama department's charity, SPAN, are welcome. Photo by Sarah Sternhagen



From January 10 through the 14, the Red Cross Club fundraised for Vaccinate a Village. The donations funded the Measles and Rubella Initiative and since 2001, 1.1 billion children have been supported through the Initiative. Each dollar donated is equivalent to one vaccine. To entice students further, the fundraiser offered merits for the NHS for every ten dollars donated. Photo by Sarah Sternhagen



The Unified Bowling team is a large group and competes against many other schools in Anne Arundel County. Since bowling must happen indoors, there have been new Covid safety precautions taken during the 2021-2022 school year. Unlike before when SPHS and their competitors would bowl on adjacent lanes, the opposing schools must now keep their team members together while they bowl. Luckily, this makes it much easier for everyone to cheer and applaud one another when someone gets a strike. Photo by Sarah Sternhagen

PAJAMAS AT SPHS

How has the recent ban of pajamas been received?

Sarah Sternhagen | Staff Writer

Dress code is often a contentious topic at public schools. Between what the rules are, how administration enforces it and if the students abide by it, it remains a controversial subject. The county's general policy for all schools is no pajamas, but the administration has the final authorization to approve specific articles of clothing and could choose to allow pajamas. But recently SPHS has become more strict in enforcing their no pajama pants policy, which some students don't agree with.

"It doesn't create a distraction to any students," sophomore class president Rory Jenkins said. "I think it's expressing how you feel."

Gray areas for distracting clothing have always existed in public schools. Administrations often try to curb that as much as possible, but the student population doesn't always agree with it.

A common argument students raise with dress code is what type of clothing the ban applies to. "I feel like it's hard to draw the line between sweatpants and pajamas," senior class president Tucker McDonough said. "People like myself wake up and want to get out the door and pajama pants are often convenient."

Before the stricter enforcement, students wearing pajama pants were prone to do it out of convenience, whether from their early rise in the morning to what's most comfortable to wear during the long school day. This led to only a handful of students wearing pajama pants a week. However, this changed at SPHS when the ban was issued. Instead of students wearing pajamas less, it sparked a silent protest when a large number of the student population wore pajamas on the Fridays following the ban.

"I was proud of the students for standing up for what they believe," Jenkins said. "They felt something was wrong [with the ban]."

The feelings of the students culminated in the silent protests and though it has calmed down, the general opinion remains unsatisfied. Students continue wearing pajamas, whether it's out of protest or for the convenience that they originally wore them for. The ban did the opposite of its intention, creating a surge in the use of pajamas for a while before the protests settled down. "No students complained about it, no one really cared,"

Jenkins said. "I understand that they're [administration's] saying it's not appropriate for school, but that could be argued with so many other things that aren't appropriate for school."

The iconic look of pajama pants, soft fabric with a plaid pattern, are easy to pick out in a crowd. With the size, pattern and fabric not disqualifying other articles of clothing, students can only reasonably believe the ban is because pajamas are used for sleeping. Yet, it is impossible for administration to know what a student slept in the night before.

"If they achieve the same purpose as regular pants, there's really no difference. One just has a checked pattern," McDough said.

Whatever the administration decides to do about the pajama ban in the future, it seems unlikely students will forgo their pajamas in favor of what they believe is an unwarranted policy.

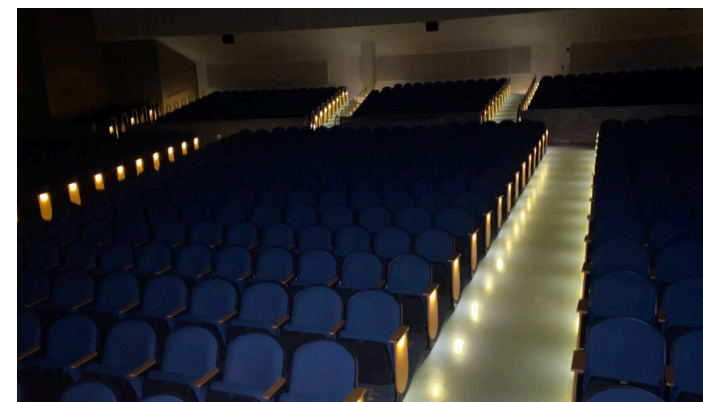


In December 2021 SPHS announced that they would become more strict with their no pajama pants policy. Now students could receive a citation for wearing them to school, but many are confused about why they have become a problem recently. Because there had never been previous problems with pajama pants it led many students to question whether the ban was warranted. "I don't think people were ever doing it in a malicious way," senior Tucker McDonough said. Photo by Sarah Sternhagen

A BLAST FROM THE PAST WITHIN THE MUSIC

Rock and Roll Revival is an exquisite production produced by yours truly, Severna Park High School, starring students from across the school and is coming soon.

Meghan DeFeo | Staff Writer



Miss Germanos and her staff are training the future generation of Rock and Roll Revival members for the 33rd annual production. The students are very thankful towards "all the staff members that help but [are] specifically thankful for Miss Germanos, who produces all the shows at our school and oversees everything drama related," junior Cooper Powell said. "Without her we wouldn't have shows." Photo by Meghan DeFeo

Rock and Roll Revival is a wonderful tradition Severna Park High School created over three decades ago. It is an outstanding production consisting of music dated at least 20 years back. Students spend hours of training to practice and perfect the show. The whole idea of "RnR" is to sound exactly like the original artists. Not only do the singers need to work to achieve perfection within their voices, but the dancers and dance team work to find ideal choreography to fulfill each song, the instrumental crew works to play the exact tune, the costume crew works to match the

costumes and the songs, the stage crew and staff works to perfect the lights, props and music and even the make up crew matching the looks to bring everything together. Mr. Brisentine takes on the role of vocal levels having to "hear the leads and make them sound like the original artists", Brisentine said. This takes "more than 100 hours for sure," junior Lainey Ordakowski said.

Taking the step to audition in front of Severna Park's inspiring music staff is a big step as is. Tryouts for Rock and Roll consist of many different sections to see what best fits the student. As said

before, the roles students can audition for include singing, dancing, make up, tech crew and band. Wanting to try out for singing or dancing individually requires a student to try out for both. This creates more challenges for students at tryouts and helps the staff find magnificent talent. Hundreds of members of SPHS staff and student body take part in the show. There "is a bunch of help that goes into Rock and Roll between costume moms, parent volunteers, staff who run it, singers, dancers and makeup artists," junior Paige Davis said. Finding the top pick for a certain role is tricky and takes dedication, so tryouts take a few days.

The challenges towards the show are balanced out by an enormous amount of fun, friendship and love that students and staff receive from the experience. Rock and Roll is not only a safe environment for students to get comfortable with their talents, it has also created an opportunity for many to feel valued and to have a passion for something. The long hours rehearsing bring quality time among students that most will not

have the opportunity to ever experience in their lives again, which gives Rock And Roll its sense of family. To pick a favorite part about the production would be hard but Powell says his favorite part "the people and the music. You get to meet so many people through Rock n Roll and you can tell everyone really has a fun time with it."

Coming back from last year's quarantine show, the staff, cast and crew is fired up to be back on stage and have their relatives and friends come from all over to come see them perform. With this year's theme as "Time After Time" the show will surely be able to fulfill that blast from the past everyone needs. This will be a challenging change and students may be "nervous on stage with a full audience," Ordakowski said. Nonetheless, this year's Rock N' Roll will be a memorable one, so make sure to look out for important dates relating to tickets, fundraising and the show. The show will go on seven different days in March and tickets will sell out quickly as per usual.



GENDER NEUTRAL BATHROOMS

A gender neutral bathroom can help the LGBTQIA+ community feel safe.

Madelynne Earhart | Staff Writer

Throughout the years, there's been a steady incline in youth who feel comfortable with their identities to express themselves. These students are people in your classes who identify with the LGBTQIA+ community.

While some identify with different sexualities, some identify with a different gender identity. These students can identify as trans, non-binary/gender queer, gender-fluid, demigender among other gender identities. Some struggle with feeling validated. This validation can be found through parents, friends and school or work environments. One thing that can help a student feel seen and comfortable is a gender-neutral bathroom. As of now, Severna Park High School does not have a designated gender-neutral bathroom. "I do think that a public Gender-Neutral bathroom is important and could be beneficial to the school" school psychologist Ms. Levy said, "I do know that five out of 12 high schools in the county have one."

Although there isn't a specific space for all students to utilize gender-neutral, students are allowed to use whichever bathroom they feel most comfortable. "Currently, SPHS students can select which bathroom they want to use based on their gender identity and comfort level and the nurse's bathroom is also available as a Gender-Neutral bathroom for use at any time upon request" Levy said.

Freshman Nick Soto said "When I use the 'boys' bathroom, I get stares and it makes me uncomfortable. I'm a trans man, but I like to wear skirts and stuff like that."

The nurse's office is what is currently available to trans and gender-queer students. While this may be the school's gender-neutral bathroom, it's not advertised either. Because students may use this space "at any time upon request," according to Levy, it may be challenging for members in the LGBTQIA+ to realize that's what is available to them. Junior Page Judge said "The nurse's office is not enough accessibility for gender queer students."

According to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIA), "Across our country, too many students avoid using bathrooms out of fear that another student might mistreat or harm them, emotionally or physically."

Having the gender-neutral bathroom in this area where they have to ask to use the gender-neutral bathroom, students may feel discouraged because of the fear of outing themselves. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality, "[A] Students' right to privacy about this personal information is protected by federal law. Revealing a student's transgender status, birth name, sex assigned at birth, or medical history to classmates, parents, teachers and other may violate the federal educational privacy law, known as FERPA, schools must make every effort to keep that information private unless the student has given them permission to share it."

Some students may not be "out" to friends, family or anyone for that matter. When you are "out," this means that you have told these people how you identify. This may cause the students to not want to use the nurse's bathroom, if they are aware of it, and will just use the

bathroom for the gender they are transitioning out of.

Levy said "I think there are certain logistical and safety matters involved in making this happen. I believe this has been brought up to administration and the leadership team and I think that discussions are occurring or have occurred."

A bathroom like this could help students with anxiety as a place to take a breath without roaming the halls or having to talk to anyone if they have social anxiety.

Junior Nora Lechowicz said "There's a bathroom on every floor, but none for gender queer students. You would assume, since this is a

"BATHROOMS" CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



The gender neutral symbol portrays both male and female bathroom signs, this lets those entering know that no assigned gender is necessary for use. These help gender/queer students feel validated and seen. Superintendent George Arlotto said "Students who consistently demonstrate and identify with a specific gender should be accommodated in their use of facilities. To the extent possible, schools should reduce or eliminate the practice of segregating students by gender. Students shall have access to restrooms of the gender with which they identify." Graphic by Madelynne Earhart



IDENTITIES VOLUME 3: LGBTQIA+

Students recount their experiences and how it helped shape their identities.

Noel Castillo | Features Editor

In places like Severna Park where everyone acknowledges that there is a lack of diversity, it can be difficult for people's identities to grow and for people to understand others. It is important to talk about uncomfortable topics in order to more fully accept each other and create a more welcoming, positive environment.

Junior Brendan Dennis and others around him always kind of thought it was obvious that he was gay. He first started thinking about his sexuality in sixth grade when one of his friends asked him about it.

"Most people in school already knew I was gay, but it took me awhile to come out to family," Dennis said. "Not out of fear, but it's just a hard subject to bring up no matter how accepting someone is."

Dennis says that compared to other queer kids, he has had a pretty easy experience being gay and never really needed a support system. People helped him come out to his family, and he is very grateful he is able to talk to them and his friends openly about his sexuality.

"I was the only person I knew who was openly gay so I didn't have anyone to ask about being queer," Dennis said. "So now I really try to be a support system to anyone who is questioning their sexuality or is in the closet because it's a hard thing to

experience." Similarly, freshman Nova Roesener realized they were nonbinary in seventh grade, but did not immediately have a strong support system.

"Some people were there for me?" Roesener said. "I didn't have a lot, in eighth grade though I gained a lot more friends and I had a lot more people there for me." They also believe that understanding one's own pronouns is really important.

"I think because pronouns are like- a part of my identity," Roesener said. "Understanding my pronouns helps me understand who I am, if that makes sense."

Sophomore Marlow Marron, a trans-masculine nonbinary student inspired their friends to come out soon after they did and can easily talk with friends and their boyfriend about gender and sexuality. Marron says their boyfriend is super understanding of the fact that them liking to present feminine doesn't invalidate them as trans and gay.

"I do feel happier now to a degree. I'm able to be very open about my identity and I don't have to be scared of romantic relationships anymore." Marron said. "Knowing my identity has changed my politics, religious beliefs, fashion sense, how I talk to other people, everything really."



Junior Brendan Dennis proudly holds up an American flag with Nikki Minaj on it at an American-themed football game. "Not much changed when I came out because I was never hiding who I really was," Dennis said. "But being able to talk to my family and friends about my sexuality is definitely something I'm very grateful for." Photo by Georgia Denton

Despite all the positive and empowering aspects of coming out, Marron warns that it may not always be the safest option.

"You have to be ready for backlash when you come out and start being open about your identity. [It] can be mortifying and scary so please don't if you're not safe or ready to defend yourself." Marron said. "The moment you realize you identity as someone who's part of the LGTBQIA+ community you also have to realize that at some point you might have to defend yourself or someone else from people who don't believe you should be treated equally."

Dennis agrees and personally knows this is the grim reality. While coming out can be freeing, it can also be dangerous because there are people who will not accept it "I am very privileged to live in an accepting home and have accepting people around me," Dennis said.

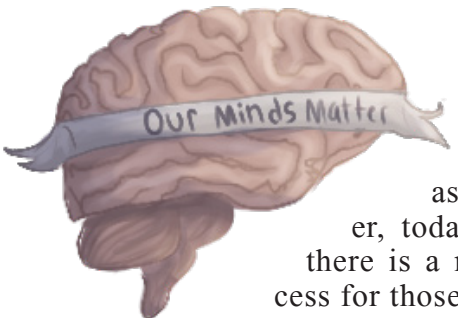
"IDENTITIES" CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Students advocate for mental health resources.

Sydney Herz | Editor-In-Chief



In the past, society was resistant to acknowledging and accommodating physical ailments, such as wheelchairs. However, today, everywhere you go, there is a ramp to allow easy access for those who need wheelchairs, along with school buses being updated for the same purpose. Despite this major shift in perspective and acceptance, many worry a similar shift in mental health will take much longer and more activism to achieve. Lucky for us, numerous SPHS students have advocated for more mental health resources and participated in efforts to obtain them.

Junior Elizabeth Opladen has been advocating for this cause since eighth grade, she has been a part of Our Minds Matter and is a part of the Young Democrats club at SPHS. Countless students worry about seeking help within our school walls since our resources aren't talked about frequently. But, Opladen has personally seen the benefits of using these tools, as the counseling center assisted her in finding classes and activities that worked best for her mental and physical health.

"I personally think that the counseling center is a good resource at SPHS [and] we also have an incredible school psychologist who is a great resource -

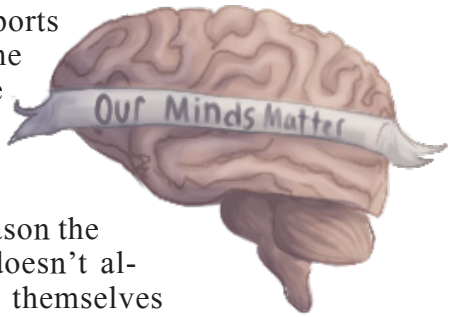
source for anyone struggling," Opladen said. "I think that what [SPHS] lack[s] is students feeling comfortable enough to go down and reach out for help."

One student who refrained from reaching out despite struggles is junior Cooper Powell, who was an ambassador for Our Minds Matter and has participated in many other events such as AFSP's Annual Walk Out of Darkness. However, given an urgent or school-related issue, he would feel comfortable enough to seek help from our resources, unlike some of his fellow classmates. Powell says he is not fully aware of the process to receive mental help or scheduling a meeting, which highlights part of the issue with Severna Park's silent suffering among their students.

"I feel like if the mental health resources were more talked about by schools [and] teachers, students would be a lot more aware of ways they can seek help," Powell said. "Counselors could use Brightspace to make a class with all of the students they are assigned to help so that these resources could be better communicated."

Opladen has a different take on what the school can do to help students become aware of these resources and decrease the worsening mental health crisis in our community. She believes the pressure on stu-

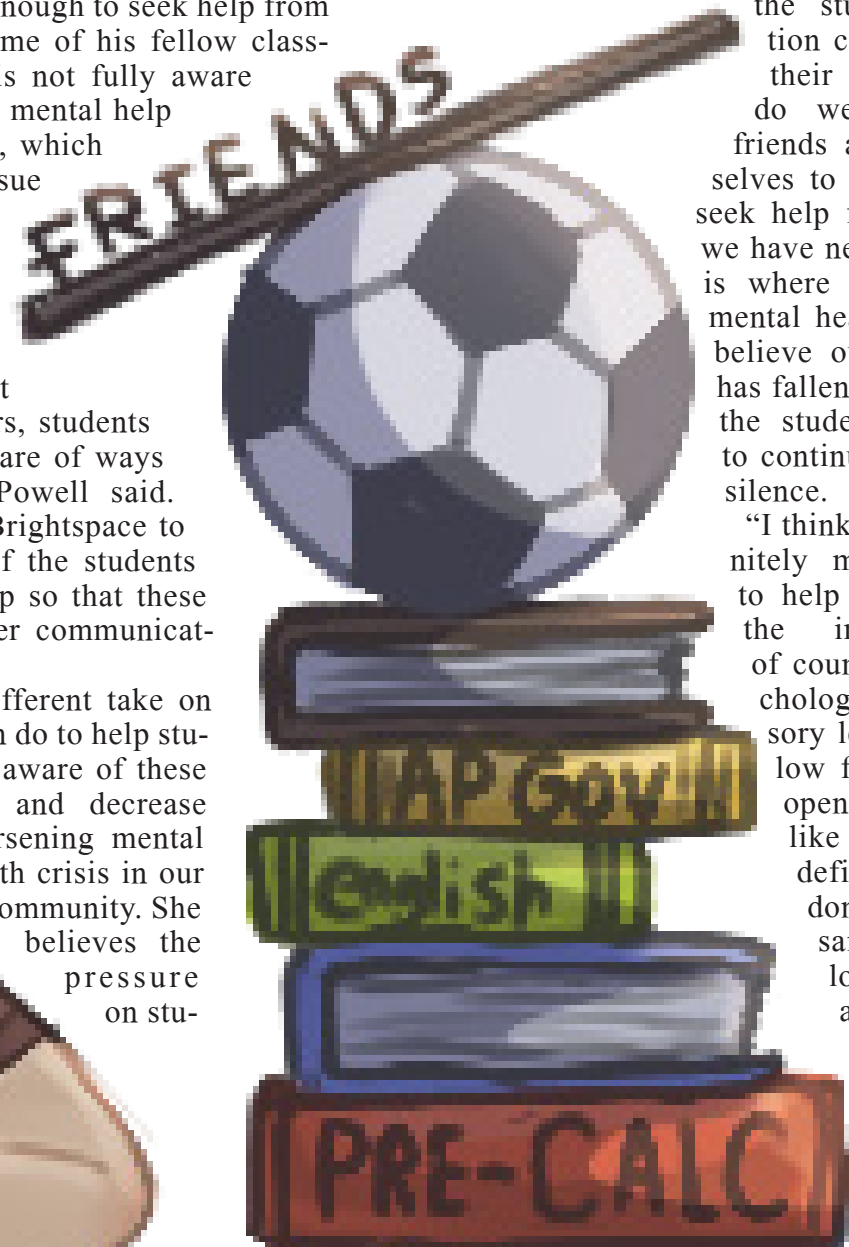
dents to succeed in both sports and academics, as well as the pandemic has allowed the number of students struggling on their own to skyrocket.



"I think for some reason the school has a culture that doesn't allow kids to be honest with themselves or others on how they are really doing," Opladen said. "I think the thing the school can work on is assurance. The most important thing I think is to assure students that their struggle is valid and that they can reach out."

While we do have these resources (school counselors and psychologists), the majority of the student population could not relay their names. How do we expect our friends and even ourselves to reach out and seek help from someone we have never met? This is where many student mental health advocates believe our community has fallen short, leaving the student population to continue to suffer in silence.

"I think SPHS is definitely making efforts to help students with the implementation of counselors, a psychologist and advisory lessons that allow for students to open up, but I feel like there could definitely be more done," Powell said. "I think a lot more people are struggling right now than we may realize."



RESOURCES

 <p>NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE 1-800-273-TALK (8255)</p> <p>If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.</p>	 <p>NEED TO TALK? Depression? Anxiety? Thoughts of suicide?</p> <p>Text 898-211 Call 211 and press 1</p>
 <p>Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center Text MHA to 741741 at the Crisis Text Line.</p>	 <p>Anne Arundel County Crisis Response System: 410-768-5522 Student Safety Hotline: 877-676-9852</p>
 <p>Resources for Adolescents and Parents specifically at adolescents and young adults and their parents.</p>	 <p>hdwonline.ca Resource to provide teens with information about depression.</p>
 <p>We are a group of individuals, both male and female, who help to moderate the Forums. Each of us is either personally affected or recovering from a depressive illness or we have a loved one dealing with such an illness.</p>	 <p>We provide information & support to LGBTQ young people 24/7, all year round. Call, text, or chat with us anytime you need support. If you are thinking about suicide, or feeling lonely, we're here to listen.</p>

Graphics by Maya Jones



YOGA: HELPING YOUR BRAIN AND BODY

How yoga can help calm your body and mind.

Zoe Philip | Staff Writer

Yoga is a type of exercise in which you move your body through various poses and stretches to improve breathing, increase flexibility, and calm the mind. Yoga has been a staple in the health community for a long time, and for a good reason. Yoga causes chemical reactions that can decrease stress, increase gray matter and release calming chemicals. Yoga assists in your brain's overall functions, while also growing physical strength. But how do all of these chemicals and stretches change your brain and body, and why? A major part of this answer is found in gray matter.

GRAY MATTER IN YOUR MIND

Gray matter is found in the brain and is made up of brain cells and neurons. With blood constantly flowing throughout it, gray matter is actually pink in color and only turns gray when that part of the brain dies. It is responsible for many of the brain's functions, including everything from basic learning skills to memory in your daily life. The poses, slow movements and breathing exercises found in yoga improve blood flow, therefore helping with the activation and strengthening of your gray matter. This results in more emotional awareness or control, focus and concentration. It also can help with the overall decision making processes. Now that we have covered the brain, how does yoga affect your body?

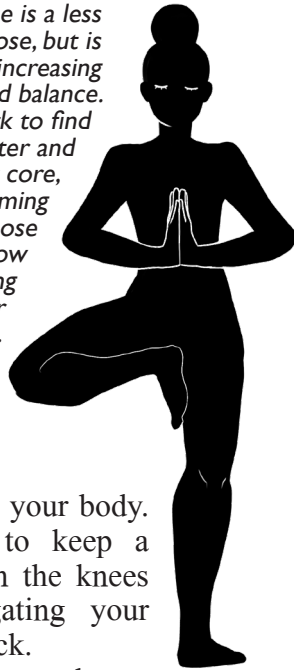
YOGA AND THE BODY

The motions and poses found throughout yoga can help stretch your body, improving mobility in the back and allowing other supportive muscles to grow to prevent future discomfort. Cat-Cow is a well known stretch to assist in back pain. First sit on your hands and knees with your hands under your shoulders and knees under your hips. Next, arch your spine first upwards and then down towards the ground, alternating inhales and exhales with each movement.

Breathing exercises often found in yoga paired with slow movements help to relax muscles, increasing blood flow as you complete the exercises. The holds between poses also help with gaining strength in your core, ultimately creating more balance and stability. Tree pose is a relatively simple way to start balancing and learning how to stabilize yourself in yoga. Start by balancing on one foot while pressing the other against your standing leg, either above the knee or below it on your calf. Do not place your foot on your knee as it can damage it long term.

Yoga assists in lowering blood pressure and overall inflammation in the body, calming you mentally and physically. Downward Dog is one of the most well known poses in yoga, promoting blood flow and lowering your heart rate. Starting on all fours, straighten your legs slightly until you are creating a

Tree pose is a less dynamic pose, but is great for increasing stability and balance. You can work to find your center and engage your core, growing a calming feeling. This pose can overall slow your breathing and still your body and mind. Graphic by Maya Jones



triangle with your body. Make sure to keep a light bend in the knees while elongating your spine and neck.

With a welcoming community, yoga is a simple and effective way to heal and nourish your body regardless of age or skill level. There are many ways to get started, including yoga classes, or the Yoga Club at Severna Park High School. Yoga Club meets with Ms. Bell on Mondays in room 115 on A Days, and in the Aux Gym on B Days. Outside of school there are classes at the Community Center where you can participate in anything from pilates to drop in yoga classes for fifteen dollars. You can go to their website at sp.communitycenter.org to get any further information about specific class times. Although the age requirement for the Community Center is fourteen, there are many ways to get involved and grow your yoga skills, so get out there and get stretching.



TIPS FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day can be difficult to plan, here are some tips.

Julia Owens | Managing Editor



Many stores like Safeway already have their basic looking Valentine's Day gift displays up. When thinking about what to get someone for Valentine's Day, try not to be basic and get something premade from the grocery store. Josie Griffiths from The Sun said "Small and expensive might be good - but avoid raiding the 'sweets' section in your local supermarket." Make it unique to the person who will be receiving it. Photo by Julia Owens

DON'T BE BASIC

As cute as the Valentine's dates in movies can be, in the real world they can come across as basic or reused. Movie dates can be fun, but only if it is a movie that both people want to watch. If you can casually ask or already know the other person's idea of a perfect date you can plan off of that. For example, some people want to have a romantic homemade dinner and an at-home movie night. If that sounds like the perfect activity. You may want to plan what you will cook and get the shopping done ahead of time.

Also as cute as chocolates and flowers are, nothing says lack of planning like cellophane wrapped, heart-shaped boxes of chocolates and grocery store flowers. I know for a lot of teenagers money is tight, but finding something that is unique to the person that is receiving the gifts makes the act sentimental and special. When in doubt, try writing a heartfelt letter or making something for them that shows that you put in time and effort.

MAKE RESERVATIONS

Not making a reservation can make the day much more stressful. You don't want to be stuck on the 45-60 minute waitlist just waiting to have dinner with your Valentine's date. Reservations fill up fast, so secure that reservation spot as soon as possible. This allows you to plan the rest of your night accordingly.

No matter how you celebrate this Valentine's Day or who you celebrate it with, try your best to make it special and let them know you care.

Valentine's Day is the same day every year, Feb. 14, but it seems to sneak up on all of us without fail. This day originated from the feast day of Saint Valentine, as a celebration of love and affection. Over time, it has transformed into somewhat of a Hallmark holiday. To make the day go a little smoother, here are some tips.

FIND OUT THEIR LOVE LANGUAGE

Another thing that can help you during this holiday is knowing someone's love language. Some of them can be receiving gifts, quality time, words of affirmation, acts of service or physical touch. If you know what they prefer, you can plan better for gifts or activities.

"BATHROOMS" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

new school, that we would have a gender-neutral bathroom. It would provide so much inclusivity for students." A gender-neutral bathroom, that is advertised and in a less high traffic area, would be beneficial to Severna Park gender queer students. In 2015, George Arlotto, Superintendent of Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) said "A school shall provide any student who is uncomfortable sharing a common area, including a sleeping area, shower, or

bathroom, or a student who has a need for increased privacy, regardless of the reason, with a designated safe and non-stigmatizing alternative."

All students should have access to a place they feel safe and comfortable in. Senior Natalie Kelly said "There's definitely a need for a gender neutral bathroom. Lots of students can feel uncomfortable with going to a certain bathroom. It's sometimes stressful to choose a certain bathroom and not having a bathroom that can fit your identity. Having a gender neutral bathroom can make SPHS more inclusive."



VIRTUAL LEARNING

Could we be returning to virtual learning soon?

Johann Bacarisas | Opinions Editor

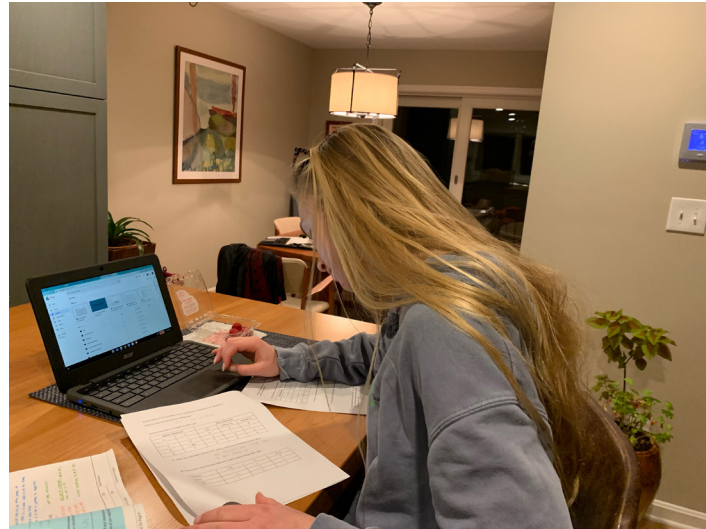
The Covid-19 pandemic was a difficult time for many people around the world, and it affected students at Severna Park High as well. The shift to virtual learning during the pandemic was difficult for many students, and while things have started to go back to normal this year, recent surges in infection rates around the nation as well as the rise of the Delta and Omicron variants of the virus have put our in-person status into question. While protocols are in place to prevent major outbreaks, circumstances may change in the future.

Taking this into account, Severna Park seems to be in a good place with regard to the pandemic. “We have seen a slight increase right before and during the Christmas/Winter Break, the same increase that has been seen nationally,” Principal Patrick Bathras said. “Our SPHS numbers are not as significant to yet shut down our school and revert to virtual learning, so AACPS will continue to monitor the numbers to determine if a virtual option is needed at some point.”

While cases around Anne Arundel county have risen significantly since December, schools have not yet returned to virtual learning, much to the relief of students. “Even though the learning aspect of school was there, there are some things you can’t just replicate on a screen,” junior Paul Okparaocha said. “The connection between students and classmates or even students and teachers was minimal. Even clubs and sports felt extremely limited.”

Other students mirror this negative opinion. “The problem is that when compared with in-person learning, I was a lot more stressed because I felt mostly on my own,” junior Aaron Cook said. “It was hard to find the motivation to do work.” Fortunately, it seems that barring a change of circumstances, in-person learning is here to stay. The way things stand now, it doesn’t appear that anything drastic will change with regards to the pandemic.

“As of now, we will continue to mandate mask wearing and do our best to use social distancing and other safety measures.” Bathras said. “If the need arises to have to revert to virtual learning, SPHS is ready with Brightspace and Google Meet platforms. Additionally, all teachers have laptops and students have Chromebooks or personal devices to accommodate vir-



According to the CDC, national transmission rates have increased dramatically across the country. Maryland is also affected by the recent spike in transmission, with transmission rates increasing significantly since December. Anne Arundel County reinstated an indoor mask mandate. “I had hoped we were done with government mandates in our response to COVID, but the current rate of spread and hospitalization is not sustainable, for our hospitals, our schools, our public safety agencies, or our businesses.” Anne Arundel County Executive Stewart Pittman said. “Masks slow the spread, and it’s time to put them back on.” Photo by Flynn Prengaman

tual learning. We are hopeful to remain with in-person learning, but only time will tell.”

While the school is capable of returning to virtual learning and the possibility of it remains, it may not have a good effect on students. “In my opinion, I think it would affect us negatively if we did virtual learning for an extended period of time,” Okparaocha said. “A lot of students, including myself, thrive better in an in-person setting, and staying in virtual for too long wouldn’t do much favors for our productivity.”

As Covid-19 continues to spread around the country, many school districts in Maryland have decisions to make about their in-person status. After closing schools and returning to virtual learning for an extended period of time, Prince George’s county returned to in-person learning after the MLK holiday. Prince George’s county leads the state in Covid cases, far surpassing Anne Arundel county.



THE WORLD OF AMATEUR INVESTING AT SPHS

Students are getting into the world of investment.

Zachary McGrath | Business Manager

Investment is a big deal, and numerous Severna Park High School students are getting into finance. Whether it is to get a secondary flow of income or to simply learn more about finance and economics; Falcons have bought Non-fungible Tokens (NFTs), Bitcoin and stocks, and that’s only the beginning of it.

Junior Jake Daniels is invested in cryptocurrency. He said that unlike many of his fellow investors, he’s “fine taking the risky route.”

Ryan certainly isn’t alone in his interest in crypto currency, with fellow falcons echoing his sentiments. Junior Shariq Mogeheh talked about following market trends while picking his crypto investments. “I bought into dogecoin when I saw a lot of buzz about it and bought the Bitcoin dip for some quick profits,” Shariq said.

Conversely, there is some dissent within the ranks of amateur investors at Severna Park on the viability of Cryptocurrency as an investment. Junior Ryan Austin said “Crypto is a waste of money.” While NFTs have been grabbing a lot of headlines as of late, relatively few Falcons are primarily investing in NFTs. Daniels said the perceived risk in NFTs doesn’t startle him. Both cryptocurrency and NFTs may be controversial amongst the ranks of investors, but it appears as if they are here to stay.

While many Falcons are excited for crypto and NFTs, numerous others are interested in traditional forms of investment such as stocks, securities and options. James was interested in investing after numerous of his friends got involved with the GameStop Short Squeeze, the sharp increase of GameStop’s stock value in January of 2021.

Another junior, Brad Dulin, is also interested in traditional forms of investment, although with a twist: he trades in options. Options, which are extremely risky, do not phase Dulin, who has been investing since he



With the barrier of entry into finance becoming lower and lower, more and more people are getting into investment. Severna Park High School students are investing in numerous different types of assets, such as NFTs, cryptocurrency, and stocks. Falcons from every grade are getting involved, for a variety of reasons, such as Junior James Fallon who started investing to get a “secondary flow of income outside of my job.” Graphic by Maya Jones

was a child. At the start of his amateur investing career, he said, “I didn’t really know what I was doing, but I learned more and more over time,” Dulin said.

While this isn’t Wall Street, it is starting to feel as if it was. With the advent of investing becoming more and more accessible to people without a background in finance and economics, we can expect more and more Falcons to get involved. Who knows, these amateur investors may be the market leaders of tomorrow.

“IDENTITIES” CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

“But I don’t want people to base their opinions about being gay just on my story because it is very rare that you’re in an accepting environment and being gay

can be very difficult. And if you are going through the experience of coming out or need help coming out or just need to talk to someone I am always here to listen no matter who you are.”

VARSITY BASKETBALL MIDSEASON RECAP

The Severna Park Boys team is on a roll and doesn't look like they are going to stop anytime soon.

Michael Nobileo | Staff Writer

Coming into the season, the Severna Park varsity basketball team had high hopes and so far the team has lived up to it. Led by longtime head coach, Paul Pellicani who has previously expressed the promise of the team with their "great size [and] players at every position." These aspects have shown, with the team attaining a record of 7-2 and its only losses coming to some of the toughest teams in the county, losing to Meade by just one point and to Broadneck by seven points. With these being their only losses, it doesn't seem like Severna Park should be worrying, for each loss comes an even more impressive win.

Severna Park's top-tier defense held back the South River team who had beat Broadneck by 12 points and scored 73 points against the Bruins. Due to the efforts of the defence, South River only scored 44 points, to Severna Park's 53 points. These are the types of games that flow confidence through the team's veins.

"When we are on our A game and our team is clicking both offensively and defensively, I don't know if there's a team in the county that can beat us," junior guard Owen Muldoon said.

These words are backed up with actions, such as the 44 points they held South River to when they beat the Seahawks, as well as a 71 point performance against Chesapeake. After a tough loss to Broadneck, forward Cole Rogers said "we'll be back." These are strong words considering how well the Bruins have done this year. However, their built-in confidence and attitude that no team is unbeatable has helped the team attain success. The team hopes to see Broadneck in the state playoffs, which would be one of the most hyped up games of the year due to the long rivalry and each team boasting a winning record.

It looks like the team is bound to make a deep run in the playoffs this year from their mentality, work ethic, and skill. With more time to develop and build together, the future is looking bright. Is this the season Severna Park boys basketball finally gets their first state championship? Only time will tell.



Five of Severna Park High School basketball boys team players Anthony Bocchetta, Cole Rogers, Bryce Stevenson, Declan Fox and Rian Sherwin from left to right dressed up in the gym during school before a big game. "These are my guys," said junior Cole Rogers. "I ride and die with them." Photo by Michael Nobileo

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SEVERNA PARK'S SUPER BOWL PREDICTIONS

With the 2021 NFL season ending soon, Falcons look ahead to playoffs and the final game.

Lilly Spilker | Sports Editor

Super Bowl LVI is set to take place at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, home to the Rams and Chargers, on Sunday, Feb. 13, 2022. The Super Bowl is pushed back one week this year due to the new 17-game schedule that the NFL switched to, and it will now occur in the middle of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

Last year, at Super Bowl LV in 2021, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs 31-9, and the Super Bowl MVP was Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady.

A popular prediction for NFL fans among SPHS was that the Green Bay Packers would take home the trophy. "I think the Packers are going to win the Super Bowl," junior Cole Rogers said. "Because they are the most rounded team in the NFL and have the best quarterback." Many saw the skill in Green Bay, including sophomore Ganon Cope. "I feel like it's just Aaron Rodgers' year," Cope said. "...the Packers have a really great offense, along with a strong defense." However on Jan 9, the Pack-

ers unexpectedly lost to the San Francisco 49ers, 13-10, and crushed many students' predictions.

If not the Packers', then who? The reigning champions of Tampa Bay were thought to have a good shot at earning the champion title. "I think the Buccaneers are going to win the Super Bowl because they did last year, and Tom Brady is going to win it again," senior Bryce Stevenson said. "The other team is going to be the Bills because Josh Allen has been playing well and they looked really good against the Patriots." While some think the Bills were going to lose in the final game, others believed they had what it takes to win everything. "I think the Bills will win it all," senior Theresa Bragg said. "Josh Allen is a great player and they've had a good season." Both Stevenson and Bragg seemed to have good predictions but their thoughts were proven wrong on Sunday, Jan 23. The Buccaneers lost, 30-27, in a tight game against the Rams. In another close match-up, the Bills went into overtime against the



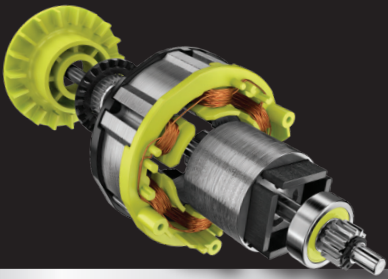
The upcoming Super Bowl has Severna Park students considering the strongest NFL teams and debating who will win that final game in mid February. "I think the Packers will win the Super Bowl but there are definitely other teams who will make a competitive game," junior Nick Whitacre said. "I'm just looking forward to watching an exciting game with my friends." Graphic by Maia Jones

Chiefs and lost 42-36. With few teams remaining, the Kansas City Chiefs were a top contender. They won in 2020 and seemed to be strong enough to do this again. "I think the Chiefs will win the Super Bowl," junior Katie Griffith said. "...they have Patrick Mahomes who is definitely a key player." Nevertheless, Mahomes and his Kansas City teammates lost to the Cincinnati Bengals on Jan 30.

are headed to the Super Bowl are those that were least favored by Severna Park students. The stage is set for the Los Angeles Rams, who secured their spot by beating the 49ers in the NFC championship, and the Cincinnati Bengals, who beat the Kansas City Chiefs in the AFC championship, to face off on Feb 13. Whichever team it may be that receives the Vince Lombardi trophy, it should be a good game.

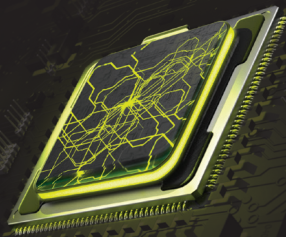
The two teams that

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