

The TALON

December 2023



ONE ACTS!

A student led theater production held here at Severna Park High. Read more on page 2.

TIME WILL TELL

Vaughn Miller tells the captivating story of his life after returning a class key to the school from 1969. Read more on page 10.

TRANSIT RIDERSHIP?

An analysis of the Maryland Transit Administration's largest issues. Read more on page 14.

VOLUME 64

ISSUE 3

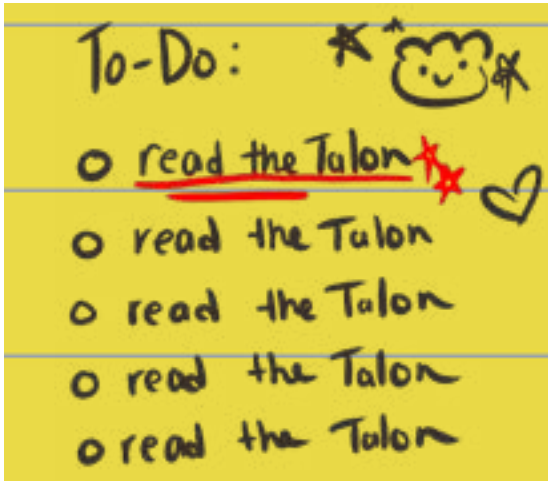
SPTALON.COM

SEVERNA PARK HIGH
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SEVERNA PARK, MD 21146

FRONT PAGE CAPTION: Due to the new Anne Arundel County snow day policy, people are worried that students won't attend virtual classes due to distraction without motivation. Graphic by Chris Benjamin

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Juniors Reese Clark, Shelby Comboy and Sophia Procacini work in the Maker Space prior to Inclusive Week in order to create buttons and colorful rocks to hand out to students to encourage kindness and inclusivity. "Teaching others about what Inclusion means or creating an inclusive environment encourages us to

learn about all of our unique backgrounds, contributions and in the end the goal is to for all of us to know that we belong and are accepted" Nadine Hendler, sponsor of Inclusive Week said. This year, SPSHS received National Unified Schools certification. Photo taken by: Nadine Hendler

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WHO WE ARE The Talon is the principle news publication and public forum of Severna Park High School, which is located on 60 Robinson Road, Severna Park, Maryland 21146. Phone: 410-544-0900

ASSOCIATIONS The Talon is a member of the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and Quill & Scroll International Journalism Association. It has won Gold and Silver Medals from CSPA.

DISTRIBUTION Staff members typically distribute 400 papers to the student body. Magazines are available to pick up in the hallways, the main office and throughout the English department. Subscribers may pay \$40 to have the publication mailed to their home. PDF copies of The Talon are found under Past Print at www.sptalon.com.

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will participate in the a assembly during fourth period to listen to a holiday concert. Photo taken by: Ruby Howland.

Junior Alex Perritt practices during Concert Bank class in order to preform for the upcoming winter concerts. On Dec. 20 the Concert Choir, Vocal Ensemble and Orchestra will play at 7 PM. On Dec. 21 SOL, the Percussion Ensemble and Jazz Band will perform at 7 PM in the auditorium. On Friday, Dec. 22 the school



Junior Maggie Moran sits with a local business partner to practice her interview skills. The Mock Interviews were organized by Signature for the juniors who had just written their resumes for English classes. This real life skill happened in the Media Center Dec. 4-8. "I think it was a good experience it showed us what an actual

interview would be like, I was kinda scared at first but the lady that interviewed me was really nice and made it seem more official" Moran said. Photo taken by: Valerie Earhart

One Act Performances

NEWS

A student-led theater production held here at Severna Park High.

Charlotte Anderson | Staff Writer

Junior Jae Mok performs on stage in last year's production of "I Don't Want to Talk about It," a show highlighting the struggles that many teenagers face. While this year all the plays are student written, this was not the case for the previous One Acts which had plays from the internet such as "I Don't Want to Talk About It" and one student written play, "The Three Armies." Students who wish to direct can find the play that speaks to them online and direct that. The plays do not necessarily have to be written by the students. Photo taken by: Valerie Earhart

Severna Park High School offers a variety of opportunities for students to express their creativity and participate in school programs. For example, one program that the school offers is One Acts, a student-led written and directed four-part production that incorporates anything from murder to cults. Each play is a maximum of 30 minutes and allows writers to express themselves creatively and branch out into new genres. Each production allows for roughly 4-15 actors, and offers serious roles as well as roles just for jokes. Students wishing to have their plays featured can submit their stories for review to the drama club adviser and if chosen, can direct and cast the show independently or with a production partner. The final show is held in the auditorium in February and auditions were held in the black-box theater on Nov. 29.

Being involved in extracurricular activities is the perfect way to boost one's resume as well as perfect your acting skills and take them to the next level. For more information, look on sphsdrama.com and for posters around the school with a QR code to learn more about auditions and what to expect. This year, those who make the show have a chance to compete in the county, and move into further competitive acting. Placements will be made for Best Actor and Best Script as well as other competitive categories. Veteran actor sophomore Elsa Webster, who performed in the school's production of "Our Place" last year, has been in One Acts for two

years, with this year being her directorial debut. Writing her own play this year, "Harsh Realities," she will be co-directing with sophomore Payton Gerwig. This play follows the story of six teenagers and how they fight to survive in an apocalyptic world. The various plays performed



in One Acts depend on what piques the director's interests, and allow them to write what they feel inspired about. If interested in being a playwright, this is the perfect place to test your skills and receive professional feedback on your creative works.

Webster says she wants people to know that "even if you are nervous or not about whether or not you will get in this year, or you're a freshman, and this is your first year having an experience with something like this, just audition because you never know. I think the great thing with One Acts is that you have the possibility for them [the plays] to all be so different, and you can really find what you want to do, and whether it's more serious acting, or more comedic, you have an opportuni-

ty to play a character that fits you."

One Acts rehearses about three times a week for about one hour and thirty minutes. Maggie Moran, a junior who acted as a freshman and directed as a sophomore, plans to direct again this year in a student written play "All Hands on

Deck." one has a great experience. It's a "commitment but not huge" making it perfect for the novice actor. Directors also get to pick who will be in their plays and are in charge of casting. Being a 100% student-written performance this year, the shows are going to be packed with creativity and artistic expression. Original and fiery you will experience it all with these original debut plays. Bella Webster, a senior who is acting and directing this coming year says: this is perfect to get your feet wet, kind of informally before you go for something really big like Rock and Roll."

Being in One Acts lays out rules of acting in a fun and social way with it still being laid back and fun.

Deck."

"One Acts is a great time for people who are a little nervous to do theater and are maybe a little bit scared of people watching them," Moran said. "[It] is a great opportunity to act and see if you like theater and a good place to try it out, free of judgment. It's in smaller groups so you get really close to the people you work with. Freshman year, it was like everyone was really good friends and it was a really nice experience."

Explaining that if you are new to the stage and want to ease into it, instead of doing something major such as Rock and Roll. Being a director, she can pick and choose when rehearsals are and makes an effort to work around students' schedules, and manage conflicts so every-



Scan here to see more information about One Acts

Severna Park Club Hockey Team Breaks the Ice

SPORTS

Ice hockey team seeks to rekindle school spirit and win big.

Samantha Polk | Social Media Editor

As the ice hockey season hits its stride, the team finds itself soaring to victories. Yet even with all their success, the empty rink magnifies the noticeable absence of cheering fans. Despite the echoing emptiness, the team plays for the love of the sport, their belief in each other and the energy of the ice.

But they hope to stir up enthusiasm for hockey so that students will fill the rink just as they pile into the football stadium for home games.

For a while now, the ice hockey team has received a lack of love due to their seclusion from Severna Park and being overshadowed by the school's other sports. The team remains resolute in their devotion to the game. Even in the beginning of their season, they came right out of the gate ready to play at their best, despite the lack of unwavering fans. Undeterred by the absence of fanfare, the team demonstrates tireless dedication to the game. Senior Kiran Spencer is confident they will have even more victories in the future.

"We're the best team in the league and we're gonna go all the way this year," Spencer said. "It's a great sport to watch, [a] great sport to play."

Echoing the sentiment, senior Sam Testerman highlights the undeniable electric atmosphere of the rink, the pulsating goal horns, and the reverberating music. "Everything echoes in here, the boards rattle a lot, and it's just fun," Testerman said, emphasizing the distinct thrill that resonates within the confines of the arena.

For these passionate players, hockey isn't just about the sport; it's an embodiment of spirit and camaraderie. The hockey game serves as a revitalizing force, igniting a fire that can truly bring players back to life.

Senior Keegan Clifford, while playfully teasing the struggling football team, highlights the adrenaline-inducing nature of hockey. "It's fast-paced and violent," Clifford asserts. "And we actually win our games, unlike the football team."

Amidst the silence of the stands, the profound camaraderie of the players and electrifying energy of the game itself, radiate a sense of belonging and joy, even for spectators. But for this team, it's everything. Even the simple joy of being on the ice feels impactful, and Kiran Spencer knows this fondness.

"Skating around on the ice feels great," Spencer said. "The teamwork and the camaraderie, it's pretty fun."

Due to their numerous wins and close calls, there are definitely moments when it becomes tense. Often in close games, they head into overtime, a certain time when people are on the edge of their seats, hoping the Falcons will find a way to score that winning goal, and junior Pierce Brenner knows the feeling well.

"Scoring in overtime definitely is the hype-est part of the game," Brenner said, highlighting that vigor and liveliness that you can feel while playing and watching it.

This team truly cares about their sport and is passionate about it and the feeling it evokes within each one of them. Even despite their shortfall of fans, they still give their all each game, cherishing every moment on the ice. That's why you come, that's why you show up. Not because of the lack of fans or the occasional disappointment

the team might feel, but because of the energy this team brings to the table. It's unlike any other. Right when you walk into the rink, you understand.

Sophomore Jack Clark is on his way to score in the head to head match against Spalding on Nov. 14 where the varsity team won 7-6, another usual win for the Severna Park Falcons Hockey team. The team's evident love for their sport and constant wins just proves that Brady Smith was right when he said "It's just a great sport." Photo taken by: Samantha Polk



After the Falcons' victory against Spalding, with celebratory faces. (Starting from left to right) junior Pierce Brenner, junior Brady Smith, sophomore Max Grotheer and sophomore Henry Marriner all gathering together on the ice to get a group photo. As senior Mitchell Gaudet once said, when asked what his favorite part about playing hockey, "it's just being with the boys that's it." Photo taken by: Samantha Polk



Words to Wrestle With

SPORTS

The wrestling head coach and team captain have been wrestling nearly all their lives. It's not too late to start.

Noel Castillo | Editor-in-Chief

Two wrestlers step onto the mat. Six minutes on the clock. Crouched down low, hands up, ready to pounce one another. Like yin and yang, one launches himself at full speed while the other steadies his breath, preparing to wrap his arms around the other for a takedown. Two points. A struggle ensues. Just as it looks like one wrestler is about to get pinned, he breaks free, pulling a reversal and earning two points. It's tie game...

"I started coaching right after I graduated college, I graduated in 2018. I spent a few years over at Meade as an assistant to my father, David Ziff and then I took over as head coach after COVID. Last year was my first full year back at Severna Park. I say back because I wrestled here as an athlete. This is my second year as the head coach. I graduated in 2013, I won a state title in 2013," head coach Samuel Ziff said.

Since workouts and practice have begun in November, Ziff's philosophies have become apparent in this season's current wrestlers' ideals.

Senior Nathan Kohler said "I've been wrestling since I was about six. Right now, I'm just trying to take it one match at a time. If I could win states that would be pretty sweet. I think my best moment in wrestling so far was last year at the Winters Mill the Falcons invitational."

While this season's invitational location is still to be determined, it is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 20, and Saturday, Jan. 21, 2024. A huge aspect of wrestling and just about any sport is staying in shape for tournaments and big games. The two have developed preferable exercises over the years.

"My favorite workout, if we're doing pre-season, we've done altered versions of it, is 'Seven Heavens.' You've got the one bar, five exercises and you can't put it down. The real version is 'Seven Heavens,' you do it seven times through without putting the bar down," Ziff said.

So far, in workouts, other grueling workouts have included: suicides" up and down the stairs in school (i.e. three laps, then two, one, back up to twice and finally three times again), running nearly five miles on the B&A trail, as well as a half hour alternating jog and sprint around the outdoor track.

"My favorite in-season workout, my favorite thing to do is put guys in scenarios and wrestle from there. Not full speed, you're going about 50% and it's a lot of where you find out where your body works; understanding 'if I do this, they're gonna do that.' When you're watching from afar, the fluidity of it, that's where that clicks. Watching that in practice and watching

it click for someone, the term we used in college was 'play wrestling.' So you're not going full speed, but you're giving each other a feel. And of course, always, wrestling... at full speed, obviously you're not trying to hurt your partner, that's where you really feel competitive, that's where the term iron sharpens iron, that's where you get that effect," Ziff said.

Wrestling isn't only about tackling your opponent and trying to hurt them. It involves precision; not expending too much energy on a shot, taking just a big enough step to stay slippery and agile, or properly slamming your opponent. It requires patience and cunning, and studying your opponent like a chess match.

"I initially picked it more for my parents to get my energy to go down while I was in the house," Kohler said. "It was translating to my other sports like football which I started because my dad was the coach. It got me physically fit, it helped me organize myself a little bit, it gave me a lot of structure I didn't have before. Just sticking with it has helped me a lot, more discipline," he said.

In sports and wrestling especially, it's important to properly nurture your body every day in or-

der to perform at your fullest capacity. Taking small steps can eventually lead to larger strides that can get you closer to where you want to be down the line, but it's important to challenge yourself in order to improve.

Best advice for a new wrestler: If you're going into a season it's cardio, cardio, cardio, Ziff said. "You can be as strong as an ox but if you can't wrestle for all six minutes you're gonna lose all the time. Build up that endurance, make sure your body's ready to go," he said. "Probably the biggest thing that ties it all together is time management. Make yourself a schedule. I wasn't the best at that, I'll admit. It took me some time to get that down. College helped a lot with that. Narrow it all down so you're laser-focused on each thing you're attacking at a time. Those are my little tidbits of advice."

With the Broadneck/Meade/Severna Park Tri-Meet and Scorpion Duals tournament in the past and Winters Mill the Falcons Invitational upcoming, this season's varsity and JV wrestlers alike under Ziff's and Kohler's leadership will have key opportunities to test their mettle on the mat.

Senior athlete Nathan Kohler almost pulls off the pin on the Broadneck Bruins' Austin C. These varsity wrestlers fight every last second of the match to win. Although he ended up losing the match by one point, Kohler performed a takedown on his opponent that unfortunately ended out of bounds. "Show up to tryouts. It's not a commitment, there aren't any cuts. You'll only get cut if you aren't giving your best and you can give your best. It's a great experience - especially for young kids going into high school - I think it could help out a lot," Kohler said. His best moment from last year: "Brought home the gold against a pretty tough kid that was probably the most emotional I've been after a match as in I was very excited. I got a crazy amount of support from my parents, from the team, from the coaches all around that moment, it was just sweet." Photo taken by: Noel Castillo



A Blue Winter

FEATURES

A look into seasonal depression.

Elsa Webster | Opinions Editor

Seasonal depression is classified as a type of depression that occurs when seasons change. While mainly found in people between the ages of 20 and 30, seasonal depression or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a condition that anyone can struggle with. It is important to note that the risk of developing SAD increases with age.



Most commonly, seasonal depression symptoms occur during the fall or winter seasons. While rare, symptoms can occur during the spring or summer months. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, "This is also called 'winter depression.' Symptoms of depression begin in the late fall to early winter months and ease during the summer months." Graphics by: Elsa Webster

While this disorder is most commonly thought of as occurring during the fall and winter seasons this is not always the case. According to Mental Health America, "Seasonal Depression typically occurs when the seasons change

and most symptoms begin in the fall and continue into the winter months. However, seasonal depression can occur in the summer or spring, although this is less common." There are specific risk factors of SAD that increase the probability of being affected. Women are typically more affected by seasonal depression than men. According to Mental Health America. There is also an increased risk of SAD if a person has a family history with the disorder. It is also said that the further someone is from the equator the higher the risk of seasonal depression.

According to Mental Health America, "In a given year, about 5 percent of the U.S. population experiences seasonal depression."

The shorter days and less sunlight that winter brings have been stated to be a cause of SAD as they create certain chemical changes in the brain. Some hormones are also said to be a cause of the disorder. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, "Melatonin, a sleep-related hormone, also has been linked to SAD. The body naturally makes more melatonin when it's dark. So, when the days are shorter and darker, more melatonin is made."

Another cause of seasonal depression is a person's circadian rhythm. According to the Mayo Clinic, "The reduced level of sunlight in fall and winter may cause winter-onset SAD. This decrease in sun-

light may disrupt your body's internal clock and lead to feelings of depression."

There are many indications of SAD. Some include losing interest in previously enjoyable activities, difficulty concentrating, feeling hopeless or worthless, and problems with sleeping. These are the general indications of SAD, however there



are more seasonal specific ones. Some winter and fall-specific symptoms include oversleeping, tiredness or low energy, weight loss, and appetite changes. If you are experiencing symptoms of SAD or "winter blues" there are certain things that can be done easily at home. Exposure to sunlight and spending time outside or near a window can help relieve symptoms. Another way to get sunlight if it is not readily available is light therapy. Light therapy is the "exposure to a special light for a specific amount of time each day" according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. Light therapy lights can be found on shopping sites such as Amazon. The Carex Day-Light Classic Plus was listed as the top pick of therapy light lamps on The New York Times website and it can be found on Amazon for \$145 and at Walmart for \$185.

A diagnosis of SAD requires a mental health exam done by a mental health professional such as

a psychiatrist. "It's normal to have some days when you feel down. But if you feel down for days at a time and you can't get motivated to do activities you normally enjoy, see your health care provider," according to the Mayo Clinic. It is important to seek help if experiencing symptoms. "There's no known way to prevent the development of seasonal affective disorder. However, if you take steps early on to manage symptoms, you may be able to prevent them from getting worse over time. You may be able to head off serious changes in mood, appetite and energy levels, as you can predict the time of the year in which these symptoms may start. Treatment can help prevent complications, especially if SAD is diagnosed and treated before symptoms get bad," according to the Mayo Clinic.

The Impact of Decorations

FEATURES

Beyond their aesthetic appeal, decorations hold a profound meaning.

Tristan Alcott | Staff Writer

All across the world, families decorate their exterior and interior in accordance with our national holidays to show their appreciation and fondness for the upcoming holiday season. Whether it's Halloween, Christmas or Thanksgiving, different houses all around find creative ways to spread happiness through their hard work. Why do these families year after year put in the time and effort to deck out their whole house with inflatable characters, wreaths, twinkling lights, Christmas trees and plenty more? What makes it so important to them? These homeowners' eagerness to spread joy and happiness.

What they do is

special and it's important to have insight on these yearly traditions. Exterior decorations create an almost tangible atmosphere of enchantment and bliss that sets the stage for the approaching festivities. The twinkling lights, vibrant colors and intricate designs create a sense of magic, transporting individuals to a world of child-like wonder and awe. The ambiance fosters a feeling of hope, joy and excitement, instilling a belief in something greater than oneself.

Beyond their aesthetic appeal, decorations hold a profound meaning. They serve as a visual language, speaking volumes, telling a story, such

as a childhood ornament. The act of hanging ornaments, whether heirlooms passed down through generations or handmade treasures, becomes a ritual that binds family members and friends together in shared experiences and memories. Each decoration carries a narrative, representing cherished moments, beliefs and values, infusing the holiday season with layers of significance.

All of these traditions and activities we participate in are normalized due to its yearly occurrence. Special dinners start to just feel like an abnormally large meal, hanging ornaments feels more and more like a chore, and as we grow up, we wake up later and later on Christmas morning. In spite of that it's important to take the time to appreciate those around us. A time to foster happiness, kindness and love. To remember why we have these holidays in the first place and to take advantage of your ability to spread those positive emotions.

According to one article by The Wall Street Journal, "The Extreme

Holiday Decorators Spending Thousands to Deck 'Every Nook and Cranny' of Their Homes" written by E.B. Solomont, tells the incredible story of Jennifer Houghton. "For extreme decorators like Ms. Houghton, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year, when imaginations run wild and no amount of flowers, tinsel, ribbons or twinkling lights is too much. With hefty budgets and an eye for luxury, some design enthusiasts spend tens of thousands of dollars a year to douse their homes with holiday cheer," E.B. Solomont said.

Now of course Houghton has an insanely large budget for these seasonal decorations but, that's exactly what makes this story meaningful. That someone who could buy whatever they wanted spends a massive amount contributing to the magical ambiance that seasonal decorations bring to the world. We can absorb her knowledge and learn that money is not a question when it comes to decorations, it is only a means to obtain the ability to create an environment that fosters joy, kindness and love.



A house not to far from SPHS decorated from head to toe with iconic christmas characters such as the Grinch, Charlie brown and many others. Santa's sleigh is featured on the top of the house with inflatable as well. Peak holiday expression. Photo taken by: Tristan Alcott

**HOLD ON TO
EVERY BEST
MOMENT**

BUY YOUR YEARBOOK

Online Snow Days Cause a Storm

FEATURES

School days disrupted by snow will now be virtual.

Chris Benjamin | Online Editor

Late last year the Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education enacted a plan that changes the way we handle snow days and other cases of inclement weather. The plan proposes that instead of canceling school due to the weather we will instead have virtual school days being either synchronous or asynchronous.

During the Winter season all anyone can think about are the upcoming holidays and much deserved breaks from the tedious school year. While everyone eagerly waits, nothing brings more joy to students than the infamous snow day.

Schools are closed and you get to spend the whole day enjoying the snow with friends and family.

“My memorable moments of snow days are being woken up by my mom telling me I have no school and getting to sleep in a little more. As well as getting to go outside and ride sleds with my friends,” senior Giovanni Lima said. While senior Jason Chang recalls a time when his neighbors achieved a remarkable feat.

“I remember my neighbors once built a massive nine foot tall snowman in the middle of my cul-de-sac.” Chang said. Snow days are meant to bring everlasting memories of your childhood that you will never forget.

The biggest issue with canceling schools due to snow is that each day past the permitted two snow days will extend the school year. English teacher Sabra Hill recounts that in years past snow days have severely pushed back the last day of school.

“A couple of years ago we used up all our given snow days which ex-

tended the school year to late June,” Hill said. The benefit of having online learning days is that they will count towards the required 180 school days ensuring summer vacation starts as soon as possible. “I still want the joy of the snow, but I think two days is enough,” Hill said.

Although the county is allowed to give us two snow days every school year without delaying the start of summer break, it became clear last year that snow days are becoming more scarce.

“I feel that virtual days are not worth it because snow days are so few and far between. Snow days allow for students to simply be kids and enjoy the weather,” Lima said.

Seeing as we had no snow days last year students should be able to enjoy these rare wonders anytime they may occur. Another effect of not having any snow days last year is that we have yet to see how smoothly the transition into virtual learning will play out.

Thanks to the COVID-19 our school has experience with virtual learning and has provided students with the needed tools.

“With the chrome-books, we have the needed technology to make a virtual school day work,” Hill said. Students’ work will be posted on

SNOW DAY

- 1 HOT CHOCOLATE 6
- 2 MAKE A SNOW MAN 7
- 3 SLEEP IN 8
- 4 ICE SKATING 9
- 5 SLEDDING 10

Brightspace and the links to voice calls will be posted by each teacher for Synchronous learning days. From past virtual learning experiences some students are already unsure about its efficiency.

“I feel like it isn’t worth the sacrifice because through my experiences, virtual learning is not effective,” Chang said. The Board of Education mentions that no students’ grades can be negatively impacted by a virtual day seeing as it is an ideal learning environment for many. This is a great way to reassure students that may be worried about their grades or any tech issues that may occur but it could also negate some students’ effort that they put into their assignments.

This plan may very well be put into action this school year depending on what the weather will be like. Until then the effectiveness of it will remain unknown as both the county and the students need to give it their best effort for it to work as planned.

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PREFERRED ACTIVITIES

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| CRAFTING | 11 MAKE MAPLE SNOW CANDY | 16 STARE OUT THE WINDOW |
| FEED THE BIRDS | 12 ROLL DOWN A SNOWY HILL | 17 FIREPLACE FIRE |
| SNOW WAKE BOARDING | 13 WATCH WINTER MOVIES | 18 SNOW FORT |
| SNOWBALL FIGHT | 14 PLAY VIDEO GAMES | 19 GO FOR A WALK |
| BAKE COOKIES | 15 SNOW ANGELS | 20 SKIING |

MAPLE SNOW CANDY

Make a delicious traditional winter treat gather a plate of snow and then drizzle maple syrup in fun designs over the snow. Wait a few minutes for the snow to freeze and then you have a delicious hard candy treat! This can also be made with maple syrup.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO ON A SNOW DAY?

I would sleep with my dog, sleep, watch YouTube, and call my friends.
HIYA POWELL

I would take the morning and get glorious sleep, and then go outside and experience the snow. Then come inside and drink hot chocolate
JACOB FORD

I would relax and do homework and play games with friends, maybe play in the snow a bit.
KYLE PARK

SNOW DAY MOVIES

- "Frozen"
- "Home Alone"
- "The Shining"
- "Grand Budapest Hotel"
- "Happy Feet"
- "The Age"
- "Knives Out"
- "Serendipity"

HOT CHOCOLATE

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 4 cups of milk | 1/2 semisweet chocolate |
| 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder | 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 1/4 granulated sugar | |

Heat together in a pot over the stove till all mixed and hot.

TOPPING IDEAS

- Whipped cream
- Mini marshmallows
- Mini chocolate chips
- White chocolate
- Chocolate syrup
- Peppermint sticks
- Chocolate Shavings

SNOW DAY LOCATIONS

SLEDDING

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Linstead Beach Hill | South River HS |
| GORC Park | St. John's College |
| Tick Neck Park | Kinder Park |
| AACC | Folger McKinsey |
| Quiet Waters Park | |

ICE SKATING

Quiet Waters Park Ice Rink
3-9 PM
\$7 ENTRY FREE
\$3.00 RENTAL



Glen Burnie Outdoor Ice Skating
1-9 PM
\$10 ENTRY FEE
\$4.00 RENTAL



Color Burst Ice Rink
4-8 PM
\$12 ENTRY FEE
\$3 RENTAL



Time Will Tell: Paying it Forward

FEATURES

Vaughn Miller's captivating story of his life after returning a class key to the school from 1969 and an unfortunate accident burned his house down completely.

Lillith Vice | Staff Writer

In 2009 just before Christmas, 72 year old Vaughn Miller lost his house due to an unfortunate fire caused by a gas leak in his basement. Although Miller was unmarried with no immediate family in the house at the time, he lost two of his hunting dogs he had owned for years. It is not unusual in situations like this for people to lose hope, give up on trying to replace their belongings and simply look for a new house. But Miller didn't just lose his house, he lost his home.

After losing his high school yearbooks in the fire, he was determined to get them back as a way to capture an important time in his life and to have something to show for his

high school experience. Most people wouldn't think twice about losing their school yearbooks, especially when their house and the rest of their belongings have gone up in flames but once the choice to look back at the memories is gone, it becomes more than that. Yearbooks are to be treasured, some day all of us hope to flip through our yearbooks to reminisce and show our grandkids pictures of us from high school. But Miller had this opportunity ripped from him, rather than accepting the reality that he may never see his yearbook again, he spent years looking for it. In his search he went back to his high school in Ohio, not far from where

he currently lives, but unfortunately, they said they had no extra copies of his yearbook. So, he went to the manufacturer of the yearbooks, to which they also said they print no extras. Then finally as a last resort he scouted at all kinds of flea markets and thrift stores hoping to find a copy of his yearbook.

But since he is retired from his previous job working at the Fulton board of collection (a debt collection company), he's taken on the liberties of returning others' yearbooks as well, in hopes that he can provide to others the solace he seeks for himself.

On Nov. 1 Severna Park secretary

received a letter from Mr. Miller, who told her his story, and returned a class key from Severna Park High School Business Honor Society from 1969 - making this class key 54 years old. Many people were touched by his sheer kindness and devotion, despite mentioning that he usually doesn't usually do this for people out of state, he went out of his way to return this sentimental item back to the school.

When asked about what motivates him to return yearbooks to others, he responded with: "I do this because I hope that someone will be kind enough to do what I do."

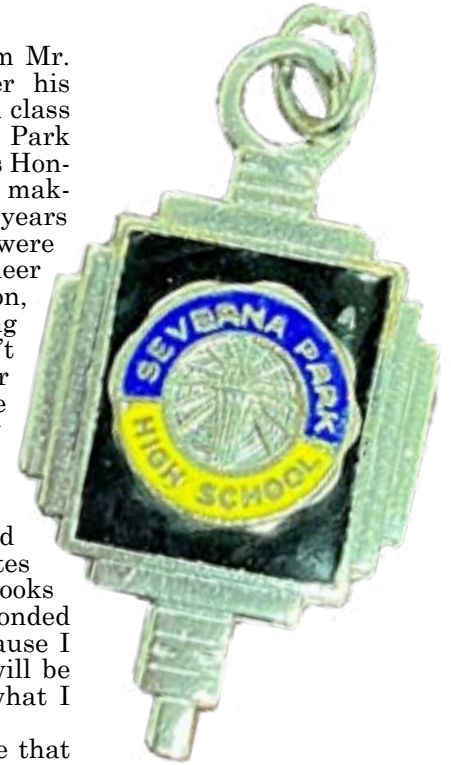
Whether it be that Miller does this to cope with the loss of his home or just out of the kindness of his heart, he helps people retrieve a piece of their past, a piece he himself has been searching for.

"I truly believe that what we give off in the world we receive, and I hope the world can return the favor I give," Miller said.

Recently the staff found Vaughn Miller senior class of 1970, yearbook - and sent him a copy of the missing book - a chance to pay his kindness forward, in this case, to him.

Connections are important, whether finding a key in a flea market and sending here to SPHS, or giving us a chance to return the favor and help Miller connection with his past.

Miller's story inspires others to hold onto hope. When things seem so lost or beyond repair like



This class key from 1969, previously belonging to the school's National Business Honor Society, was returned in the mail by Vaughn Miller. Along with the key came a letter saying he lived in Swanton, Ohio and his house burned to the ground. He lost many things valuable to him including his dogs and the only copies of his high school yearbooks. Since then he goes to flea markets and thrift stores looking for his yearbook, and returns the ones he find that don't belong to him, in case anyone else is going through a similar experience. Photo taken by: Lily Vice

this in our times of darkness, the same way Miller did. Never lose hope, and remember that there's no obstacle we as human beings cannot overcome.

HOLD ON TO EVERY BEST MOMENT

GET YOUR YEARBOOK

Jesters

An Introduction to Creating Clubs

FEATURES

How to join and make clubs.

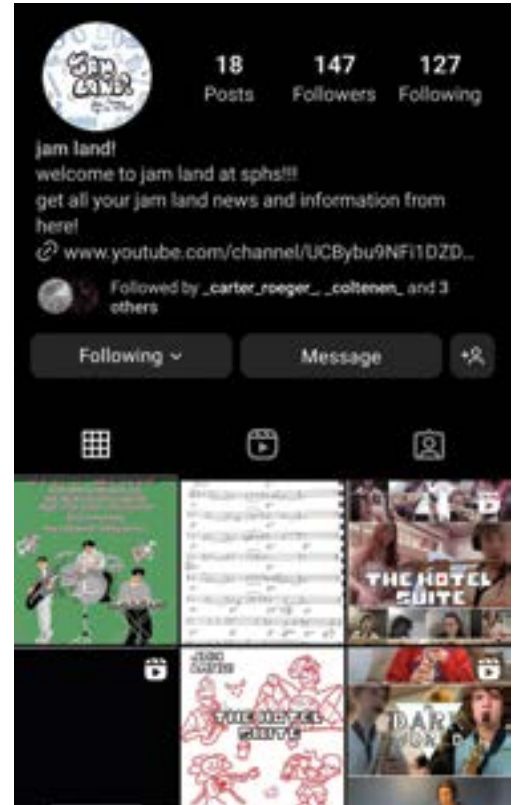
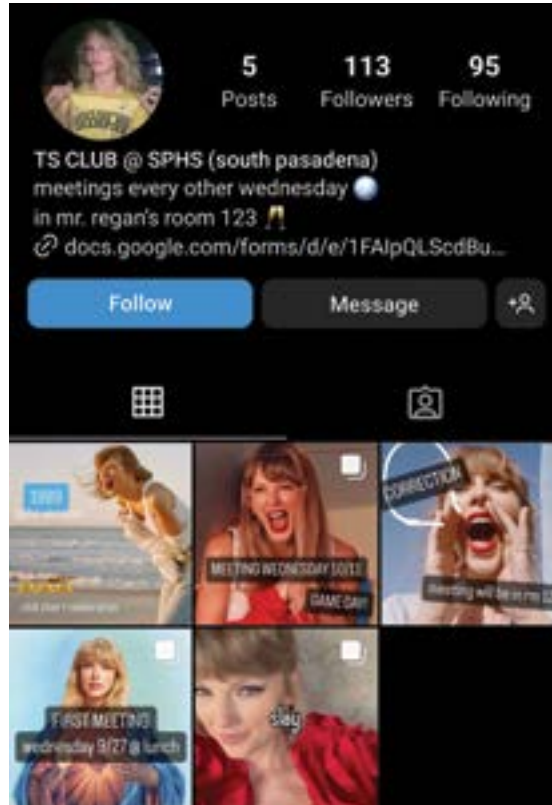
Lucas Cropper | Staff Writer

Since the dawn of time, humans have sought refuge through groups; since the dawn of high school, clubs have existed to bring students together. When looking for a clique, friends, or just people to talk with about your similar interests, you can find just about any club to match your vision. But what if there isn't a club that fits your needs? And what if you were told you have the power to propose such a club? Because you do. The process involves having the idea, having a teacher to host/advise said club, having members to back the club, talking to an administrator, and signing some forms and it is as easy as pie.

Before you rush into making your own club, you can find out about existing clubs on the 'Club Descriptions' Google sheet found on the SPHS Brightspace homepage under 'Important Student Links.' Although this document does not feature all the clubs that the school offers and the 'Jam Land' club is called 'Jam Band,' it is a useful document nonetheless. And for the freshman (bless their souls), the school hosted a Freshman Day where all the clubs showed what they had in store. Other methods include word of mouth and social media.

"We got a lot of recruits from the uh, what's it called? The club day... previously it was usually just like, word of mouth... I guess probably the main way is just people tell other people to join," president of Jam Land Owen Blackburn said.

To create a club, approach an administrator, such as Ms. Cassarino or Mr. Gardner who are



For those seeking more information about the clubs they are looking to join; most clubs have some kind of social media page. The virtual space is sometimes more easy to navigate than the sea of people swimming through a school day. And the web of clubs is expansive so there may be clubs that the club people at school barely know about, so if you really want to dive into the club depths, there you go. Photos taken by: Lukas Cropper

helpful.

Ava Gilman, President of the Taylor Swift club, said "First I found a group of friends and people who I knew would be interested in joining this club and then I talked to Mr. Gardner who is a very helpful person for making clubs...I got a bunch of forms filled out, I got Ms. Poole used to be our teacher/adviser person, but now it's Ms. Metcalfe..."

Senior Carter Roeger and friends wanted to propose a beatbox club. However, they have not because there is not enough backing yet. Don't let that distract or divert you from the club you want to propose. You do whatever club would make you happy - make a happiness club, ev-

everyone will definitely join that. And what is also easy and you have to be somewhat motivated to do, is join a club, though, certain clubs require some kind of commitment and are entwined with the county somehow, some clubs are casual walk-in type clubs, such as Jam Land and Taylor Swift club.

Blackburn said, "I think- I wanna say maybe 10-15 years ago this guy started it. Uhm, and he's like way-like graduated college, he's like an adult now. But ever since then it's kind of been like a tradition. Uhm, and it's been around for a long time."

Clubs like the 24 Club, Key Club, Sci-fi and Marine Bio clubs are ingrained in time; you can

create a legendary club if it appeals to the masses. Just go through the necessary processes and out through the other side into a home-made club. Or rather, a school made club.



New Year's Resolutions

OPINIONS

Why most of them fail and how to set yourself up for success in January.

Ollie Alcombright | Staff Writer

Many people make New Year's resolutions such as eating healthier, going to the gym and fixing their sleeping schedule, but do people always make reasonable goals? A recent study, shared in the article "Why Most New Year's Resolutions Fail" published in February 2023, shows that 23% of people quit their resolutions in the first week, 43% quit by the end of January and only 9% of Americans actually complete their resolutions.

Alex Meyer, the school psychologist, said regarding setting goals, "It should be something that you really want to improve on yourself."

The first thing to consider when you are creating a resolution, according to Meyer, is to look at the S.M.A.R.T goals method, which was developed in 1981 by George Doran, Arthur Miller and James Cunningham. S.M.A.R.T stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based goals. All of these steps can help to ensure that your resolution can be attainable and timely.

A good New Year's resolution should only focus on one area of your life, be measurable, or tangible, in the sense of allotted time or money, but a

resolution should also be realistic, based on values, dreams and goals that are relevant to you and have a specific time window set such as: I will go to the gym three times a week or once a month I will do some mindful yoga. "These goals should be flexible, realistic and based on something that is relevant to you"

Meyer said.

If you use all these steps to create a resolution and you still feel it is too hard or too much to ask of yourself, scale it down. Shorten the time window, narrow down the area of your life you're making the goal about, or focus more on the realistic aspect. An example of a bad resolu-

tion is to be a better person because it is too vague.

"If it is harder than you thought, scale it down," Meyer said. If you are making the goals unreasonable, there is no shame in scaling it down and making it more reasonable.

A better and more reasonable goal could consist of exercise three times a week or save \$20 per week. These types of goals can be considered more timely, since the time frame is every week, or every month. Having a time window attached to your goals can help keep the consistency.

Don't be too tough on yourself. One of the final steps is to have an end reward. "Personally, for me, I like to have a reward at the end," Meyer said. Examples of rewards could be going out for ice cream, or treating yourself to a spa day once your goal has been achieved.

Creating a New Year's resolution can come easily to some people, while for others it may come across as difficult, or unreasonable. Make sure to make reasonable goals for yourself and follow the SMART method to ensure relative success.

SMART GOALS

- S** *Specific*
What do you want to accomplish and what needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?
- M** *Measurable*
The success toward meeting the goal can be measured. Answer the question - How? How will you know if you've successfully met your goal?
- A** *Achievable*
Goals are realistic and can be achieved in a specific amount of time and are reasonable. Do they have the skills required to achieve the goal?
- R** *Relevant*
The goals are aligned with current objectives that are aligned in a specific area; include the expected result. Why am I setting this goal now?
- T** *Timely*
Goals have a clearly defined time-frame including target or deadline date. Make sure they don't go on forever.

The S.M.A.R.T goals method was originally created in 1981 by George T. Doran, who noticed that most business goals were too diffuse to have a meaningful impact. School psychologist Alex Meyer recommends using this method when trying to create a New Year's Resolution because it can aid in helping to think through your goals and make sure they are achievable. The start of a new year can mean different things for everyone. Some people use it as a 'restart' to take steps to change their routines for the better, and others use it as a whole new year to keep their already healthy routines going. Graphic by Ollie Alcombright



The Winter Love Letter

OPINIONS

Dr. Love answers your questions!

Owen Cress | Guest Writer

Graphic | Chris Benjamin and Mia Tocco

Welcome back to the Love Letter! I hope you're feeling festive for today's issue, I know I am! I don't know about you guys, but I've been snuggling up to the fire, drinking my cocoa, and playing some smooth Christmas jazz. I've also been growing my own stash of mistletoe, which, don't worry, is legal in our state. Just for recreational use, of course! This month's holiday edition of the Love Letter will cover your love problems like a thick blanket of snow, so hop in for the ride!

How do I start a conversation with my crush?

Every relationship is built on the foundation of communication. Without face-to-face conversation, you wouldn't be able to pass English, much less talk to someone you like. However, despite the necessity and frequent usage of our conversational skills, we cannot bring ourselves to talk to that cute girl or guy who sits at our lab table. It takes a Herculean effort just to ask them for a pencil. So, let's explore some strategies we can employ to get you both talking.

The easiest way to talk to anybody is to talk about school. Simple questions like, "How was the test?" or "What did you get for the homework?" can be instrumental in starting conversations. These questions will lift you up to at least acquaintance status, which is good enough to start with. Another easy option is asking a question about what they do. "How's that soccer season going?" or "Are you a part of the drama club?" are surefire ways to move your relationship along. The real trick is getting them to talk to you.

But just how do you get them to talk to you? What you need to do is bait the hook, and once they bite, reel 'em in. Use one of the basic questions mentioned before, but as the conversation comes to a close, say, "Wanna see how many pine needles I can put in my mouth?" This question will have the effect of utterly baffling your crush. This state of confusion is valuable, since now they'll likely be looking for anything else just to ground them back to reality. That's where you hit them with the, "Want to see a movie this weekend?" The normalcy of this statement will immediately become appealing by contrasting the insanity of your last statement. This gives you a pretty high chance for them to say yes. If they say no, just put a bunch of pine needles in your mouth and ask again for every three handfuls you pop. Thank me later.

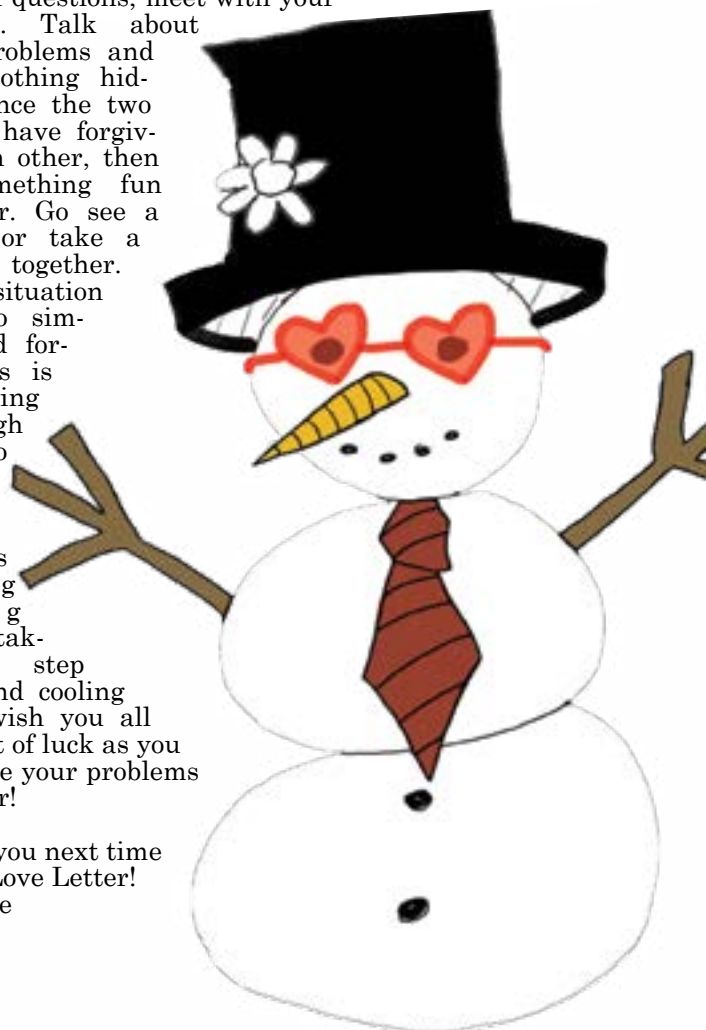
I had a fight with my partner yesterday. How do we make up?

Every relationship has a honeymoon phase where everything is just perfect. However, after this phase, the bitter reality that you and your partner are human will set in and cracks will begin to show in your relationship. This shouldn't be a surprise or a cause for alarm, however. This natural phenomenon happens in friendships too. It forces you and the other party to appreciate both what you like and dislike about each other and work towards a stronger bond. So, what's the best way to navigate this stage of a relationship? No matter how you handle your relationship, act with love and kindness above all else. You don't have to

be married or even in love to act with love. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 says that "Love is patient, love is kind. Love doesn't envy or boast. It isn't arrogant or rude. It doesn't insist on its own way. It's not irritable or resentful. It doesn't rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth." This striking passage serves as a mission statement for me and I encourage you to take it to heart. In making up with your partner, ensure that you act with humility and kindness.

The steps I recommend are firstly contemplating what happened leading up to the fight, during the fight, and the aftermath. What was everyone involved thinking? What did everyone involved want? What can I change to better accommodate my partner? Once you've answered these types of questions, meet with your partner. Talk about your problems and keep nothing hidden. Once the two of you have forgiven each other, then do something fun together. Go see a movie or take a walk together. If the situation isn't so simple and forgiveness is becoming a tough pill to swallow, then there's nothing wrong with taking a step back and cooling off. I wish you all the best of luck as you navigate your problems together!

I'll see you next time in the Love Letter!
Dr. Love



Frequent Service or Transit Ridership?

OPINIONS

An analysis of the Maryland Transit Administration's largest issues, and why it can't really be blamed for them.

Shubh Agnihotri | Guest Writer

The Maryland General Assembly (MGA) has its first chance in almost a decade to modernize the state's transportation system. Eight years ago, Larry Hogan was sworn in as the Governor of Maryland and ushered in an age of stagnance for the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). In Hogan's first year as governor, he symbolized what the rest of his tenure would look like by killing the Baltimore Red Line. An east-west light rail transit route, the red line would have connected communities from Woodlawn, through Baltimore and into Bayview.

Hogan canceled the route, calling it a "wasteful boondoggle."

Citing low expected ridership numbers, Hogan returned \$900 million to the federal government and reallocated \$736 million

in state funds to highway maintenance. A shortsighted decision, public transportation in Baltimore and its greater metropolitan region has remained lackluster, while taxpayers continue to heavily subsidize highway expansion, maintenance, and planning. Newly elected Governor Wes Moore, in his commitment to avoid raising taxes on Marylanders, has unfortunately continued the cycle of disinvestment in the MTA. The new Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) has suggested cutting almost \$600 million in funding for the MTA, by eliminating every commuter bus route, two of three MARC round trips to Martinsburg, delaying the transition to zero emissions busses, and cut operating assistance for local transit systems by 40%. They also intend to "balance the final CTP" by delaying "a number of MTA light rail, MTA metro and Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) state of good repair projects," and also lowering the "MTA's state of good repair funding level below the level required by the Maryland Transit Safety and Investment Act." At a time when the rest of the country is planning ambitious and historic investments into their public transportation networks, these decisions are unacceptable and regressive.

A similar tale is told in Severna Park. Built in 1887, the Baltimore and Annapolis Railroad's freight operations primarily served to ship coal to the Naval Academy from Baltimore via the Broadneck Peninsula. Their passenger excursions would shuffle commuters in and out of the newly established bedroom communities we call

home today. It is with the B&A that our communities were born, and without it that our communities would choke on smog and congestion. Today, the portion of the line from Camden Station in Baltimore to Glen Burnie remains in operation as Baltimore's Light Rail, and the rest south has been converted into the B&A trail. The MTA picked up the B&A's commuter bus service that runs from Patapsco in Baltimore to Calvert St. in Annapolis. While the route may still technically be served by public transportation, the total travel time by bus with transfers is 34 minutes longer on average than it was with the B&A railroad. Grade separation is the biggest factor in decreasing travel times as a railroad, free of mixed traffic, is a much faster alternative than a bus. The light rail runs at similar or better speeds than the B&A did more than 70 years ago and runs thrice hourly, while the bus section south of Glen Burnie drastically increases travel times and only runs hourly.

Working in the MGA, it is evident that most requests for improved public transportation service in Severna Park were met with concerns about a lack of funding or low ridership expectations.

Which comes first: A strong ridership base for transit? Or fast and frequent service?

The MTA, with its limited budget, is only enabled to consider new transit routes that have an existing ridership base, ready to pay fares and keep the organization afloat. Communities that don't have much transit to begin with are often overlooked for their low expected rider-

ship numbers. Even running more buses and trains on existing lines is politically challenging as many complain about underused service. Given viable alternatives to driving, transit ridership numbers would soar. The fundamental issue here is the MTA's lack of confidence that it can reasonably fund equitable, frequent, and fast transit access across the state. With the current budget, smaller communities and areas currently under-served by transit are unlikely to see much improvement.

The fiscal conservative mindset in Maryland's Executive branch is still present. The chair of the Environment and Transportation Committee, Delegate Marc Korman, introduced HB74(2023) to solve the funding issue. The bill would have created an authority to fund rail projects across the state by introducing optimal tolling, the maximum amount that drivers would pay to use the road without deterring use of the road. With the new dedicated funding for railroad construction, maintenance, operation, and repairs, the state of Maryland would be catapulted into the ranks of our region's agencies in regards to public transportation.

Please email your state delegates and senators to tell them to oppose the governor's office's CTP budget for the MTA and support HB74(2023)! Attend your region's town halls and fight for your right to move! As ice makes the road slick this winter, riding by train is a safer alternative.

Establishing transit routes on our arterial roads would reduce congestion getting to school and work.



A southbound LightRailLink train departs Linthicum station towards BWI. Running on the former right of way of the B&A railroad, the light rail runs from Hunt Valley in Baltimore County, then runs at street level on Howard St. in Baltimore, continues on to Linthicum, then forks after Ferndale to serve both Glen Burnie and BWI Airport. Photo taken by: Shubh Agnihotri

Mobile School Apps

OPINIONS

Mobile Apps to Help Students

Claire Gray | Staff Writer

Managing school can be difficult, especially if you have a full schedule, are a freshman or just have trouble keeping track of things. An agenda is nice, but it gets lost easily and it just doesn't work for everyone. What's the alternative to an agenda? Apps! Everyone has their phone on them anyway; while you're checking it, why not write down your assignments so you don't forget? If you've been looking for some extra ways to be on top of schoolwork, check out these apps available on your phone.

E-GENDA

E-genda, as its name implies, is an online agenda in case your paper agenda doesn't work for you. The app allows you to add your classes and whenever you add an assignment to a class, it will show up in your schedule. The app shows you how long you have until an assignment is due, if it's overdue and it sends you notifications so you don't

forget as well. This app is simple, but it does its job, keeping track of your assignments.

POWERSCHOOL

Powerschool is an app many people are familiar with, but it's worth mentioning, considering how important it is. It's a website along with an app, but if you have it as an app it will notify you whenever your grade changes. It also provides your teacher's emails and all graded assignments.

SATURN

The Saturn app is made for students to better understand their school schedule, classmates and school activities. If you connect it to Powerschool, it includes a task bar to prioritize what assignments are coming up and shows you what items are upcoming. It connects to your school to show you when you have early dismissal or days off. And it has a separate messaging bar to communicate with people in your classes,

and make study groups. Saturn has proved to be a great way to connect with the kids in your classes without exchanging personal information, as well as automatically updating your assignments once it's set up.

GOOGLE APPS

The Google apps may go without saying, but they can be a little confusing. There's a separate app for each feature of Google Drive, and you can't actually edit your documents without them. For example if you go into Google Drive on your phone, you need to have the Google Slides app in order to actually edit the slide. That goes for Google Docs and Sheets as well.

PULSE

Pulse is the mobile version of Brightspace, however it's not very helpful. A better alternative is to look up Brightspace on a search engine, that way you can actually access everything.

School can be over-

whelming and hard to manage, so hopefully these apps are able to help with organization, scheduling or just efficiency. In case you're falling behind, it never hurts to try new methods to stay on top of school work.



Screenshot of Powerschools dashboard. The dashboard that many students are familiar with when they open Powerschool. Photo taken by: Claire Gray

CLUB PICTURE DAY: FRIDAY, JANUARY 12 IN AUDITORIUM

Club members must obtain a pass from their club adviser in order to be dismissed. No pass, no photo.
Please arrive 5 minutes prior to scheduled time

8:30 Embers	9:45 SGA Delegates	11:15 Percussion Ensemble	12:50 Chess Club	2:15 EnviroThon
8:30 Talon	9:55 SGA Officers	11:15 Puzzle Club	12:50 Skills USA	2:20 Debate Club
8:30 Quill and Scroll	9:55 Medical Youth	11:20 Silks & Indoor Guard	12:55 Robotics	2:25 What's New in Sports
8:35 E Sports	10 AM PLTW - 2024 & 2025	11:25 JamLand	1 PM Book Club	2:25 Zoology
8:35 ROTC	10:10 STAR Committee Student Members	11:30 JazzBand	1:05 Science Honor Society	2:30 Environmental (Green)
8:40 It's Academic	10:05 Young Democrats	11:30 Red Cross	1:10 Baseball Club	2:35 Falcon Pride
8:45 Leadership III	10:05 Physics Club	11:35 Young Republicans	1:10 Slam Poetry	2:40 Equity Club
8:50 Key Club	10:10 Art Club	11:40 ACE	1:15 Chick-fil-A Leadership	2:45 Ping Pong Club
8:55 Senior Class Officers	10:15 Best Buddies	11:40 FCA	1:20 Mock Trial	2:45 Wishing Crane Project
8:55 PowerLifting	10:20 Coding Club	11:45 National Honor Society Officers	1:25 Entrepreneurship Club	2:50 Checkers Club
9 AM National English Honor Society	10:20 Thespians	11:50 Leadership I	1:30 Rho Kappa	2:55 Freshman Officers
9:05 Science Fiction Club	10:25 Improv Group	12 PM Leadership II	1:35 Wrestling Club	3 PM Marine Biology Club
9:10 Impulse	10:30 Stage Crew	12:10 Falcon Flight	1:35 Space Explorations	3:05 PLTW - 2027 & 2026
9:10 Women in STEM	10:35 Future Doctors	12:15 Chinese Club	1:40 Film Club	
9:15 Math Team	10:35 National Business Honor Society	12:15 Volleyball Club	1:45 Creative Writing Club	
9:20 National Art Honor Society	10:40 Dance Team 3	12:20 Sailing	1:50 Vocabulary Club	
9:20 Taylor Swift Club	10:45 SOL	12:25 SPTV	1:50 Star Wars	
9:25 Model UN	10:50 Tri M	12:30 One Love	1:55 Mu Alpha Theta	
9:25 AP Spanish Club	10:55 Vocal Ensemble	12:35 Junior Class Officers	2 PM National Honor Society for Dance	
9:30 Spanish Club	11 AM Chorus	12:40 French Honor Society	2:05 Dance Team 2	
9:35 Spanish Literature	11:05 All State Chorus, Orchestra and Band	12:40 Service Learning	2:10 Dance Team 1	
9:40 Spanish Honor Society	11:10 All County Chorus, Orchestra and Band	12:45 French Club	2:15 Sophomore Class Officers	



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