



The SPTALON

February 2024

CANCEL CULTURE

TikTok creator Isa was harshly criticized for making racial remarks, but as a community is it right to threaten and bully people over something like this?

Read more on page 3

WHAT TO DO

Looking for some fun activities to do this Valentine's Day? Here is a curated selection to keep you busy this winter!

Read more on page 8

THE LOVE LETTER

If you're interested in romance this Valentine's Day, Dr. Love has some advice. Bringing up strong topics like relationship status's and even sexuality.

Read more on page 10

VOLUME 64

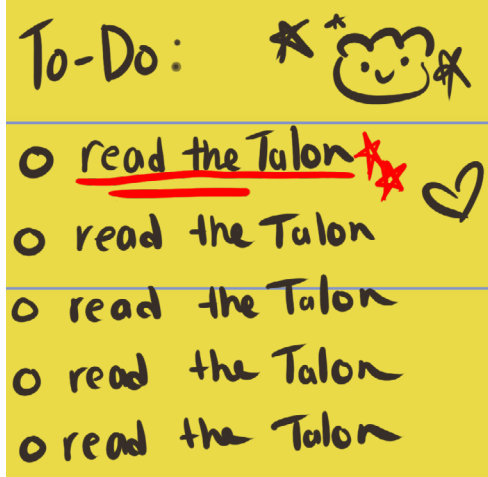
ISSUE 4

SPTALON.COM

SEVERNA PARK HIGH
60 ROBINSON ROAD
SEVERNA PARK, MD 21146

Looking for a good cookie recipe for this Valentine's? Try the shortbread cut-out cookies with jam. Read the recipe on page 6. Photo and graphic by Mia Tocco

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The Math Team compete where there is an individual round and a team round completing math problems. They acquired the highest cumulative score on Jan. 27, allowing the team to take first place. New members are welcome to the club meeting in Ms. Staisloff's room during Falcon Block on Tuesdays. "The math is Algebra 2 and Pre-Cal level, but there is a logic involved" junior Ben Elliffe said. "They have placed first at all three contest that we have had so far. Alex Zhou and Ben Elliffe both received perfect scores in the individual competitions on Jan. 27" Ms. Kintzley said. Photo taken by Ms. Kintzley

The varsity swim team is wrapping up their winter season, with Regionals in Annapolis on Feb.17 and States on Feb. 25. Amelia Groger said "The team has been training and competing very well this season. The team culture is also super great, everyone is cheering for each other at meets and we push each other to be the best." Photo taken by Robert Haufe



Students went to Sandy Point Park on Feb. 2 to participate in the Cool School Challenge, where students raise money for Special Olympics and take a swim in the Chesapeake Bay. The Artic Parkies had 130 students and staff, and raised over 16 thousand dollars. "I participated in the Polar Bear Plunge because I wanted to support the athletes in the Special Olympics and the event is super fun. I love the excitement surrounding the plunge and people coming together for a great cause," junior Fiona Kelley said. Photo taken by Kaylee Winters

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An Observation About Modern Cancel Culture

NEWS

Recently, it seems to be getting easier and easier to get "canceled" online.

Mia Tocco | Photo and Graphics Editor

In early January, TikTok creator @isaescu, or Isa (now goes by Isabella online), got canceled by her community and other TikTok users due to a leaked video of her saying a racial slur. This cancellation sparked a debate about how far people should go about canceling people and how it has become easier to cancel people as technology improves. Isabella's comment section is still flooded with negative and ironic comments in response to her actions. The comments were so negative on her "apology video" that she turned them off.

In the past couple of years, TikTok has boomed in popularity and given a platform to over 1 billion people. Unfortunately, this has shined light on some bad apples that use the app to spread negativity. While originally the users might stay relatively tame, over time their true colors are shown through their actions.

One TikToker, @isaescu or Isa/Isabella, recently gained fame in the past year for her physical appearance and her "Get ready with me videos." Over the course of six months, she gained over 1.8 million followers on the platform and consistently gets hundreds of thousands of views on all of her TikToks. Isa is only 15 years old and still attends school in Florida but recently, she got thrown into hot water in regards to her actions, which could affect her future. In early January 2024, a video was leaked of Isa saying a racial slur to her boyfriend's friend.

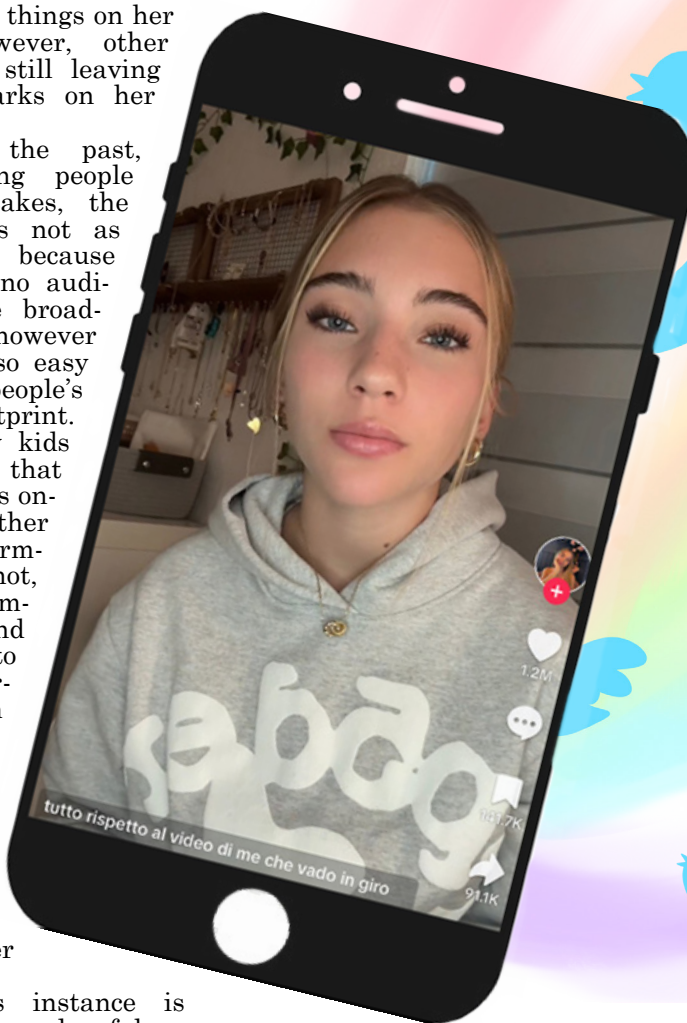
Since the video was leaked, Isa has received many hate comments and she eventually made an "apology video." Many fans and critics were upset by the "apology video" because in their eyes it didn't seem genuine enough. At the time of the release of the "apology video," the comments were still on and people continued to make jokes severely ridiculing Isa, claiming that her future was ruined and she wouldn't be able to attend college due to her actions online. While this may be true as now colleges and employers look into digital footprints, the hate caused Isa to turn

off her comments not even a week after the video was posted. Now she is posting regularly again with her normal content. The majority of her fans still support her and are commenting positive things on her videos however, other critics are still leaving mean remarks on her videos.

In the past, when young people made mistakes, the impact was not as large-scale because there was no audience to be broadcasted to, however now, it is so easy to track people's digital footprint. Now, many kids are worried that their actions online, whether they are harmless or not, can cause employers and schools to be discouraged from accepting them. Now with media being so easily accessible, it is becoming a bigger issue.

This instance is just one example of how more and more influencers are becoming "canceled" due to their extreme online presence. Many TikTok commenters, while their remarks may be humorous, can get out of hand and end up creating stress for the creator, creating more damage than is necessary. It is so easy to leave a mean

comment however, it can truly affect creators because, at the end of the day, they are people with feelings too.

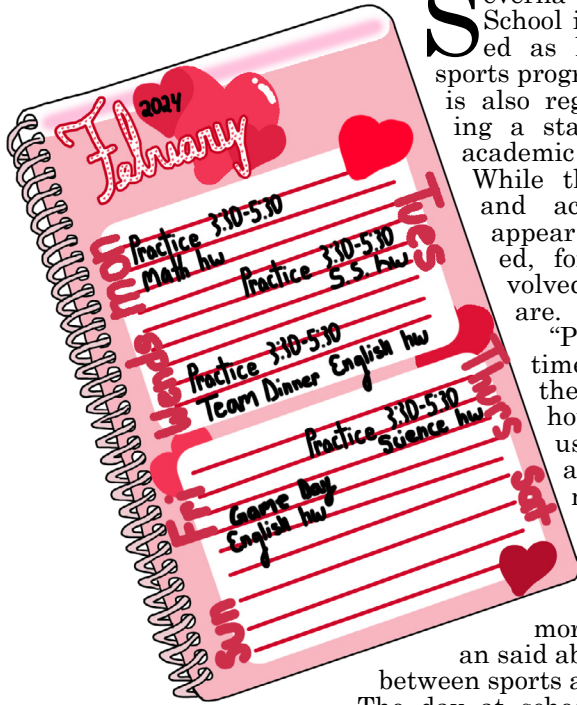


Students, Sports and School

SPORTS

How students involved in sports balance practice and schoolwork.

Elsa Webster | Opinions Editor



Severna Park High School is often regarded as having a good sports program. The school is also regarded as having a standard of high academic achievement. While the two, sports and academics, may appear to be unrelated, for students involved in sports, they are.

“Practice sometimes conflicts with the work I have, however I am used to it by now and I know I must use every second I have to keep up with everyone,” sophomore Sean Monahan said about the conflict between sports and schoolwork.

The day at school for students who are involved in a sport does not end at 3:18. Students in sports have practices or games that require them to stay late.

“I either have practices right after school that end at 5:30 and if we don’t have a team dinner which would be every Wednesday then we just go home, we can have the rest of the day to just do our homework. We also have Falcon Blocks which I think are really helpful but if we have team dinner then we don’t get home until maybe 8pm which depending on how much schoolwork you have or how long it takes you to usually do it, can kind of stress you out a little bit. Especially if something is due the next day,” junior Lena Slade said. These commitments can lead to stress and take up the student’s time but there are ways to do homework. “Or if you have a game then we have to usually stay to watch the JV’s game which is before ours which also takes up our day and we don’t get home until like, 10 or nine or something like that and that can also stress us out for not being able to get our homework done but usually we can do our working during a JV’s game as long as we’re there and present we can do our work which is helpful too,” Slade said.

While these commitments can stress out the students that have them, those students are surrounded by support from teammates or coaches.

“It can start to feel like a lot and sometimes you can feel overwhelmed but I think with having your friends and coaches pick you up and just pushing through its overall a really good environment to be in,” Slade said. While they do limit the time students have to complete their homework or other schoolwork, practices have many benefits to the teams such as improving the team as well as improving the connection between the team.

“Sometimes our team struggles to stay focused

but when we stay focused obviously our practices are really beneficial because we go over our plays and make sure we have our plays down,” Slade said. “And our practices are definitely helping. At the end of our practices we go over how everyone practiced that day and I think it helps us become a better team because knowing what we need to work on and what we need to do better and just helping each other focus and picking each other up when we think we made a bad play, a bad pass helps bring the team together and build chemistry.”

After school time is not available to many students involved in sports, due to their commitments, school time such as Falcon Block can be helpful.

“To balance between school work and practices, I take advantage of the falcon blocks offered every day to do as much homework as possible and ask teachers for help if I need it,” Monahan said.

Practices and other commitments have to be considered when planning time to do schoolwork. Schoolwork has to be planned around sports schedules.

“You always have to work around practice first because you have to just do your homework when you get home,” freshman Gabriella James said.

Balancing schoolwork and commitments to school may be hard sometimes but this does not mean it is impossible.

“It’s always been manageable, you just got to, you know, work around it,” James said.

Homework and unfinished classwork takes up a large part of the average high schoolers after-school time. This time often gets interrupted by after-school activities such as sports. “You can either end up staying really late at the school or having a game two or three times a week along with practices,” junior Lena Slade said. Photo and graphic by Elsa Webster



Soccer Team Superstitions

SPORTS

Girls varsity soccer team's successful superstitions.

Emerson Scott | Staff Writer

Severna Park is home to many extraordinary athletes and the sports teams have made a name for themselves and have brought home many titles for the school to be proud of. This year, the girls varsity soccer team won the 3A State Championship and had an undefeated season. Some may say that it was due to hard work, determination and dedication to the sport, but if you asked the team, they would say superstition was a driving force too. With the success of the season, the girls on the team were able to control what they can control all the way down to the strict game day routine that if broken would “definitely” cause a loss. From Chick-Fil-A breakfast every game day morning, team dinner with a dessert of dirt cake every night before a game, to every unique quirk and ritual personally performed by each and every player.

These superstitions aren't new, the tradition of eating dirt cake each night before a game is one that has been passed down through the girls soccer program and the intensity in this superstition is one no one can avoid. When

asked about dirt cake, senior and captain, Ryn Feemster said:

“I hate dirt cake, but my freshman year the seniors forced me to eat dirt cake every single game even though I hated it.” Also when speaking about dirt cake, senior and captain Caitlyn Boucher said, “I would also have at least one bite of the dirt cake the night before even if I didn't want it.”

Another thing unchallenged by the team was bus buddies, the person you sat next to never switched. Every away game the team would file onto the bus and knew exactly where to go like the back of their hands. Sophomore Ava Scott said “we all had the same bus buddies and I feel like everyone agreed that you don't switch your bus buddy.”

On a more personal level, each team member had their own game to game rituals that either helped the team or possibly just gave them peace of mind. For some, like junior Bella Van Gieson, these superstitions were definitely on the more advanced side. When speaking about game day morning breakfasts Van Gieson said,

“I order my Chick breakfast at a certain light on the way to Chick, has to be that light, and last year when I wasn't at that light, we lost to Broadneck...” Van Gieson also said, “Before the game, before everything, I take a picture with Sarah Ste-

fancik, Foof Dunoyer and Eleni, cause we've been doing that since last year. We take a picture in the same pose and I save it. So I have like twenty-thousand of them.”

These are just a few of the unique superstitions possessed by Van Gieson, they are accompanied by her singing the song “Beauty And A Beat” with fellow teammate Francesca Dunoyer, dancing and like many, knocking on wood.

Senior Sara Kreis also has a few superstitions of her own too, and when talking about her choices regarding the game and pregame preparation she said they “worked wonders,” which is something every athlete always wants to hear.

“Every single game I had Abby Cover do my hair and it felt like a superstition to me...” Kreis said.

Similarly to Kreis, Ava Scott's superstition was her shin guards.

“I lost my shin guards, like my left shin guard during practice before we started all of our games and then we won. And I had on two right shin guards that didn't match at all and I found my left shin guard but I never put


it back in. For the rest of the season I used my both right shin guards and they were mismatched and everything, but I felt like it helped us and it helped me.” Scott said.

The 2023 girls varsity soccer season was something exceptional and the girls showed this not only through the great work on the field but also pouring every fiber of their luck and superstition into the game. Which showed that the group was more like a family and wanted to do anything to keep it going as far as they could possibly take it.

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Junior Bella Van Gieson takes a team photo on the way to an away game on Nov. 10 at River Hill for a semi-final match. The girls varsity team won the game 3-0 against the opposing team and some might say their superstitions played a crucial role in their victory. Photo taken by Bella Van Gieson

Rom-Coms are the Bomb

FEATURES

Romantic comedy movies to watch during the holiday.

Chris Benjamin | Online Editor

During the month of February many people without a significant other may find themselves feeling left out of the Valentines recreations. An on theme activity that can be done by yourself or with others is watching movies, specifically rom-coms. Many might think that rom-coms are cheesy, but never judge a book by its cover as some can tell amazing heartfelt stories. These movies will make you laugh, cry or possibly both at the same time so make sure to have a box of tissues on stand by.

“The Proposal” features both Ryan Reynolds and Sandra Bullock and is a comedy with a great unique romance story. Bullock plays Margaret, a well-known Canadian book editor who runs her team with an iron fist, making her disliked by many of her staff. When she is informed that she is about to lose her work-visa she forces her assistant Andrew, played by Reynolds, to marry her in order to receive U.S. citizenship. As they spend more time together facing shenanigan after shenanigan they start to question how fake their feelings towards each other really are.

“10 Things I Hate About You” is an iconic rom-com with a cast containing all-stars Heath Ledger, Julia Stiles, Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Larisa Oleynik. The story follows the new kid Cameron, played by Gordon-Levitt, who instantly catches feelings for a girl named Bianca. Unfortunately, Bianca isn’t allowed to date until her irritable older sister Kat, played by Stiles, does. This causes Cameron to seek out Ledger’s character, Patrick who is the known school bad boy and is the only one daring enough to attempt dating Kat. This movie follows both the relationship between Cameron and Bianca, and between Patrick and Kat. Cameron starts to question whether Bianca truly reciprocates his emotions whereas Patrick starts feeling genuinely attracted to Kat.

“(500) Days of Summer” is about how Tom, played by Joseph Goron-Levitt, is surprised when his girlfriend Summer, played by Zoey Deschanel, breaks up with him supposedly out of the blue. We follow him as he reflects and looks back on the 500 days that they were together to see what led to the eventual downfall of their

relationship. The movie does a great job at separating itself from other rom-com movies with its unique form of flashback storytelling. Throughout the course of the movie, the red flags throughout the relationship become more prevalent and Tom grows to accept the break up.

“La la Land” stars Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone as aspiring artists living in California, desperately trying to pursue their dreams. As their relationship grows it becomes clear that although they feel strongly towards one another, what they want for the future is vastly different. They must choose whether they will give up on one of their dreams in order for the other to pursue theirs or give up on the relationship.



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Photo and graphics by Mia Tocco and Ruby Howland



Shortbread With Jam

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 2 sticks of softened+diced butter
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp salt
- Strawberry/any red colored jam

DIRECTIONS:

- Beat the butter and sugar together, using an electric mixer.
- Add the egg yolk and vanilla extract, mix until smooth.
- Sift in the flour and salt and knead with clean hands until a dough is formed.
- Mold the dough into a ball and warp with plastic wrap, chill in a fridge for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- Roll out the cookie dough (1/4 inch) and cut into circles with a cookie cutter.
- For every 2 cookie dough circles, cut a heart out of one of them with a butter knife.
- Place the cookies on top of one another (the heart cut out one on top) and press down on the edges with your fingers.
- Place jam in the middle of the cookies and spread out to fill the heart.
- Cook for 12 minutes, cool and enjoy :D

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Loving Yourself This Valentine's Day

Lilith Vice | Staff Writer

Valentine's Day should be a day to evaluate and express love.

Love can be found in many things. Sometimes placing the love onto a single person can be dangerous. If it is truly a day to express love and passion then people should focus Valentine's Day more on being thankful for being able to love than making it about having someone to love.

What would we do without love? Many argue that love is the best part of being alive. But also as we all know very well, love can cause hurt and pain when overlooked. Have you ever gone through a bad breakup and felt like you'd never wish to fall in love that deeply again? Quite honestly many of us have; something we all must learn is that love is never something to give up on, but maybe something we can redirect into another place when we feel the absence of it. Love can make us thrive to be the best we can be, but when executed improperly, it can also cause mass destruction to our own self worth and self esteem.

So for all the lonely people this Valentine's Day, do not hang your head, but embrace it. Embrace being boundless by the pressure of finding the one and find the things that fulfill for some that may be writing articles for your school newspaper to work towards your dream of being a big time journalist, or maybe it could be the comfort of snuggling in bed with some hot chocolate watching your favorite show. Whatever it may be, remember that love can be found in the most unusual of places and sometimes you must let it find you.

Cupid's Advice for a Healthy Relationship

Justin Bate, Colten Billings, Natalie Clayton, Logan Humphries | Staff Writers

1. *Open communication*
2. *Know your love language*
3. *Always pursue your sweetie*
4. *Show interest in their interests*
5. *Be transparent*
6. *Relationship won't ever be 50/50*
7. *Be vulnerable*
8. *Have your own interests outside your relationship*
9. *Disagreeing is OK*
10. *Be very clear about boundaries*



Sarah's House

Owen Cress | Guest Writer

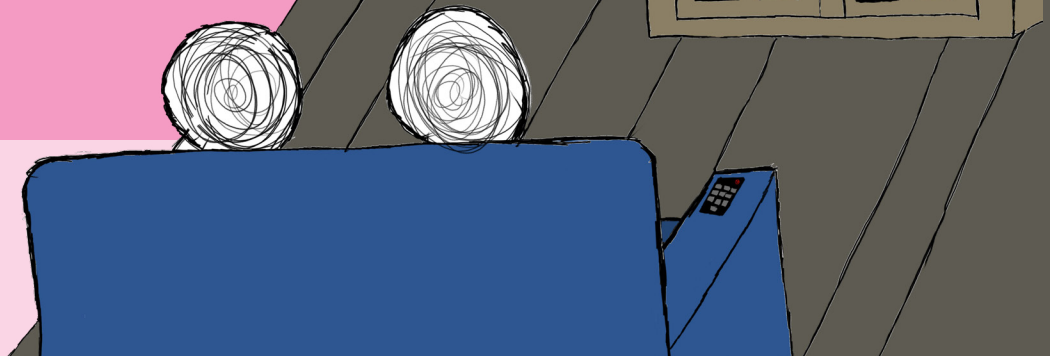
Dr. Love shares love for Sarah's House.

So many Americans, especially historically marginalized groups of people such as women or people of color, lack safe shelter, health services, daily meals, or even the skills or knowledge to improve their situation. These people need our support, our love. Sarah's House is a homeless shelter in Anne Arundel County that makes true love their goal. Whether that love be extended to those experiencing the cruelty of homelessness or the looming terror of food insecurity, Sarah's House ensures that their compassion is abundant and their scope is wide. This Valentine's Day season, it's our time to give back.

Dr. Love is working with Equity Club to raise funds for Sarah's house. On Valentine's Day, join us in spreading awareness for people suffering from socio-economic inequity by being sponsored to walk laps around the track. Decide how many laps you and your friends want to walk and get your friends and family to sponsor you per lap. For example, you might walk four laps and raise \$4 per lap. The walk takes place at the track directly after school on February 14 with music, friends, and fun. Classic Dr. Love glasses and stickers will be on sale, with all proceeds going right to Sarah's House. The top three donors get a special shirt, so be sure to reach out to your family and community for donations and together we can make Anne Arundel County a more loving place. Juniors and associated honor society people, this is also a MERIT opportunity. A \$5 donation and participation in the walk counts as one volunteering merit!



This graphic depicts two people kicking it back and watching a rom-com together. The great thing about movies is that they can be enjoyed alone or with a group of people, so they make for a good holiday activity that can be enjoyed by all. Graphic by Chris Benjamin.



What To Do When You Don't Know

FEATURES

Struggling to figure out what to do with friends?

Samantha Polk | Social Media Editor

Winter can be a challenging season to stay active and social, but with a solid list of activities, you can beat the blues. Here's a curated selection to keep you busy during the dark and gloomy days:

1. ICE SKATING AT QUIET WATERS PARK:

Glide over to the picturesque outdoor ice rink at Quiet Waters Park. Whether you're a seasoned skater or a beginner, it's the perfect setting for winter fun.



2. HOT COCOA CRAWL:

Warm up with a delightful hot cocoa crawl. Explore local cafes and bakeries, sampling hot chocolates around town to discover your favorite or hidden gems within the community.

3. BONFIRE AND S'MORES NIGHT:

Gather around a crackling bonfire with marshmallows, chocolate and graham crackers for a festive activity on cold winter nights.

4. TRAMPOLINE PARK:

Embrace your inner child by visiting an indoor trampoline park. Play games and perform tricks for a surprisingly fun experience.

5. PAINT POTTERY:

Unleash your creativity by painting pottery with friends. Locations like

This photo is when me and my friends went to Starbucks and got hot cocoa to pass the time after school. It's a great place to study and there are plenty of places to sit even if you just wanna talk. Caption 2: I went to Pic and Paint Pottery with my bestfriend and I made this mug inspired by Valentine's day. It was a great activity that took up a lot of time and gave me and my friend a great thing to talk about while we were busy painting. The process is super simple and I highly recommend it. Photos taken by Samantha Polk

Pic and Paint Pottery and Providence Pottery offer a range of items to paint, from mugs to sculptures.



6. GO TO THE MOVIES:

Enjoy a classic winter pastime by heading to the movies. The Annapolis Mall and Harbor Center offer nearby theaters with discounts on certain days or even free movie nights.

7. BAKING/ COOKING:

If you find yourself indoors, try baking something delicious. Whether from scratch or a premixed box, it's a tasty way to spend your time.

8. GO SLEDDING/ MAKE A SNOWMAN:

This activity is determined by the weather around you, but you can indulge in the joy of sledding or building snowmen. Consider a mini adventure to buy sleds or snowman accessories for added fun.

9. GO OUT TO EAT:

Take advantage of winter nights by going out to eat. Popular spots in Severna Park, like Chick-fil-A, Uber Bagels, Squisito, Senors Chile and Park Tavern, offer great food and ambiance.

10. VISIT AN ESCAPE ROOM:

Escape rooms are a great way to keep you entertained and have fun with your friends especially if you hate the cold. Some escape rooms near Severna Park are EscapeTime escape rooms and Mission Escape.

Finding activities in winter may not be easy, but this list aims to spark ideas for your winter adventures. Stay active, stay social and make the most of the season.

SENIOR PROFILES UNDER SENIOR PORTRAITS



Nicholas Blanchfield
As the old Latin teacher, Nicholas...



Elizabeth Blevins
Elizabeth Blevins is a...

What was your favorite part of your high school journey?
Working on my senior thesis, and working on that "next to be completed" assignment that I did.

What was your favorite part of your high school journey?
The senior dance department. The teachers have made those learning moments almost like a game and made whatever hard? This thought has to be the greatest thing I've ever...



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Love is Love

FEATURES

Being LGBTQIA+ on Valentine's Day.

Elsa Webster | Opinions Editor

Traditionally, Valentine's Day has been celebrated by and made for heterosexual couples. This can sometimes make it harder for older generations to accept new, non-heteronormative relationships. From early January until the day is over, Valentine's Day items such as gifts, signs or other heart-shaped, pink and red paraphernalia can be found all throughout different stores in order to get people excited for the day.

"I think it's very hyped up by people, especially if they are in a relationship and it's very important to them and if they don't get anything they'll be sad and I don't really see the whole point of it," sophomore Lee Burbank said.

As most people know, Valentine's Day is celebrated in order to highlight love and relationships. Every person has a unique experience with love, and therefore, Valentine's Day. These experiences can vary based on factors such as relationship status and even sexuality.

"Well people who were in non-heteronormative relationships, weren't really out, or really open about it. Lately I have not seen many non-heteronormative relationships actually celebrate Valentine's Day. So maybe this year they'll be more open because there's more people in these non-hetero relationships. But it's definitely more focused on the hetero-normative," Burbank said.

A true reality for those looking to get decor to celebrate the holiday, is that it is primarily centered towards hetero-normative couples and relationships. This can make it hard on non-heteronormative couples.

"It's mostly boy and girl, wife and husband, stuff like that. You don't really see wife and wife, or girlfriend and girlfriend, boyfriend boyfriend, husband husband," Burbank said.

Senior Trevor Starks said "It's very new for older generations and it's stuff that I kinda just get and I just kinda accept it, but I have a lot of family members that don't get it and don't understand it and it's kinda hard to balance that and then having a relationship because I mean, any relationship is going to have issues and you know, going to be high

stress. But having the family issues build up on top of it really makes it just that little bit more stressful."

Valentine's Day can sometimes further divide the experiences between those who are heterosexual and those who are not.

"There will be ways that it's different. Obviously there is no right or wrong answer for which way to celebrate it but I definitely think that it can be very different depending on, like I said before, your family. If your family accepts you too, you can go on a date, go to movies, go out somewhere fancy. As for heterosexual couples, it can be a lot easier because you know, it's the thing, it's the norm. But there are cases where people have to hide their relationship and all they can do is hang out with them with their friends," Starks said. "So I feel like there is some differences but I feel like, in the best situations, they're both really great options and you can have a really great time no matter what."

While the primary focus of Valentine's Day usually centers around romantic relationships, they are not the only relationships that are celebrated on Valentine's Day. Love can be anything from being in a romantic relationship with someone to loving your family and your friends. Valentine's Day, like love, could be for more than just romantic relationships.

"I feel like it shouldn't just be romantic relationships getting all the attention," sophomore Rio Miguez said.

Younger people often don't experience relationships until they are usually much older. This doesn't mean that younger people don't experience love. Love means different things to different people.

"I feel like it's important for younger people to have people they love, not necessarily romantic love but family, obviously and friends. I feel like if you don't have that, that's going to affect you pretty largely," Miguez said.

Regardless of whether a person is heterosexual or not, in a relationship or single, love is a part of life. While certain barriers do exist that can prevent LGBTQIA+ couples from having a normal Valentine's Day experience, this could change in the next coming years as being a part of the community becomes more largely accepted.

"I mean, obviously I hope so. And I do think so. That we will get to that point, in my lifetime, we will get to a point where it is completely normal whether you're homosexual or heterosexual, anything. I feel like there will be a point in time where you can do anything, it will be easily accessible," Starks said.

Valentine's Day, the holiday centered around love, is often exclusionary to LGBTQIA+ couples due to its marketing being primarily focused on heteronormative couples. "I feel like, it just takes a little bit of wisdom, you know, just a little bit of thinking around. There are certain things that are like, 'for him, for her', that kind of stuff. But there are definitely ways to get around it," senior Trevor Starks said. Graphic by Elsa Webster



The Love Letter

OPINIONS

Dr. Love answers YOUR questions.

Owen Cress | Guest Writer

It's that time of year again! The month where butterflies use our stomachs as vacation homes and people confess their romantic feelings en masse, also known as February. I've been kicking for three years starting on Valentine's Day, which is funny to think about. Throughout my brief time as SPHS' love doctor, I've had one question lurking in the back of my head: What is love? While our barely-even-conscious high school minds continue to develop and ponder that question, I've found some key points that might lead to the answer.

Love extends beyond romantic relationships. Love can be seen manifesting as the unwavering care for another person, commonly seen in parenthood or sacrifice for another's life. In that sense, love offers the prospect of utopia--a world in which everyone's goal is supporting their fellow man. However, our attachment to selfishness and anger keeps us from perfecting love. Valentine's Day should remind us what love

stands for: not the self-centered desire for romance and affection, but rather the offering of yourself to others for their benefit.

How do I talk to people I might be interested in?

One issue you might find in your love life is that you might be a really cool person but you just don't have someone in your life that you'd be interested in getting to know better, largely resulting from the inability to talk to someone that checks your boxes. Here's two tips to sort that out.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO STAND OUT.

When two people hold a conversation, it's because both parties are interested in one another's thoughts. This interest doesn't have to stem from romantic attraction, and in 90% of cases, it doesn't. It just means that there's something interesting enough about the two people that conversation must be engaged. So be interest-

ing. Dr. Love started as a pretty stupid bit designed to talk to girls on Valentine's Day, right? I just said I was Dr. Love one day and made an Instagram account trying to answer people's love questions. That concept was interesting enough for continual interaction, and now we're here.

Another case study is a friend of mine who lives a curiously contradictory life. He plays football, yet he sings and dances too. That's interesting, and consequently he talks to a lot of people. Find traits that make you interesting and play to these strengths.

ASK 'WHY?'

A conversation can be flowing perfectly until an abrupt and awkward ending. These conclusions suck and might even damage your relationship with the other person if the immediate termination of the conversation ends with too much discomfort. To keep the interaction exciting, follow up on topics by asking why. Let's say you're talking about what



you like to do in the city. This girl says, "My favorite things to do downtown are kick pigeons and climb flagpoles." Ending it there, while probably a good idea, might leave you two on a strange note. So follow up with a "why?" Who knows, maybe you could fix her.

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

Sweetheart

Serenades



- Dear my beloved Claire, I love you so so much!
- Anna, my pookie bear, I love you to the moon.
- I love you Claire.
- I love you Leo. Hugs and kisses.
- Silas, your eyes are like pale buds.
- Nolan, you make me feel all sorts of ways.
- Mrs. Earhart, I've always loved your voice.
- Hey Becca. Ur cute.
- S. B. Ricky. My loving gubernator. Your eyes are like eyes. All of you are secretly Romans. ~Abbie

Valentine's Day Outfits and Candy

OPINIONS

Poll results from our student body on the best Valentine's Day candy and fresh fit ideas for the transition to spring.

Noel Castillo | Editor-in-Chief

As preparation for this May's Met Gala and the countless possibilities for wacky outfits and flaming celebrities on social media; a compilation of pink outfit ideas to ease into the season of love. Although February is the penultimate winter month, it should start to warm up enough to wear short sleeves, or at least short sleeves with a thin jacket. Other glam ideas include: a neon pink hoodie bright enough to melt someone's heart as well as their retinas. A pink onesie with hearts or an oversized pink comfy sweater - when paired with light blue shorts make for a stunning look that celebrities will struggle to contend with. A

la mode.

It is also a great idea to accessorize your pink outfit with a pink head band, necklaces or bracelets. Pink Mardi Gras beads around your neck, red, pink and blue bracelets of varying shapes and sizes such as hair ties and rubber bands. These next-level outfit choices will elevate your aura and render you simply irresistible this Valentine season. Even though masks are out of fashion, a pink fuzzy ski mask or scarf might be just enough to put your outfit over the top. Tres chic.

Additionally, the results on the best candy poll were an astounding clear win for dark chocolate. It is clear you should



Share results

Polls were run on the Talon Instagram account as well as personal accounts. However, the results were very clear each time, with over 200 votes on the official Talon account and 71 votes in this personal poll - dark chocolate was the decisive victor, white chocolate a close second and sweet tarts/lollipops alternating between third and fourth place. "Best candy for holidays: Rhebs Candy Company. Go there," senior Ryan Bessling said. Graphic by Noel Castillo



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VALENTINE'S DAY

walk

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\$5 donation AND participation = 1 NHS Merit

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All donations go to Sarah's House

NHS MERITS AVAILABLE FOR \$5 DONATION AND PARTICIPATION IN WALK

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gift your loved ones or significant other dark chocolate heart to maintain their love for the Valentine season. The mixed results are from both high schoolers, as well as SPHS alumni whose opinions are of highly esteemed value; thus the results are purely objective and a majority of the time you should gift chocolate-related candies to your friends and family. Tres sympá!

Although sweet tarts and lollipops reasonably earned more than a 15% consistently in both polls, it is a much safer gamble to simply purchase

dark or white chocolates for higher consistency. Some romantic chocolate ideas include: Hershey bars, Crunch, Rolo, Hershey kisses, Mr. Goodbar, Ferrero Rocher chocolate, Ghirardelli, Godiva, Almond Joys and Kit Kat. Delicieux!

However, should you choose to go down the lollipop route; Chupa Chups, Jolly Rancher and Dum Dum lollipops are always a pleasant surprise from math teachers like Mrs. Sasse and Mrs. Meadows. Giant swirl lollipops can also be really fun and super cool. Use this to coup beaucoup des coeurs.

GO TO WWW.SPTALON.COM FOR ONLINE CONTENT AND COVERAGE

Love and Presidents

A Valentine's comic about dead presidents.

Lucas Cropper | Staff Writer

