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# NEWS IN BRIEF

The Unified Bowling team won counties in the 2023-2024 season. With high hopes for this upcoming winter season. The first game of the season is Jan. 3 at the Severna Park Lanes. Photo Taken by: Ms. Earhart



SkillsUSA is a club where high-school students learn and develop skills beneficial to their future professions. Students have the opportunity to be involved in different activities each month where they help the community and gain merits for their hard work. During a weekend in November members of Skills USA attended a Fall Leadership Conference to receive their statesman award. Photo Taken by: Ms. Angerer



SOL, Band, Jazz Band and Orchestra all come together to spread the Christmas spirit to students before leaving for winter break. On Dec. 20 they will be performing in the auditorium during fourth period. Photo Taken by: Ms. Earhart



Junior Lilly Nagy takes peppermint cupcakes out of the oven, while sophomore Megan Guerette frosts eggnog sugar cookies in preparation for the upcoming holiday season. Gingerbread cookies fresh out of the oven are also featured to the left. Photo by Rinonah O'Connor Graphics by Ruby Howland

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**GUEST WRITERS:** JON NEAL, ANYA DIGGS, RINONAH O'CONNOR, JOLENE ROBERTSON, ANDREA ROM, NICK STOHLER  
**ADVISER:** VALERIE EARTHART

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# The Election

## A new president and senator, how will it impact you?

Jon Neal | Guest Writer

Senator Angela Alsobrooks and President-elect Donald Trump both won their elections on Nov. 5, both with plans to change our schools. Both candidates have laid out their plans for the Board of EDU long before the Nov. 5 election.

### Senator Alsobrooks

As Maryland's first African-American Senator in the state's history, she plans to expand Title I funding, which will provide more financial aid to school districts for students from low income families.

Another change she would like to make is to raise teachers salaries, and make it so that teachers will not have to cover basic job-related expenses out of their own pockets. This includes things like teaching supplies and room decorations. This could result in better supplies for students and nicer classrooms.

### President-Elect Trump

In his first term, he proposed billions in cuts to the Board of EDU funding, and this

term, he wants to shut down the Department of Education for good. This would mean that each state's Board of EDU would be responsible for itself. This would not shut down education, just the federal department in Washington D.C. In order for the agency to be shut down, Trump would have to get congressional approval and 60 votes in the Senate. Currently there are 53 Republican and 47 Democratic Senators, so his plan will likely not go through.

If it did get shut down, it would have no effect on school funding since the federal portion of it comes directly from the federal government. However, this would cut off some financial aid for students from low income families.

In addition to the changes in the Department of Education, Trump would like to ban books about unpatriotic acts and that shame the American government, typically these all fall under the dystopian genre. He has large amounts of support in banning books like "The Handmaid's Tale," and "Fahrenheit 451," and Trump will likely



push  
f o r  
their remov-  
al from the shelves of  
school libraries.

This would mean that those types of books would be removed from school curriculum, and teachers would have to teach different books than the ones that they have taught for years. Teachers would have to remake lesson plans and this could result in more poorly taught, unprepared lessons.

All of the states electoral votes have been cast, with 226 going to Harris and the other 312 going to Trump, yet with a difference of 86 electoral votes, there is only a difference of around 2.5 million

Thousands of people have the famous "I Voted" sticker on their clothing after casting their vote on Election Day. Graphic By: Ruby Howland

votes, with Harris receiving 74,169,603 votes and Trump receiving 76,722,398 votes. Trump was declared the winner early in the morning of Nov. 6.

Senator Angela Alsobrooks has already been sworn in and is working on getting her plans in order. Trump will be sworn into office on Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, and from then on he will no doubt start putting his plans into action.

## Election Results

Representative in Congress District 3  
Sarah Elfreh

Representative in Congress District 3  
Steny Hoyer

Judge of the Circuit Court Circuit 5  
Thomas Kasey

Christine Marie Celeste

Judge, Appellate Court of Maryland At Large

Anne Albright

Kevin Arthur

Andrea Leah

Board of Education  
Gloria Dent

Robert Silkworth

Erica McFarland

Sarah McDermott

Dana Schallheim

Joanna Bache Tobin

Dawn Pulliam



# Spanish Club's Preparation for the Holidays

The specific holidays and traditions that Spanish Club focuses on and the importance of celebrating other cultures.

Anya Diggs | Guest Writer

Senior Kate Livingston, president of Spanish Club, shared the importance of celebrating the cultures and traditions of others in Central and South America through the club. The goal is to connect students by highlighting historic traditions from various cultures that would not have been recognized otherwise. Spanish Club will hold their annual holiday meeting on Dec. 18 when they will present some typical Christmas traditions and foods.

In past years, Spanish Club has chosen to celebrate the holidays with a unique theme, usually focusing on Christmas. By highlighting one tradition or country, club members receive an in-depth understanding of a different culture, developing a whole new appreciation for diversity.

"We always have something for the holidays, like, Navidad and Christmas. Last year we did a Christmas beach celebration," Livingston said.

This year Spanish

Club is going to feature a Mexican celebration called Posadas. Posadas is a tradition, usually for kids where they reenact Mary and Joseph's search for shelter on Christmas Eve.

"I think maybe we might recreate it this year and kind of travel door to door," Livingston said. She was thinking about incorporating the teachers in the Spanish hallway to engage club members and simulate what it is really like to participate in an authentic posadas celebration.

In addition to Christmas, on Jan. 15, Spanish Club also plans on doing a celebration for Dia de los Reyes, Three Kings Day.

"It's their version of Santa, but they have the three kings that deliver the presents," Livingston said. This holiday honors the biblical story, the Feast of the Magi, involving the three kings who brought presents for baby Jesus.

The Spanish Club always makes sure to spotlight a

spanish dish for the holidays.

"always make Rosca de Reyes, which is basically a bundt cake with angel food cake and it's purple, yellow and green for the colors of the three kings day," Livingston said. There is also a fun tradition Spanish Club likes to incorporate every year where a little plastic baby is hidden in the cake. It's considered good luck for the person who receives the piece of cake containing the baby Jesus.

Ultimately, it's essential for everyone to have a chance to celebrate unique cultures because the world is diverse and we can always learn from each other.

"It helps us foster community and encourages us to become more connected with everyone around us. It's also important to live the language and immerse yourself with Spanish culture to truly appreciate the language when taking Spanish classes," Livingston said.



Rhodes Opaliski is helping to make winter crafts to celebrate the holidays. Photo taken by Mathilda Nachtmann

## A Diverse Celebration

Student's holiday celebrations spanning many religions and traditions.

Elsa Webster | Editor-in-Chief

No one person's holidays are identical. Each is influenced by area, family or religion. But even despite what some may view as differences, these religious celebrations in particular can be very similar to each other.

"I know Jewish people also do fasting sometimes. I know in Christianity there's people fasting as well. I think

it's all pretty important for all of us to get close to our own religions and know who we are and make us who we are today," junior Aqidut Hassan said.

Hassan, a Muslim student at Severna Park, celebrates the Islamic holidays of Ramadan and Eid al Fitr. Ramadan will take place Feb. 28 through March 30 with Eid al Fitr taking place March 29 and 30.

"For Ramadan we celebrate fasting. We fast throughout the whole month and it can change depending on the year. We eat during midnight and we fast from sunrise to sunset. And it's basically just being closer to God, being grateful for what we have or what other people don't have," Hassan said. "For Eid, that's towards the end where we just kind of wrap it all up and

we stay with our families being grateful that we have everyone near us. We celebrate with a big feast to make sure that we know that we have all of the stuff and we're grateful for it."

With celebrating these traditions, there are certain ones that are particularly meaningful to those who practice it.

"I would say Ramadan because it helps me get closer to





# Peppermint Mocha in Severna Park

## Rating peppermint mochas at different coffee shops in Severna Park.

Jolene Robertson | Guest Writer

As winter approaches, the peppermint mocha arrives back at your coffee shops. Throughout the start of November, three different coffee shops were visited and ranked based on their iced peppermint mocha and the experience.

### The Big Bean

The first coffee shop visited was The Big Bean (558 Baltimore Annapolis Blvd). The Big Bean started off strong with great customer service. The people who work there are engaging, and always seem to enjoy their work. The drink came out in under a minute, which is great for people in a hurry. However, their peppermint mocha was somewhat disappointing, due to not enough peppermint and the mocha being too milky. The price at \$5.46 is expensive, but still less than one of the other coffee shops. The coffee shop is very cute but not as inviting as the others. Their hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends and 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on week-

days. The hours are not accessible for most people working early shifts or who need an evening pick me up. The Big Bean's final rating is 3/5.

### Dunkin

Next on the peppermint mocha expedition is Dunkin' (604 Richie Hwy). One good thing about Dunkin's iced peppermint mocha is that it comes with whipped cream and a chocolate sauce. Aside from those toppings, there is not enough of an actual peppermint flavor to give it that holiday feel. The experience in Dunkin' was fine but, there was nothing special about the customer service. Although they do have Christmas decor, it is lacking holiday spirit. While \$5.25 is expensive, it costs the least amount of money out of all the coffee shops visited. The best thing about Dunkin' is their hours, from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekends and 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays. All of those features shaped Dunkin' to come in 3rd

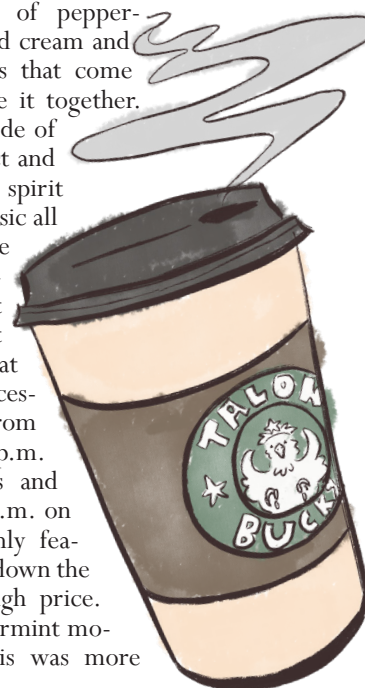
place with a final rating of 2/5.

### Starbucks

Last but certainly not least, Starbucks (503 Richie Hwy). Starbucks is known for their holiday menu. Starbucks had a high rating due to the taste of the actual drink, with the perfect hint of peppermint. The whipped cream and chocolate shavings that come with the drink tie it together. The ambiance inside of the store is perfect and with the holiday spirit and Christmas music all over, it makes the experience wonderful. The last great thing about Starbucks is that their hours are accessible, and open from 5 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on the weekends and opening at 4:30 a.m. on weekdays. The only feature that brought down the rating was the high price. Their small peppermint mocha is \$6.31. This was more

expensive than any of the other coffee shops. Starbucks ends with a final rating of 4/5.

All the shops visited were unique in their own ways. However, Starbucks was the clear winner with a distinct peppermint flavor and the perfect festive ambiance.



The typical holiday themed drink of December is peppermint. From peppermint coffee at any coffee shop to peppermint milkshakes and more, But, not all peppermint drinks live up to be the best. Graphic by Ruby Howland

my religion and it's just a really peaceful month where I can just be who I am. Quite honestly I just feel really happy," Hassan said regarding her favorite tradition.

Even without practicing a certain religion or custom before, it can still hold meaning and be something to look forward to.

"I'm sort of in transition right now. I am currently converting to Roman Catholicism from a non religious family. So this year I will be celebrating Christmas though in years past I have not," senior Sabrina Richter said. "I'm looking forward to going to mass on Christmas. I think that'll be really meaning-

ful, and really exciting."

Richter, along with some members of her family, made the decision to convert recently and decided to participate in some of the traditions associated with the Christian faith.

"I discovered religion over the summer, discovered Christianity. I decided I wanted to convert and I decided I wanted to celebrate Christmas this year. It's given a lot of meaning to my life," Richter said. This decision came with looking at and examining the religion and its beliefs. "I looked at the evidence and I thought it was true. I'm a very logical, rational person, and I really, really do think

it's the truth," Richter said.

Though there are differences between how people celebrate holidays within their religion depending on different factors, there is not always a change in how people celebrate throughout the years.

"They all stay really similar. They don't really change at all. I think that if there's anything changing, it's you and just how you are," Hassan said.

With many religious celebrations happening in winter months, there is a lot for students to look forward to. While Christmas might be what most think of, the winter season has many holidays and traditions that students at SPHS partake in. Graphic by Ruby Howland and Elsa Webster.



# A Taste Of Winter

## What sweets should you make this holiday season?

Rionnah O'Connor | Guest Writer

The holiday season is creeping up, lists are being made, decorations are being bought and families are considering what recipes will make everyone happy, from grandparents to toddlers. In this stressful time, I've chosen two dessert recipes to create and review so you all know the do's and don'ts of this upcoming season.

### Recipe 1- Chocolate Cupcakes With Peppermint Frosting

#### REVIEW:

How easy was it to make on a scale of 1-10: 7/10  
How much time did it take: 45 minutes  
How did it taste on a scale of 1-10: 4.5/10  
How did it look on a scale of 1-10: 5/10

#### INGREDIENTS:

1 c. salted butter, softened  
4 Tbsp. (heaping) cocoa powder  
1 c. boiling water  
2 c. all-purpose flour  
2 c. sugar  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/2 c. buttermilk  
2 eggs  
1 tsp. vanilla  
For Frosting  
1 c. salted butter, softened

5 c. powdered sugar, sifted  
3 Tbsp. heavy cream, plus more if needed  
40 peppermint candies, crushed very finely

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 36 muffin tin cups with paper liners.
2. Heat a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the butter and stir in the cocoa. Pour in the boiling water, stirring to combine. Allow the mixture to boil for 15 seconds, then it remove from the heat and set aside.
3. In a separate bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, baking soda and salt. Set aside.
4. In a separate small bowl, mix together the buttermilk, eggs and vanilla.
5. Pour the chocolate mixture over the flour mixture and stir until halfway combined. Pour in the buttermilk mixture and stir until the batter comes together.
6. Fill muffin cups two-thirds full and bake until set, about 18 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely.
7. For the frosting: Beat the butter to get it started, then add in the powdered sugar. Beat on low while adding the cream. When it comes together, add the crushed peppermints, reserving some for garnish. Beat the frosting on high until it's light and fluffy, 30 seconds or longer if needed.
8. Frost the cooled cupcakes however you want, then sprinkle on more crushed peppermints.

### Recipe 2- Eggnog Cut-Out Cookies

Bottom left: Rionnah O'Connor in the process of baking Christmas cookies in her kitchen. Photo taken by Lilly Nagy. Top right: Megan Guerette and Lilly Nagy pose with ingredients for baking peppermint cupcakes. Photo by Rionnah O'Connor

#### REVIEW:

How easy was it to make on a scale of 1-10: 8/10  
How much time did it take: 2 hours  
How did it taste on a scale of 1-10: 7.5/10  
How did it look on a scale of 1-10: 9/10

#### INGREDIENTS:

3/4 c. unsalted butter, softened  
3/4 c. granulated sugar  
2 large egg yolks, room temperature  
1 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract  
3 c. all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1/2 tsp. kosher salt  
1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg  
1/3 c. prepared eggnog, room temperature  
Easy cookie icing  
Red food coloring  
Green food coloring

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attach-

### Where To Skate

What are the best ice skating rinks you should visit during the winter season?

Artin Tarpinian | Staff Writer

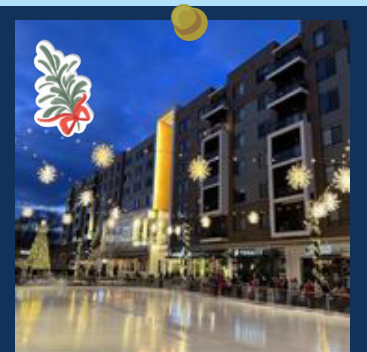
There are many winter sports people enjoy. From sledding, to snowboarding, to skiing and so on. However, there is one winter activity that is quick to pick up, and not easy to stop. Ice skating. Ice skating is a top five winter activity that people of all ages can enjoy. But, many people can not enjoy this winter sport if they cannot find a good rink to skate at. In Severna Park, and the surrounding areas, there are plenty of ice skating rinks that are not only available, but also have a stunning atmosphere.

One of such places

ment, beat the butter and sugar on medium speed until creamy, 3 to 4 minutes. Using a rubber spatula, scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl. Add the egg yolks and vanilla, then mix on low until fully combined, scraping the bottom and sides of the bowl as needed.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt and nutmeg.
3. With the mixer on low speed, gradually add the flour mixture to the butter mixture, alternating with the eggnog, beginning and ending with the flour mixture, beating just until com-

is located in Washington D.C. near the National Gallery of Art Sculpture. The rink, only open during the winter season, offers views of the nearby gardens and various modern art sculptures, making it a picturesque location. It is an estimated 50





bined after each addition.

4. On a lightly floured work surface, place the dough. Divide the dough in half and form into disks. Wrap each disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, 30 minutes to 1 hour.

5. Place one oven rack in the upper third of the oven and a second oven rack in the lower third of the oven. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

6. Working with 1 disk of dough at a time and keeping the second disk refrigerated, lightly flour a work surface. Roll the dough out until ¼-inch thick. Use a 2- to 3-inch cookie cutter to cut the dough into shapes. Using a thin spatula, transfer the cookies to the prepared baking sheet, spacing them about 2 inches apart. Refrigerate the scraps.

7. Bake until the tops are dry and the edges begin to turn golden, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool for about 10 minutes on the pan, then move the cookies to a cooling rack to cool completely. Repeat with the remaining dough and the scraps, re-rolling only once for smooth cookies.

8. Mix a batch of easy cookie ic-

ing (choose the thicker border icing). It should fall off the whisk in a thick stream and the fallen ribbon of icing should hold its shape for about 10 seconds before sinking back into the bowl of icing. Remove 2 tablespoons of icing each to 2 small bowls. Stir in 1 or 2 drops of red food coloring into one bowl and 1 or 2 drops of green food coloring into the other bowl until the desired colors are reached. Spoon the colorful icing into two separate zip-top bags or piping bags. Use a pair of scissors to snip inch off the tip of each bag.

9. Add additional 1 tablespoon of water, 1 teaspoon at a time, to the remaining white icing until it is at a flooding consistency; the icing falls off the whisk in a fluid stream and the fallen ribbon of icing holds its shape for only a few seconds before sinking back into the bowl of icing. Divide the thinned white icing between two 9-inch baking pans, spreading the icing into an even layer. Drizzle the red icing all over one pan of icing and drizzle the green icing over the second pan. One at a time, put the cookies face-side down



in the icing. Take the cookies out one at a time, twisting and shaking gently to let any extra icing drip off, and return to the cooling rack.

10. Allow the cookies to dry completely, 8 hours or overnight. Store the cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.

#### FINAL REVIEW:

Finally, after creating the two recipes, and having both myself and a friend that helped with the process review them, the gingerbread sandwich cookies were the most worth the time and effort they took, looked cute yet simple and tasted like the perfect blend of win-

ter flavors.

The kitchen of Rionnah O'Connor where the two recipes were made. With the help of Megan Guerette and Lilly Nagy, O'Connor made the recipes for review. Photo by Rionnah O'Connor



minute drive but the rink itself is well built and maintained, allowing for an easy skating experience. Not only does the rink itself make for a great experience, but the surrounding area also includes the Air and Space Museum, The National Museum of the American Indian, The Washington Monument and many more. Be sure to make it there as early as possible because it is a large attraction for many people in the greater D.C. area. Opening times all start at 11:00 a.m. and close at 9:00 p.m., excluding Friday and Saturday which both have closing times at 11:00 p.m. There are also designated times that you must pay for to skate. Fees include \$12 for anybody over the age of 13, ages 12 and under are \$10 including students with a school ID, and \$6 skate rentals. All in

all, the ice skating rink in the sculpture garden is an amazing place to go if you are passionate about ice skating and love a winter-like feel in the city.

Outdoor ice-skating offers many different experiences with the environment and the shape of the ice on the rink. Another outdoor ice rink, located around Ellicott City, Color Burst Park is an amazing outdoor experience. Not only is it good for ice-skating, but it also holds many concerts and other fun events during the winter. There are also indoor and outdoor dining areas that offer amazing food. Their hours are from 4-9 p.m. from Monday through Thursday, 4-10 p.m. on Friday's, noon-10 pm on Saturday and noon-8 p.m. on Sundays. To get on the ice you must reserve your times online,

including a \$12 charge and \$3 for ice skate rentals. When on the ice you get approximately 75-minutes to skate. Skate-aids are also available for \$5. This park also offers other activities during the summer including movie nights, guest speakers, and areas for picnics. Overall, Color Burst Park is a fun experience during both the summer and winter seasons. The atmosphere and the rink itself is kept clean, looks comforting and includes loads of activities for all ages.

In and around Severna Park there are many good skating-rinks that you should try as well. These are all specifically my opinion on the best ones that I recommend to try during the winter season. Both of these rinks include an amazing skating experience, on and off the ice.

They both also offer amazing atmospheres that can be enjoyed during a variety of seasons, not just winter.



Top right caption: One of the metal tree sculptures in the D.C Art Sculpture Garden during the winter season. Photo by Artin Tarpinian Bottom left caption: Photo of Color Burst Park Ice Rink located in Columbia, Maryland at night during the ice-skating season. Photo by Artin Tarpinian

# "The Girl in the Castle" Keeps You Guessing

A thrilling novel presented by James Patterson and Emma Raymond.

Andrea Rom | Guest Writer

"A Girl in the Castle" by James Patterson and Emma Raymond is a thrilling novel about a seventeen year old girl who seems to be existing in two time periods at once. The worst part is, nobody seems to believe her. The book captures the woke issues of society as well as incorporating fantasy and fiction with a secondary time period in the 1300s. This book has loads of suspense as well as unexpected twists and turns. The book may not sit well with your stomach if you're squeamish, however, so be prepared for self harm and other horrific death. The authors of this book perfectly capture true loss as the young girl grapples with severe PTSD and psychological issues.

Hannah's story has you guessing right up to the end, and the immense descriptions

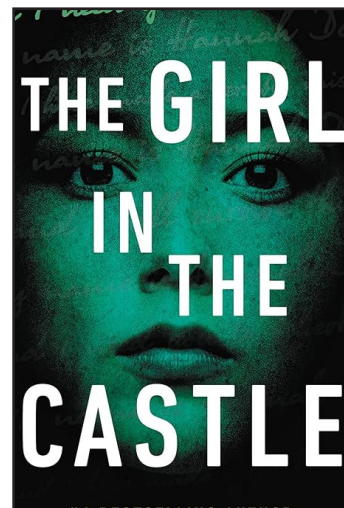
and realistic feeling make you wonder if you're going insane along with her. This book isn't only a gruesome thriller however, it incorporates romance and mystery when a stranger, Jordan Hassan, volunteers to look after her. This novel seamlessly blends historical fiction with modern mystery. The authors have done an incredible job at crafting a narrative that is captivating but may haunt you after you read. The strong descriptive language draws readers into a separate dimension where lines between reality and imagination are blurred and you don't know who to believe.

The novels also have incredibly rich and complex characters and incredibly detailed surroundings and settings. The castle that Hannah resides in when she's in the

1300 era, or more accurately, when her "psychotic episodes" hit, is described almost as if it's another living breathing character. The readers are indulged in information that really brings its backstory to life by using interlinking timelines and intriguing issues that keeps readers on the edge of their seats.

Loss and suffering is a big part of most of this book, but it's also a book of healing and moving forward in life, even if that means leaving people you love behind.

"The Girl in the Castle" is a compelling read for all genres and those interested in psychological thrillers. The ending will leave readers stunned, scratching for another read because once you know, you know.



Hannah Dory, a patient of the Belman Psych Mental Hospital, feels alone in her belief that she truly exists in two timelines. The faded image of her face illustrates the constant disconnect she feels from both of her worlds and her inability to control what life she lives. Photo from Grand Central Publishing.

## "Greenglass House" by Kate Milford

A book with not just mystery, but rich characters too.

Elizabeth St. Andrie | Guest Writer

"Greenglass House," by Kate Milford, is rich with world-building and characterization. Published in 2014, the book follows the adventures of Milo, the adopted son of two innkeepers in the city of Nagspeake. When guests arrive unexpectedly, it spurs a mystery that fuels the rest of the plot.

The plot may seem slow to some because the action doesn't really pick up until about twenty pages in, but, the rich worldbuilding is evident even on the first page. As soon as you read about "fountain pens that write in illegal shades of green," you'll be hooked. The book is set during Christmastime, and readers will sympathize with Milo's frustration over having his holidays interrupted. Once the action picks up with the appearance of a

mysterious map, it will keep you up under the covers with a flashlight.

The twist at the end is a great shock, and it can be fun to go back through and see if you can spot it coming. But therein lies the difficulty: Mystery books can be boring once you know how they end. That's why some of the best mysteries often weave other elements into the plot, so when you go back through, you get to notice all the complexity that you might have missed. It gives the book a sense of depth. And this is exactly what Milford does.

For starters, there's the city of Nagspeake. Not only is it partially based on the Chesapeake Bay, Milford is from Riva, but all the little details that Milford adds in, like the history of Nagspeake and

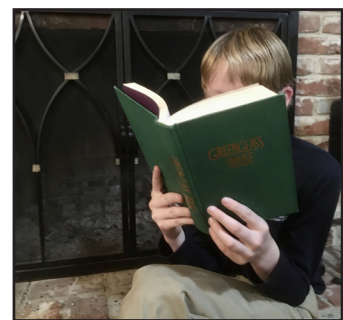
Greenglass House, relate to the plot. It can be a hard task for authors to work in worldbuilding and still have it relate to the plot, but Milford does this invisibly. The long paragraphs of description are still engaging because of their richness, and they also provide clues and foreshadowing.

Milo's adoption is also a plot thread that is enjoyable on a second read, because of the character growth that isn't ruined by knowing the ending, since the main point of it is its nuances.

Looking for foreshadowing can also be enjoyable on a second read, although perhaps more so for those who enjoy English class. It is especially interesting to see in the stories-within-a-story that appear in the book, which also appear

in "The Raconteur's commonplace Book," another novel by Milford.

Overall, "Greenglass House" is an enjoyable read, especially during the holidays. And the rich worldbuilding makes it a mystery to remember — and reread.



"Greenglass House" is a good book to curl up by the fire with during the holidays. It makes it a little more immersive, considering the setting. Photo taken by Elizabeth St. Andrie.



## Why students are embracing records.

Nicholas Stohler | Guest Writer

In today's world, where music, movies and podcasts can be streamed at any moment without a purchase, vinyl records have made a surprising resurgence, especially among younger audiences. You can't walk through a Target or Walmart without spotting a vinyl record section, attend a concert without seeing vinyl for sale at the merch table, or scroll through TikTok without an artist promoting their latest album on this ancient device. But, who exactly is responsible for this resurgence?

"I have no clue," admits Matt Mona, owner of KA-CHUNK Records, a beloved local vinyl shop located in Downtown Annapolis.

Opened in 2011, KA-CHUNK was created with the intention of being an underground haven for music lovers. Mona designed the shop in order to create a unique, inviting atmosphere for patrons to explore.

"It's a sweet spot," senior Owen Blackburn said, noting the shops vintage posters, tape machines and even arcade games.

Mona, who grew up in a musical family near Washington, D.C., has always been passionate about participating in

local music scenes. While deciding on the location for his shop, he recognized a gap in Annapolis.

"D.C. has cool places, Baltimore has cool places, but Annapolis didn't really have anything at the time," Mona said.

Over the past 13 years, KA-CHUNK has transformed into a beloved community hub for music enthusiasts.

"The record selection is very diverse; they have a lot of records to choose from, and the staff is very nice and always welcoming," Blackburn said.

Initially, KA-CHUNK focused on less mainstream records, catering to a niche audience. However, the landscape shifted dramatically after the COVID lockdown.

"People didn't really know if it was going to be a trend or if it was going to be a mainstay in people's lives," Mona reflects. "I think evidence has shown over time that it has become a mainstay." The lockdown prompted many people to discover new hobbies, and for some, this meant diving into the world of vinyl collecting.

Social media has played a significant role in promoting this vinyl revival. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram have al-

lowed artists and fans to share their collections and experiences with a wider audience.

"I think it's partially a collectible item," Blackburn said.

"Like, I don't think that many people want to listen to records. You know, I think it's more that people like having something to collect," Mona said.

If you're looking for a cozy spot to explore vinyl re-

cords and immerse yourself in local music culture, according to students KA-CHUNK Records is a must-visit. "The store goes beyond being a nice place to buy records. It really is a cozy atmosphere and definitely caters to the Rock N' Roll lifestyle," senior Owen Cress said.



A vinyl from the band Operation Ivy in Annapolis' KA-CHUNK. KA-CHUNK is an all-in-one shop for music and game lovers who would like to add some extra records to their collections. Photo taken by Nicholas Stohler.

## Top Vinyl Sales 2024

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1 |  | TAYLOR SWIFT<br>"The Tortured Poets Department" | 3 |  | BILLIE EILISH<br>"Hit Me Hard And Soft" | 5 |  | CHAPPELL ROAN<br>"The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess" |
| 2 |  | OASIS<br>"Definitely Maybe"                     | 4 |  | FONTAINES DC<br>"Romance"               | 6 |  | SABRINA CARPENTER<br>"Short n' Sweet"                      |

According to Official Charts

# Army-Navy 2024

One of the most anticipated rivalries in college football was on Dec. 14 to a sold-out stadium.

Aileen Jeter | Features Editor

The Army-Navy Game is one of the most iconic rivalries in college football. The game has been televised every year since 1945 and is frequently attended by the President of the United States.

But neither the Black Knights of West Point nor the Midshipmen of the US Naval Academy have taken home a national NCAA title in the last few decades. So what makes these games so popular?

Not only are the games a feature of the sheer athleticism and hard work of Division 1 football players, but they represent something much bigger — the unity of the United States military, and the fact that these players have not only drafted themselves to the NCAA, but to the country — risking their lives to protect our freedoms.

This rivalry is not the same as, say, Alabama and Georgia in the SEC. The spectators understand that every player on the field has chosen to selflessly devote their lives to the safety and preservation of our country. For that matter, both sides are respected equally, no matter who wins or loses.

However, this doesn't mean the games don't get intense. Most people know someone who has served or currently serves in either branch, which gives nearly every American a team to root for.

The game occurred on Dec. 14 in Washington, DC — maintaining the tradition

of playing on the second Saturday of December — bets were placed on which team will emerge victorious, from both sets of fans.

The popular team at the moment is the Army Black Knights. Since the game's inception in 1890, West Point has come home triumphant only 55 times. However, in recent seasons, the Black Knights have a two-year streak of beating the Midshipmen, and they intend to raise that number.

West Point currently stands at 9-0 in the season, but even that statistic undermines their success. This year, Army has won nearly every game by at least 17 points, with their average margin of victory being 28.3. For context, this puts West Point at third in the nation right now, just behind Texas and Ohio State.

So where do the Midshipmen stand in this? The year started strong for the Navy, going undefeated for six weeks. However, they fell short when facing Notre Dame and Rice University, and by pretty decent margins. This doesn't mean all hope is lost for the Midshipmen, though. Whispers of their junior quarterback Blake Horvath being a Heisman Trophy contender have been circulating throughout ESPN.

Horvath has been having an unmatched season, and has been ranked next to the likes of Alabama quarterback Jalen Milroe and Notre Dame's Riley Leonard since the beginning of fall. Horvath is a huge advantage for the Midshipmen, and puts

them at a near-equal match for the Black Knights this December.

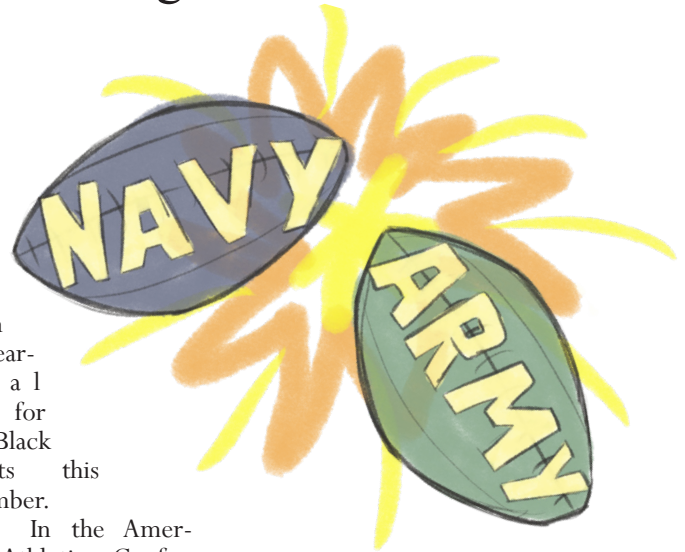
In the American Athletic Conference (AAC), West Point currently stands at the No. 1 spot, while Navy trails close behind at No. 3. This is historic, as there might be a possibility for the two to face off in the AAC Championship game the week before Dec. 14. In other words, the country might see two Army-Navy games this year.

But at the moment, none of this is for certain. What is for sure is that Americans are in for an edge-of-their-seat game with outstanding perfor-

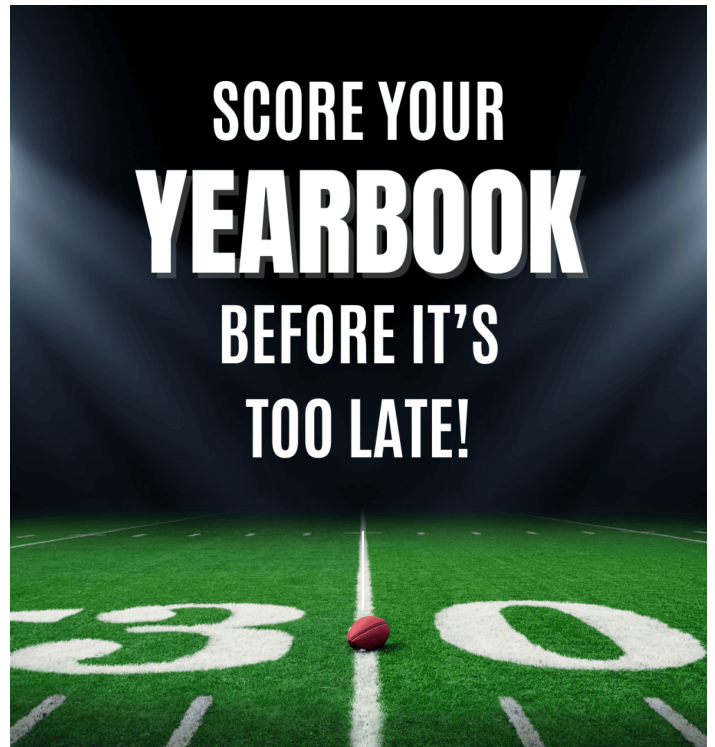
man-ces and energy.

The Navy team pulled out a win over Army with a 31-13 final score, dominating from the first quarter of the game.

The Army vs Navy game showcases a thrilling rivalry game and represents the clash on the football field aside from the collaboration in the defense of the nation. The talent displayed on the field and the selflessness to go fight for freedom is and will be honored by this game for many years to come. Graphic by Ruby Howland



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# The Elimination of Signing Day

NCAA changes so far and what it means for NCAA athletes, coaches and sports.

Emerson Scott | Sports Editor

College athletics today is an ever changing topic; constant shifting in NCAA rules and regulations are creating new realities for athletes at a rapidly increasing rate. From changes in conferences, roster sizes and scholarship money available, to new rules around financial aid, NIL (name, image, likeness), as well as the nixing of signing day.

The most recent of these changes is the elimination of signing day. The decision was made on October 9th and it marked the end of a 60 year signing day tradition. More formally, signing day is the signing

of the National Letter of Intent, or NLI for short. The National Letter of Intent is a legally binding document used by division 1 and 2 college programs that promises student athletes the financial and academic agreement made between them and the school, in return the student then commits to attend the college for at least one year.

The purpose of the National Letter of Intent was to prevent other college programs from recruiting athletes from other schools, and also setting clear guidelines in regards to deals between the school and

the athlete.

Without it, it will now become a part of financial aid deals and will serve a similar purpose but in a different format. This change also opens the door for more complex agreements to be made that involve name, image, likeness (NIL) negotiations for student athletes to profit off of.

NIL, or name, image, and likeness, is a very new thing in the world of college sports as well, and was just formally brought onto the scene in 2021. It allows student athletes to create revenue off of their image even commercially, and receive and create deals that make use of their fame and personality. Prior to this, the NCAA was beyond strict on what students could and couldn't do using their name, inflicting serious penalties even for accepting free food or gifts due to a student's athletic fame. But now, athletes can make money off of their name on the back of jerseys, custom shoe deals, commercial appearances, and more.

Although a lot of what is to come is still gray waters, the feelings of unsettlement is an opinion shared by many signed and verbally committed high school students here at Severna Park.

University of Massachusetts Lowell lacrosse commit, and Junior Lizzy Thompson noted,

"I feel that the changes

in the NCAA are a mix of good and bad, there are upsides and downsides. This may open bigger opportunities but it may cause uncertainty for many."

College bound athletes are now finding new ways to attack recruitment and adapt to the shifting. Because of these changes, some students feel the need to commit earlier to ensure spots, but now nothing is promised. Roster caps have put coaches in a tougher position than ever, having to make choices about a player's future that they have never had to do before.

All of these changes have really shaken up how the NCAA operates and it is now clear that they are not afraid to mix the pot. The 60 year tradition of signing day, many believed, is something that would never change or go away, but that is just a testament to what the NCAA is willing to do to keep up with the advancement of college athletics. Signing day might not include a binding document anymore, but the ceremonial aspects still hold major amounts of importance. Athletes that worked hard in the high school and club setting not only use that day to finalize a commitment, but also to celebrate a new chapter of their life as well as their dedication to their sport; and that is something that can never be taken away.



Senior lacrosse, and soccer commits pose together for a picture on Severna Park's signing day ceremony this year. This was a day for the seniors to take pride in their hard work and represent their school that they will be attending beyond Severna Park. (Photo credit: Erin Hussey)

## THEMED GAMES

GIRLS AND BOYS VARSITY GAMES

**HOLIDAY**  
vs GSA

Dec. 20 @ 6:30 PM

**BLACKOUT**  
vs SOUTH RIVER  
Jan. 12 @ 5 PM  
and 6:45 PM

**NEON**  
vs OLD MILL  
Jan. 24 @ 5 PM and  
6:45 PM

**CAMO**  
vs BROADNECK  
Jan. 31 @ 5 PM and  
6:45 PM

**JERSEY**  
vs CHESAPEAKE  
Feb. 7 @ 5 PM and  
6:45 PM



GO FAN  
TICKET  
SALES

# Getting Ready for Girls Basketball

How the girls on the basketball team are preparing for the upcoming season.

Samantha Polk | Online Editor

Players are ramping up their preparation for the season—physically and mentally. For athletes like Charley Coward and Lena Slade, making the team requires dedication, hard work, and a positive mindset. Lena Slade, a senior, has spent much of her offseason focusing on physical conditioning.

“To get myself prepared for my senior season, I spent a lot of time in the gym training cardio and lifting weights to be stronger,” Slade said. The physical demands of basketball, from sprints to contested rebounds, require strength, endurance, and agility. By improving her fitness, Slade ensures she can compete at the highest level throughout the season. Building strength isn’t just about lifting weights; it’s about ensuring a well-rounded fitness routine that prepares players for the constant movement of the game.

For Severna Park’s varsity team, being in peak physical condition is essential for both individual performance and team success. While physical readiness is critical, mental preparation is just as important for success in tryouts and the season ahead. Charley Coward emphasizes the need for mental toughness.

“I’ve also just been preparing mentally because it’s a really fun season but also a tough one. You have to be mentally tough,” Coward said.

Basketball requires players to stay focused under pressure, make quick decisions and bounce back from setbacks. Whether it’s missing a shot or playing in a high-stress game, the ability to stay positive and composed can make the difference between success and failure. For Coward, staying mentally strong is a key part of preparing for tryouts and beyond.

Both Coward and Slade know the value of training with teammates.

“I’ve been going to training with some teammates, including Brooke and Charley, making it really fun and encouraging each other to push through,” Slade said.

Working together not only strengthens team dynamics but also boosts individual performance. Training with others adds an element of fun while also providing a source of motivation and support when things get tough.

The camaraderie shared by teammates fosters a competitive yet supportive environment, where athletes push each other to improve and hold each other accountable.

Coward and Slade’s approaches highlight the importance of a well-rounded training plan, both on and off the court. By focusing on strength, endurance, and mental resilience, players can ensure they’re ready to face the challenges of a competitive season ahead.



During the 2023-2024 girls basketball season, varsity won the regional championship. This year the goal is the same. Make it to regional's and win again, possibly even earning more awards on the way. Photo taken by Annie Houghton

With a few games under their belt, the girls basketball team is gearing up for their next games. For these next games, students can participate in

them by adhering in game spirit themes such as blackout for January 17 against South River and neon for January 24 against Old Mill.

