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*Photo link: Longwood Gardens*



# Contents

*Photo link: Mt. Cuba Center*

<b>COMMUNITY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BUSINESS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>FOOD &amp; DINING.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>HEALTH.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>SPORTS.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>STAY CONNECTED .....</b>	<b>30</b>



**FIREWORKS GUIDE**



**LARGEST BOND BILL IN DELAWARE HISTORY PASSED**



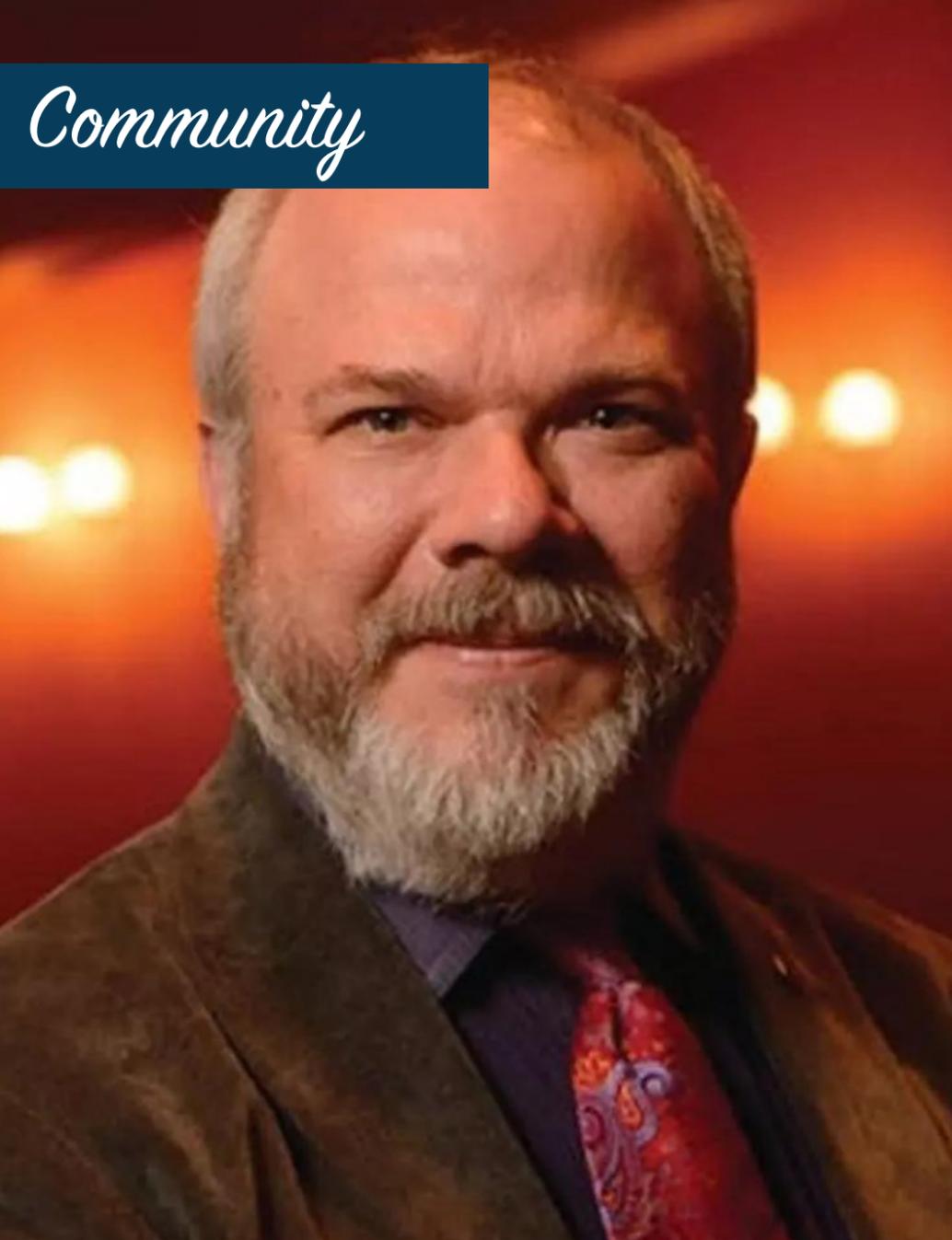
**NEW VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER IN WILMINGTON**

*Photo link: Mt. Cuba Center*



*Community*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# MARK FIELDS TO RETIRE FROM THE GRAND AFTER 16 YEARS

“It does seem like the right time, both professionally and personally,” Fields said. “The Grand is in a really good position now, having emerged from the pandemic and with the success that we’ve had in fundraising. We’re in a really good place so I feel comfortable making room for somebody else and new ideas and new energy.”

“From a personal point of view, my partner retired a year and a half ago and this creates an opportunity for us to enjoy retirement together. We have a lot of interests and a lot of things we want to do, and so it all seemed to come together.”

## FIELDS ADVOCATED FOR ARTS

While at The Grand, Fields, 62, has been a tireless spokesman for both public and private support of the arts as well as a constant cheerleader for downtown Wilmington.

“Mark Fields was certainly the right guy at the right time for The Grand,” said Brian DiSabatino, chairman of The Grand’s board of directors, in a press release. “During his entire tenure he showcased not only The Grand, but the relevancy of the arts in Delaware. Carrying us through the most difficult time in our history, he’ll be able to look back fondly that he left The Grand as an amazing beacon of hope, joy and community.”

Fields said his proudest accomplishment at The Grand was helping it get through the worst of the pandemic.

“That was just an amazing challenge to be a performing arts center that can’t do performances,” he said.

The Grand managed to keep the core staff together, but had to lay off 60% of the staff for about two years, with the promise that they would be called back as soon as possible.

“When we were in a position to hire everybody back, 85% of the people that we laid off came back,” Fields said. “Some of them quit jobs, other jobs that they’d taken, to be able to come back here and I just think that speaks volumes about this organization and this group of people who work here, that it’s all in service of a mission that we all believe in very deeply.”

He and Wendy Ho Schnell plan to travel, Fields said. “We’re actually going on a bike trip in the Netherlands this summer and have also planned a trip to California’s national parks in October,” he said. “I think we’re going to New Orleans in November, so we’re not wasting any time.”

An enthusiastic apiarist known for keeping bees on the **roof** of The Grand, Fields has been training a bee-prentice who will take over the rooftop hives when he leaves. “I won’t have a key to the building anymore,” he pointed out. But he does have more hives in a nearby community garden.

Fields has no plans to work elsewhere. “I can’t imagine another professional experience that will be able to compare to the time I have spent here at The Grand,” he said in the release. “It seems right to go out on such a high note.”

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

BY BETSY PRICE

The executive director of **The Grand Opera House** will retire in September after 16 years of steering the fortunes of Wilmington’s premier performing arts institution. Mark Fields started with The Grand in 2006 as a marketing consultant, was appointed managing director in December of that year and then swapped jobs with the-then executive director in December 2014.

# MT. CUBA'S FIVE KESTREL CHICKS GET BANDED



BY BETSY PRICE

**Mt. Cuba Center** is generally known for its horticulture, but now it has good news for the avian world: A pair of its kestrels has sired five chicks.

Kestrels, the smallest **falcons** in the U.S., have experienced as much as a 93% population decline since the 1960s, especially in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions, according to a press release from the **Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control**.

The chicks were discovered two weeks ago during an annual check of the kestrels' nest box in Mt. Cuba's meadows. As part of tracking the endangered species, tiny samples of the chicks' blood were taken and the babies all had leg bands put on so they can be identified.

Mt. Cuba's kestrel box is one of seven on its site and

one of 71 kestrel nest boxes from all three counties that have been monitored during the 2022 nesting season.

DNREC called the discovery of Mt. Cuba's chicks "another milestone moment." The state agency leads the **Delaware Kestrel Partnership**, a group of conservation agencies and organizations, which is working to save the American kestrels in North America. The state declared them an endangered species in 2014.

As part of the state response, DNREC and the zoo began installing nest boxes on both private and public lands across the state. The partnership's focus now is on helping the kestrel rebound, said DNREC biologist Jordan Brown. See her recent survey [HERE](#).

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# LONGWOOD GARDENS TO LIGHT UP JUNE 30 WITH MUNRO EXHIBIT

BY BETSY PRICE

Longwood Gardens will light up June 30 with eight huge new installations by Bruce Munro, including 18,000 stemmed bulbs in a Field of Light, 1,000 flamingos wading in a pool and projections on a canvas of 8,960 CDs.

It's been a decade since Munro, a British citizen known for large light displays he describes as immersive, first lit up Longwood **in summer 2012**. That show included lighted pathways, shimmery bulbs by the lake, towers created from layers of bottles and huge chandeliers in the conservatory.

This year's nighttime "Light: Installations by Bruce Munro" will run through Oct. 30 on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. Shows will start at dusk and require special tickets.

The installations, indoors and out, include:

- Field of Light's 18,000 illuminated stemmed orbs lit by fiber optics along the Large Lake landscape
- SOS in the orchard, an array of lights with a pathway of 162 gabion baskets synchronized to the tuning of an old radio
- Gone Fishing's three 15-foot diameter structures, each formed by 100 fishing rods reflecting on the surface of the Small Lake.
- Time & Again's 37 stainless steel lilies forming a 20-foot convex dome shimmering with radial star bursts of light at the Whispering Bench

- Ramandu's Table, 1,000 white flamingos with continuing changing hues wading in the pear-shaped basin near the Chimes Tower.
- Green Flash in the East Conservatory, a three-and-a-half-meter geodesic sphere of 1,820 empty bottles
- C-Scales in the conservatory's Exhibition Hall, a shimmering lake of 8,960 CDs reflecting a Longwood inspired film sequence from overhead projectors
- Time & Place in the conservatory's Music Room, where artwork reinterprets moments in time, represented as abstractions.

"Art is a strong way of connecting people to themselves and the landscape," Munro said in a press release. "I hope to inspire guests to become more aware of the space they are in and to revel in the wonder that is Longwood Gardens."

His work has been shown at the **Victoria & Albert Museum**, London; **Waddesdon Manor**, Buckinghamshire; and the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum**, New York. See some of his work **HERE**.

Longwood Gardens, located at 101 Longwood Road in Kennett Square, PA, is a former du Pont estate that routinely tops lists of Philadelphia-area cultural attractions. Special tickets are required for "Light," starting at 5 p.m. June 30-Aug.28 and at 4 p.m. Sept. 1-Oct. 30.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



# BRANDYWINE ZOO PUDU HAECHAN DIES AFTER SHORT ILLNESS

Zoo. “At this time, we do not have a cause of death and won’t until after the necropsy,” which is the animal version of an autopsy. The Brandywine Zoo, run by DNREC, is working with the **New Bolton Center** of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, who will perform the necropsy

Haechan’s female companion, with whom he shared the pudu habitat, has no symptoms of illness. She is under careful observation, the DNREC press release said.

“Everyone is grieving here,” said Spencer. “It’s so sad, especially when the two pudu had bonded and seemed content.”

Clover did not, however, seem to have become pregnant, said a Los Angeles Zoo information officer.

### PUDU NAMESAKE

Haechan was born at the Los Angeles Zoo in December 2018. He was named by fans of the Korean pop music group **NCT-127** for his resemblance to a singer in the group. Haechan, which means full sun, is the singer’s stage name.

A fan-driven Facebook fundraiser raised more money than it needed in just a few hours to name him Haechan.

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# YOUR GUIDE TO DELAWARE FIREWORKS, AND SO FOURTH

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Most Delaware places known for Fourth of July fireworks and other Independence Day activities have announced their plans. Organizers consistently ask for people to arrive early and leave late, and the Delaware Department of Transportation warns that many events close roads, too.

Dusk is about 9:05 p.m. on the Fourth, but fireworks could start as late as 9:30.

## FIREWORKS ON (OR NEAR) THE FOURTH

- **Bethany Beach**'s holiday celebration starts with a parade at noon on July 4 featuring floats decorated with a "Timeless Bethany" theme. The parade will also feature bands, autos, bicyclists and pedestrians. Parade awards will be announced at the bandstand at 7:15 p.m., followed by concert at 7:30 and the fireworks at dusk.

- "Yes, we provide fireworks in Dewey (on Rehoboth Bay in front of northbeach) on the 4th of July," businessman Alex Pires said. "Always on 4th of July."

- **Dover**'s Fourth of July Celebration on July 4 usually features a parade, music on Legislative Mall and fireworks. The parade starts at 6 p.m. at Hazel Road and follows State Street, with the reviewing stand on The Green.

- The **Hockessin** Fourth of July Festival and Fireworks includes neighborhood relays in the morning, a parade in the afternoon and the fireworks at dusk on July 4. The fireworks can be seen all over Hockessin, the website says, with the main viewing from Swift Park, Piedmont Baseball Fields, Hockessin Library and Artesian Soccer Fields.

The day's activities are led by Mike Smith and Mark Blake, of the Greater Hockessin Area Development Association. The parade and relays are returning for the first time since the pandemic, Smith noted.

They have also added a **5K for Fireworks** run, on June 30 at the Hockessin Athletic Club, to "get people excited" about the holiday activities. The run will also raise money for the fireworks. "We're looking for sponsors and donations to help us reach the goal of \$15,500 needed to make it all happen!" the organizers write on their **Facebook** page.

They're also pushing publicity toward Pike Creek and Newark, whose residents often attend the fireworks, to join in the neighborhood relays, he said. "It's a fun way of celebrating America in Hockessin," Smith said.

- **Laurel**'s 28th annual 4th of July Celebration begins at 3 p.m. July 4, at Market Street Square Park. Events include a petting zoo; two live bands; a car show, 4-8 p.m. at Janosik Park, a parade starting at 7 p.m.; and fireworks at dusk.

- **Lewes**' Go Fourth fireworks will start at dusk on July 4. The Lewes Chamber of Commerce said children's activities start at 9 a.m., and there will also be a boat parade.

- **Newark**'s Liberty Day and Fourth of July Fireworks runs 6-10 p.m. July 4 at the University of Delaware athletic complex on South College Avenue.

- Rehoboth Beach's fireworks are set to begin around 9:30 p.m. July 3. The display will launch from the beach near Brooklyn Avenue.

- The **Smyrna/Clayton** July 4th Foundation hosts Delaware's oldest-running fireworks, at dusk on July 4, across from Smyrna High, with a parade that morning.

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*Photo by Jopwell from Pexels*



*Business*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**

# ABANDONED BURGER KING FOUND IN CONCORD MALL SENDS INTERNET WILD

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

“A fully intact vintage Burger King was found behind a wall at the Concord Mall,” a Twitter user posted Tuesday. And by Wednesday, the tweet had gone viral, with more than 15,000 retweets, more than 160,000 likes, a Reddit [thread](#) and an [article](#) in India. Another Reddit [thread](#) about the photo started Monday.

The Twitter user credited the photo to Jonathan Pruitt and said it was taken in April. Pruitt said that he took the photo when he was working at the mall because he “thought it was cool.” He posted on a Facebook group for regional memories, but it didn’t get much response.

This week, however, “my phone has been blowing up” with comments.

Pruitt grew up in Baltimore and lives in Newark and never ate at this Burger King. He is, however, fond of Whoppers.

The earlier Reddit thread, also labeled DE business, had comments from people (somewhat) familiar with the situation. The thread’s title said the Burger King closed around 2009.

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# ATTENTION SHOPPERS: NO MORE PLASTIC BAGS AS OF JULY 1

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

“Bags, wallet, keys and phone” are some new lyrics suggested for the old children’s exercise song “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” as Delaware moves to a plastic bags ban.

The new words come from some creative folks at the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control to promote a broader and deeper ban on plastic bags that starts Friday, July 1.

In 2019, the state legislature voted to keep supermarkets, drugstores and other large chains from giving away thin plastic bags, effective Jan. 1, 2021. The goal: a cleaner environment.

Supporters probably expected stores to only give away compostable paper bags or charge for reusable bags, discouraging their use. Stores did sell costlier reusable bags, but, citing a brown-bag shortage, many largely switched to free thicker plastic bags. **No longer.**

“Plastic film bags, regardless of thickness, are no longer allowed,” DNREC says on its [FAQ](#). DNREC encourages customers to bring their own bags, and stores can offer reusable bags, paper bags or no bags at all. “All retail stores in Delaware are affected by the change,” the agency writes. “Restaurants are not subject to the ban.”

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*Food & Dining*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**

# DELAWARE'S 'CHOPPED' FINALIST SAYS TO STAY TUNED

BY PAM GEORGE

Delaware chef **Reuben Dhanawade** faced stiff competition on the Tuesday night finale of **Food Network's** "Chopped: Desperately Seeking Sous Chef." At stake: a sous chef position with judges Chris Santos, Maneet Chauhan or Scott Conant.

"If you want to work for me, you're going to have to stay composed, be creative and manage the clock," Santos told the four contestants, who had each won their respective semifinal battles against four other chefs.

"Sounds like a plan," replied Dhanawade, a chef at the University of Delaware.

"That's what I'm going to do," added Laura Windham, a lead cook at King + Duke in Atlanta.

## 'CHOPPED' FINALIST'S APPETIZERS

But managing time proved to be Windham's down-

fall. She left the Mexican corn ravioli in the fryer, which led to her elimination.

Dhanawade, however, did well with the appetizer basket ingredients, which also included baby bok choy, monkfish liver and yuzu kosho. He made a monkfish liver taco with a street corn ravioli crema topped by bok choy salad. "I love what you did with the taco," Santos told him.

Chauhan was also impressed that Dhanawade went in a Latin direction after seeing the street corn. But Conant wanted more restraint. Determined to take the judge's advice to heart, the Delaware Technical Community College grad approached the entrée basket with an eye on simplicity.

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BY PAM GEORGE

In Delaware, status is bestowed to those with low-digit license plates, an address in the 19807 zip code and beachfront property. But in culinary circles, you can display your cultural or financial wealth by posting your tasting menu on Facebook.

At **Snuff Mill Restaurant, Butchery & Wine Bar**, the “Off the Chain” six-course menu runs \$200 per person sans wine. The new **Bardea Steak** plans to offer a tasting menu soon. Wine dinners, which typically feature four to five courses, are rising into three figures. However, a tasting menu need not be eyewateringly pricy.

For example, at **Ciro Food & Drink** on the Wilmington Riverfront, you can choose from four courses (\$50) to eight (\$99). A tasting menu allows chefs like **Ciro’s**

# CIRO'S TASTING MENU HIGHLIGHTS HIDDEN JEWEL'S OFFERING

Michael DiBianca to get creative; the included dishes are rarely on the regular menu.

But there’s another reason why he likes them, despite the extra effort involved.

“It’s about being able to offer the best and freshest ingredients,” said DiBianca, who previously owned the acclaimed Moro in Trolley Square. “I spend most of my time early in the week sourcing produce. Then I make Venu drive and get it—wherever it might be.”

## ON THE SAME PAGE

Venu is DiBianca’s partner, Venu Gaddamidi, who is only too happy to cruise to Camden-Wyoming to pick up fresh strawberries and asparagus from Fifer Orchards. He’s also on hand to accept deliveries from Coverdale Farm.

“One of the key features of our menu is our fresh Delaware produce and staying true to people’s dietary requirements,” explained Gaddamidi, who opened the adjoining Veritas Wine & Spirits in 2009. “From now until October, the only vegetables on the tasting menu are from local farms.”

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*Government*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# GENERAL ASSEMBLY PASSES LARGEST BOND BILL IN HISTORY

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The Delaware Senate on Wednesday voted to pass the largest bond bill in state history, weighing in at a whopping \$1.4 billion. The House of Representatives passed the spending package unanimously Tuesday afternoon.

The bill allocates \$1.4 billion toward roadway enhancements, school construction, courthouse expansion, state building renovations, library upgrades, state park improvements and clean water investments.

“For the second year in a row, we are making a record-breaking investment in Delaware’s infrastructure, Delaware’s job market and Delaware’s future,” said Sen. Nicole Poore, D-Delaware City.

Poore is a co-chair of the Joint Committee on Capital Improvements, known colloquially as the Bond Committee. She said the projects funded by the bill will create jobs by putting people to work building new schools and libraries. The bill will also enhance water quality, preserve farmland, and support towns and non-profits, Poore said.

But not everybody was on board. Sen. Dave Wilson, R-Lincoln, said he wishes the bill would include more money for the Food Bank of Delaware.

“While this bill funds many important and worthy organizations, I am disappointed in the bond bill as written,” Wilson said. “Yesterday, the federal government announced an additional \$4.5 billion in aid to combat global hunger, but in our state, the Delaware

Food Bank has been seriously overlooked, receiving just \$6 million of a \$20 million ask.”

Wilson said it’s more important now than ever to fully fund programs that put food on the tables of Delaware’s most vulnerable populations. He abstained from the vote.

Last year’s **bond bill**, previously the biggest in history, totaled \$1.35 billion. What’s in the bond bill?

- \$331.4 million in state transportation allocations to complete road projects statewide, including additional funds to address the roads in poorest condition.
- \$285.2 million for school construction projects in the Appoquinimink, Brandywine, Caesar Rodney, Cape Henlopen, Capital, Christina, Colonial, Indian River, Milford and Smyrna school districts, as well as funding for all three technical school districts Polytech, New Castle County Vo-Tech and Sussex Tech school districts.
- \$90 million in community reinvestment and redevelopment to help community nonprofits and municipal organizations fund critical infrastructure upgrades
- \$80 million to the new Kent and Sussex Family Courthouses for the second year of funding.
- \$40 million for the preservation of farmland and open spaces.
- \$38.5 million for the new Troop 6 in Wilmington.

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# MCGUINNESS DEFENSE RESTS, CLOSING ARGUMENTS THURSDAY

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Testimony concluded Wednesday afternoon in the criminal corruption trial of State Auditor **Kathleen McGuinness**. Now that both sides have rested, the jury will hear closing statements and the judge's instructions Thursday, then begin deliberations.

McGuinness is charged with multiple felonies and misdemeanors alleging conflict of interest, theft, non-compliance with procurement law, official misconduct and witness intimidation. She's **accused** of arranging public payments to a campaign consultant to avoid regulator scrutiny, hiring her daughter whose salary was deposited into a jointly-owned bank account and attempting to intimidate employees who might help investigators looking into her conduct.

Before the defense rested, Superior Court Judge William Carpenter reminded McGuinness that she had the right to testify in her own defense. "I am confident my team has conveyed reasonable doubt, so no thank you, your honor," McGuinness replied.

Carpenter has limited closing statements to one and a half hours per side. Prosecutors will present their statements first, followed by the defense. The state will be allowed to offer a brief rebuttal.

The trial enters this next phase after 10 days of testimony—longer than initially expected. Most of that time was spent **questioning** the state's 25 witnesses, including current and former employees, McGuinness' family

members and friends, officials from other agencies and Department of Justice investigators.

The defense called just five witnesses, including four former employees and Frank Robinson, chief investigator for the Division of Civil Rights and Public Trust.

First on the witness stand Wednesday was Kyra Marshall, a former part-time employee and friend of McGuinness' daughter, Saylar.

Marshall testified that she got the job because of her friendship with Saylar, didn't interview for the position, drove McGuinness' state vehicle, earned \$17.50 per hour with a weekly maximum of 29.5 hours, and "banked" her hours during the state fair so she could be paid despite working more than the weekly maximum.

While that testimony may seem damning at face value, McGuinness' defense team hopes to show that Saylar McGuinness was treated just the same as other similarly situated employees, including Marshall.

The defense next called Lydia August, another former part-time employee who testified from home via Zoom. Her testimony brought some levity to the trial as her puppy barked through most of the direct and cross examinations.

She said there was some confusion as to whether she resigned from the auditor's office or was laid off.

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BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware’s Democrat-majority Senate on Tuesday sent several controversial bills to Gov. John Carney for his signature.

Most of the topics seemed ripped from headlines. The gun bill would bar anyone **under 21** from buying or owning a gun, as well as controlling a firearm or ammunition. The abortion bill will increase the number of **health professionals** who can perform an abortion.

# SENATE SENDS GUN, ABORTION BILLS TO CARNEY

Another would prevent law enforcement from using **deceptive methods** when questioning minors suspected of a crime.

One will jack up the cost of parking violations and allow DelDOT to post signs telling commercial trucks they cannot park or stop on roadsides in residential areas.

## HOUSE BILL 451

**HB 451** would bar anyone under 21 from purchasing, owning, possessing, or controlling a firearm or ammunition of a firearm. **Sen. David Sokola**, D-Newark, said this bill is directly addressing the recent epidemic of shootings.

It was proposed after the May 24 school shooting at **Robb Elementary** in Uvalde, Texas, killed 19 children in the third-deadliest school shooting in the nation’s history.

“You somehow can walk into a sporting goods store on your 18th birthday in Delaware and purchase a far more powerful weapon capable of far greater bloodshed than a handgun,” said Sokola. “This does not make sense. Six of the nine deadliest mass shootings in the United States since 2018 have been perpetrated by people who are 21 or younger.”

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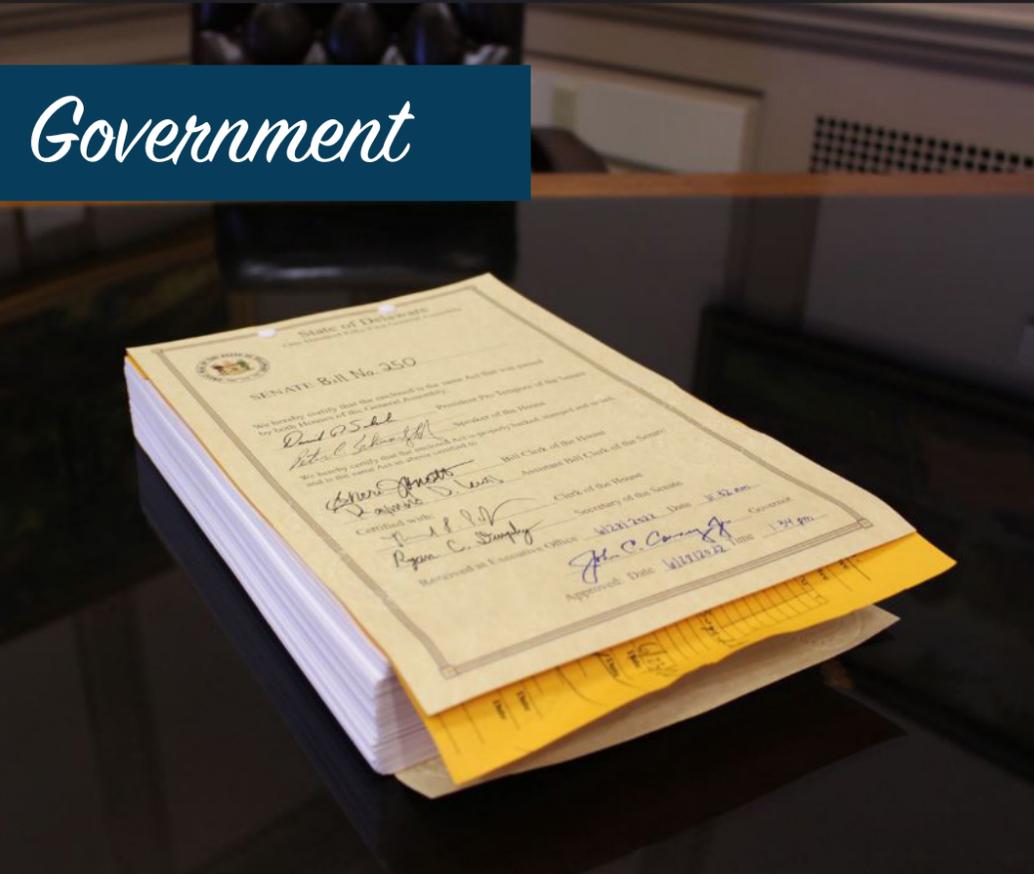
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# DELAWARE'S 2023 BUDGET SIGNED, STARTS JULY 1

the money being put into the Rainy Day and Stabilization funds. Delaware dipped into that Stabilization fund for the 2021 budget to cope with revenue losses from the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

But both the 2022 and fiscal 2023 budgets have benefited from \$1 billion surpluses in the last two years, largely from federal COVID-19 funds and huge realty transfer taxes when property sold.

The 2023 operating budget itself includes pay increases for state employees, including 2% to 9% increases for all merit employees and increases for public school transportation drivers. All state employees will also be receiving a \$500 one-time bonus.

The \$378.6 million **one-time supplemental appropriation** includes funding for the implementation of paid family leave, among other things.



### BY BETSY PRICE

On the wings of another staggering surplus, Gov. John Carney on Tuesday signed the \$5.1 billion 2023 operating budget for Delaware. It takes effect Friday, July 1.

The operating budget, **Senate Bill 250**, is the largest in Delaware's history, reflecting a rise in spending of 6.9% in spending over the previous **year**.

It also will increase Delaware's Rainy Day Fund from \$280 million to \$316 million and the Budget Stabilization Fund from \$287 million to \$402 million.

The heads of the Joint Finance Committee, which are responsible for writing state budgets after Carney submits his suggested one, said in both the Delaware **Senate** and **House** that the bills contained something for everyone.

Republicans in both houses said they could support the budget despite its increase in expenses because of



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# APPOQUINIMINK LIBRARY OPENS WITH FOCUS ON GREEN ENERGY

BY JAREK RUTZ

After decades of dealing with a teensy library stuffed inside a multi-use building, Middletown on June 24 celebrated the opening of **Appoquinimink Library**, a new 28,000 square foot library and digital center. A small crowd gathered to watch officials cut the ribbon at 651 North Broad St.

County Executive **Matt Meyer** called it a tremendous day for residents in south New Castle County, specifically the Middletown, Odessa and Townsend communities. The building’s design bridges the 18th-century residential scale of **Middletown**’s historic downtown in the city’s west end and the larger commercial scale developments in the east.

“From selecting the location to the design, it’s been a true team and neighborhood effort,” Meyer said, “and I couldn’t be prouder. I am excited for the community to

start using these amenities as soon as possible.

### WHAT’S INSIDE THE LIBRARY

The new Appoquinimink Library will offer more than checking out books or checking Uncle Google on library computers. It also includes:

- A maker space containing state-of the-art laser cutters, 3D printers and computerized vinyl cutters alongside traditional tools for making and creating.
- A recording studio where residents can capture sound and video content for editing in the library’s media lab.
- A spark wall where children can explore the different content tucked into colorful drawers and cubbies of the installation.

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# MORE LEGISLATION IN THE WORKS TO ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that would help address the state’s lingering concern over a teacher shortage was unanimously released by the Senate Education Committee June 22.

**House Bill 430**, now headed to the Senate floor, would encourage schools to begin a Grow Your Own Educator Program, which supporters believe will improve **recruitment**, retention and diversity of teachers in the First State’s public schools.

“The bill will codify a framework to support districts and charters to start and support their grow-your-own initiatives to train, stay connected with, and eventually hire their own graduates,” said Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin. She said the programs will help Delaware public schools develop educators from current public

school students. There will be bonuses in that the students will stay in Delaware and will already know the communities they work in.

### HOW IT WOULD WORK

According to Sturgeon, HB 430 builds on last year’s **HB 178**, which provided year-long teacher residencies.

The two bills allow for lengthy residencies for prospective teachers, allowing them to gain experience in the classroom while also helping to grow the educator pipeline in Delaware.

Sturgeon spoke in support of HB 430, with hopes of it addressing the state’s teacher shortage.

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# COLONIAL'S DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM SHOWS IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

The district needed to focus on keeping the kids coming to school, helping students with academic and emotional support, and even tracking their classes to make sure they were taking and passing the correct classes to get the required graduation credits.

Menzer went to Murray Berstein, then chief executive officer of Nixon Medical Services, who was also passionate about students staying in schools so they have a gateway to college and future endeavors.

“Look, why don’t you get a bunch of business people together who want to tell a principal how to run a school, and we’ll bring them in,” Menzer said to Berstein. “We’ll meet regularly and talk about the challenges a principal of a high school faces and maybe we can do something, and we can focus on dropout prevention because that’s what you’re passionate about.”

Menzer envisioned Colonial hiring people from [Communities in Schools](#), a national nonprofit that works inside public schools to help at-risk students. But Menzer needed \$52,000 to hire two Communities in Schools employees. Bernstein, [WSFS Bank](#) in Wilmington and Chris Kenny, CEO of ShopRite joined forces to raise the money. (Kenny is the owner of Delaware LIVE News).

“The CIS workers really just end up being an added resource for our school in terms of climate, counseling and guidance,” said Menzer.

This past weekend, the state published its annual dropout and graduation [report](#). The data comes from the 2020-2021 academic year. The First State had a graduation rate of 87.02% and a dropout rate of 1.4% last year. Those numbers have been consistent since the state began publishing these reports in the 2014-2015 school year. That year, Delaware students had a graduation rate of 84.3% and a dropout rate of 2.19%.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

BY JAREK RUTZ

Kelvin Addy needed a push to make it into William Penn’s 2014 graduating class. Now he’s working for one of the organizations that helped him get his diploma, helping today’s students succeed and closing a circle that began with Colonial School District’s novel dropout prevention program.

Since the program’s implementation in 2012, graduation rates have spiked and dropouts have plummeted. At the time, the dropout rate at the school was 7% and the graduation rate was 74%. As of 2021, the last year that Colonial has a complete dataset, the dropout rate fell to 1.7%, and the graduation rate leaped to 83%, even with the pandemic chewing on resources.

The idea for the program came in 2005, when Jeffrey Menzer, then principal of William Penn High School—the district’s only high school—noticed that the system did not have a great track record of seeing its students through to graduation. He thought that ought to change.



# DELTECH TO ADD VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER IN WILMINGTON

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware Technical Community College announced Tuesday that it plans to build a Veterans Resource Center at its Wilmington campus to serve as a hub for students with military ties. The center will be funded with an \$18,000 grant from Navient, a financial services company in Wilmington known for student loans.

“We are very grateful to all of our donors and, thankfully, we now have Veterans Resource Centers at all four of our campuses,” said Delaware Tech President Mark Brainard. “We appreciate the continued generosity of our donors and their support of our student veterans.”

Veterans are valuable members of the college’s community and are greatly appreciated for their service to the U.S., he said. The center will allow them to socialize as well as work there. The center adds to DelTech’s

commitment to supporting military families and veterans. Other military services at the college include:

- A director of military and veteran affairs who coordinates college initiatives statewide
- Academic counselors dedicated to providing assistance through the application and enrollment process
- Help with Veterans Affairs and tuition assistance benefits
- Priority of services including course registration and placement in competitive programs
- Veterans Inspiring Progress program that connects student veterans with resources to help them succeed and offers support and camaraderie

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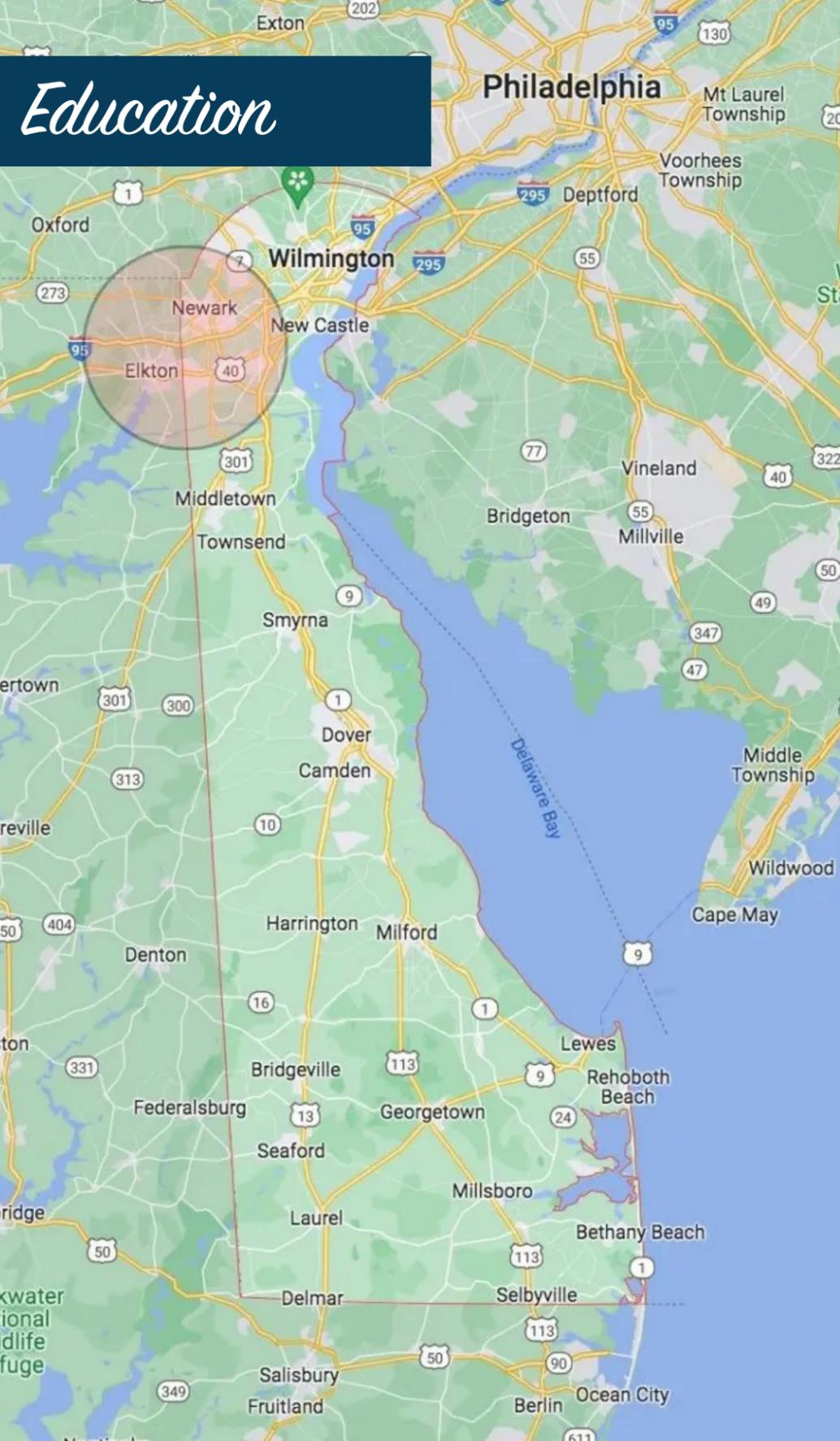


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# BILL TO BLOCK FIVE-MILE RADIUS CHARTER PREFERENCE RULE DRAWS HEAT

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that would bar charter schools from giving preference in student admissions to those living within a 5-mile radius of the school faced a lot of scrutiny in the Senate Executive Committee June 22. **House Bill 238** was passed by the House on May 5, although it **faced concerns** in the House hearings as well.

Rep. **Nnamdi Chukwuocha**, D-Wilmington, said then that the 5-mile radius preference has racist implications and will continue discrimination.

The House vote was a close one, with 22 favorable, 16 against and one legislator not voting. As of 2 p.m. June 23, the vote on House Bill 238 had not been published on the General Assembly's **website**.

"I think that there is, if not unanimous, near unanimous concerns among the committee members with regard to this legislation, the way it's structured and kind of impact it will have," said Sen. Brian Townsend, D-Newark, on June 22. He said it is sad that neighbors don't know each other, since "18 different school buses come into a neighborhood and take the kids to 18 different schools," but that this bill is not the solution.

Delaware charters have become more diverse over recent years, he said, specifically citing **Newark Charter**.

"I think that there have been changes over the years that have led to greater diversity at Newark Charter," Townsend said. "I think that the ongoing tensions between it and the Christina School District are sad to see,

and I think that in many ways they are more one-sided, coming from Christina."

Earlier this year, Christina's school board grappled with the idea of placing a **moratorium** on all new and existing charter schools in New Castle County. After months of **debate**, it never happened.

Townsend said he was bussed into the city to attend Stubbs Elementary when he was a child.

"I don't think the answer is to perpetuate a system where kids go to school so far from their homes," he said. "I think it is a shame that we do not have more modern, amazing palaces of schools in the city of Wilmington for the little kings and queens in those neighborhoods."

Committee chair David Sokola, D-Newark, presented the bill that was sponsored by Rep. John Kowalko, D-Newark. Even so, Sokola himself said he is very opposed to the bill.

"The fact of the matter is if it's repealed there is no feeder pattern for the Newark Charter School," said Sokola, "and I don't know if that would be an educationally sound thing to do."

Franklin Newton, head of Newark Charter, said he opposes the bill because it isn't what Delaware code intended.

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*Health*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# TWO COMPANIES TO JOIN HIGHMARK IN OFFERING MARKETPLACE PLANS

BY BETSY PRICE

For the first time since 2017, Delawareans this year will have more than one company’s plans to choose from in the **Delaware Health Insurance Marketplace**.

AmeriHealth Caritas and Aetna CVS Health will offer plans along with Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware, which has been going it alone.

That will mean an additional 35 plans offered through the marketplace, said Insurance Commissioner **Trinidad Navarro**.

“It’s a great day because now there’s competition for the ACA marketplace and with competition consumers always, always benefit,” Navarro said. “Today’s announcement is a testament to both the needs of Delawareans who have increasingly signed up for coverage, and to the strong regulatory environment we have built, which has helped insurers go from taking losses to being able to cover their expenses and consumers’ coverage needs.”

Inflation may play a role into keeping the rates from dropping as much as they normally would, he said. “It’s hard to put a number on where the rates will go this first year,” he said.

### MARKETPLACE HISTORY

Aetna once sold plans in the Delaware marketplace, but dropped out of Delaware, and then every other state as federal support for the **Affordable Care Act** program was attacked by the Trump administration.

“A lot of the original architecture the ACA was being chipped away,” Navarro said, “things like risk corridor payments and cost sharing that was part of the agreement that the federal government would help offset the losses.”

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# DELAWARE REPRESENTED WELL IN CARPENTER CUP SOFTBALL

BY GLENN FRAZER

Mid-Penn won this year's Carpenter Cup softball tournament held at FDR Park in Philadelphia last week, but the state of Delaware was well represented.

Delaware South went 3-0 to win its bracket in pool play June 21 while Delaware North (2-1) finished second in the same bracket. That qualified both teams for June 22's championship round. The tournament featured 16 teams from Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Delaware South has won the tournament a record five times.

The two teams from the First State fell in the quarterfinals in close games. The defending champs from lower Delaware (South) lost to Lehigh Valley 5-3, and the

North lost a 3-0 game to SOL (Suburban One League). Everyone contributed to the success of their respective teams at the plate, defensively and in the circle.

The South team was made up of 13 underclassmen from seven different teams in Sussex County while the North roster included 12 from seven schools in New Castle County.

The South coach was Jay Davis, formerly an assistant at Goldey Beacom, assisted by Keith Stonebraker (Delmarva Christian). The team was led by Cape's Ava Calciano, Kylee Hill (Laurel) and Kinsley Hall of Indian River, each with five hits. Laniya and Shaniya Lewis (Sussex Tech), Lilly Fetterman (Delmarva Christian),

Lily Hoban (IR), Katie McHale (IR), Lilli Showacre (Delmarva Christian) and Emily Smith (Delmar) each made significant contributions. Hill and Showacre handled the bulk of the pitching. Hill also homered and collected seven RBI in the four games.

The North was coached by Nina Marcano (Middletown) assisted by Tori Brooks (Newark Charter). Savannah Laird (Appo) led the team with six hits while Ryan Vitola (Archmere) and Reese Founds (Middletown) both added five hits for the four games. Lily Capellas (Appo), Sky Eleazar (Appo) and Abby Baldwin (Conrad) all collected multiple RBI. Others performing well for the North were Lindsay Henn, Marisa Edevane and Annika Downs from DMA, Summer Montgomery (Middletown) and Jaida Church (Charter of Wilmington). Carly Maxton (St. Mark's), Founds and Laird combined to allow just four earned runs for the tournament. Maxton recorded 29 strikeouts in 11 innings of work.

A few of the unique rules for the Carpenter Cup were a pitcher could only throw four innings per game and unlike the boys baseball tournament, only underclassmen were allowed on the rosters.

Fans, family and friends of these young ladies that represented Delaware should be very proud of their performance, and the manner in which they handled victory as well as defeat. I know I am!



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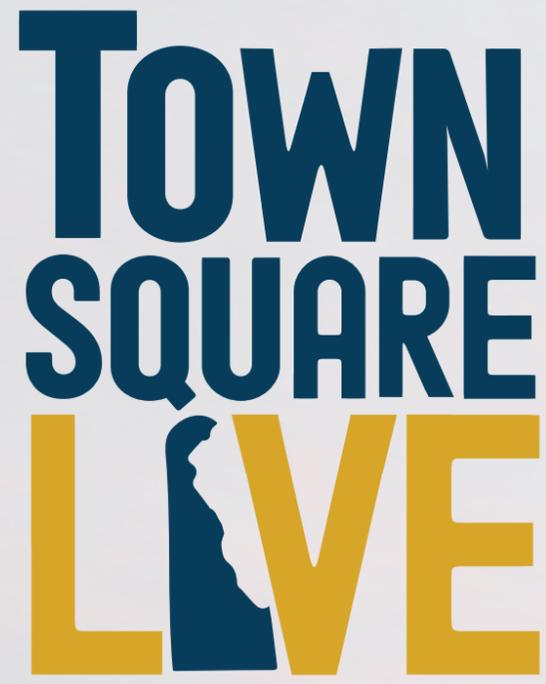


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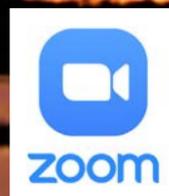
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