

# TOWN SQUARE LIVE

*Photo link: Delaware's Quaint Villages*

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*Photo link. Rosemary Connelly*

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**RETURN DAY TRADITIONS**



**NEW MATH PROGRAM TO COMBAT  
LOW SCORES**



**BENSON LEADS VIKINGS OVER FORCE**

*Photo link: Mt. Cuba Center*



*Community*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# POLARIZATION CHALLENGES RETURN DAY TRADITIONS

**BY ANDREW SHARP**

You have to wonder: In these days of deep political anger, how wise is it to let opposing politicians stand together near a weapon?

That's what Delaware does after every election. It's the tradition of Return Day, and the weapon in question is a hatchet buried by the opposing sides in a reenactment of the old metaphor.

Democratic and Republican politicians from the governor to senators to local town council members gather for a parade, feast and speeches, riding in carriages together in a demonstration of goodwill. It's not perhaps a sign of affection, but at least a token of willingness to work together for the good of the state and a reminder that, though they're opponents, they don't have to be enemies.

"It means, kind of, the essence of how politics should be," said Republican state Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, who

represents the Georgetown area. It's "the beginning of us as elected officials actually getting to work for the people that elected us. And to put the partisanship aside."

That's the idea anyway.

But this year, a note of discord has crept in. The Delaware Democratic Party Executive Committee has called on its candidates not to ride in some of the carriages used in the parade. Why? The antique vehicles come from the Nutter D. Marvel Carriage Museum, which is under fire for a Confederate battle flag flying above a memorial to Delaware soldiers who fought on the Southern side in the Civil War.

Some question the Democrats' move as going against the very spirit of the event, while others emphasize that people of both parties are taking a stand against the flag, while still enthusiastically participating in Return Day itself.

The dispute over a flag flown in a war more than 150 years ago is just one of the many fights that have split communities in the United States in recent years. It's also a chilling reminder of where such polarization can lead.

Politicians and their followers have been smearing each other since the beginning of the republic, but many observers agree that the trend has swung back toward the extreme side in recent years.

"Our politics really started to become a blood sport in the early '90s after the Clinton election," said Niklas

Robinson, an associate professor of history at Delaware State University. He also mentioned the 1994 midterm elections, when Newt Gingrich launched a national rallying cry for the GOP with new political strategies and more disciplined messaging.

In the past, major events like World War II may have brought people together, albeit imperfectly, Mr. Robinson said. But the most recent crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, only served to drive people further apart.

"It's increased everywhere. And, unfortunately, we're seeing that increase (in polarization) in Delaware, as well," Sen. Pettyjohn said. The division is trickling down to the local level, from state races to town elections.

"You're starting to see those divisive issues come into more of the local politics, where it shouldn't be. And it's taking the focus off of these races where there's...very important local issues to be discussed."

Further, we're "relying on proxies, relying on media, relying on social media,...relying on labels, instead of listening to people's stories," said Joe Lawson, a member of the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice.

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# SOME QUESTION NEED FOR ONE-WAY TRAFFIC IN ROCKFORD PARK

“We’re behind the state parks’ efforts to make it safer for all of us.”

Reception elsewhere, however, was not 100%, judging by posts on Nextdoor.com that followed a recent Highlands Community Association meeting that discussed the plan.

“A thoughtful email can save historic Rockford Park from unnecessary and unsolicited improvements and preserve the natural beauty of the park,” Lisa Hemphill wrote in her opening post.

## ROCKFORD PARK PROPOSAL

The proposal was developed by DNREC, with input by the Delaware Department of Transportation and approval by Wilmington, Globetti said. Wilmington owns the 104-acre park, and DNREC’s parks division manages it.

In the proposal, one entrance would be at Park Drive and Red Oak Road, on the eastern side of the park. Park Drive would then curve around, one way, to the exit on 19th Street. From 19th Street, Tower Drive would be one-way to Park Drive. Lookout Drive would be one-way between two sections of Park Drive.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

One exit, two entrances and three one-way streets are planned for Rockford Park in Wilmington. And the 133-year-old park is getting its first designated path for pedestrians and bicyclists.

“The goal of this project is to address, and virtually eliminate, any high risk for a pedestrian accident through the section of Park Drive between Red Oak Road and the Tower Drive intersection,” said Michael J. Globetti, media relations manager for the **Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control**, which includes state parks.

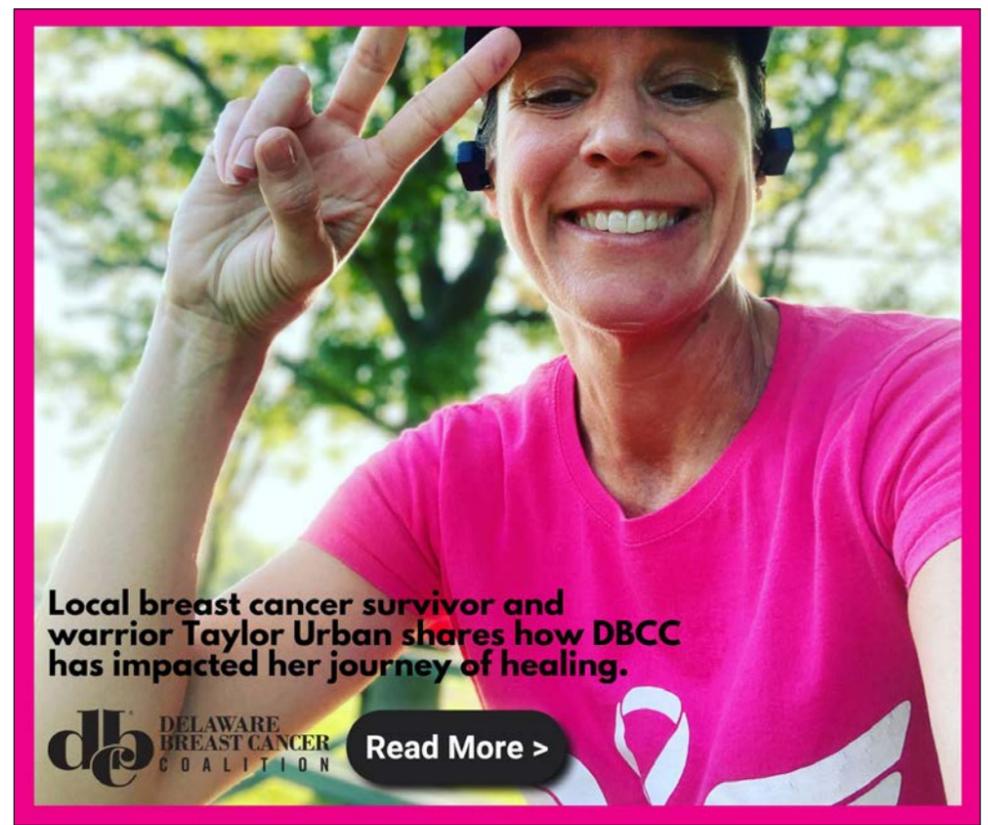
The proposal uses space now taken by the lane going the other way for about 35 more parking spaces near the dog run and for that dedicated pedestrian and bike lane.

“We’re behind them 100%,” said Leslie Hubbard, executive director of **Friends of Wilmington Parks**.



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## WILMU LAW SCHOOL TO START WITH 100 STUDENTS, BE ACCREDITED BY 2025

BY JAREK RUTZ

Wilmington University's School of Law expects to open in August 2023 with 100 students, 50 during the day and 50 at night. The school will not yet be accredited by the **American Bar Association**. That usually takes about three years, said Dean Phillip Closius on Oct. 27 during the school's first press conference. He expects it to be by March of 2025, a year before the law school's first class takes the bar exam.

During the school's press conference, Closius said he didn't want anybody to feel like they weren't at a quality school if they choose Wilmington University law classes. Coming from a different state has made him immune to what he calls the "Wilmington inferiority complex."

"So many say 'Well, we're not Philadelphia, we know we're not New York,' but I don't care what you're not, I care what you are," he said. "I can sell Wilmington, and you're a lot more attractive than you think."

WilmU **announced** two weeks ago that it would be starting the state's second law school. The other is **Widener University's Delaware Law School**. It deferred offering more information until the Oct. 27 press conference.

Closius was the **dean** of the University of Baltimore School of Law for four years and also taught law at the **University of Toledo School of Law** for 28 years before joining WilmU.

WilmU's website now lists the required courses, which include 29 first-year credits, 38 upper-level credits and 19 elective credits. Originally, WilmU planned on making the night sections exclusively online, but the ABA forbids the online-only option until the school has earned provisional accreditation.

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# FIREFLY '23 CANCELED TO 'RECHARGE LIGHTS,' WHATEVER THAT MEANS

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Organizers for Delaware’s largest and most successful music festival have announced that next year’s event will not be happening.

“After 10 magical years of **Firefly** in The Woodlands, we’ve decided to take a year to recharge our lights,” the announcement said. “We will see you in 2024!” Organizers didn’t offer any explanation for the cancellation.

Dover Motor Speedway, which owns The Woodlands, said it has been proud to host the festival since its inception and looks forward to its 2024 return.

“While we look forward to Firefly’s return, we will continue to explore sports and entertainment opportu-

nities to bring to our property for the community to enjoy—such as the ‘Gift of Lights’ drive-thru event set for this holiday season,” the statement said.

The first Firefly festival was held in July 2012. It continued to be held each July until it was canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic. It returned in 2021 but was held in September. In 2022, organizers decided to hold the event in September again.



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# HISTORY FAVORS RAMONE, NUMBERS FAVOR BURNS IN PIKE CREEK RACE

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

A suburban New Castle County race for state House is turning into one of most hotly-contested battles of this year’s general election.

Incumbent Republican Rep. **Mike Ramone**, who has been in office since 2009, faces Democrat Dr. **Frank Burns** for the South Pike Creek seat—one of the last held by Republicans in the state’s northernmost county.

Before entering politics, Ramone founded and operated several local businesses, including the Delaware Swim and Fitness Centers, the Delaware Swim Team, Aquatic Management Systems and Ramone’s Landscaping.

Burns is a doctor of biochemistry who owns **BioPrimate**, a company that specializes in microbial community and microbiome research.

Although Ramone is a Republican, the district he represents is not. Of the 19,030 registered voters in the

21st Representative District, 8,517 are Democrats, 5,117 are Republicans, and 5,396 belong to a third or no party.

That’s part of Ramone’s pitch: He’s an independent voice who votes issue-by-issue and his primary concern, he says, isn’t partisan politics—it’s his constituents’ wallets.

Burns doesn’t buy Ramone’s schtick. Try as he might to appeal to the center (and even the left), Ramone is a Republican, Burns says, with all the associated baggage.

With so many national issues bearing down on the election, Ramone must chart a delicate course between what his party wants and what his constituents demand.

Burns said many local issues, like traffic concerns, are apolitical and come down to a lawmaker’s ability to connect residents with the people or agencies who can solve their problems. The result is an untraditional election between a popular Republican in a solid-blue

district and a political newcomer whose views more closely align with the majority.

## WHY STAY IN OFFICE, RAMONE?

Incumbent Republican Rep. Mike Ramone, who has been in office since 2009, faces Democrat Dr. Frank Burns for the South Pike Creek seat—one of the last held by Republicans in the state’s northernmost county.

By age 45, Ramone had established a series of successful businesses in northern Delaware and could have easily retired and dedicated the remainder of his life to leisure, he says.

“The businesses were good, people had been good to us and we were in a very strong position financially,” Ramone told Delaware LIVE News. “So I was like, ‘You know what, I think I’m going to try to give back to those who gave to us.’”

Ramone, now 61, said he never considered himself a politician, and still doesn’t. He doesn’t stay in office for the clout, he said, and would “get out of the way and help...if a great Republican or Democrat came along who I felt would be phenomenal for the district.”

This isn’t the year, Ramone said. His daughter, who he undoubtedly feels would meet that criteria, was rezoned out of his territory during decennial redistricting in 2020. She’s **running** for state representative against Rep. Paul Baumbach.

“The reality is,” Ramone said, “when they do redistricting and cut your whole family out of your district and put them in another district, I’m not the kind of guy that walks away from that—I’m not going to get bullied out of being a legislator.”

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*Food & Dining*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



## Food & Dining

BY PAM GEORGE

The **Lewes Oyster House** proves that good things come to all who wait. After months of construction delays, the downtown Lewes restaurant at 108 Second St. opened to the public this week.

Last week, however, the Second Street eatery gave the staff a trial run with friends and family, and one reporter talked her way into a seat at the oyster bar for a sneak peek. The visit proved that the team had used their time wisely.

### SHOWING OFF EXPERIENCE

The partners' background is impressive.

Tim Bartle is an industry veteran who worked for the **Charlie Palmer Collective**. Also on board is Tom Little, whom many know from his time with **Crooked Hammock Brewery** and its management group, **La Vida Hospitality Restaurant Group**.

# NEW LEWES OYSTER HOUSE OFFERS SEASIDE TAVERN VIBES

While working for La Vida, Little met Sean Corea, a Culinary Institute of America graduate. Corea helped Nage transition to Fork & Flask and also worked at **Nalu**, another casual concept.

Lewes Oyster House sports a comfortable vibe like those establishments, but the owners hardly sleep on the job. From the logo to the menu, it is clear that they considered their concept.

### CREATING A SEASIDE TAVERN

The space, formerly Jerry's Seafood, is in the Walsh Building, which was built in the 1930s. It's been a community center and fire hall, but most people remember the site as the original Rose & Crown, and remnants of that location remain—namely 10 taps and a handsome bar.

The partners wanted the restaurant to feel like a public house, a gathering place for the town. And, in the old days, an East Coast tavern would have oysters, which explains why the beach's favorite bivalves are the star. Indeed, the stage is set from the start.

The oyster bar is on the lower level next to the expansive windows facing the street. Aquarium-like tanks that hold the oysters are nestled next to the glass.

Selections thus far have included sweet Arrowhead Point from Rehoboth Bay, Chincoteague; Sewansecott from Virginia; and Pink Moon, delicate oysters from Prince Edward Island.

One might question putting the shuckers' backs to the

sidewalk, but it works. The curious paused to peer into the restaurant, and diners get a double show—they can watch the shuckers and pedestrians.

A plush banquette for a group is on one side of the oyster bar, creating a see-and-be-seen table—everyone who walks into the restaurant must pass by it. On the other side is a wall of wines.

The bulk of the seating is on the second level, where black banquetts with brass railings line an exposed brick wall.

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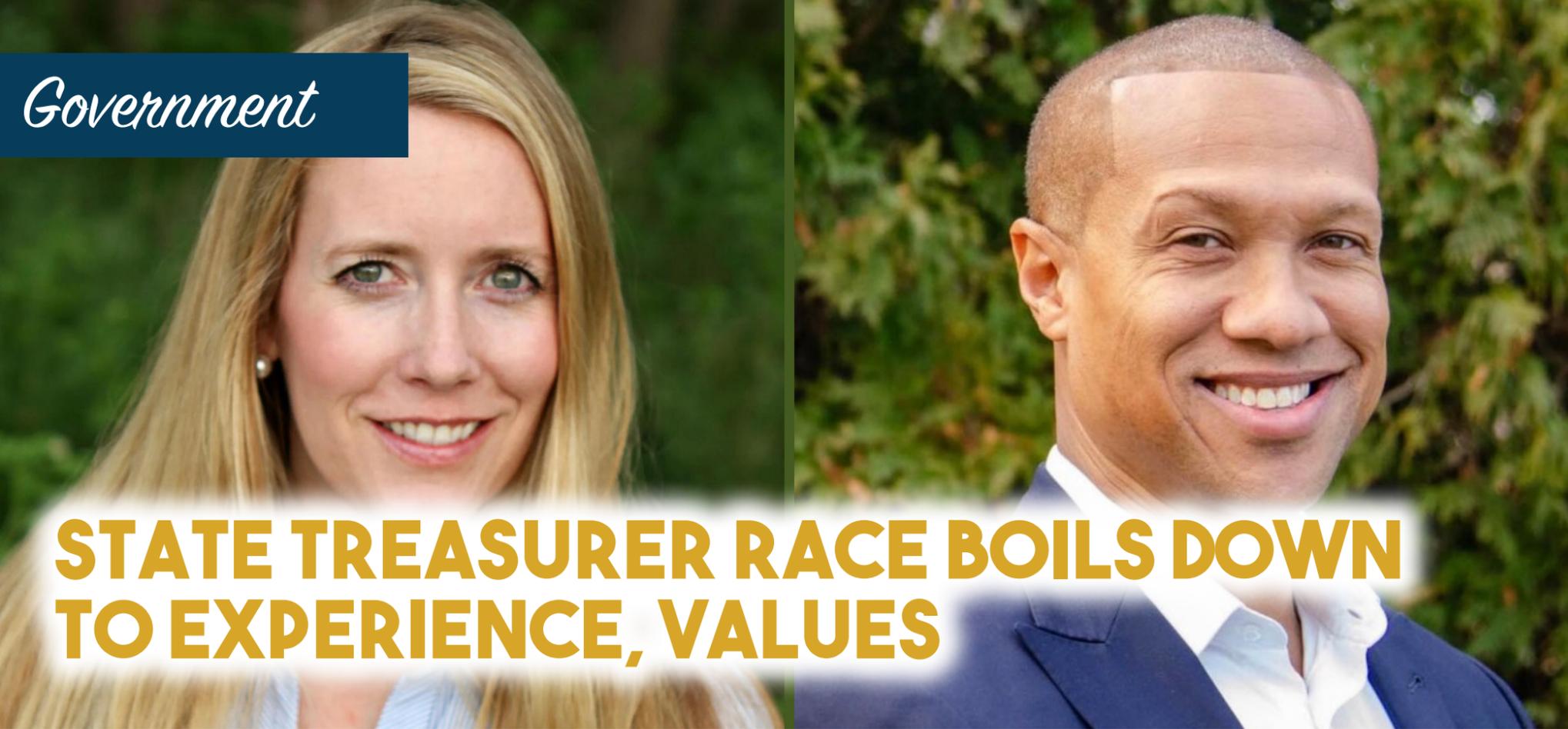
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*Government*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# STATE TREASURER RACE BOILS DOWN TO EXPERIENCE, VALUES

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

The incumbent is a former physician assistant whose office has increased state investment revenues and pushed retirement plans for those in low-wage jobs.

The challenger is a financial planner who teaches at Delaware State University and advises members of the Delaware National Guard on wealth management.

Neither thinks the other is a good fit for the job of Delaware state treasurer.

On Nov. 8, voters will choose between Democratic incumbent **Colleen Davis** and Republican challenger **Greg Coverdale**. The odds favor Davis, based on voter registration **totals**. Democrats far outnumber Republicans in Delaware.

As of October, there are 362,992 registered Democrats in the state, compared to 210,480 registered Republi-

cans. About 190,000 voters don't belong to either party.

But Coverdale told Delaware LIVE News that his career in finance makes him uniquely qualified to serve as state treasurer. He believes Davis is unqualified and said he's confident voters will see things the same way.

Davis said when deciding whether she's qualified to serve, voters need look no further than her office's successes during her first term.

While Coverdale faces an uphill battle, the election of a Republican to the state treasurer's office is not unprecedented. Davis's predecessor, Ken Simpler, whom she **defeated** in the 2018 election, is a Republican who was elected in 2014 with 53.6% of the vote.

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# EARLY VOTING PROVES POPULAR DURING GENERAL ELECTION

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Delawareans appear to like early voting.

One poll worker at the Wilmington Riverfront polling place said there had been lines out the door since voting began Oct. 28 (Friday), including one celebrity voter: U.S. President Joe Biden, who **voted** Oct. 29 (Saturday) alongside his granddaughter Natalie.

On Monday, New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer cast his ballot at the same location. Meyer, who voted early during the primary election as well, said he's excited to see more people taking advantage of the voting method during the general election.

"I think it's fantastic," he said. "I think voting needs to be widely accessible and we should encourage more people to vote."

Meyer said he believes strongly in same-day voter registration and mail-in voting, both of which were ruled

unconstitutional by the Delaware Supreme Court earlier this month.

"It's a court decision," Meyer said. "The court says there needs to be a constitutional amendment and I certainly would do everything to support that constitutional amendment."

Early voter Dennis Vorheis, who voted by mail in 2020, said his employer offers time off to vote on Election Day, but he decided to vote early anyway.

"The combination of wanting to avoid the lines next Tuesday and being off work today, gave me the freedom and the flexibility to vote early," Vorheis said. "Could I have voted on Election Day? Yes. Is it more convenient for me to vote early? Yes."

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# CARNEY VETOES MEDICAL MARIJUANA GUN BILL

BY CHARLIE MEGGINSON

Delaware Gov. John Carney on Oct. 27 vetoed a bill that would have allowed medical marijuana patients to possess firearms without fear of prosecution by the state.

It's illegal under federal law for medical marijuana patients to purchase or own firearms. That wouldn't have changed under **House Bill 276**, but patients who are not otherwise prohibited from possessing firearms would have been assured they would not be prosecuted at the state level. The bill passed unanimously in the House of Representatives and 17 to 4 in the Senate.

### WHY VETO THE BILL?

In a **letter** to lawmakers explaining his veto, Carney said it's already lawful for medical marijuana patients in Delaware to possess firearms under state law. Carney fears the bill would have created confusion about the rights of medical marijuana patients—under federal law—to purchase firearms in Delaware.

“Under current federal law, the use of marijuana, even for medical purposes, remains illegal,” Carney wrote. “Federal law and background check processes currently restrict the ability of a user of marijuana, even for medical purposes, from purchasing a firearm.”

The governor said the proposed law would neither ease the existing tension between state public health policy and federal drug enforcement policy, nor eliminate the complexities and risks that confront Delawareans who are gun owners and medical marijuana users.

“At best, HB 276 maintains the status quo,” Carney wrote. “At worst, it risks misleading those who may be impacted and increasing public confusion.”

Rep. Jeff Spiegelman, R-Clayton, who sponsored the bill, said Carney's veto will cause far more confusion than would exist had he signed the bill.

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# DMV UNVEILS LOTTERY TO WIN LOW-DIGIT TAGS

BY STAFF WRITER

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me...a low-digit Delaware license plate?

The Delaware Division of Motor Vehicles plans to issue the low-digit tags a bit differently this year. Traditionally, the DMV releases unclaimed low-digit license plate numbers and makes them available on a first-come, first-served basis. This year, they're introducing "12 Days of PLATE-mas," an online low-digit tag lottery.

## LOW-DIGIT TAGS IN DELAWARE

Delaware has a robust market for license plates. Unlike in other states, Delaware license plates become the registrant's property and can be transferred from one car to the next or bequeathed to an heir. They can also be sold to new owners.

A [study](#) published by researchers at Rice University emphasized that "license plates offer no direct economic benefit other than authorizing the operation of a motor vehicle."

"But they appear to be a source of social status," the study says. "Not only do market prices suggest a preference for lower plate numbers, but there exist extreme



price jumps that indicate that exclusive clubs exist whereby the number of digits on the plate convey implicit membership." For example, in 2021 the "37" tag was sold to an anonymous buyer for a whopping \$282,000.

Authentic and reproduction black and white porcelain plates are authorized for passenger car tags not exceeding 86,999, commercial, dealer and motorcycle plates up to four digits, and ham operator license plates.

Plates with a black background, stainless steel numbers and the word "Delaware" embossed on the plate are authorized on passenger car plates up to 200,000. The same is true for plates with a black background and numbers covered with white reflective sheeting.

Plate number "1" is reserved for the governor, "2" is for the lieutenant governor and "3" is for the secretary of state. The rest can be exchanged on the open market.

## 12 DAYS OF PLATE-MAS

People interested in winning a low-digit tag during the 12 Days of PLATE-mas release must register [online](#).

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*Photo credit: University of Delaware*



*Education*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**

## HERE'S WHAT THE LEARNING COLLAB WILL DO TO GET STARTED

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Wilmington Learning Collaborative already is forming the council that will govern it. Once the council is established, it will order a needs assessment, which will help the council decide where to put or share resources.

Those are the starting tasks of the new education group that state, city and district officials hope will help raise learning and test scores for Wilmington's children.

The collaborative is designed to work in city schools across the Brandywine, Christina and Red Clay districts by allowing the people who work with the children have more say in the ways kids are taught. It's also meant to provide social and other support for the families dealing with issues that are not as common in suburban areas, such as poverty, violence, homelessness, addiction and more.

The three districts formally signed the agreement to create the Learning Collaborative Tuesday night.

This collaborative's council already has six members set. The 20-page **agreement** calls for each district superintendent and city school board member to be on the council. That means superintendents Dorrell Green of Red Clay, Lincoln Hohler of Brandywine and Dan Shelton of Christina will join Brandywine's Shanika Perry, Christina's Alethea Smith-Tucker and Red Clay's Adriana Bohm as members.

Still to be named are a parent representative from a Learning Collab school, a retired city educator, an appointee from Wilmington Mayor Mike Purzycki and a high school senior in the city to serve as a student representative.

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## NEW AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM TO PAIR WILM POLICE, KIDS

BY JAREK RUTZ

A new initiative at Warner Elementary School in Wilmington is bringing law enforcement into schools to teach fifth graders about how officers investigate crimes, conflict resolution and more.

For 10 weeks, students at Warner have an opportunity to enroll in the “Cops and Kids After School” after-school program, which started last week.

So far, 30 fifth graders have signed up. The meetings are once a week for an hour-and-a-half. Each session will focus on a different topic that relates to the daily work of cops.

“We’re able to get into these schools and humanize our job, explain how we do things and why we do things,” said Andrew Conine, a police sergeant in the city. “And then at the end, we remind them that we are there for them and will do anything possible to help them if they ever need us.”

These are the 10 subjects set to be discussed:

- Conflict resolution
- Crime scene investigation
- Drug awareness
- First aid
- K-9 Unit operations
- Criminal investigations
- Explosive and bomb investigations

- Hostage Negotiation and Crisis Management
- Arson and fire safety
- Internet safety

“I cannot think of a better way to build positive relationships and reiterate to students that law enforcement officers are here for our protection,” said Warner Elementary Principal Kimberly G. Bruinton in a press release.

“By exposing them to various departments and opportunities, the hope is that our students will learn to respect the community workers in the police department, as well as the services offered, and even one day serve within their own community.”

Conine said building a community bond between officers and the youth is equally as important than the content lessons themselves.

“We come in, they see the uniform, and some kids are intimidated because of what they read in the news or see in Hollywood,” he said. “And then we start to talk and break the ice and let them get to know us. We have kids ourselves, we’ll bring in a K-9, and it all just allows them to see we are everyday human beings who want to protect them.”

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

What does a vibrant preschool-12 learning community look like?

[Click here to find out!](#)





# SEAFORD HIRES TWO CONSTABLES TO ENSURE SCHOOL SAFETY

BY JAREK RUTZ

Seaford School District has hired two constables to patrol its schools and help keep students safe, it announced Monday. The system was inspired to take extra security measures partly as a response to school shootings in the last year, including the May 24 shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, TX, said Gary Zoll, director of student services at Seaford. Nineteen students and two teachers were killed in that massacre.

Seaford is the latest system to invest in additional safety measures. Indian River School District has had them for about a decade, and **Woodbridge** and **Laurel** school districts hired a couple this year.

“It’s an added level of security that we thought was essential to our schools,” Zoll said. “Having a constable

police officer, someone who’s ready at a moment’s notice or an instant notice just to be a protection for the schools is the one thing that we thought we definitely needed.”

Zoll said he hopes to add more, with a goal of having one at all six schools in the Seaford School District.

The district has hired two veteran officers for the role. Paul Anthony is a former member of the Delaware State Police and Blades police chief. B. Scott Gray also is a retired member of the Delaware State Police.

The district has used resource officers from the Seaford Police and will keep one, Zoll said.

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# STATE REJECTS RED CLAY'S \$265 MILLION REQUEST

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware's **Department of Education** has denied **Red Clay Consolidated School District's** request for \$265 million to address maintenance costs and improvement needs in 27 buildings.

"With anticipated available funding, the focus of the public education capital budget for Fiscal Year 2024 is funding previously authorized projects, including market pressure funding for increased construction costs and statewide minor capital improvements and equipment funds," the Education Department said in a statement.

Those funding demands total approximately \$204 million, leaving no opportunity for authorization of new projects at this time, the statement said.

"We're going to have to come back to the table and work with our state officials, Department of Education,

**Office of Management and Budget**, the **Bond Bill Committee** and others to really see if there is another remedy to address this," said Red Clay Superintendent Dorrell Green. "You can only put off these projects so long before the cost then becomes exorbitant in terms of being able to fund a lot of these projects."

Jose Matthews, a Red Clay board member who is on the district's facilities committee, said that he was not notified in any way by the state, and that the decision was "devastating."

"As we defer maintenance, again, that number will only get higher," he said. "The repairs don't just go away, as much as we continue to sweep this under the rug."

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# STATE TO UNVEIL NEW MATH PROGRAM TO COMBAT LOW SCORES

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware will announce a new statewide math plan in December to counter COVID-19 learning loss and boost the state's horrific test scores, which are among the worst in the nation. The state has been working on the plan since January but is not yet prepared to release details because the plan hasn't been finalized.

Underscoring the need for help, especially in math, is the fact that 18 Delaware public schools have single-digit proficiency scores in math, and two have them in English language arts.

That means less than 10% of the students, who are tested in third through eighth grade, understand math at their grade level. (See the list below)

The goal of the new math program will be to assure every student has mathematical mastery by eighth grade, said Monica Gant, the chief academic officer for the state Department of Education.

The math plan is expected to mimic some aspects of the science of reading plans sparked by state legislation. Those plans require schools to teach according to science that shows how the brain works and will require some teacher training, using materials curated by the state and more frequent testing of students to determine how they understand the material during the school year, so help can be given, if needed.

While the state blames a lot of the low scores on virtual learning and other COVID-19 woes, others also cite teacher shortages, large class sizes and a lack of funding for materials and support such as tutoring all play a role, those people say.

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# DSU ANNOUNCES LARGEST ENROLLMENT IN SCHOOL HISTORY

DSU is Delaware’s Historically Black College and University. This year, it was named the second best public HBCU in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*.

One of Allen’s main goals as president has been to grow the enrollment and to make the student body and faculty as diverse as possible.

The school’s enrollment has trended upward in four of the previous five years, and it hopes to reach 10,000 students by 2026, as laid out in its *strategic plan*, the release said.

Delaware State has grown 40% during the last decade, acquired the dying *Wesley College* in Dover, and significantly increased online and graduate choices.

At the same time, it’s attracted millions of dollars for programs from the likes of major corporations and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, who gave the school \$20 million.

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BY JAREK RUTZ

After months of teasing a record enrollment, *Delaware State University* announced Oct. 28 exactly what it was. DSU has 6,200 students enrolled, a growth of 33% over the last five years—right through the COVID-19 pandemic, a school press release said Oct. 28.

In August, DSU welcomed more than 1,400 first-year students to campus, which is its largest freshman class ever.

“The best signal of success for any higher education institution is this: More students wanting to enroll, wanting to join our family, wanting to make their mark in a smaller, more interconnected global community,” said University President Tony Allen.

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## EMOTIONAL GREAT OAKS COMMUNITY PLEADS FOR SCHOOL SURVIVAL

BY JAREK RUTZ

Great Oaks Charter parents, students and teachers laughed, cried and pleaded with an Education Department representative Oct. 27 for the survival of their school.

“What real love means is we bear all things, because these are just kids,” said math teacher Anthony Davis, choking up with tears. “These students come to Great Oaks and we see the best in them, not only who they are but what they’re going to be.” He pointed to several of the Great Oaks students in the crowd, saying, “She could be a doctor, he could be a lawyer, and she could change the world.”

The school was placed under review by the Department of Education Sept. 28 over violation concerns surrounding the charter’s enrollment. The [Charter School Accountability Committee](#) will conduct the

investigation over the next two months.

After two students were crying and hugging in the hearing, several teachers were clapping and saying that’s the love and camaraderie that Great Oaks is all about. First-year Great Oaks special education teacher Yvonne Thomas was also crying. She said that everyone who walks through the doors of the charter leaves a better, more loving human.

[Great Oaks](#), one of 23 charters in the First State, opened its doors in 2015 in the [Community Education Building](#) in downtown Wilmington. The charter’s core values are: students first straight talk we grow, model excellence one team, and joy and humor. Its mission is to create a safe, effective and innovative learning environment that enables everyone to reach his or her greatest potential through a high dosage of mentorship.

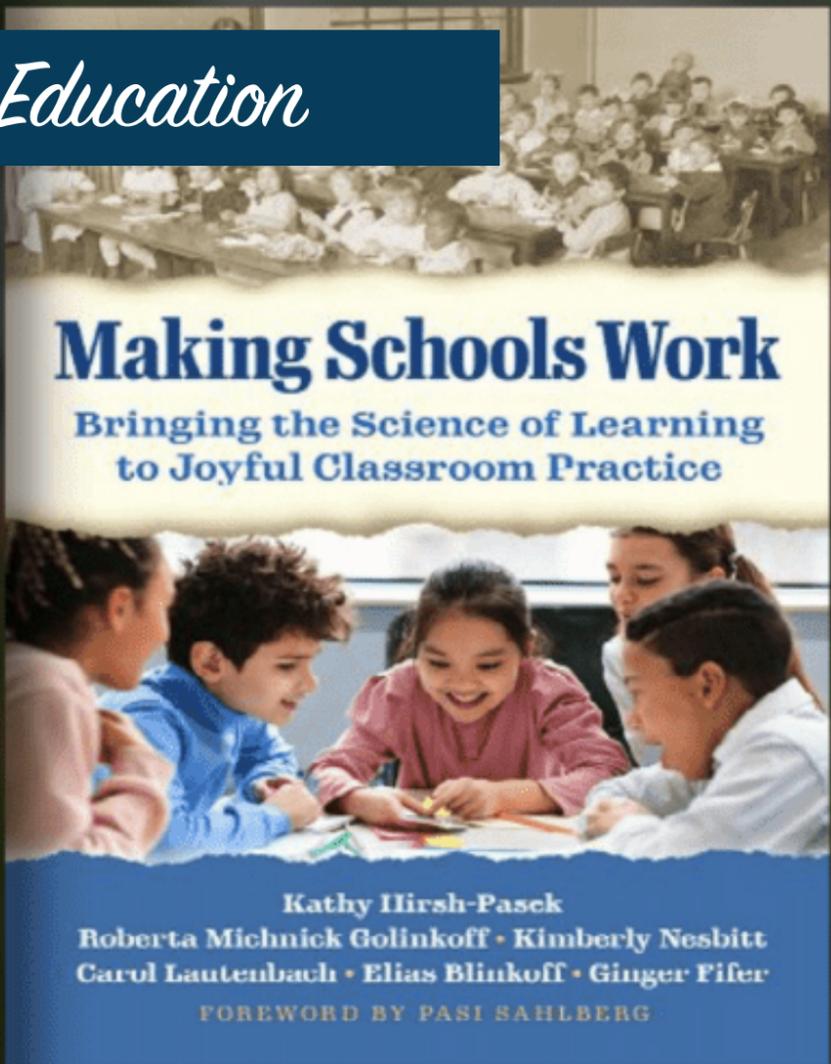
“Every Student, Every Day, Engaging, Connecting and Succeeding—No Matter What,” is the school’s vision, according to its [website](#).

“I wouldn’t be where I am without the lessons Great Oaks has taught me,” said freshman Amir Philips. His schoolmate, Jayla Morels, agreed.

“Great Oaks has supported me not only academically but socially,” she said. “I feel safe in an open environment where different cultures, sexualities and needs are accepted and loved just the same.”

The chartering agreement called for Great Oaks to keep an enrollment of 325 students, which means the state is sending money to Great Oaks under the understanding that it is serving that many. Fewer students would mean less funding for the school.

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# UD PROFESSOR'S BOOK ON IMPROVING SCHOOLS DROPS FRIDAY

“COVID has had an effect on our children’s test scores and there’s no question that kids with fewer resources suffered the most, plus teachers are fleeing the field,” Golinkoff said. “But what if you could keep the same curricula, and you could make teachers feel more empowered, have more agency and make kids more invested in their education.”

This book helps explain how to do just that. “Making Schools Work” offers three case studies of schools, including a statewide system in New Hampshire, that are all teaching with a “six Cs” approach to learning.

“We argue, and based on thousands of psychological studies, that children need to be learning content with a focus on what we call the six Cs,” Golinkoff said. “That’s collaboration, communication, content, critical thinking, creative innovation and confidence.”

The book will guide educators and school leaders in applying the six Cs and playful learning principles to what goes on in the classroom every day.

Playful learning is a method of instruction that focuses on making lessons fun, active, engaging, meaningful and socially interactive.

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## BY JAREK RUTZ

University of Delaware professor Roberta Michnick Golinkoff believes that to rectify the decline of public education in America, students need to have fun while learning. So, with the help of five other academics, she spent the last two years working on a new book, “Making Schools Work: Bringing the Science of Learning to Joyful Classroom Practice.”

The book, which came out Oct. 28, demonstrates with hands-on examples how a change in educational mindset, rather than in curriculum, can improve student outcomes on both standardized tests and skills needed to succeed in life after school.

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**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



## DELAWARE MAY FACE 'TRIPLEDEMIC' OF COVID, FLU, RSV CASES

BY BETSY PRICE

If you are sick, stay home.

That's the big message behind the state's announcement Oct. 28 that Delaware could face a "tripledeemic" of three serious respiratory viruses: COVID-19, the flu and respiratory syncytial virus, also known as RSV.

All three are putting patients of all ages into hospitals, which were already strained by infected patients and those who need medical care for other reasons.

"Our primary message is stay home if you are sick," said Dr. Rick Hong, interim director of the Division of Public Health. "Fortunately, a vaccine is available for flu and COVID-19...Unfortunately, a vaccine is not available for RSV and the current increase in cases throughout Delaware and the country emphasize the need to carefully follow prevention measures for these seasonal viruses."

### ROOTS OF TRIPLEDEMIC

For the week of Oct. 16-22, 2022, there were 44 laboratory-confirmed cases of the flu, compared to 19 cases the week before. That brings the statewide total for the season, which **began** Oct. 2, to 69.

There are many more cases of flu out there. Many people with flu never go to a doctor. Many who do are not tested by the state lab. Their doctors or clinics test them in the office. So there likely are hundreds to thousands of cases circulating, even though the official count is low.

For the same week, there were 98 cases of RSV, for a season total of 250.

The flu and COVID-19 have many similar symptoms, including fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue (tiredness),

sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle pain or body aches and headaches. Other signs and symptoms of COVID-19 that are different from flu include a change in or loss of taste or smell.

Some recent reports have said that many people report that a sore throat is the first sign of the more serious Omicron mutations. That's also a common first sign of the flu.

The state recommend that those who are sick call their own health care provider to see if they should be tested for COVID-19 or come in for a visit. Those who test at home when they are sick should consider re-testing in two days if their test is negative, or ask their doctor if they need a flu test.

### RSV

RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually starts with mild, cold-like symptoms including fever, cough, congestion, runny nose, sneezing, and in infants, fussiness and poor feeding.

It can progress to more severe symptoms such as fast or short breathing or wheezing. Infants and young children whose cases are worsening may make grunting noises when breathing, chest caving in during breathing, and skin turning purple or blue due to a lack of oxygen.

While persons of any age can develop RSV, it is most common in children under age two and can be severe, especially for infants and older adults.

Most people will recover in one to two weeks, but some children require hospitalization.

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*Photo by Donnell Henriquez*



*Sports*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



# BENSON LEADS VIKINGS OVER FORCE

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The game featured two undefeated 1A teams as the No. 2 St Elizabeth Vikings hosted the No. 3 Charter School of Wilmington Force. Both teams came into this game with identical records at 7-0. The Vikings remain undefeated with a big win on their homecoming Oct. 28.

Senior Quasim Benson led the Vikings to a 48-10 victory over the Force. Benson put the offense on his back as he rushed for more than 300 yards and five touchdowns.

Benson's first touchdown came on the Vikings' second possession taking a handoff up the middle untouched for a 25-yard touchdown run. His second touchdown came just a few minutes later as he took a handoff off tackle then cut it back to the middle of the field for a 70-yard touchdown.

On the first play to start the second quarter, Benson struck for his third touchdown of the game. He took the handoff up the middle and again went untouched for 65 yards for the score as he lifted St Elizabeth to an 19-0 lead. Midway through the second quarter, Benson cracked the goal line for a fourth time on his shortest scoring run of the day as he punched it in from eight yards out for a 26-0 lead for the Vikings.

After four Benson touchdowns, the Force were able to break the shutout. Charters quarterback Roman Paoli rolled right and connected with Brady Harach for a 43-yard touchdown. Harach carried a defender the final few yards into the end zone, putting the Force on the board 26-7. On the ensuing kickoff, the Force converted a successful onside kick at the Vikings' 43.

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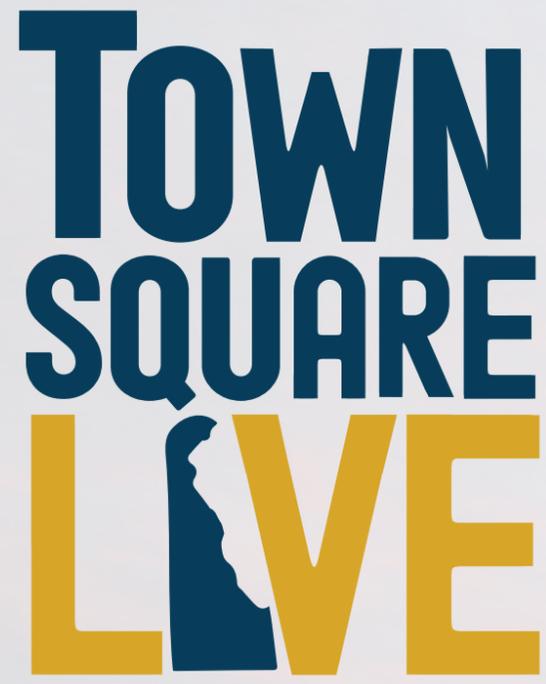


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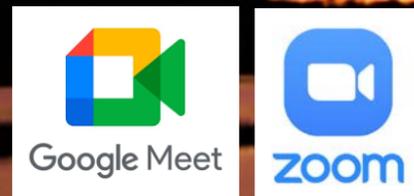
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