

photo link: Longwood Gardens

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

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March 2, 2023
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“Book of Mormon” Tickets for \$25?!



Wilmington Drops Trash Collection for Some



Swimmers Bring Home State Championships



Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



'BOOK OF MORMON' FOR \$25? PLAYHOUSE OFFERS TICKET LOTTERY

BY BETSY PRICE

Feeling lucky, Delaware theatergoers?

You might want to try your hand in a lottery for \$25 tickets to “The Book of Mormon” when it hits the Playhouse on Rodney Square March 10-12. The digital lottery is a producer tradition at venues that host the national tour of the hysterical comedy. They have attracted as many as 800 entries at some locations.

At the Playhouse, tickets run \$40 to \$99 and have sold well. The Grand, which operates the Playhouse, will partner with digital ticket lottery platform **Lucky Seat** for the lottery. Participants must have an account with luckyseat.com to enter. Entries for shows at The Playhouse will open at 12 p.m. on Friday, March 3, and close Wednesday, March 8, at 10:30 a.m.

LOTTERY WINNERS

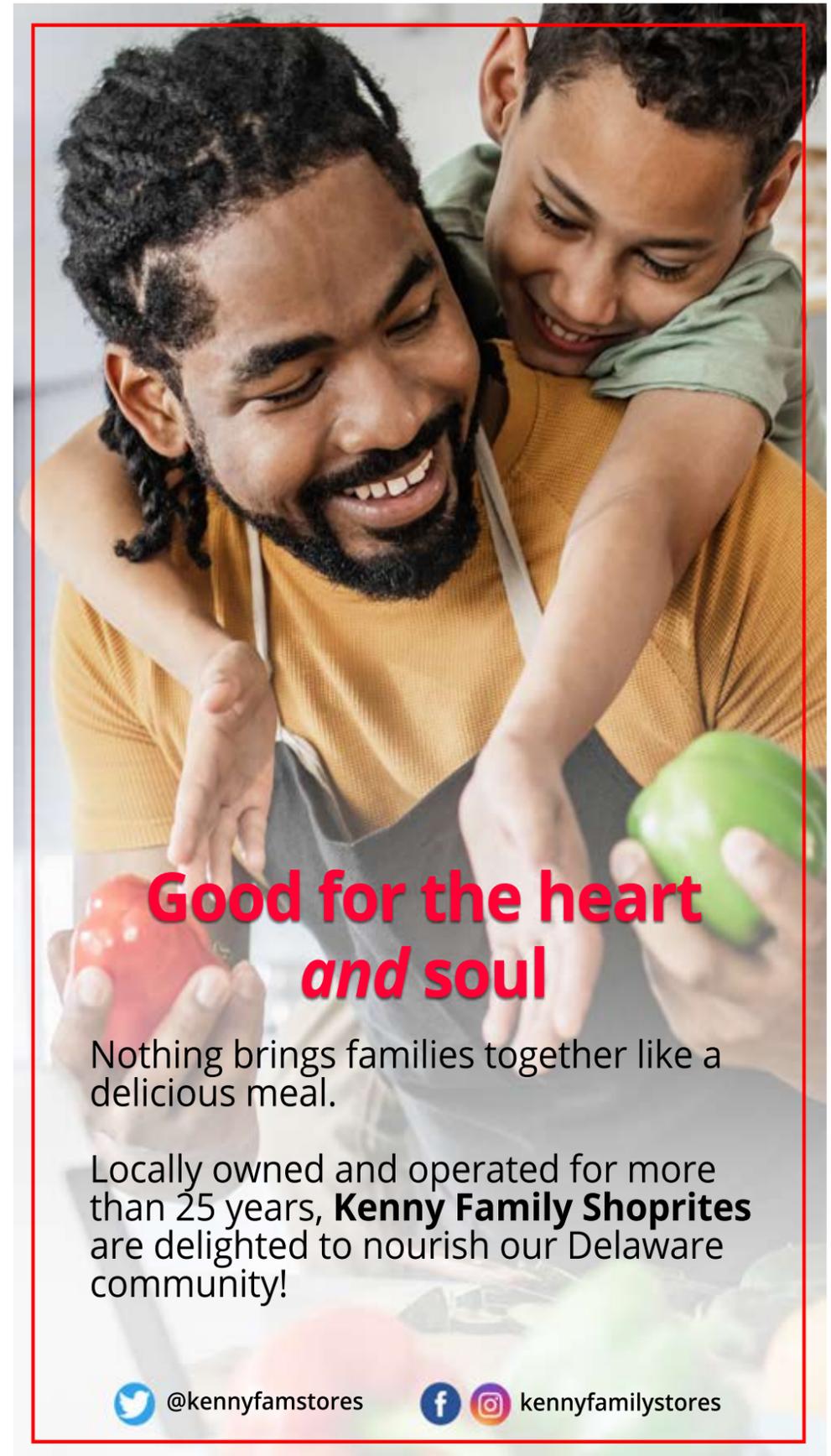
Lucky Seat will send an email to winners at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8. Winners will have a limited win-

dow to purchase and claim their tickets, until 3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 8. If all tickets have not been claimed, drawings will continue at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. until all tickets have been claimed.

Tickets are subject to availability and a limit of two tickets per patron. In some cases, tickets may be partial view and, while every effort will be made to seat multiple seats together, there is a chance that seats may be split up. Tickets can be picked up at the Box Office at The Playhouse on Rodney Square with a photo ID starting two hours before the performance time.

“The Book of Mormon,” which won nine Tony Awards, features book, music and lyrics by Trey Parker and Matt Stone, who also created “South Park,” and Robert Lopez, who helped create “Avenue Q.”

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NEW HISTORY TRAIL DOCUMENTS IRON HILL'S FREE BLACK FAMILIES

BY BETSY PRICE

A new history trail at [Iron Hill Museum](#) documents the existence and lives of free Black families who began settling there in the 1930s. No one knows if any of those who lived there had been slaves, although it's certainly possible, historians said after the trail's ribbon cutting on a gloriously sunny afternoon. The families included the Congos, Websters, Earls, Smiths and more.

Some had property large enough to devote their work lives to. Others worked neighboring farms for pay, and some worked in the nearby iron mines. Family members of those who lived there called the dedication of the African American History Trail an emotional moment.

"To see this is so empowering," said Janice Alexander, who spent her tween and teen years there. "Back then you would never think that we would get here, that this would be a monument, that this would be something

that everybody would be interested in."

Opening the trail was one of three goals of a \$25,000 Community Environmental Project Fund grant that the Iron Hill Museum received from the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environment. It included establishing the trail with signage installed by Eagle Scout Cameron Mills; using native plants to create a demonstration garden using a German horticulture technique; and coming up with a plan to rid the property off Old Baltimore Pike of invasive species.

"The African American History Trail allows the Iron Hill Museum to broaden its interpretation of the schoolhouse by including the under-recognized history of an independent, long-standing free African American community of landowners on Iron Hill, placing it into the context of a society in which free and enslaved Blacks

co-existed before the Civil War," said Debbie Keese, museum board member who spent two years researching the property and families.

Those families survived post-war reconstruction and segregation, with everyday struggles supported by community and church, she said.

"It is hoped that today's families visiting the site will be able to make comparisons between past and present-day politics, social norms, family structures and educational practices while inspiring thoughtful discourse about issues of equity and justice, both social and environmental, in a safe, comfortable and beautiful space," she said.

IRON HILL ANNIVERSARY

The state needs more African American history trails, said Ricky Mouse Smith, president of Delaware's branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. There are stories to be told up and down the state, he told those gathered for the day.

Iron Hill's property—not far from the I-95 toll booth—includes Iron Hill School No. 112C, one of 87 schools founded by Pierre S. du Pont to educate Black children, who were ignored by Delaware's state schools at the time. It is the school's 100th anniversary.

Family member Shirley Earl, who attended the groundbreaking with her daughter, Donna Johnson, and niece, Janice Alexander, went to school at No. 112C.

The area residents chipped in and bought a bus so they could send their children to Louis Redding Middle School. Eventually, most graduated from Howard High in Wilmington.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



RAISE THOSE GLASSES! WILMINGTON BEER WEEK RETURNS

BY BETSY PRICE

Restaurants and breweries will toast the return of Wilmington Beer Week, which started Feb. 28 and runs through Sunday. It will focus on locally brewed beer and there's a bonus for local suds lovers: Those who **download** a passport and get it stamped five times during the week will be eligible to win the Ultimate Wilmington Beer Tour, which is \$250 in gift certificates to select brew week venues. Second- and third-place prizes will also be awarded.

Special events will include a Sour Night at Wilmington Brew Works; an IPA Night at Iron Hill; an Atlantic 10 Watch Party with Lagers at Stitch House Thursday, March 2; a Beer Can Art Exhibition Friday at the Chancery Market Food Hall & Bar; and a Brewers Reserve Rare Beer Tasting Saturday at Iron Hill.

Participating makers are Bellefonte Brewing, Dew Point Brewing, Hangman Brewing, Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant, Stitch House Brewery, Twisted Irons

Craft Brewing and Wilmington Brew Works as well as mead/cider craft producer Liquid Alchemy.

Participating restaurants with a significant craft beer profile also will join in: Chelsea Tavern, Dorcea, Grain (Trolley Square), Two Stones Pub (Wilmington), Trolley Tap House; Washington Street Ale House; and the Chancery Market Food Hall & Bar.

BEER WEEK SHOWS GROWTH

“Wilmington has a great brewing tradition with some big breweries that unfortunately didn't survive much past prohibition,” says Craig Wensell, CEO and brewer for Wilmington Brew Works. “Now we've got three breweries in the city limits and plenty more a short drive away. When someone visits Wilmington and heads to a bar or restaurant, they can now find beer on tap that was brewed a few miles away.”

“I think it was the right move to shift the focus to local beer,” adds Justin Sproul, senior head brewer at Iron Hill



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Brewery & Restaurant. “It opens up opportunities for breweries to participate, which creates more excitement and makes for better events.”

The Chancery's Beer Can Art Exhibition from 5-7 p.m. Friday, March 3, is being timed to Art Loop. The Brewers Reserve tasting also will feature a on the city's brewing history by local beer historian John Medkeff. Tickets can be reserved by calling Iron Hill at (302) 540-8919.

Proceeds benefit “Restore The King,” a fundraising campaign to restore the King Gambrinus statue. The week will conclude with Beer & Brunch at participating WBW venues that offer food.

For more information or to download a passport, go to www.WilmingtonBeerWeek.com.



PLAN FOR NEWPORT CONSIDERS TRAIN STATION, BOXWOOD ROAD

redesign traffic flow downtown to keep regional traffic dispersed and at low speeds and allow for pedestrians and bicyclists.

It also suggests that the town buy land downtown to create metered parking lots, and it encourages businesses to share their parking lots.

Another idea is extending the Jack Markell Trail, which connect Old New Castle and the Wilmington Riverfront, to Newport, with a new boat ramp.

25 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEWPORT AREA

The plan looks at Newport, which has about 1,000 residents, and its suburbs, and it makes 25 recommendations. Most involve roadways and shared paths for bicyclists and pedestrians. The paths, if built, would better connect the Newport River Trail, the train station, the Boxwood Road center (“this recommendation is under consideration by the developers of the Boxwood facility for inclusion in their plans”), the Conrad Schools of Science, Richardson Park Elementary, the Delaware Military Academy, Banning Park and Delcastle Technical High School.

The plan also suggests extending DART’s Route 9 and setting up direct bus service between Newport and the University of Delaware (“ridership for this recommendation is currently lower than the warrant threshold”) and improving several bus shelters.

The biggest idea, by far, is bringing back passenger rail service to Newport. The plan predicts it would cost

\$30 million to \$40 million. A ridership model updated in 2019 “support the reopening” of the station.

However, a forecast of 500 weekday riders was based on 17 trains each weekday, but there are now only 10 weekday trains running through Newport.

The original train station was built in 1908 and has long been demolished. A new station would be built downtown, with parking expected to use state-owned land underneath Delaware 141. An [interactive map](#) places the new station just west of Route 141.



BY KEN MAMMARELLA

A new [transportation plan](#) for Newport might revive a way of traveling from a century ago and also anticipates how people are increasingly shopping online. The Wilmington Area Planning Council is hosting a public workshop on the plan 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 7, in the Old Newport Town Hall, 15, N. Augustine St.

Work on the plan began in 2021 with three main goals:

- Reopening a Newport train station (an idea that goes back to at least 2011).
- Determining the impact of freight movements to and from the Boxwood Road logistics center used by Amazon (Delaware’s [largest](#) building).
- Improving downtown for pedestrians and bicyclists.

All three goals are made harder by the way that downtown Newport basically sits underneath Delaware Route 141. The agency is ready to explore traffic calming and





SEDGES SHOULD BE WELCOME ADDITION TO GARDENS

fine textured foliage and plants with very coarse textured foliage. Two different kinds of foliage really contrast beautifully when they're planted together."

One Carex—*C. stricta*—is figuring into a project that Mt. Cuba is working on with the state of Delaware to help expand bog turtle habitats. Bog turtles, the smallest turtles in North America, are imperiled through their range, Hoadley said.

"They like to nest in the crown of this specific species of Carex, which grows in very wet boggy habitats," he said. Mt. Cuba has been propagating the plants and then giving them to the state, which as been planting them in the turtles' habitat.

"They're actually seeing the bog turtles using those plants as nesting sites," he said. "There's been successful collections of eggs that have hatched from those reintroduced plants. It's just a really cool story about conservation in action and showing how some of these conservation initiatives really do work."

For home gardeners, the many varieties of Carex offer lots of choices and looks.

"While we were mostly evaluating the Carex from an ornamental perspective, we were telling people, 'You know, these plants look good. They're going to have a presence in your garden for a long period of time. They add texture, and they're going to cover ground suppress weeds,'" he said.

Mt. Cuba didn't evaluate the plants' effect on pollinators because they are wind pollinated, unlike the plants in a recent hydrangea trial. During that one it was easy to where where bees flocked, which was to lace caps.

"Carex are providing habitat for wildlife while they're providing cover," Hoadley said. "They're also providing a food source in the form of their leaves. They are actually host plants for a number of caterpillars, as well as producing seeds that are eaten by birds and small mammals.

"So there is ecological value. It's harder to to measure, but a lot of those ecological interactions will actually happen in your home garden as we saw them happening in our trial garden." That makes Carex a strong possibility for anyone focusing on the long-term sustainability of a garden, he said.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

BY BETSY PRICE

Mt. Cuba Center's latest plant research report offers home gardeners some options for turf grass-like plants that can be moved and work well in full shade or full sun. A five-year study of Carex plants, also known as sedges, found that many of the 70 tested were remarkably resilient.

"Some of the biggest surprises were just the adaptability of these plants," said Sam Hoadley, Mt. Cuba Center's manager of horticultural research. "We really kind of put them through their paces."

Mt. Cuba's trial garden uses middle-of-the-road average garden soils, he pointed out. The average home gardener should consider sedges as a tough, adaptable and versatile group of plants that will also provide food and shelter for wildlife, he said. In addition to providing ground cover like grass, they can be massed in large groups.

"Several different species kind of mixed together is really great," Hoadley said. "It's a very interesting look that gives you lots of different textures from plants with very

photo by fauxels on Pexel



Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



FOOD BANK CELEBRATES TOPPING OFF NEW MILFORD BUILDING

BY RACHEL SWICK MAVITY

Nearly 100 supporters, community members, politicians and more gathered Feb. 24 at the Food Bank of Delaware’s topping-off ceremony for its new \$32 million warehouse. Everyone was invited to sign the steel beam, which when placed symbolized the completion of the structural construction.

The ceremony included the traditional placement of a small evergreen tree on the beam, a symbol of future good luck, as well as an American flag, said Steve Thompson, a Food Bank board member and chairman of its capital campaign.

The 67,000-square-foot facility on 11.5 acres will house the Food Bank’s community food distribution program and workforce development programs. It also will allow the creation of a community Healthy Foods

Pantry and have space for a café where culinary students can learn valuable skills while feeding the community breakfast and lunch.

As in Newark, the Milford project will include an outdoor community garden where fresh food will be grown, for distribution to clients and for the cafe.

FOOD BANK EXPANSION

Cathy Kanefsky, president and CEO of the Food Bank, said the project will be paid for through donations and grants. About \$24 million already has been secured, and Kanefsky said she expects to meet the goal over the next few months. The Food Bank hopes to open without a mortgage, she said.

“We do more than provide food. We provide hope for a better tomorrow. That is why this project is so import-



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ant,” Kanefsky said. “This building will allow us to not only distribute food, but help our neighbors find long-term economic stability through job skills training, financial coaching and more.”

The Food Bank’s current Milford building is only 16,000 square feet, so the new location represents a significant increase in size, she said.

The current building has been sold to the previous owner who is generously renting it to them for \$10 a month as long as they still need the space. The new building is expected to open in the fall, Kanefsky said.

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photo link: SoDel Concepts



Food & Dining

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



FOOD TAKEOUT, DELIVERY STILL STRONG, BUT COMES WITH COST

BY PAM GEORGE

During the pandemic's peak, restaurant takeout soared. Partly, that's because it was the only option in spring 2020. However, more than a few consumers still haven't dined inside, and others have grown accustomed to the convenience of taking dinner home or having it delivered.

As a result, takeout is still trending. However, the demand can stress the kitchen, which is typically short-staffed, and some operators don't trust third-party delivery services, while others depend on them.

GROWING ACROSS CONCEPTS

Takeout has always been a selling point at fast-food restaurants, and in 2022, 85% of all fast-food orders were to go, according to market research firm the NPD Group. That number was down from 90% in 2020 but up from about 76% in the years just before the pandemic. Among full-service restaurants, 33% of orders were to go in 2022—nearly double the pre-pandemic rates.

But while quick-service restaurant menus are designed for takeout, other concepts have had to adjust—and it's not easy.

"Everybody wants items they can take out in a box. Everybody wants **DoorDash**," said Mike Stiglitz, founder of the locally based **Two Stones Pub** chain. "And that's one of the things we've struggled with."

For instance, Two Stones takeout nachos require multiple containers, and customers must assemble them at home. The dilemma helped give birth to **2SPizza**, which opened in Newark last month. But even pizza places are feeling the pinch.

"The takeout operation on the weekends is at capacity," said Robbie Jester, owner of **Pizzeria Mariana**, which is also in Newark. "There is definitely still a demand."

THE STRUGGLE TO KEEP UP

When Pizza Mariana is overwhelmed, Jester snoozes online ordering, typically in 20-minute intervals.

"It helps give us pockets of breathing room to get the food out and regroup," he explained.

Similarly, users of third-party delivery services, such as DoorDash, may notice that some restaurants go offline even when they're open for on-site dining. Consider them swamped.

That's also the case if the phone just rings when you call to place an order. Jester's restaurant phone set to three rings. "People call back if they aren't able to get to us right away," he noted.

Wit Milburn, the owner of **Kapow Kitchen** and **Ubon Thai Kitchen & Bar**, switched to a new point-of-sale system that can process takeout and delivery orders and on-site dining.

"It's made everything seamless," he said. He's also carved out a to-go pickup area in Ubon.

Milburn uses all of what he calls "the big three" for delivery—**Uber Eats**, DoorDash and **GrubHub**. Some restaurants pick one service, typically DoorDash. Indeed, Bloomberg Second Measure's transaction data shows that in January 2023, DoorDash and its subsidiary **Caviar** earned 65% of U.S. consumers' meal-delivery sales. Between January 2019 and January 2023, DoorDash's market share roughly doubled.

REFUSING TO TAKE CHANCES

Not every restaurant is a fan of such services. Greg Vogeley of Drip Café in Hockessin and Newark won't use them.

"I've always had a mental block about someone touching my food before it gets to the end user," he said.

His concerns have merit.

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Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

DELAWARE OFFERS SECOND ROUND OF CHILD CARE WORKER BONUSES

BY JAREK RUTZ

Tiny Tots Childcare Director Jessica Burns got good news Wednesday: A second round of relief checks for Delaware’s child care professionals. That will help her workers pay for their certifications, which cost between \$300 and \$500, she said.

“This definitely is a retention effort by the state,” she said. “My staff is very, very excited and hoping to get to work on them very soon so that they can see those bonuses. It definitely helps them out a lot.”

Wednesday, the [Department of Education](#) announced the second round of bonuses, this time for \$700, for child care workers.

“This is an important step to help families work and support vital day care workers,” said Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown. It’s a highly competitive market, she said, and most providers are small businesses that struggled through forced COVID-19 mandates.

The state is using federal American Rescue Plan funding—which earlier provided more than \$120 million in relief for Delaware’s child care industry—in an effort to keep early childhood educators in the state during the ongoing national teacher shortage.

The bonuses grew out of concerns about child care that popped up during COVID-19 when centers closed, forcing some parents to quit their jobs. It’s also become a crisis among workers, who often cannot find affordable childcare so they can work. The problem existed before the pandemic, but grew much worse during it.

To be eligible for the bonus, child care professionals must:

- Work directly with children or provide on-site support in a licensed family child care home, large family child care home, early care and education or school-age center in Delaware
- Work at least 20 hours per week

- Have worked for at least 90 days at the time of the application
- Be at least 18 years of age or older

Burns said state regulations are going to change and require child care centers to employ only Child Development Associates in coming years.

“That’s going to hurt the childcare field, so the state needs to give some incentives for people to get that classwork done and stay in the field,” she said.

In summer 2022, the Education Department dished out \$1,000 checks. All bonuses are considered taxable income. The application for round two will be open for two months with all submissions due April 30.

“I’m happy that the state is using ARPA funds to encourage people to stay in the field and to thank them for the work they do,” said Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown. “Having a strong child care system allows parents to secure and keep good-paying jobs which benefits their families and our local economies.”

After being verified, licensed child care professionals can expect to receive their payments within 10 days if they choose direct deposit or up to 30 days if they choose to receive a check by mail. To apply for the bonus, click [HERE](#).



WILMINGTON DROPS TRASH COLLECTION FOR A DOZEN BUILDINGS



BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Bureaucracy moves slowly, sometimes taking years to act. Online complaints, on the other hand, take just minutes or days to raise a ruckus. Both trends came together when Wilmington recently told the owners of about a dozen buildings that the city would no longer collect their trash or their recycling.

City code, as revised in 2014, limits trash collection to single-family homes and other dwellings with four or few units, such as apartments or condos.

In 2017, the city announced that it had reviewed about 20,000 trash and recycling accounts and determined that 97 of them were commercial accounts and should not have had free city trash collection. That list included condos, apartments, nonprofits, houses of worships, schools and daycares. On Jan. 1, 2018, the city cut them off, sent them to private haulers and said it would save \$200,000 a year by doing so.

The new review of the situation led to the same results, affecting a smaller—but vocal—crowd.

“The city code clearly says that the city should be collecting residential only,” John Rago, deputy chief of staff for policy and communication, said in response to the latest change.

That’s not what people posting on a new Nextdoor thread wanted to hear, and it doesn’t matter that the free collection has—unlawfully—been going on for years, maybe decades.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT TRASH

“There’s got to be more to this!” Nancy Kavanaugh wrote. “Ridiculous.”

“How does the city justify withholding one of its services from us, especially one as important to the environment as recycling?” Christopher Bell wrote. “They should be ashamed of themselves.”

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TWO HOURS TO BRING A SMILE

20 MEALS ON WHEELS DELAWARE

Multiple people complained that their taxes should cover trash collection and recycling. They vowed to complain—but none of the dozens of posts on the thread showed any hope of reprieve from formal complaints.

An additional problem is that the city no longer operates front-end lifter trucks to handle the containers used by some multiunit structures, Rago said.

“Our intent is not to cause any hardships, but Wilmington’s charter and code are very clear in that city government collects trash and recyclables from residential properties only,” Mayor Mike Purzycki said in 2017.

The most likely scenario is that rents and condo fees will increase to pay for private collection.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

PROBLEMS DETAILED IN THREE SHORT-STAFFED DELAWARE POST OFFICES

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Last Oct. 25, the Lancaster Avenue post office had 68,493 delayed letters, magazines and packages, a new federal inspector general’s report found. And not one was logged as delayed, as it should have been.

That stat is just one part of a numbing inspection of three post offices in New Castle County and three in Philadelphia. The tone is dry, and the problems are rampant.

The 21-page **report** found deficiencies in each post office in five targeted areas: delayed mail, package scanning, truck arrival scanning, arrow keys (master keys used, among other places, in apartment buildings) and property conditions.

The report comes among continuing complaints about postal service, include days of skipped mail, long delivery times and long lines waiting for service. It made eight recommendations (with local managers “agreeing”

with them all), but it’s not clear when the causes cited—repeatedly, lack of staff and inadequate training—will be fixed.

The inspector general “considers management’s comments responsive to the recommendations and their planned actions should resolve the issues identified in the report,” the report concludes.

The Wilmington area was audited “based on Congressional interest in Delaware” and concerns raised in a U.S. House hearing last September. The station in Philadelphia’s Germantown section was audited at the request of Sen. Robert P. Casey and Rep. Dwight Evans.

The inspector general “judgmentally selected” the other five offices based on the number of “stop-the-clock **scans** occurring at the units, rather than at the customers’ point of delivery.” In other words, somebody marked the item “delivered” before the carrier made it

to the addressee. “Judgmentally selected” **means** they used their expertise of where and what to analyze.

The six offices were Edgemoor, Lancaster Avenue and Marshallton in Delaware, along with Germantown, Logan and North Philadelphia in Philadelphia. The audit started in October to look for election mail—it found 26 pieces of delayed election mail in Philadelphia—and continued through February.

DELAYS AT DELAWARE POST OFFICES

Managers in Lancaster Avenue explained the delays occurred because they were short-staffed; they had several inexperienced employees; and managers miscommunicated.

Managers in Edgemoor said managers were inexperienced and “were not aware of proper guidelines and reporting policy” on logging delayed mail; and they were short-staffed.

Managers in Marshallton said “they did not adequately monitor operations” because they were “busy with other tasks, including managing staffing and participating in daily meetings.” The acting supervisor was also “not aware of proper procedures” for reporting delayed mail and had missed seeing 129 packages left behind in a retail window the night before.

PACKAGE SCANNING

Between July and September, the audit found 5,337 packages were scanned (say, marked “delivered”) at the post office, rather than at the delivery point. The audit doesn’t say how many packages were handled by these offices during that time, to put that number into perspective.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

WIFE OF BEAR MAN WHO BUILT SECRET BUNKER GOES TO JAIL, TOO

BY BETSY PRICE

The wife of a Bear man who built a secret underground bunker to grow marijuana may not be able to go to jail with him, but she's going. Shakira Martinez has been sentenced in federal court to nine years in prison for money laundering, conspiracy to commit money laundering and structuring bank transactions following a jury verdict in July of 2022.

She was convicted with her husband, **Omar Colon**, referred to in court as one of the biggest cocaine traffickers in Delaware history. He previously was sentenced to 45 years' incarceration.

The two were accused of laundering nearly \$1 million in drug proceeds through the purchase of real estate properties in Delaware and Pennsylvania using their company, Zemi Property Management. They deposited drug money into several different bank accounts—and asked their friends and family members to do the same—and then used those funds to buy cashier's checks that funded the property purchases.

Colon wouldn't have been successful without Martinez's money laundering and structuring crimes, the court was told. Colon was arrested on May 6, 2017, shortly after giving his cocaine supplier \$382,045 in cash in a hotel parking lot in Newark, DE. The **Drug Enforcement Administration** later found a secret underground bunker beneath Colon and Martinez's home, accessed by a tunnel behind a false fireplace.

Circuit Judge Stephanos Bibas said during sentencing that money laundering is a "huge issue that fuels the drug trade with all its harms." He said the prison sentences were a way for the court to send a message.

Special Agent in Charge Yury Kruty said "IRS Criminal Investigation special agents are uniquely qualified to follow complex financial transactions and uncover the source of the illegal funds. Martinez and Colon employed multiple tactics to clean up their ill-gotten gains, but in the end, they could not outsmart the government."



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- URSULINE ACADEMY

photo link: Christiana High School

CHRISTIANA HIGH SCHOOL			
BOYS TRACK RECORDS	GIRLS TRACK RECORDS		
NAME	YEAR	NAME	YEAR
A. BARRY	11.81	A. BARRY	11.81
A. BARRY	14.20	A. BARRY	14.20
A. BARRY	16.20	A. BARRY	16.20
A. BARRY	18.20	A. BARRY	18.20
A. BARRY	20.20	A. BARRY	20.20
A. BARRY	22.20	A. BARRY	22.20
A. BARRY	24.20	A. BARRY	24.20
A. BARRY	26.20	A. BARRY	26.20
A. BARRY	28.20	A. BARRY	28.20
A. BARRY	30.20	A. BARRY	30.20
A. BARRY	32.20	A. BARRY	32.20
A. BARRY	34.20	A. BARRY	34.20
A. BARRY	36.20	A. BARRY	36.20
A. BARRY	38.20	A. BARRY	38.20
A. BARRY	40.20	A. BARRY	40.20
A. BARRY	42.20	A. BARRY	42.20
A. BARRY	44.20	A. BARRY	44.20
A. BARRY	46.20	A. BARRY	46.20
A. BARRY	48.20	A. BARRY	48.20
A. BARRY	50.20	A. BARRY	50.20
A. BARRY	52.20	A. BARRY	52.20
A. BARRY	54.20	A. BARRY	54.20
A. BARRY	56.20	A. BARRY	56.20
A. BARRY	58.20	A. BARRY	58.20
A. BARRY	60.20	A. BARRY	60.20
A. BARRY	62.20	A. BARRY	62.20
A. BARRY	64.20	A. BARRY	64.20
A. BARRY	66.20	A. BARRY	66.20
A. BARRY	68.20	A. BARRY	68.20
A. BARRY	70.20	A. BARRY	70.20
A. BARRY	72.20	A. BARRY	72.20
A. BARRY	74.20	A. BARRY	74.20
A. BARRY	76.20	A. BARRY	76.20
A. BARRY	78.20	A. BARRY	78.20
A. BARRY	80.20	A. BARRY	80.20
A. BARRY	82.20	A. BARRY	82.20
A. BARRY	84.20	A. BARRY	84.20
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A. BARRY	90.20	A. BARRY	90.20
A. BARRY	92.20	A. BARRY	92.20
A. BARRY	94.20	A. BARRY	94.20
A. BARRY	96.20	A. BARRY	96.20
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Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



CHARTER SCHOOLS SUE HOLODICK OVER SPECIAL ED PAYMENTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The [Delaware Charter Schools Network](#), 11 charter schools and the Delaware secretary of education are waiting on a judge’s ruling in a lawsuit about \$4 million in tax revenue the charters say they are due.

The network and the 11 charter schools sued Education Secretary Mark Holodick in Kent County Superior Court in July to get the money and to remove the secretary of education from the process approving the payments. The charters claim that Holodick failed to perform his legal duty to verify and certify their invoices and so they were not paid. State code requires the secretary of education to verify the invoices within 20 days of receiving them.

Representatives of the network and the Department of Education declined to comment on the case and even to define “special services.”

Holodick did reference the lawsuit in the February State School board meeting when a member asked him

about rewriting the language for licensure and certification.

“At some point, we will,” he said. “I think we’re going to wait until this lawsuit is over between the charter schools and the traditional districts that’s active...I think it makes sense for us to wait until that lawsuit plays out.”

The districts are not defendants in the suit. Only Holodick is.

Delaware codes says special services include speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, early identification and assessment of disabilities, special counseling services, developmental, corrective or supportive services that may assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.

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KENT COUNTY SENIORS PICKED FOR U.S. SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

BY JAREK RUTZ

Joshua Donophan wanted to join a program that sends students to the U.S. Senate for a week because he believes it's crucial to understand how the nation's government officials think and how the government operates. Now the Lake Forest High School senior is getting a \$10,000 college scholarship to do that.

Donophan and Smyrna High School senior Carl Rifino both received the U.S. Senate Youth Program award. They will stay in Washington, D.C., March 4-11 for the program's 61st Washington Week.

ABOUT THE U.S. SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

Created by the United States Senate in 1962, the program has been sponsored by the Senate and funded by [Hearst Foundations](#) since its inception.

Its goal is to increase young Americans' understanding of the interrelationships of the three branches of government and learn the caliber and responsibilities of federally elected and appointed officials. Each year, two students from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity are selected to participate. Another goal of the program is to emphasize the importance of democratic decision making in America and around the world.

"I got the email and I was literally jumping in the hallway, I was going crazy," Donophan said. "It was a great moment and I was glad I could share it with my friends and my teacher."

Rifino had a strong emotional reaction, too.

"I was in the library for study hall, I saw the email come up and I screamed," he said. "I grabbed my laptop, ran upstairs to my AP U.S. Government and Politics teacher's class and I barged into her class and told her and I started crying for like 30 minutes."

Donophan and Rifino don't have many specifics on what each day will entail, and they were asked to not disclose what they do know will be on the schedule. They will meet Delaware's United States Sens. Chris Coons and Tom Carper.

"That will be a great opportunity for me and Carl to talk with them," Donophan said, "and to actually ask them some questions and see where their minds are at with Delaware."

Donophan serves as vice president of Lake Forest's Business Professionals of America, and is heavily involved in the National Honor Society and Spanish club, which he serves as secretary. He hopes to go to Columbia, Harvard or Princeton, and while he is passionate about the government, he said he's not interested in the headaches and back-and-forth of politics.

"I think I'd be more suitable for something like law school rather than politics because I couldn't necessarily do politics in my right mind and still continue to just be myself," he said. "I've always been told I'm very good at making my point clear in an argument but in a civil way."

If law doesn't work out, he's considering pursuing a career in music or economics.

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WILMINGTON CHARTER WINS STATE MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION

BY JAREK RUTZ

After five rounds of competition, the Charter School of Wilmington’s team bested 17 teams to win the 2023 Delaware High School Mock Trial Competition final Saturday. Teams from public, private, parochial and charter schools throughout Delaware took part in the two-day event at Wilmington’s **Leonard L. Williams Justice Center**.

The participants included 217 students, 52 coaches, and 118 Delaware bench and bar members, who served as presiding judges or scoring judges.

The schools are assigned to knockout brackets, with winners playing until the final two schools remain. Teams earn points for a variety of factors such as wit-

ness believability, trial composure, time management, knowledge of the case and courtroom procedures, and more.

Gary Traynor, a justice on Delaware’s Supreme Court, acted as the judge in the semifinal between Cab Callo-way School of the Arts’ team and Wilmington Charter’s team. He said the students exhibited excellent trial techniques, and it was abundantly clear that they were well trained. He also gave them advice on how to improve their opening and closing statements as well as their questioning during cross-examination.

“It means everything to be able to get thorough feedback and guidance from the top judges in the state,”

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said Aadhi Narayan, an 11th-grader at Wilmington Charter. “They know pretty much everything about law and they’re able to explain the routes needed to get us where we need to be.”

Narayan’s role on the winning team was defense attorney. He presented the opening statement, directed one witness on his side and prosecuted a witness on the opposition. Going to law school is something he’d love to do in the future, and he said the Wilmington Charter team really focused on the feedback from last year’s competition to improve this year.

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SAINT MARK'S UNVEILS SEAN'S ROOM, A MENTAL HEALTH LOUNGE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Saint Mark's High School students were anointed with holy water Friday as the Catholic school opened a mental health center named for a former student whose 2018 suicide led to a movement to help other youth cope.

"Let us ask God's blessing on all who will enter into this place, seeking peace and guidance and upon those who will be here to offer an ear to listen and strength support and lift up," said Deacon Pat Johnston.

Sean's Room is an extension of **Sean's House**, a mental health center in Newark that serves 14- to 22-year-olds. Both are named for Sean Locke.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

"Sean Locke is a beloved Spartan who loved this school," said Principal Diane Casey. "Today is a great day to let our light shine and be the light for others."

So far, the home has helped more than 18,000 Delawareans get the mental health treatment and support they need.

Sean's Room is a former classroom converted into a lounge where students can relax, ask questions and learn about mental health. Sean's Room will be staffed by **University of Delaware** specialists two days per week during lunch periods. Specialists will work with Saint Mark's guidance staff to keep continuity of care consistent while handling everyday student concerns.

On both ends of the main lounge are two smaller breakout rooms where students can have one-on-one time with UD workers.

The school declined to identify the donor or donation amount that paid for the room.

Casey said mental health struggles have increased because of the pandemic isolating children. Returning to normalcy after years of masking and online classes was overwhelming to a lot of students.

According to the SL24:Unlocke the Light Foundation, which runs Sean's House and Sean's Room, more than

35 million people in America suffer from depression.

Two of Sean's former classmates and friends told Friday's crowd that Sean's Room is an incredible way to honor Sean's legacy. They asked students to take advantage of the room because they always thought Sean was the last person who would be struggling mentally.

Once Sean's House was created in 2020, Saint Mark's had planned to start a Sean's Room on its campus.

"Room 156, with natural sunlight coming through the windows, was the perfect place," Casey said.

Chris Locke, Sean's father, said that he plans to open additional Sean's Rooms in Delaware schools, but wanted to start with the place where his son left such an impact.

"You know you have a Sean in your life and that's why all of you are in this room today," he said. "Each of you wants to make a difference for how we deal with mental health with this generation."

Locke admitted he and his father never spoke about mental health, and he never knew how to talk to Sean about the subject.

"I did not create an environment where Sean could come and open up about what he was struggling with," he said. "I would have said all the wrong things. I would have told him to suck it up."

Mental health struggles do not discriminate, Locke said. Sean held his demons inside even though he was a star athlete, homecoming king and heavily involved in extracurricular activities.

"It could be the kid that has no friends in the cafeteria, or it could be Sean who had all the friends in the cafeteria," Locke said. "This is your room now. This is what you make of it."

LEARNING COLLAB HIRES DSU, EMPOWER SCHOOLS TO MANAGE PROJECTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Wilmington Learning Collaborative governing council voted Thursday night to hire Delaware State University and Empower Schools as project managers. The council also announced it has **posted** a job description for executive director and already has a dozen applicants.

The initial contracts with DSU and Empower Schools, a national education group that partners with local groups to provide improved and accessible education, will be for six months. The council will pay \$160,000 to DSU and \$140,000 to Empower Schools, the first big chunk it's used of its expected \$10 million budget.

"My role would be playing a significant role in your strategic planning, facilitating those key conversations that are going to take you from these initial launch pieces to getting deep in the work," said Shelley Rouser, chair of DSU's education department.

She said the project management team will make sure that the Learning Collab's aspirations are put to paper and facilitated.

"I would be a key point person for making sure that your team is coming together and that our work is coordinated to serve the deliverables that you have in mind," Rouser said.

DSU will focus on four main areas: project design, strategic advising, technical assistance and implementation.

"The collaboration between Empower and Delaware State University really gives us the full package," said council member Alethea Smith-Tucker. "You have anticipated our needs and have been a part of this process from the very beginning."

Both Rouser and Empower Schools expressed interest and essentially lobbied to partner with the Collab before



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it was created last November.

LEARNING COLLAB PROJECT BREAKDOWN

The project management team will consist of four representatives from DSU and three from **Empower Schools** and be divided into three parts.

DSU's Srabani Mohanty and Empower's Malik Stewart will focus on project leadership and management. DSU's Rouser, Empower's Matt Matera and Empower's Rachell Davis will hone in on project support and offer subject matter expertise. DSU's Darren Rainey and DSU's Tina Mitchell will work on educator support.

In addition to sharing some DSU highlights, Rouser told the council that the university recently announced a \$31.6 million investment for an early childhood innovation center.

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REDDING CONSORTIUM SEEKS ALIGNMENT WITH LEARNING COLLAB

BY JAREK RUTZ

Redding Consortium officials said Wednesday night they will prioritize aligning their plans with the Wilmington Learning Collaborative, investing in wraparound services and building community partnerships.

“How do I say what Redding should be doing next if I have no idea what the connection between Redding and the WLC is,” said Cerron Cade, director of the **Delaware Office of Management & Budget**. “It’s kind of putting the cart before the horse.”

WHAT IS THE CONSORTIUM?

The Redding Consortium, founded in 2019, recommends policies and practices to the governor and legislators to ensure educational equality for all segments of society and to improve outcomes, both academically and socially, for students in Wilmington and northern New Castle County.

Several consortium officials suggested establishing a definition for equity and metrics so they can measure progress in the coming years.

“How do we know when we’ve achieved educational equity?” was asked in some form or another multiple times Wednesday without a clear answer.

The group also has worked to add wraparound services—before- and after-school programs, counseling, social services and wellness centers—to some Wilmington schools as well as awarding scholarships for people studying education.

The consortium’s goals are similar to the **Wilmington Learning Collaborative**, an agency that was created in November 2022 to help Wilmington children in nine city elementary schools across Brandywine, Red Clay and Christina school districts.

It aims to empower city students and families by giving them a voice in policy making to improve student achievement metrics like test scores, absenteeism and graduation rates. The Collab also plans to help connect families with services that can help solve issues such as homelessness, hunger, poverty and more.

Wilmington residents are going to be confused when officials knock on their door to talk about the Redding Consortium and then come back a week later to talk about the Learning Collaborative, said Sen. Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman, D-Wilmington.

She said the consortium needs to figure out how to communicate what it offers and how it differs from the Collaborative so community members can better understand Redding’s efforts and initiatives.

EastSide Charter School Chief Executive Officer Aaron Bass said there should be a better alignment between the Department of Education and the consortium. Misunderstandings and missteps can pop up, Bass said. He did not give specific examples.

“The relationship and the communication between the WLC and Redding is absolutely essential,” said Education Secretary Mark Holodick. “That will, of course, start happening, I would imagine now that the [Learning Collaborative] board has come together and is in the process of hiring an executive director.”

Holodick said the relationships schools make with community partners is paramount to the success of both groups. Holodick, Bass and others agreed that the commitment to wraparound services is another top priority.

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photo by DIAA

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

MEN'S	WOMEN'S
1982 Florida Conference	1982 Florida Conference
1983 Florida Conference	1983 Florida Conference
1984 Florida Conference	1984 Florida Conference
1985 Florida Conference	1985 Florida Conference
1986 Florida Conference	1986 Florida Conference
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Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



SALESIANUM & URSULINE BRING HOME STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Salesianum and Ursuline were crowned state champions of boys and girls state championships Saturday at the University of Delaware. Salesianum captured its seventh straight state championship accumulating 343 team points to outscore second place Charter School of Wilmington. Salesianum only won two races which were the 200 and 400 freestyle relays, but were able to score points in seven different races throughout the night.

Ty Wilmore from Wilmington Friends and Aaron Stevens from Conrad School of the Sciences each brought home two individual state championships apiece. Wilmore won both his state championships pretty handedly posting a 1:40.13 in the 200-yard freestyle. He then put on a great performance posting a 4:32.44 in the 500-yard freestyle. Stevens brought home

his individual championships in the 200-yard individual medley and the 100-yard breaststroke.

Ursuline was able to edge out the Charter School of Wilmington by six points to capture the 2023 girls state championship by a score of 298 to 292. Ursuline didn't win a single race but placed in 10 of them. Ursuline wins its first state championship since 2017.

Georgia Colburn, Laney Mullins and Rachel Bockrath all brought home two individual state championships each. Colburn won the 100-yard butterfly and the 100-yard backstroke. Mullins won the 200- and 500-yard freestyle races. Bockrath won the 50- and 100-yard freestyle races breaking her state record in the 100 with a time of 49.32 beating her time from last year of 49.82.



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MOUNT PLEASANT STYMIES CONRAD TO ADVANCE

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The Mount Pleasant Green Knights proved to be too much for the Conrad Red Wolves. The Red Wolves hosted a first round game after being named the 16 seed of the DIAA boys basketball state championship after a 15-5 season. However the Flight A Green Knights proved to be too much as the 17 seed.

After trailing by one point at half Mount Pleasant began to pull away in the third quarter. The defense and length of the Green knights began to take over the game. Big men Senior Segio Salis and Darnell Lloyd established their presence in this game.

The duo of Lloyd and Salis combined for 19 points and 13 rebounds in the game. A bulk of those stats came in the third quarter as the Green Knights were able to outscore the Red Wolves 21-11.

The third quarter deficit was too much for the Red Wolves to overcome as the Green knights made big play after big play to help close out the game and come away with a 69-58 victory to advance to the next round.

The Green knights were led by Niame Scott who scored 23 points hitting four three-pointers and went 5 for 7 from the line. Anthony Sidberry and Darnell Llyod each added 13 points apiece. Conrad was led by Jaylin Horsey who scored 26 points connecting on six three-pointers.

The Green Knights will advance to play the No. 1 seed Middletown Cavaliers Thursday night at 7 p.m.



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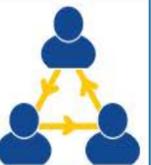
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DIAA BOYS BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND ONE BRACKET UPDATE

BY NICK HALLIDAY

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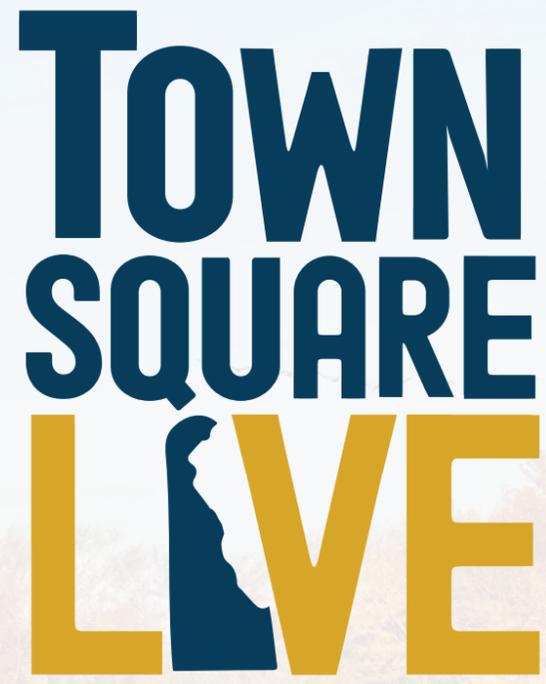
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