

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

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photo link: Delaware Art Museum

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Contents

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Community	3
Business	7
Food & Dining	10
Government	13
Education.....	20
Sports	25
Stay Connected	28



Candlelight Whodunnit



House Judiciary OKs Child Abuse Bill, Tables Another



All-Star Softball Thriller Ends With Walk Off Win

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photo link: Delaware State Parks



Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



CANDLELIGHT WHODUNNIT MAKES YOU WONDER WHO'S REALLY WHO

BY BETSY PRICE

Candlelight Theatre patrons often ask actor Shawn Yates, as he's serving their dinner, for hints about who the killer is in the Arden Playhouse's production of "The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940." Yates, who plays composer Roger Hopewell, always tries to give a vague sort of hint, but it's easier said than done.

Many of the 10 actors in the show play multiple roles. "There's four primary suspects, but everyone winds up being a suspect at some point," Yates said. Even Hopewell has secrets, Yates said.

"Almost every actor is pretending to be somebody they're not," said Bob Kelly, the theater's artistic director. "One actor who's playing an Irish actor is actually somebody else who then actually winds up being somebody

else, so it becomes a very involved plot of multiple identities."

Fun, food and farce is the order of the evening at Candlelight, which offers dinner before the shows. In a holdover from COVID-19 restrictions, patrons choose entrees and dessert from a menu rather than visiting a buffet themselves. Servers—several of them performers in the show—deliver food to their table.

CANDLELIGHT DINNER

Choices include shrimp with cocktail sauce, ricotta-stuffed pasta shells topped with marinara and mozzarella, flank steak with mushroom gravy, salmon with coconut cream sauce and more. Vegetarian meals can be provided.

Yates said all the actors are offered the chance to serve dinner, but no one is required to.

"I enjoy serving," he said. "You really get to connect to the audience. All these subscribers come see every show, so you start seeing some of the same people again and again. You kind of build a rapport with them."

He's also got a theatrical advantage. "My character doesn't come in until 20 minutes into the play, so I still have a little time to decompress after serving or cleaning tables," he said.

"Musical Comedy Murders" continues a recent tradition of Candlelight offering one drama or comedy a year in a schedule of musical extravaganzas to break up the season.

"When I came in, I directed a few plays. We started with 'Steel Magnolias' and that did pretty well," Kelly said. "Even though we didn't get the kind of attendance we get for a musical, it struck me that there was an audience out there for those kinds of shows."

The drama-only plays have included the female version of "The Odd Couple" and "Driving Miss Daisy," but "Musical Comedy Murders" follows the success of last year's "Clue." Attendance for the play often rivals that of the musicals, Kelly said.

"Musical Comedy Murders," which ends Sunday, June 25, played Off-Broadway in New York City, takes place right before World War II in a New York mansion owned by a theater benefactor. It drops members of a recent Broadway flop, in which three chorus girls were murdered, into a benefactor's home, only to be trapped by a blizzard with a masked killer. Doors slam, walls slide away and the murderer drags his victims to secret hiding spots.

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TONY AWARD WINNER STARRED IN DELAWARE THEATER PLAY LAST YEAR

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware audiences got an upclose look at one of last night's Tony Award winners last year when she starred in a play at Delaware Theatre Co.

Bonnie Milligan, who won on Sunday night, won the 2022 Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical for her role in "Kimberly Akimbo," was in "Other World," a special effects musical extravaganza that also featured a wide range of diverse actors.

Milligan, known for her wide vocal range and ability to belt out a song, played Lorraine in the Delaware production. Her father created a popular video game, only to disappear one night. She is lured into a search for him by Sri, whose mother worked with Lorraine's father and also disappeared. Lorraine is dismissive about the idea and the game, singing, "Boys and their toys, just a lot of noise, I don't get it."

Matt Silva, executive director of the Delaware Theater Co., said Milligan is a magnificent talent as well as a compassionate artist who was amazing to have around.

"She astonishes audiences, bring the goods every night as a real pro," he said. "We were grateful to be working with her at DTC."

Silva remembered that the first time he hear her sing he thought, "Man, that a voice that's gonna be on Broadway stages for a long time to come." He expects there to be additional productions of "Other World" in the future, but couldn't say when.

"Other World" was one of the many plays working their way toward Broadway that Delaware Theatre Co. has presented. In "Kimberly Akimbo," Milligan plays the Kimberly's shiftless Aunt Debra. Silva thinks that musical will have a long life on Broadway.



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- URSULINE ACADEMY



PLAYHOUSE SEASON TO INCLUDE FAMILIAR SHOWS, FAMOUS NAMES

BY BETSY PRICE

The rhythm won't be the only thing that gets you in The Playhouse on Rodney Square's 2023-24 season. The season includes six musicals, many with familiar names, and solo shows by Broadway stars Alan Cumming, Sutton Foster, and husband-wife David Foster and Katharine McPhee. The four-show Broadway in Wilmington subscription series will feature:

- "Pretty Woman: The Musical," drawn from the beloved Richard Gere-Julia Roberts movie, Oct. 13-15.
- "On Your Feet!," the story of Cuban-American musicians Gloria and Emilio Estefan's rise to stardom, March 7-10, 2024.
- "Come from Away," an ultimately uplifting story of a small community that welcomed airplanes from around the world after the 9/11 attacks, April 19-21, 2024.

- "Little Women," a retelling of Louisa May Alcott's classic story of sisters growing up during the Civil War, May 9-12, 2024.

Two crowd-pleaser extras will round out the season: "Million Dollar Quartet Christmas" in November and "Annie," who in the doldrums of January (5-7) will promise us all the sun will come out tomorrow.

"Million Dollar Quartet Christmas," which will run Nov. 17-19, imagines Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins gathering a second time, as they were known to do in December 1956, but this time singing holiday fare such as "Run Rudolph Run," "Jingle Bell Rock" and "I'll Be Home For Christmas."

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The laptop screen displays the Mailchimp homepage. At the top, the Mailchimp logo is visible on the left, and the text "Sales +1(800) 315-5929 Log in" is on the right. The main heading reads "Outperform your last campaign". Below this is a central graphic for an "Abandoned Carts" campaign titled "BIG ON FLOATS". To the left of the graphic is a flowchart showing the automation process: "Float left in their cart" -> "Wait 1 hour" -> "Gets reminder email". To the right of the graphic is the text "Sell more with email automations" and a sub-headline "Generate more orders with our prebuilt automations: remind abandoned cart shoppers, reengage lost customers, or cross-sell your products. Marketers have seen, on average, 4x more orders with our Customer Journey Builder than with bulk emails." A "Sell more" button is located at the bottom right of the text area.

Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



HOW'S THE DE HOUSING MARKET? DEPENDS ON WHO YOU TALK TO

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

My uncle, a resident of Bethany Beach, liked to say that people who lived at the beach talked about three things: real estate, the weather and where to eat. Here are a few interesting numbers to spark a conversation about real estate:

- The Lewes area is Delaware’s hottest market in terms of rising prices, according to the real estate site Redfin. “The median sale price of a home in Lewes was \$784K last month, up 30.7% since last year,” it said. Contrast that to the Laurel area, where prices are down 11.7%.
- Sussex County has Delaware’s priciest homes, \$450,648 on average, a 26.96% increase from 2021. That’s the conclusion of [New Jersey Real Estate Network](#) in looking at data from Zillow. The statewide average is \$365,168.93, up \$18.3%.
- Delaware has the nation’s oldest homebuyers, with 38% of buyers age 55 and older, compared to the

national average of 20.7%, Delaware Public Media reported in April.

These stats demonstrate, in different ways, the trend of people retiring to the Sussex beaches. And Redfin users looking at homes in the Lewes area are most likely coming from the Washington, D.C., area.

Yet.

Delaware’s real estate transfer tax collections soared during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, but have been much lower in recent months, the Delaware Economic and Financial Advisory Committee has repeatedly reported at meetings. Transfer tax is one of the many indicators they watch to assess the state’s finances.

“The Delaware housing market is experiencing a major shift,” Houzeo concludes, citing data from [Redfin](#). “The median sale price decreased by 0.14% in April



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2023 year-on-year, and the number of homes sold dropped by 29.7%.”

“Delaware homes stayed on the market for an average of 17 days, up from seven days from last year,” and Delaware is expected to see a decrease in home prices by **20%**.

Stats from the Delaware Association of Realtors paint a different picture. Sales in April fell 29%, compared to April of 2022. Listing prices were up 6.8% to \$389,963, while sale prices averaged \$363,818. New listings and pending units were both down 20%.

And one more stat, from a 2021 federal Department of Housing and Urban Development [study](#). The average sale price of new homes then was \$394,200, while the average sale price of existing homes was \$255,400.





LAND CLEARED FOR MULTI-USE SILVERSIDE ROAD DEVELOPMENT

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Development has finally begun on the site of what was the oldest building built for free public education in the United States. The Forwood School, which was built before 1800, was knocked down months ago and plans are to use its stones in a leasing center.

The development is on 11.7 acres in the heart of Brandywine Hundred, on Silverside Road, across from Branmar Plaza, and just west of Marsh Road. Forwood Commons, according to plans prepared by an engineering firm, will include 38 townhomes, all with two-car garages, and four buildings for retail. Almost five acres will be paved, according to county records.

The retail includes a 7,000-square-foot restaurant with outdoor dining; a 13,400-square-foot site for a pharmacy or retail; a 4,000-square-foot bank; and a building with a 5,920-square-foot retail space and a 1,920-square-foot coffeeshop.

Developer Joe Setting bought the property in 2014 and by 2015 had proposed 35 three-story townhouses and five commercial buildings with the same mix of tenants. Various governmental reviews ran from 2015 to 2019. Setting did not return requests for updates.

NEIGHBORS COMPLAIN ABOUT DEVELOPMENT

When crews began clearing the site, a thread on nextdoor.com generated dozens of comments, complaining about the green space and wildlife habitat lost and the traffic congestion gained.

“I felt sick to my stomach looking at the destruction of that beautiful wooded area where all our innocent wildlife once lived. So sad,” Dawn Groover wrote, ending her post with a broken heart.

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Providing Big Support For Delaware's Small Businesses



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photo by Spencer Davis / Unsplash



Food & Dining

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BY PAM GEORGE

Every respectable VIP tent boasts a bar and lavish buffet, and you can expect both in the private area at the **Rocking the Docks** concert series, which kicks off on June 21 at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal.

But the 10-week series' new private section will also emphasize décor. Picture picnic games, a photo backdrop, a neon Rocking the Docks sign, beachy lounge chairs with ottomans and accessories that complement the performers and the waterfront setting. Credit Jessica Jones of **Dewey Beach Picnic Co.** for the atmosphere.

"I'm enhancing the experience," explained the New Jersey native, who honed her skills working for a high-end wedding and event company in Key West, FL.

Jones has more than an eye for detail; she can also spot the trends. The luxury picnic business is a cutting-edge cottage industry that has bloomed since the pandemic.

A COASTAL CAREER

"Luxury picnic" is not a term that people used around Ocean City, NJ, where Jones grew up. But she was cer-

DEWEY BEACH PICNIC CO. TURNS ORDINARY INTO EXTRAORDINARY

tainly familiar with the beach lifestyle, complete with summer jobs down the shore, where she met husband-to-be Hunter.

The couple gravitated toward the water. For instance, Jones had a gig on a pirate excursion boat; he learned the ropes with a parasailing operation. Their experience led to positions in the Virgin Islands and Key West, and they eventually moved to the Florida island.

By chance, Jones met the owner of Simply You Weddings, which had a job opening. Jones didn't hesitate, and she learned all she could from her mentor until the couple's newborn daughter "changed my life," she said.

Having a baby and juggling the many details of someone's special day—plus the long hours—proved problematic.

Meanwhile, the couple's family friend, Justin Sikora, owned **Dewey Beach Parasail**, now in its 19th season. The Jones moved to Rehoboth so Hunter could work with the business, which the couple purchased in 2018.

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BY PAM GEORGE

While contemplating career choices, Antonios Fessaras flipped through a family photo album and saw an image of his grandfather.

“He had a coffee shop back home in Greece, and that’s the business that my father grew up in before the family came to America,” said Fessaras, who studied business at Wilmington University.

In Greece, the “kafenio” shop is the hub for socialization and relaxation but also contemplation, if you’re sipping your coffee alone. While Delaware has no shortage of coffee shops, Fessaras saw a niche.

In May, he opened **CafeNeo** at 139 S. Main St. in Newark. The restaurant features Greek pastries and novel Greek coffee. Unlike many grab-and-go coffee

CAFENEO'S OFFERINGS: GREEK PASTRIES, COFFEE BREWED IN SAND

shops in Delaware, CafeNeo invites guests to sit and sip for a spell.

“In Greece, you see groups of people by the droves just hanging out, having a coffee, exchanging stories, things like that,” he said.

The Appoquinimink High School graduate is bringing his family legacy full circle in more ways than one. His father is the original owner of Daffy Deli, a much-loved sandwich shop for UD graduates in the 1970s and ’80s.

COFFEE SERVED WITH GROUNDS

So, what is Greek coffee? It’s more of a process than a type of bean. Finely ground coffee—finer than espresso grounds—is placed with water in an ibrik, a copper pot with a long handle. The pot is nestled in hot sand to brew, after which the contents are poured into a small cup—grounds and all.

“You wait for the grounds to settle and just drink it as is,” Fessaras explained. “It doesn’t require any dairy product—it’s extremely smooth. But the coffee grounds specifically stay in the drink for potency.”

If Greek coffee seems similar to Turkish coffee, consider that the Ottoman Empire once covered most areas of Greece, which explains the similarities in food throughout the region.

CafeNeo also offers frappes, which are ubiquitous in Greece. Baristas can whip Nescafe instant coffee with water until there’s a smooth foam. They then add ice and the dairy product that the customer desires.

If you can’t stray from an espresso, you’ll also find the familiar fare at CafeNeo, including lattes and cold brew coffee.

CAFENEO'S FAMILY RECEIPES

The Newark shop is also a bakery and many delicacies are from Fessaras’ family recipes, which are kept under lock and key.

“Everything is made fresh in-house from scratch,” says Fessaras, whose parents were both born in Greece.

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LEGISLATIVE HALL

Government

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HOUSE JUDICIARY OKS ONE CHILD ABUSE BILL, TABLES ANOTHER

BY SAM HAUT

The House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday discussed in detail two bills that look to change how Delaware handles child abuse cases. One was passed, the other tabled.

Senate Bill 124, sponsored by Sen. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Arden, would clarify that people have to orally report cases of child abuse, neglect or trafficking to the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families. If a case of suspected abuse, neglect or trafficking doesn't fit certain criteria, people can submit it orally or through the department's online portal.

Those criteria include sexual abuse, child death, a child with a current physical injury, a child needing medical attention or a mental health evaluation, or a child who is living in hazardous conditions.

The bill also will not allow people who are licensed under the Delaware Division of Professional Regulation

and the Department of Education to remain anonymous when they are making reports of child abuse or neglect.

Rep. Sean Lynn, D-Dover, asked Trenee Parker, the director of the Division of Family Services, if anyone has access to the name of the person who reports a case of child abuse. Parker said that information would be confidentially stored in their database.

Lynn asked how the bill applies to the confrontation clause in the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. constitution, which states that during criminal trials, the accused has the right to see the witnesses involved.

Tania Culley, a child advocate with the state of Delaware, said that if a case where someone anonymously reported abuse went to trial, the defense attorney would be able to confront that witness, but not the people accused.

"That's already the current law. This bill isn't changing that," said Rep. Krista Griffith, D-Fairfax. "That

initial call is making that initial investigation and protecting those reporters who are people like Rep. Romer, who may call in something that she witnessed and want to be protected from retribution."

Lynn said parents should have some rights in these cases. "I think that it's a consensus that no one wants children abused or neglected," Lynn said. "But other people have rights in these cases as well. The parents have the rights. The right to be a parent is a constitutional right."

Rep. Jeffrey Spiegelman, R-Townsend/Hartly, said there could be an issue of some people being overzealous in their reporting.

"If you have an overzealous neighbor who also has an ax to grind and they're calling the hotline saying ... 'I saw Rep. Spiegelman out for a run again. His kid must be unsupervised (and)' ... I got home to members of your team at my home, I'd be pretty ticked," he said.

The bill isn't meant to stop anyone from reporting, Parker said. "This is not designed to dissuade anyone from help," Parker said. "That's absolutely not the intent."

Spiegelman said he still thinks there are situations that could stop people from reporting if they cannot report anonymously. "You're putting me in a very awkward position where you're potentially putting my safety against the law," he said.

Frequent General Assembly public commenter Robert Overmiller said he also had concerns about the fear of reprisal.

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ALLOWING ABORTION WORKERS TO MASK ADDRESSES OK'D BY SENATE

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Senate passed bills Tuesday pertaining to confidentiality for abortion providers, minority party representation on an emergency health committee and payouts for employment discrimination.

Senate Bill 158, sponsored by Sen. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Arden, focuses on confidentiality rights for medical providers. The bill allows anyone who is a reproductive health care services provider or employee to apply for participation in Delaware's **Address Confidentiality Program**. That program allows participants to keep their actual address confidential by applying to the Department of Justice for a substitute address for their mail to be delivered.

Gay said the bill is in response to the threat of closure for abortion clinics after the Dobbs decision that overruled Roe v. Wade. She said Delaware clinics also face pro-life backlash and cited a Newark clinic that was fire-bombed in 2020.

“In addition to actual violence, we know that providers have a fear for their safety,” Gay said. “In the Judiciary Committee when this bill was heard, we heard from a representative of Christiana Care, one of our largest health providers, who had collected stories from providers who quite understandably did not want to stand in front of the Senate.”

The bill was passed unanimously and heads to a House committee.

Senate Bill 66, sponsored by Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, adds the senate minority leader and the house minority leader as members of the Public Health Emergency Planning Commission.

As in federal government, a minority leader is someone who represents the party that is not in power. Right now, that's the Republicans. The senate minority leader is Gerald Hocker, R-Oceanview, and the house minority leader is Michael Ramone, R-Pike Creek South.

The bill also would require the commission to meet within 30 days of the initiation of a state of emergency due to a public health emergency. The goal would be to help craft the response to the emergency.

Those who opposed Gov. John Carney's orders for businesses to shut, schools to go online and masks to be worn complained again and again that the Legislature and the public had no input into the moves.

“Nearly every other board or commission has minority party representation,” Buckson said. “It's necessary that the minority party, whether it be Republican, Democrat or other, and the constituents they represent have a seat at the table when discussing these important matters.”

SB 66 heads to a House committee.

Senate Bill 145, sponsored Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin, bumps the limit of financial compensation or punitive damages based on the number of employees at a place of business that has been cited for discrimination.

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EV BILLS INCH CLOSER TO LAW AS GOP CONTINUES OPPOSITION

BY SAM HAUT

Several energy-related bills waltzed through the House Resources and Energy Committee Tuesday, despite Republican opposition.

Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 7, sponsored by Sen. Stephanie Hansen, D-Middletown, would update the responsibilities of the State Energy Office to include developing the State Energy Plan, the state's Climate Action Plan, and transitioning Delaware towards more renewable energy.

The bill is a change from **Senate Bill 7** that the Senate Environment, Energy & Transportation Committee approved on May 16, which only mentioned supporting clean energy, not transitioning towards it, and didn't bring up the state's Climate Action Plan.

It passed the committee with four votes in favor and four votes on its merits. It now heads to the House Appropriation Committee.

Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 103, sponsored by Sen. Sarah McBride, D-Wilmington, would require new single-family homes with building permits issued after Jan. 1, 2024, and multi-family homes with an application for final site plan approval submitted after Jan. 1, 2025, to have electric vehicle charging stations.

The bill is a change from **Senate Bill 103** that the Senate Environment, Energy & Transportation Committee approved on May 10, which had included a minimum of 40 amperages and 208/240 voltage in the definition of an electric vehicle capable parking space, which was removed from the most recent bill.

It passed the committee with six votes in favor, one vote on its merits and one vote against. It now heads to the House floor for consideration.

Hansen said that Senate Substitute 1 for SB 7 is needed to help the state smoothly transition to more renewable energy.

"We need the government structure to provide the oversight and the coordination, the public accountability and the transparency, during this transition," Hansen said. "This bill sets the stage to meet that challenge by identifying and reclassifying five existing full-time employees with that necessary funding switching over to the State Energy Office."

In the fiscal note for the bill, it will cost the state \$333,278 in ongoing funding and \$21,000 in one-time funding for the 2024 fiscal year, \$447,786 in ongoing funding for the 2025 fiscal year, and \$456,438 in ongoing funding for the 2026 fiscal year.

Rep. Richard Collins, R-Millsboro, said that he hopes the bill doesn't throw the state off a cliff.

"Modern energy has provided the world with the greatest benefits, lifespan, health, environment, that we've ever seen," Collins said. "Now we've decided through government action, we're going to do away with many of the benefits in the hopes that this new technology will work out."

Rep. Ronald Gray, R-Bethany Beach, said that he's concerned about the state's ability to meet its energy needs.

"Similar to Rep. Collins, I am really concerned about the energy grid," Gray said. "You read about Europe and what's happened to them...and it's a real concern. When the wind doesn't blow or the sun doesn't shine, our renewable ones are not gonna provide the energy that we have."

Rep. Jeff Hilovsky, R-Millsboro, said private businesses would do a better job handling energy than the government.

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STATE: COMPLICATED TO ASK FEDS TO TAG SMOKY DAYS AS UNUSUAL

BY SAM HAUT

A conservative institute wants Delaware to move to make sure that it's not tagged by the feds with several bad air days because of last week's smoky, hazy days caused by wildfires in Canada. David Stevenson, director of the Center for Energy & Environment at the Caesar Rodney Institute, has urged Delaware's Department of National Resources & Environmental Control (DNREC) to declare it an exceptional event.

An exceptional event involves DNREC asking the EPA to exclude certain days that far exceed the federal limit for air pollution because the event was both not reasonably controllable and not reasonably preventable. Angela Marconi, director of the DNREC Division of Air Quality, said that the agency was considering that option, but wasn't sure if it would be declared an exceptional event.

"Preparing an exceptional event request is a laborious task, so it's not as simple as just saying, 'Hey, EPA, we think this was an exceptional event,'" Marconi said. "It does require putting the data together in a pretty significant package, but we are looking into that."

Stevenson counters that it may suit DNREC to allow the pollution counts to stand so it can continue to issue regulations that may prevent new businesses from opening.

Stevenson and Marconi describe the amount of pollution using the federal jargon "attainment," which means that an area is at or below the Environmental Protection Agency's allowable limit. That number is based on a three-year average for six different types of emissions: ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and nitrogen dioxide.

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The poster features a dark blue background with a white and orange logo at the top. The logo includes the text "Summer Nights at Hagley" and "PRESENTED BY DOGFISH HEAD CRAFT BREWERY" with silhouettes of people and a dog. Below the logo is a photograph of a man and a woman sitting on a grassy bank by a river, looking at each other. The text "Unwind by the Brandywine." is written in a white script font over the photo. At the bottom, there is a white box with the text "Enjoy music, food trucks, beverages, & ice cream Wednesday evenings June through August. Dogs welcome." and a yellow button with the text "CHILL OUT". The Hagley logo is also present in the bottom left corner.

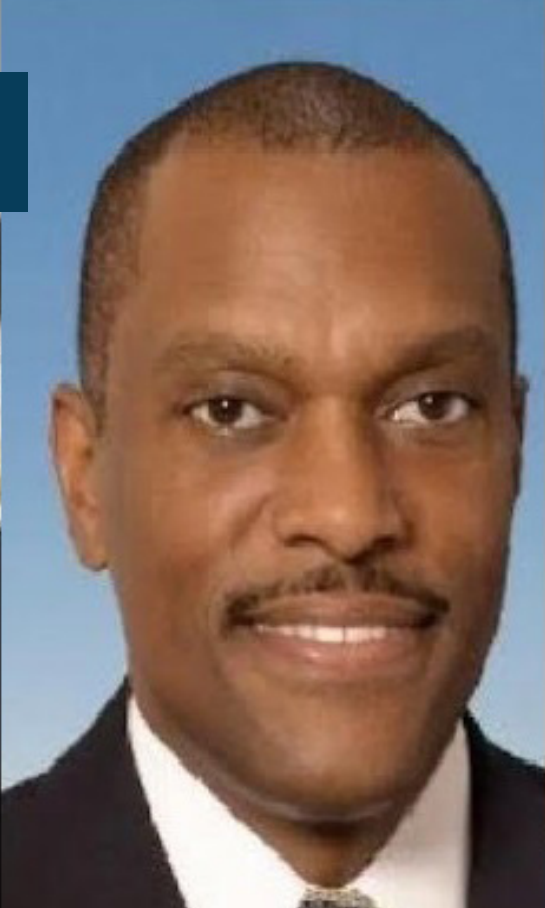
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Hagley

Enjoy music, food trucks,
beverages, & ice cream
Wednesday evenings June
through August. Dogs welcome.

CHILL OUT



CARNEY NAMES MARIJUANA COMMISSIONER, OTHER CABINET OFFICERS

BY SAM HAUT

Delaware is putting a name to the role of state marijuana commissioner. On Monday, Gov. John Carney nominated Robert Coupe as marijuana commissioner. He will serve within the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, a division he once headed.

Coupe was among a group of nominations released by Carney. They included:

- Josette Manning as Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services. She will replace Molly Magarik, who is stepping down in July.
- Steve Yeatman as Secretary of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.
- Greg Lane as chief information officer, leading the Department of Technology and Information.

Coupe has a strong law-and-order background. He was secretary of the Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security from January 2017 until March 2020, the commissioner of the Delaware Department of Correction from March 2013 until January 2017, and colonel of the Delaware State Police for 28 years.

He has been chief of staff at the Department of Technology and Information since January 2023 and was

chief of staff at the Delaware Department of Justice from March 2020 until December 2022.

Manning has been the secretary of the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families since 2017. Previously, she was a prosecutor at the Delaware Department of Justice for 17 years.

Yeatman, the deputy secretary at the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, will be nominated to replace Manning as secretary. Yeatman has served as chief policy advisor and deputy director of the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services.

Jason Clarke, who has served as chief information officer at the Delaware Department of Technology and Information since January 2021, is leaving in mid July for a job at Advantech. Lane, the chief technology officer at the Department of Technology and Information since 2017, will be nominated to replace Clarke.

The Senate is expected to consider Carney's nominations before the General Assembly ends its 2023 session June 30.



CHANGING 'WOMAN' TO 'PERSON' DOESN'T STOP MATERNITY BILL

BY SAM HAUT

Republicans and Democrats went back and forth in arguing about the definition of woman in a maternity health bill, but all agreed on the need to raise awareness about human trafficking.

Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 106, sponsored by Sen. Kyle Gay, D-Elsmere, would replace the words “woman” and “women” with “person” and “people” in the Delaware code on maternal health and also change the term maternal depression to perinatal mood and anxiety disorder. The bill’s number was changed from Senate Bill 106 about half an hour before the Senate came into session on June 8.

While both bills are similar, the substitute removes reference to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and adds information on perinatal mood and anxiety disorder to anyone who is pregnant, rather than just for people experiencing symptoms of

the mood disorder. Sen. Elizabeth Lockman, D-Wilmington, said that the bill would focus on moms and dads.

“The bill also updates the language to ensure that we are not just focusing on moms, but we are also recognizing that one in 10 dads will develop postpartum depression and up to 18% of new dads will develop clinically significant anxiety disorder. So by ensuring that moms and dads are both getting the help that they need, we can better serve the mental health concerns of our constituents.”

The bill passed 14 to 6. It now will go to the House.

Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, said that the gender silencing legislation the Senate passed, **Senate Bill 97**, has an exemption for areas where references to gender are necessary. He wondered why that wouldn’t apply with Senate Substitute 1. Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, said he was upset about being given the substi-



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tute bill so soon before voting on it and doesn’t want the legislature to change the word “woman” to “person”.

“When I’m presented with a bill that asks me to strike maternal and women from pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood, I’m not doing it,” he said. “It’s not my intent to disparage anybody,” Buckson said. “It is simply to say that words matter and so do moms and motherhood.”

Sen. Dave Lawson, R-Marydel, said he feels the bill is demeaning to women.

“It puts me in quite a quandary here,” Lawson said. “You know, my mother, my wife and daughter are all women. To strike them from a bill that absolutely involves them directly and put in ‘person,’ certainly is demeaning to every woman.”

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photo credit: Jarek Rutz



Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



SENATOR WANTS \$9K TUITION FOR TRADE STUDENTS TO CONTINUE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that would prolong a program giving financial help to students pursuing a trade was heard in the Senate Banking, Business, Insurance and Technology Committee Wednesday.

Senate Bill 154, sponsored by Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, repeals the sunset of the Focus on Alternative Skills Training Program. That program provides up to \$9,000 in training for graduating high school students into a non-degree program for certification and credentialing. It's for students who enter a trade rather than going to college.

Per the bill's fiscal note, the program's operating costs to the state will be between \$78,000 and \$1 million for each of the next three fiscal years.

"This was originally funded through federal money, so it did not hit our state budget," Pettyjohn said.

Rachel Turney, deputy secretary for the Department of Labor, said there's plenty of money in pandemic relief funds that need to be spent by the end of 2024 that could help the state pay for the program. On average, she said, a student in the program receives about \$8,000.

No opposition was voiced, but the outcome of the bill was uncertain because Senate committees do not take votes in public. The vote tallied away from the committee and posted on the bill tracker.

Pettyjohn said he would hate to see a program that has helped kids succeed die when the kind of skills they provide are a hot commodity right now.



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LEARNING COLLAB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRONTRUNNER SETS PRIORITIES

BY JAREK RUTZ

The only finalist for the job of executive director of the Wilmington Learning Collaborative established her goals, described her stances on key education issues and answered some fun personality questions during a town hall Tuesday night.

“The pace of change doesn’t always align with what we want to see immediately,” said Wilmington resident **Laura Burgos**. “I think we have an opportunity to really identify two or three strategic priorities for the year ahead, where we can test out and pilot some solutions in our respective schools and do it in a way where there’s some cohesion and some continuity across our efforts.”

Burgos, an experienced educator with lots of work in philanthropy and advocacy, appears to be in prime position to be hired after the other finalist, **Edward Ryans**, withdrew last week.

Ryans has worked as a teacher and administrator in primary and secondary education and is in his 30th year working in **Prince George’s County Public Schools**, Maryland’s second-largest school system with more than 130,000 students. The reason for his withdrawal, which came last Tuesday, is unclear.

The **Wilmington Learning Collaborative** is a state agency created in November 2022 that aims to improve the educational and societal outcomes for children in nine city elementary schools across Brandywine, Red Clay and Christina school districts. By giving families a voice in policy making, it hopes to empower city residents and combat challenges like low test scores and graduation rates and high absenteeism, as well as improving other achievement metrics.

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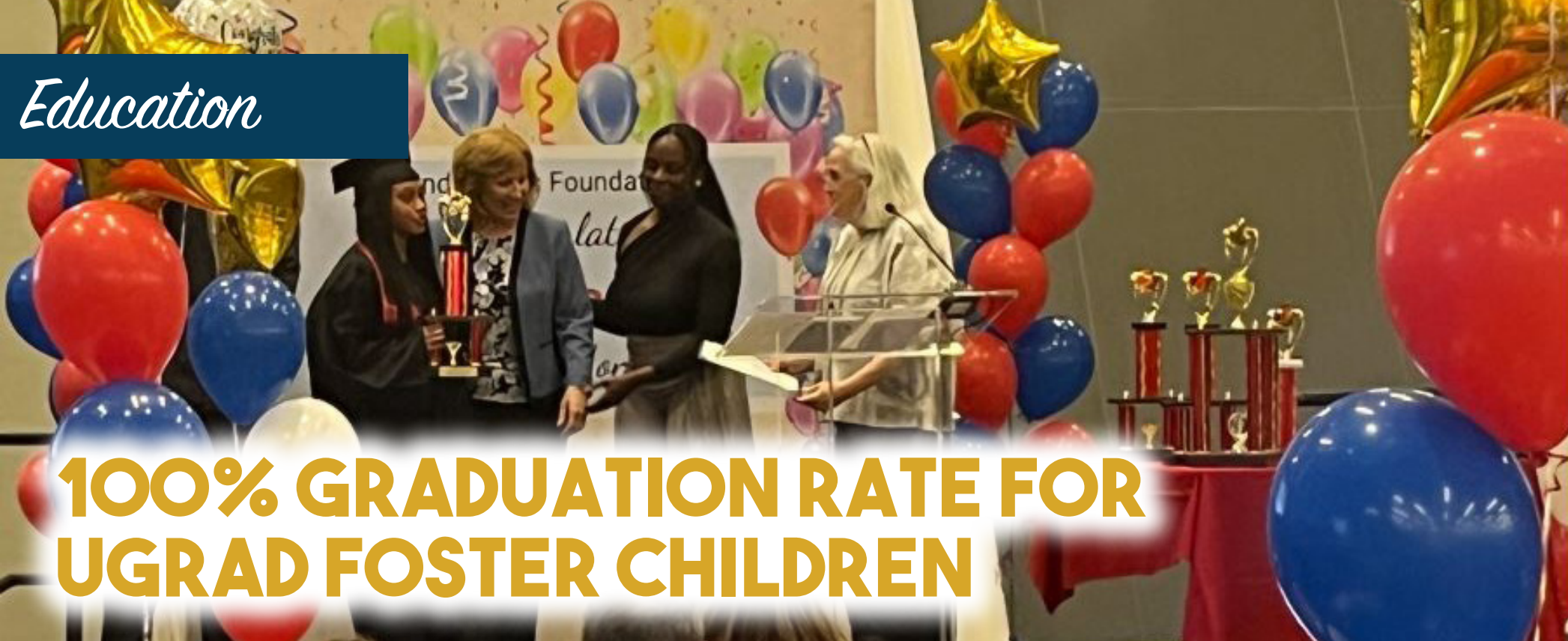
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100% GRADUATION RATE FOR UGRAD FOSTER CHILDREN

BY JAREK RUTZ

Eighteen of Delaware’s foster youth were honored in a ceremony Monday night for persisting in the face of multiple problems to graduate from high school and college, often exhibiting excellent work in school.

UGrad Education Program, which started in 2011, has served more than 18,000 foster children throughout the state with academic support. The program pairs struggling students with mentors who help the students evaluate their needs, negotiate with teachers and schools and complete the work they need to graduate. Shay Drummond credits it with her success in college.

“It helped me transition smoothly from high school to college and the program bridged gaps that I wouldn’t be able to handle,” she said. She recently earned a bachelor’s in legal studies from Widener University.

This year, UGrad served 60 students and will expand to 75 by September, with a waitlist of several others who

want to join. Students are recommended for the program by their schools or advisors.

Only 10 workers and three tutors are employed by UGrad, which receives federal, state and private funding to make up its operating budget of \$1.2 million. The tutors are school teachers who are hired by UGrad. They typically have hour-long sessions on the weekends, one-on-one with students, to help with different academic subjects. They often will check in during the week and offer an additional session during periods of heavy work loads.

“If it’s an emergency session, like someone has to have help with a term paper being due, we may extend it for a couple hours or whatever we need,” said Caroline Jones, president and founder of the **Kind to Kids Foundation**, which runs the program.

The foundation focuses on the needs of children and

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teens in foster care, often victims of child abuse and neglect, who are deeply affected by the trauma in their lives. It’s best known for its duffle bag program. It gives foster children a bag filled with books, a blanket, toiletries and more so they have something other than a pillowcase or garbage bag in which to carry their belongings. Pre-COVID, the foundation sponsored events at which hundreds of people would volunteer to make fleece blankets and stuff the bags.

Monday’s celebration featured teens in foster care who are graduating from high school, foster youth who are completing their college education and children in foster care who are succeeding in elementary, middle and high school. The UGrad Education Program has achieved a 78% graduation rate, which is on the rise, with the past four years yielding a perfect graduation rate.

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LAKE FOREST'S DANA CAREY NAMED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PRO 2023

Lake Forest School District—the Felton, Kent County district servicing 3,600 children—is small, she said, but mighty.

“I am very proud to be a Spartan,” she said, “I would also like to thank my family, my mom, my husband and my three beautiful children, Emma, Mason and Luke.”

She won over nominees from 18 other districts and one charter school.

Carey gets a \$10,000 award—\$5,000 to pocket and \$5,000 for the educational benefit of their students. The other 19 finalists receive \$2,000. Eligible candidates have worked at least three years as a behavioral health professional and hold a certification or licensure credential through the Department of Education and/or the Professional Regulation Board.



BY JAREK RUTZ

Dana Carey, counselor at **Lake Forest North Elementary School**, is this year’s behavioral health pro of the year.

“I would like to first thank my Lake Forest family,” she said. “Thank you so much for being here to support me and love me.”

School behavioral specialists are typically psychologists, counselors, social workers or nurses. They assist teachers by working one-on-one with students who might be disruptive, students who are disengaged due to something like ADHD, or any other behavioral interferences to a child’s learning.

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Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

2023 BLUE GOLD SOFTBALL ROSTERS AND SCHEDULE

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Tonight the 2023 Blue Gold Softball All-Star game will be played at Smyrna-Clayton Little League field. The rosters have been announced and are available below. The game is slated to start at 6:40 p.m., but they will have a few more events on the schedule:

- 5:45 Skills Challenge: Home Run Derby, Bunting, Target Shooting, Around the Horn, and Speed Around the Bases
- 6:20 Pre-Game Awards: Player of the Year, All State Awards
- 6:30 Blue Gold Introductions: Team Introductions
- 6:40 All-Star Game

We will be **live streaming** the introductions as well as the game in its entirety. The game is going to be a nine-inning game to give all the participants a chance to play. After the game there will be one player from each team awarded an MVP trophy which we will be live for as well.

Below are the rosters for tonight's game for both teams.

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BY NICK ALESSANDRINI

Saint Mark's High School has a wrestling national champ and *her* name is Addie Till. Till stood on top of the podium at 118 pounds in Salisbury, MD, on May 6 as the MAWA Eastern National Champion. Hard to believe it was just three years ago when the Spartan freshman decided to get involved in the sport of wrestling. "When I found my love for the sport of wrestling, I had been coming off a back injury and went to my younger brother's wrestling practice and saw a few girls out on the mat," Till said. "I was so interested and figured I could try it out since I had been a high-level gymnast for the past 10 years of my life and had the

SAINT MARK'S ADDIE TILL WINS GIRLS' WRESTLING NATIONAL TITLE

strength to compete mentally and physically on the mat."

Till, a freshman, became the first female varsity wrestler in Spartan history this past year, wrestling at 113 pounds for the historic program. She won her first match as a Saint Mark's varsity wrestler this season and the achievements continued. Till won the Girls Wetzel Classic and the Girls Halloween Havoc, while placing fourth at the first female Beast of the East High School Wrestling Tournament this past winter. She placed eighth at the Independent Conference Championships in 2023, making her a two-time Conference place winner, going back to 2022 when Till was just an eighth grader.

There has been a recent uptick in female wrestlers at the high school level and here in Delaware. The first official Girl's Beast of the East tournament took place this past winter at the University of Delaware and highlighted some of the best female wrestlers on the East Coast. Other Delaware female wrestlers, Caravel's Natalie Radecki and Delaware Military Academy's Alyssa Mahan each won Beast of the East championships in 2022. Till will look to get back to work in 2023-24 and improve on her skill set. "I always have to better my best. My ultimate goal is to be the first female in Delaware to place at States," Till said.

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ALL-STAR SOFTBALL THRILLER ENDS WITH WALK OFF WIN

BY GLENN FRAZER

Over 40 of Delaware's best seniors took the field for their final high school softball game at the Smyrna Little Lass complex Tuesday evening. The "picture-perfect" weather complimented an outstanding performance by the Blue and Gold all stars in front of a large crowd.

The Gold team included players from Caesar Rodney, Delmar, Delmarva Christian, Indian River, Laurel, Sussex Academy, Sussex Central, Sussex Tech, Woodbridge and Brandywine. First year head coach Rachel Fetterman (Delmarva Christian) was assisted by Cape Henlopen's Mike Tkach and Michael Oberly (Brandywine). While the Blue was coached by Nicki Shirey of Smyrna, who is retiring, and was named the Coach of the Year by her peers. Shirey was assisted by Sean Brennan from

Milford and Jon Thomas of Saint Mark's. The Blue team consisted of players from Appoquinimink, Archmere, Caravel, Charter School of Wilmington, Conrad, DMA, Middletown, Milford, Red Lion, Saint Mark's, Smyrna and William Penn.

The Gold squad won the pregame skills competition to be designated as the home team for the extended nine inning game. The skills competition consisted of a home run derby, bunting accuracy, throwing drills, speed around the bases and an "around-the-horn" contest with the Gold barely edging the Blue.

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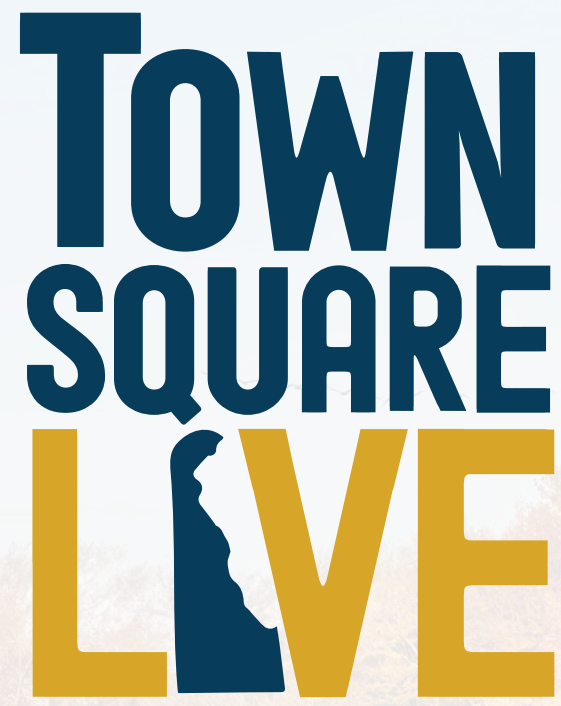
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