

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

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August 3, 2023
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photo link: Longwood Gardens
photo by Candie Ward

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The Grand 2023-2024 Season



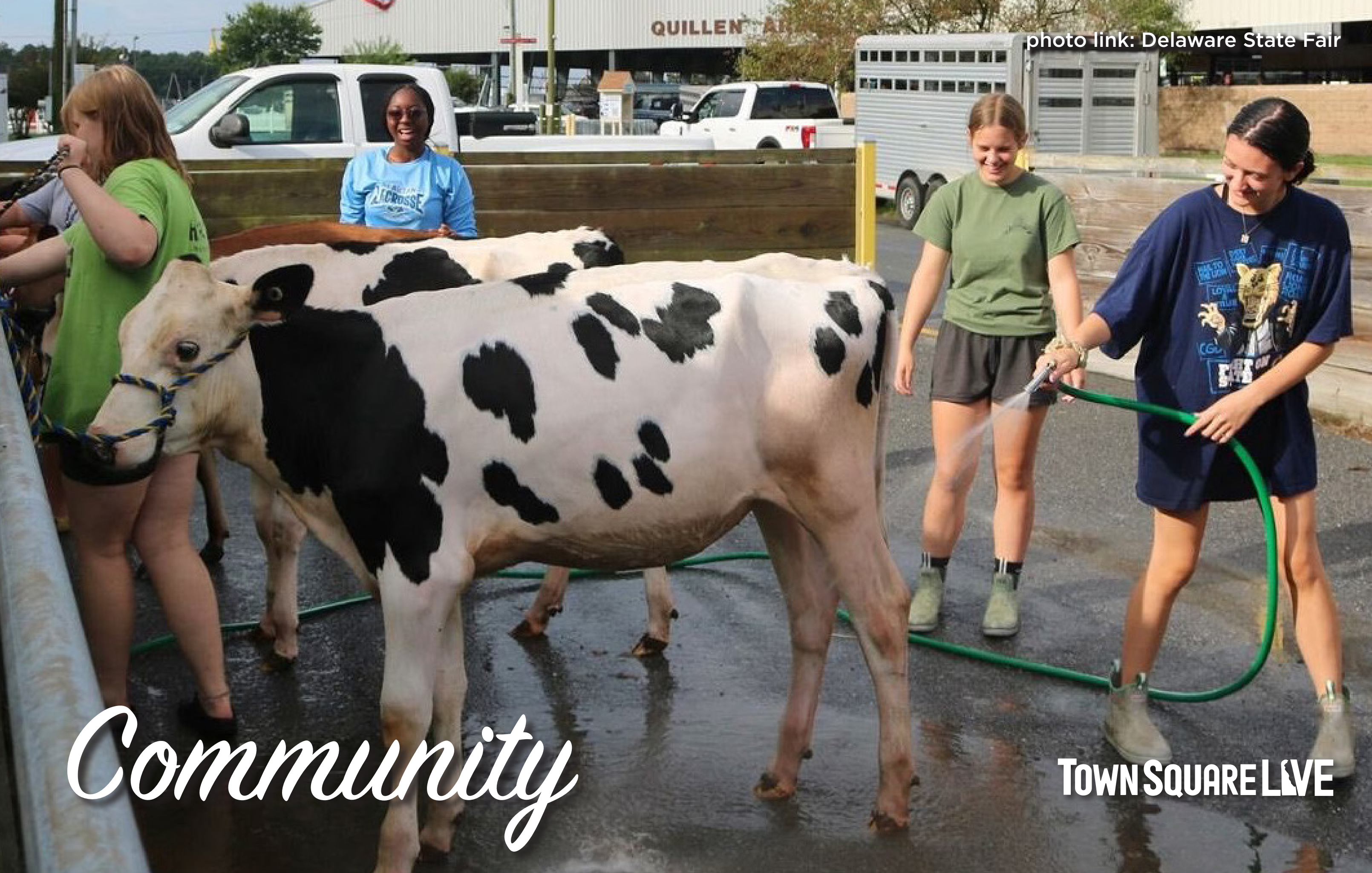
New Library Buildings in the Works Across Delaware



Charles V. Williams Stadium

QUILLEN A

photo link: Delaware State Fair



Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



CHARGES DROPPED IN CASE OF CHRISTINA GRAD ARRESTED BY UD

BY JAREK RUTZ

After weeks of public outcry, charges were dropped against 18-year-old Mohammad Sanogo who was arrested by the **University of Delaware** police June 15 less than an hour after he received his high school diploma there. The decision follows UD police finally releasing **bodycam footage** of the incident.

A **Newark High School** student, Sanogo was on campus because **Christina School District** rented the Bob Carpenter Center for its high school graduations. Sanogo, who had a grade point average above a 4.0 and plans to attend the **University of Maryland** for aerospace engineering, was arrested after police ordered him and friends to leave. Police said he resisted arrest. Sanogo and witnesses said an officer ordered Sanogo, who is Muslim, out of his car and threw him to the ground, despite Sanogo telling them he could not breathe. He has asthma.

A statement from Attorney General Kathy Jennings

said it was dropping charges after Sanogo attended a course, which it didn't identify, and accepted his responsibility in the incident. Again, it was not specific about what that responsibility was. Efforts were unsuccessful Monday morning to reach Sanogo for comment.

Christina school board member Naveed Baqir has been a prominent voice in the defense of Sanogo, calling the arrest "another George Floyd moment." Dozens of community members testified in support of Sanogo in a June board meeting, condemning **UD Police** and accusing them of misconduct and excessive force.

Along with the bodycam footage the university reiterated that its police officers acted appropriately in addressing behavior that posed a risk to public safety.

"UDPD is a nationally accredited police agency with officers trained to handle situations such as these through the application of objective and reasonable force, utilizing appropriate de-escalation techniques to ensure the

safety of all involved—including Mr. Sanogo," UD stated. "The University will continue its review of this situation to look for learning opportunities."

Baqir wasn't satisfied with what he called a "carefully crafted and edited video."

"The video does not address the role of three trucks that blocked Mohammad's car from three sides," he said. "When Mohammad moved his car forward in anticipation of the truck to move once the signal light turned green is also being portrayed as if he was maneuvering the vehicle around those trucks when the fact is that the truck in front of Mohammad blocked traffic despite the green signal light."

Baqir also said the trucks that failed to move on a green light and UD unnecessarily created a needless stressful situation to justify their actions to make an unwarranted arrest.

"The Christina graduate was neither speeding in the parking lot nor did he have any person hanging out of his vehicle," he said. "His medical condition and panic was completely ignored and his life was put in an unnecessary imminent danger by UD staff. Even when a truck in front of Mr. Sanogo purposefully blocked his exit on a green light, he was picked up and mercilessly thrown on the ground face first."

A July 26 filing from Attorney General Jennings' office states that "after extensive review of the body camera and surveillance footage, conversations with University of Delaware Police and Mr. Sanogo's attendance at a Department of Justice-sanctioned course on Friday, July 21, the state believes that dismissal of the charges is the appropriate resolution."

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



DELAWARE SYMPHONY STARTS SEARCH FOR NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR

BY BETSY PRICE

The Delaware Symphony Orchestra has announced the search for its next music director, expected to begin work in the 2025-26 season. The process started with forming a 13-member search committee for the person who will succeed David Amado, who served as the symphony’s music director and conductor for 20 years before stepping aside and becoming music director laureate in the spring.

The committee will accept applications for the post through Sept. 29. The committee members expect hundreds of applications from around the globe.

“Because of the way information travels now, the pool of applicants is larger than it would have been in previous decades,” said J.C. Barker, chief executive officer of

the orchestra. “There are so few positions open at any one given time that an orchestra of the stature of the Delaware Symphony is going to receive a lot of attention.”

Detailed information is available on the symphony website and will be advertised in national and international industry outlets. It says the duties of the person who wins the job will include repertoire selection, programming and artistic production as well as active participation in the orchestra’s fundraising initiatives.

Frank Clowes, president of the Delaware Symphony Association, said the orchestra is stepping forward into a new era and that musician and community support is a pivotal ingredient in the search.

“I am eager to witness the creative direction the DSO

will take under this fresh leadership,” Clowes said. “It’s an exciting time, and we are all looking forward to the transformative journey ahead.”

SYMPHONY PROCESS

The committee—composed of five orchestra musicians, five members of association board, two community leaders and Barker—will review all candidates. They were told to expect two years of hard work.

Finalists will be announced in spring 2024 and will appear with the orchestra during the 2024-2025 season. Surveys will be distributed to members of the audience and orchestra after each performance to gauge their reactions.

“There will be a different energy with every conductor who appears,” Barker said.

The appointment of a music director is expected to come in summer 2025.

“The search for a new artistic leader is a crucial stage in the growth of any orchestra,” said Barker. “This is an exciting and busy time for our organization, and we are eagerly looking forward to the process.”

Amado was the 100-year-old-plus orchestra’s fifth music director. He will conduct the symphony twice during the 2023-24 season, opening and closing it. In between, guest conductors will take the baton. They include Michelle Di Russo, an associate conductor with the North Carolina Symphony; André Raphel of Philadelphia, the former music director for the Wheeling, WV, symphony; and Scott Speck, music director of the Joffrey Ballet as well as the Mobile (AL) Symphony.





VANDALISM AT ROCK MANOR GOLF COURSE UNDER INVESTIGATION

BY BETSY PRICE

New Castle County Police are investigating damages to the **Rock Manor** golf course caused July 27 by people who drove dirt bikes and all terrain vehicles on the course. The group did donuts and turfed large portions of the greens, causes thousands of dollars in damage, while posing a danger to patrons on the course. Some bystanders were able to film them in action and posted the video to social media.

The incident occurred at about 7 p.m. Thursday and police were dispatched to the 1300 block of Carruthers Lane. A photo on **Golfcity** shows one of the pristine

greens ruined by circles and trenches cut into the grass. It makes the hole unplayable and completely wastes the hundreds of hours it takes to nurture and care for a green like that, said Lou Stagner, who also posted **video** of some of the bikes riding around a green.

The officers are seeking witnesses. If you were on the scene and have photos or video, please contact the New Castle County Division of Police non-emergency number at 302-573-2800.



EPA PUBLIC NOTICE

Proposed Cleanup Plan Available for Public Comment

STANDARD CHLORINE OF DELAWARE SUPERFUND SITE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed a Proposed Cleanup Plan for the Standard Chlorine of Delaware Superfund Site., Operable Unit 4. The Cleanup Plan addresses contaminated groundwater at the site, known as Operable Unit 4. EPA is hosting a public meeting on August 22nd to share details on the Proposed Cleanup Plan and take public comments. The 30-day public comment period is open from August 3 to September 2, 2023. Details on how to review the proposed plan and submit comments are as follows:

Review the Proposed Plan:

Online: www.epa.gov/superfund/standardchlorine

Files may also be viewed online at the following locations:

Delaware City Public Library 250 Fifth Street Delaware City, DE 19706 (302) 834-4148	US EPA Region 3 1600 John F. Kennedy Boulevard Philadelphia, PA 19103 (215) 814-2396 <i>Please call to schedule an appointment</i>
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Public Meeting Date: August 22nd, 2023, Time: 6:00pm to 7:30pm

In person location Delaware City Library 250 5 th Street Delaware City, DE 19706	To attend the meeting online or via phone , please visit the Standard Chlorine website for instructions on how to join. www.epa.gov/superfund/standardchlorine
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Submit public comments various ways by 09/02/23

By Mail: U.S. EPA Region 3
 Attn: Lisa Trakis (3RA22)
 1600 JFK Boulevard
 Philadelphia, PA 19103

By Email: trakis.lisa@epa.gov

By Voicemail: (215) 814-2010 *Please speak slowly and clearly and include your name and phone number.

By attending the public meeting on August 22nd.



Questions? Contact: Lisa Trakis, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
 (215) 814-5433 | trakis.lisa@epa.gov



Community

THE GRAND SETS 50 SHOWS FOR 2023-24 SEASON

The Grand's 47th annual Grand Gala. It will feature the Commodores and a return to the Hotel Du Pont for the Ultimate After Party.

The Grand also will party with the Christina Cultural Arts Center to celebrate the music and culture of the community with the annual Soul of the City Festival Sept. 16 from noon until 4 p.m. This year's festival will celebrate unique Wilmington arts organizations, while highlighting the 50th anniversary of Hip Hop. The hip hop continues on Sept. 22 at Frawley Stadium with the 50th Anniversary of Hip Hop Concert featuring Rick Ross, 2 Chainz, Fat Joe, Big Daddy Kane, Doug E Fresh, EPMD, Rakim and Slick Rick. Universal Attractions Agency's Co-Owner Jeff Epstein, who conceived the collaboration with Doug E. Fresh, says the concert is unprecedented.

"To have such an elite group of Hip Hop icons from the golden era coming together to celebrate 50 years of Hip Hop music this way...it's truly mind blowing," he said.

Tickets are now on sale to the general public and can be purchased online at www.TheGrandWilmington.org or by calling 302-652-5577 or 302-888-0200. The fastest and easiest way to guarantee the best seats is to purchase online. The Grand offers discounts for purchasing multiple shows. Buying three will save you 10% per ticket and buying six will save you 20% per ticket and give you free parking vouchers as well as a dining discount card.

Up Market Street, The Grand's **Broadway in Wilmington** series, will take place at The Playhouse on Rodney Square. It opens in October with "Pretty Woman: The Musical" Oct. 13-15. From March 7-10, see "On Your Feet!" featuring the lives and music of Emilio and Gloria Estefan. "Come From Away," an uplifting story about the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, plays April 19-21. "Little Women" runs May 9-1; "Million Dollar Quartet Christmas" plays Nov 17-19 and "Annie" will play Jan. 5-7.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

BY BETSY PRICE

Old-school Motown, Disney costumes, favorite comedians and world music are among the shows that **The Grand** will bring to Wilmington for its 2023-24 season. The season will start Sept. 6 with Byrds co-founder and acclaimed guitarist Roger McGuinn.

Also set to appear are Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt Together on Stage Oct. 5; Disney Junior and Marvel characters Sept. 26 in Disney Junior Live On Tour: Costume Palooza!; comedians Tig Notaro Sept. 17, David Sedaris April 5 and Lewis Black May 2; the Pedrito Martinez Group Sept. 29 and Tablao Flamenco Sept. 30; Alan Cumming Oct. 28; and Sutton Foster March 2.

"There is absolutely something for everyone," says Pamelyn Manocchio, executive director. "It is our sincere hope that we continue the rich history of this historic building as Delaware's home for the performing arts and place to create lasting memories."

The performing arts center also plans an announcement later this summer about



CANDLELIGHT'S 'SOUND OF MUSIC' IS SELLING OUT SHOWS

BY BETSY PRICE

Apparently, seeing a live production of “The Sound of Music” is among **Candlelight Theatre** fans’ list of favorite things. The current production at the Arden theater, which ends Aug. 26, had the largest opening weekends of any show at Candlelight since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

“The Sound of Music,” which tells the story of the Von Trapp family and their escape from Nazi Austria, features faces familiar to the dinner theater’s audiences, with the added bump of two sets of children who swap out the roles of the seven Von Trapp children.

The 1959 Broadway show led to the filming of the Oscar-winning movie, includes classic tunes such as the eponymous title song as well as “Climb Ev’ry Mountain,” “The Hills Are Alive,” “So Long, Farewell,” “Edelweiss,”

and, of course, “My Favorite Things.”

In addition to a new musical, the Candlelight has introduced a new menu to reflect the show’s German and Austrian traditions.

Paul McElwee will play Captain Von Trapp to Sophie Jones’ Maria. It’s the third time they’ve been paired in a Candlelight performance. He’s played King Arthur to her Guinevere in “Camelot” and they played the parents of con artist Frank Abagnale in “Catch Me If You Can.”

“It’s really nice to have the opportunity to play this role opposite someone I have a kind of a theater history with,” McElwee said. “We have good chemistry and we have a great time together. Maria is really the star of the show, and Sophie is just wonderful.”

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

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WE ARE NO. 1! AT LEAST, IN GOOGLING THE NFL

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Delaware is the most NFL-obsessed state in the country, judging by Google searches. It had 60,582 searches per 100,000 people, even though it isn't home to an National Football League team. But it does have a long history of betting related to the NFL, going back to 1976. That's more than three times as high as the searches in Alabama, No. 50 on the new list. Like Delaware, Alabama does not have a resident National Football League team.

Google Keyword Planner was used to find the 50 most Googled terms relating to NFL in the US and then each state's number of searches for each term. There are 616,974 searches for the top 50 NFL-related terms on average every month. Delaware, then, represents almost 10% of these searches. Out of the 50 terms that were used, the most common nationwide were "NFL," "NFL scores" and "NFL schedule. The most common in Delaware: "NFL score."

"The true scale of the country's love for NFL becomes even clearer when you consider that those 50 search terms don't even include any team-specific searches," said a representative for [onlinecasinos.com](https://www.onlinecasinos.com), which announced the results.

Nevada, a state with an even longer history of gambling and the site of the 2024 Super Bowl, was No. 2, averaging 58,899 searches per 100,000 people. Maryland took third place, at 56,892, and Pennsylvania fourth, at 54,403.

Alabama registers the lowest level, at 19,348, with the website speculating because it's "one of the country's college football hotbeds, and home to the all-conquering Alabama Crimson Tide—winners of six national championships in the past 15 years." Four other states without NFL teams—Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kentucky and Louisiana—rounded out the bottom five.

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photo link: Longwood Gardens



Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



NEW CASTLE CHAMBER PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

BY BETSY PRICE

New Castle County Chamber of Commerce President Bob Chadwick will retire at the end of the year.

Chadwick, who has been working with the chamber since 2006, said he will

be 64 this year and is expecting his first grandchild.

“I am eager to spend more time with family and more time pursuing my other passions which include music and travel,” he said in a chamber newsletter.

Chadwick said it had been an honor and a privilege to work with the chamber. He started out as a contractor, then became director of the Economic Development Council, vice president for Business and Economic Development, executive vice president, acting president and finally president in 2018.

He will assist the Chamber’s Executive Committee in recruiting a new president and assuring a smooth and effective transition.

“In the meantime, you will continue to see a vibrant, relevant and active chamber,” he said. We will continue to lean in on serving our members each and every day and maintaining strong and effective government affairs and economic development programs.”

Chadwick praised the “amazing staff at the chamber as well as a strong and engaged board of directors.

“While I will be departing at the end of the year, you can rest assured that the New Castle County Chamber will continue to be one of the most impactful business organizations in Delaware,” he said.



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LEADERS GATHERED WEDNESDAY IN MILFORD TO TALK ARTS

BY BETSY PRICE

Arts, business and political leaders gathered Wednesday, Aug. 2, at the Milford Public Library Amphitheater to talk about the creative economy. The meeting at 10 a.m. will focus on the “Creative Economy and Cultural Tourism Recovery and Growth Plan” that’s been put together by the Delaware Arts Alliance and is expected to include government agencies at local, state and federal levels.

Believed to be the first of its kind in the nation, this effort ultimately will engage hundreds of Delawareans from diverse backgrounds to produce a shared vision, advocacy tools and actionable policy agenda for advancing Delaware’s creative economy. The event was open to the public.

The alliance chose Milford for the launch of its new project because of its central location and commitment

to the arts. Input at the meeting is expected to help shape it, alliance materials say.

The “creative economy” is defined based on UNESCO’s categories, including performance & celebration, books & press, music recording & publishing, natural and cultural heritage, visual arts & crafts, audiovisual & interactive media and design & creative services.

The alliance is working on the plan with the Delaware Division of the Arts to foster growth in the arts, culture and tourism.

“Our aim is to develop the ‘Creative Economy and Cultural Tourism Recovery and Growth Plan’ as a clear roadmap that outlines the necessary policy changes and investments required for the sector’s success—including nonprofits, for-profit businesses and individual artists,” the alliance website said.

“Supporting the creative economy is a key strategy for addressing various economic, social, and policy issues within the state, and is crucial for the state’s tourism and economic recovery.”

The alliance points to the strong state and federal support for the arts in Delaware during the COVID-19 pandemic, with many heads of those organizations saying Delaware was far more generous than other states.

“We now have the opportunity to imagine our state beyond recovering from the impacts of COVID-19 and focus on the strategic growth and long-term sustainability of a locally produced creative sector,” the website says. “Through data analysis, policy benchmarking and regulatory review, and thorough community engagement, we are excited to produce a plan that builds upon Delaware’s strengths and successes and removes barriers for creatives.”

The project is expected to include an online interactive asset map; economic impact study; and policy analysis/agenda. That will include a look at the state of Delaware, all three counties and six specific municipal areas: Wilmington, Dover, Georgetown, Smyrna, Middletown and Milford).

To take part in a survey that will help inform the plan, go [HERE](#).

For more information, contact Project Manager Chonnie Blair, at cblair@delawareartsalliance.org or Neil Kirschling, executive director at nkirschling@delawareartsalliance.org.



photo by Engin Akyurt / Pexels



Food & Dining

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

RESTAURANTS: BLUE CRAB MOVES; COCO MANGO GRILLE, SIROCCO OPEN

BY PAM GEORGE

For parents, August is summer's swan song. It's harvest season for foodies. And for beach locals, it's almost the "second season," when the weather is still pleasant, but the crowd of tourists has thinned.

Meanwhile, there are still festivals and new restaurants to try. Put the following on your to-do list:

Moving in Newark: **Blue Crab Grill**

Blue Crab Grill, a Newark fixture in Suburban Plaza for 24 years, plans to move to a new development on Creek View Road behind Timothy's Restaurant. The location is on the same site as the Chapel Street Players' new theater, which resulted from a land swap with Lang Development Group. The old theater on Chapel Street will make room for Lang's latest apartment complex.

New to Rehoboth: **Scirocco**

In downtown Rehoboth Beach, **Coast Rehoboth Beach**, part of the Tapestry Collection by Hilton, is open on SandCastle Motel's old site. The operators also manage Hyatt Place in Dewey Beach and Hyatt House

in Lewes. A stay in the new hotel includes free parking, Wi-Fi and an indoor pool and fitness center.


Of particular interest to readers of this column, however, is the hotel restaurant, Scirocco, which offers a Mediterranean-influenced menu. The menu has a selection of small plates, including flaming saganaki (\$12), charred octopus (\$16) and carpaccio (\$18). Mains include pan-seared scallops (\$38), fresh branzino (market price) and, for landlubbers, a center-cut filet with parmesan-truffle gratin.


New Wilm restaurant: **Keem's Cuisine**

In Wilmington, Keem's Cuisine recently opened in the same shopping center as Shop Rite near the Riverfront. Dinner items include crab cakes with creole remoulade sauce, fried whole snapper with creole pepper sauce, jerk chicken Alfredo and a Nashville hot chicken sandwich. Entrees range from \$15 for the sandwich to \$60 for lobster tails stuffed with crab.

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TWO HOURS TO BRING A SMILE





ZAVA CAFÉ BRINGS THE ZA-ZA-ZOO TO MILTON

BY PAM GEORGE

Some maintain that Milton is like Lewes before the tourists arrived. Both are small towns with centuries-old buildings and rich histories. Heavy tourism only came to Lewes in mid-1960s, when the fish factories—and the aroma of menhaden—departed. A Friday stroll through Milton’s historic section gave credibility to the claim.

Located on the Broadkill River, the former shipbuilding town was favored by sea captains, who selected an inland homesite because it was safe from enemy attacks by sea. Some of the Victorians and old buildings that still stand once belonged to the captains and the four governors’ families who lived here.

But that Friday, the destination was not the riverside Governor’s Walk. It was **Zava Café**, a new coffee shop at 102 Federal St. that now serves dinner Wednesday

through Saturday. The slim space previously housed Cantina Ultima and Kristen Latham’s Fox Hole restaurant. (Latham still has the **Dough Bar** on the Broadkill River, which specializes in pizza.) Zava Café moved in late last year.

ZAVA’S IMPRESSIVE PEDIGREE

The Milton location is the second for **Zava Café**. Danio Somoza and Thaina Bittencourt opened in the first in downtown Rehoboth Beach in 2022. They were inspired by the coffee shops serving healthy fare in the Washington, D.C., area.

The Rehoboth café is only open until 3 p.m., but adding dinner to the Milton restaurant is smart. The town needs more restaurants, and the café is within walking distance of the **Milton Theatre**.

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photo link: Town of Middletown, DE



Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

WILMINGTON WATER BILLS GOING UP. AND UP. AND UP. AND UP.

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Wilmington in July increased its water/sewer rates for its customers in the city and the suburbs. And it's planning to increase them in 2024. And 2025. And 2026.

"Water/sewer rates increased on July 1 by 5.7% for all categories of our customers (city and non-city)," said John Rago, deputy chief of staff for Mayor Mike Purzycki. "The projected increases for the next three years (fiscal years 2025, 2026, 2027) will be 5.7% each year," he added.

"The rates are based on a six-year comprehensive water utility financial plan, which is updated every year," he said, adding that the future projected rate increases are "subject to change as the six-year financial plan is updated."

Wilmington serves 39,000 customers in the city and nearby suburbs.

Wilmington's water bills, like many utilities, **break down** rates. There's a monthly facilities charge, a block rate for the first gallons used not covered by the facilities charge and a second rate when lots and lots of water is used. Wilmington's rates have one chart for businesses inside the city, with different rates for commercial, industrial and apartments. A second chart covers the same three categories outside the city. Two more charts cover residences inside and outside the city. All the charts are arranged by the size of the intake water main.

All told, the charts include 154 cells with dollar figures. Rago said a link to these rates is planned off of the Public Works Department home page.

"Inside city" rates are lower than "outside city" rates because of the higher costs to maintain and expand

infrastructure, Rago said. "When there is a rate increase, except on rare occasions, the increase is applied evenly across the board for every class of customer."

WATER BILLS ELSEWHERE

Other local water utilities are also planning to increase their rates. Veolia in April **filed** a \$43 million infrastructure plan with the Delaware Public Service Commission. It would **raise** the average residential water bill for New Castle County customers by \$4.51 per month. The PSC allowed new, provisional rates to start June 27.

Artesian—which serves a third of Delaware's residents—a day later **filed** a plan to raise rates for the average homeowner by \$6.83. The PSC voted in June to ask Artesian to refile the request. Both utilities **cited** the cost of infrastructure investments.

When Artesian submitted its first proposal, it said the bill for the average residential customer using 4,000 gallons per month would increase from \$49.90 to \$56.73. In Wilmington, a residential customer using 4,000 gallons would pay \$41.90. A residential customer outside the city would pay \$63.45.

The University of Delaware's Water Resources Center, which has been researching water rates in the region since 2000, says rates are four times what they were 20 years ago, WHYY reported in December.

"Private utility costs are about double that of municipal rates, according to the university," the radio station added.





NEW LIBRARY BUILDINGS IN THE WORKS ACROSS DELAWARE

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

New public libraries are being built across Delaware, as part of a state government goal to have one square foot of library space for each resident. That space and that expansion is a shorthand way to understand libraries' increasingly broad roles. They have a long history of lending books and answering reference questions, but today's libraries are adding to their status as community information centers with new items and new programs.

For instance, there's the library of things, where patrons can check out board games, medical devices, gardening equipment and dozens of other items. Kiosks provide spaces for people to have confidential tele-meetings with healthcare providers, government officials and potential employers. Libraries served as distribution points for COVID testing and some are hosting social workers. And in some ways, the library

has become the place to meet people," said Kay Wheatley, president of the Rehoboth Beach Public Library board.

All these new services need space, which is why the state's 33 public libraries today cover 636,952 square feet—more than **doubling** in the past decade. These libraries are run by multiple governments and institutions and are connected through the Delaware Division of Libraries.

The American Rescue Plan Act Capital Projects Fund included \$40 million for library improvements throughout all three counties:

- \$11 million to North Wilmington Library for a new building.
- \$7.8 million to Friends of Duck Creek Regional Library to build an expanded library.
- \$7 million to Selbyville Library for a new building.

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LAST LIGHT ON KEY ROUTE 1 SECTION GOING AWAY

KEN MAMMARELLA

An overpass now under construction near Milton will eliminate the last traffic light on Route 1 between Dover and Nassau. When the interchange with Route 16 (also called Broadkill Road) is expected to be completed in late 2025, Route 1 should be able to more safely handle more traffic.

The work is part of the **Corridor Capacity Preservation Program**, piloted in 1991 on that 31-mile stretch from the southern end of the toll portion of Route 1 (also called the Relief Route) to the bridge at Nassau that thematically defines the northern end of Delaware’s beaches. The \$40 million **project** is also part of the Delaware Department of Transportation Hazard Elimination Program.

It includes elevating Route 1 over Route 16 with new dual bridges, entrance/exit ramps to and from Route 16, turn lanes on Route 16 at the ramp intersections, realignment of the intersection at Route 1 and Deep Branch Road, construction of stormwater management facili-

ties and roadside swales and installation of lighting.

“Since 2009, we have completed seven grade-separated interchanges along Route 1 south of Dover,” Secretary of Transportation Nicole Majeski **said**, “and this project is another step in our work to limit the number of access points where vehicles enter and exit the highway to improve safety and reduce congestion.”

Congestion, though, is still a much-discussed issue on Route 1 from Nassau down to Rehoboth Beach. A sign just south of Nassau notes there are 13 traffic lights in the next five miles, heading south. One of those lights is at Old Landing Road. DelDOT’s Coastal Highway Intersection Improvements page calls for extending the southbound Route 1 U-turn at Old Landing by converting the existing double left-turn lanes at Rehoboth Mall Boulevard into one left turn lane. Construction is expected to start in September, with completion at the end of November.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

the Candlelight theatre

The Sound of Music
July 15 - Aug 27

Into the Woods
Sept 16 - Oct 29

It's a Wonderful Life
Nov 18 - Dec 23

302-475-2313
www.candlelighttheatredelaware.org

photo credit: William Penn High School

WILLIAM PENN HIGH SCHOOL

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Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BY BETSY PRICE

Still think “Super Mario” is magical? Kooky about “Call of Duty”? Freaky over “Fortnite”?

You’re not alone.

Gaming is wayyyyyyyyyyy beyond a pastime. Lifelong friendships are being made online. Lovers bond over their favorite games. Leagues and teams are forming everywhere for esports professional play. And now Wilmington University is offering Delaware’s first college-level certificate for serious players who want to to take their talents up a notch.

The new 18-credit, 100%-online certificate was created with Futures First Gaming, a STEM.org accredited Ed, Tech, Media and Esports Entertainment company. The certificate can stand alone, or its credits can count toward an associate or bachelor’s degree.

It combines six credits of esports-specific coursework, including esports events and production, and esports and data, with nine credits of industry skill-based

WILM U TO ADD ESPORTS CERTIFICATE TO LIST OF OFFERINGS

curriculum designed to provide students with many flexible career opportunities.

“Three billion people worldwide are identifying as gamers,” says Stephen Sye, CEO of Futures First Gaming. “I like to say, ‘Gaming’s the carrot, but the learning is the nugget.’ This is an opportunity for both students and parents to really understand that their children can pursue their passions and still be successful.”

EGAMING INTEREST

Wilmington University is not the first educational institution to realize the draw of gaming. Saint Mark’s School used part of its capital campaign fund to build a state-of-the-art **Esports Center** and Red Clay Consolidated School District already has a partnership with Future First Gaming to turn **A.I. duPont’s esports club** into an active class pathway with ties to the University of Delaware’s esports program.

In addition to hosting esports competitions and conferences, the Wilm U program broadens gamers’ perspectives of the many possible career options in the world of gaming and esports. Students who complete the Workforce Development Program with six academic credits will be allowed to apply directly to the new WilmU Esports Certificate program.

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SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS QUESTION VALUE OF STATE ASSOCIATION

BY JAREK RUTZ

Some Delaware school district boards are questioning what they get from their membership in the **Delaware School Boards Association**. The cost of joining is not insignificant.

In **Caesar Rodney School District**'s July board meeting, John Marinucci, former executive director of DSBA, said it would cost the district \$10,500 per year to be part of the association, That includes a discount on using BoardDocs, a use-friendly way to post district business, such as school board meetings and materials.

Christina School District's fee would have been \$16,500 this year, but the board voted to discontinue it.

In **Red Clay**'s July 13 meeting, board members Kecia Nesmith and Cathy Thompson butted heads because Nesmith wanted to table the vote on whether to join the association so she could get further information about it to judge if it's worth the financial expenditure.

"I'm more in favor of moving forward right now and I think it's important that we join because we're the

largest school district in the state of Delaware and we've gotten a lot of benefits out of the DSBA," Thompson said in the meeting.

Thompson said the board, which was not a member last year, missed out on opportunities to network at the National School Board Association conference, having a voice in the legislature and board training activities.

David Tull, the new executive director of the association, was a former school board member in Seaford School District. He said the national conferences he attended were definitely one of the highlights of his time on the board and a great way to learn from boards across the country. He also cited the extensive training and development opportunities available as members of the association.

Most Delaware school districts are members of the association. Christina School District's board voted in July to quit the association with a vote of four to three.

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FIRST STATE EDUCATE, ACTION FUND NAME NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BY BETSY PRICE

Julia Keleher, a Pennsylvania educational leader who once was sent to prison on fraud charges, has been named the new executive director of **First State Educate** and **First State Action Fund**, two linked nonprofits devoted to improving education in the Delaware. She succeeds Laurisa Schutt, who helped found the organizations. Schutt will remain on the board, but is pursuing other interests as well.

Keleher's two decades of education leadership roles have been characterized by innovation and creative problem solving, the agencies said in a press release. She served as secretary of education in Puerto Rico from 2017-2019, led technical assistance and risk management initiatives at the U.S. Department of Education for seven years and taught as well as acted as administrator in the Red Clay Consolidated School District from 2000 to 2007.

Keleher became a controversial figure in Puerto Rico. After leading Hurricane Maria recovery efforts and passing an education reform bill, she became the target of a federal investigation and was sentenced to six

months in federal prison and 12 months of home confinement on conspiracy charges. That did not deter the interest of the First State Educate and First State Action Fund, who conducted a national search for Schutt's replacement.

"Julia's experiences these past 15 years have led to a deep understanding of the power structures and intricacies of educational systems," said First State Educate Board President Thère du Pont. "The education and justice systems around our families are complex and unforgiving—Julia is uniquely positioned to spark significant change."

Keleher was charged with fraud and accused of using her position to exchange 1,034 square feet of a public school in Santurce to a private company in exchange for an apartment in the Ciudadela apartment complex in San Juan, according to her Wikipedia profile. She found the charges and maintained her innocence, but eventually pled guilty to two counts of conspiracy to attempt fraud and went to prison for six months.

Du Pont in the press release said Keleher's "combination of experience, well of compassion and empathy, and commitment to educational excellence is unmatched. We could not be more excited for her to work with our partners to build a cohesive and inclusive ecosystem that drives continued improvement in Delaware schools."

"My roles in Red Clay, the Department of Education and in Puerto Rico showed me how pivotal coalitions are in efforts to transform learning," Keleher said in the press release. "As executive director of First State Educate, my focus will be elevating and integrating the voices of those most affected by our school system—and those best positioned to influence change."

EDUCATE/FUND FOUNDINGS

First State Educate/Action Fund were founded in 2019 to catalyze radical change in education by activating the power of Delawareans. Since its founding, the groups have helped 16 game-changing leaders be elected to school boards throughout the state, including five school board members enrolling 45,000 students who now serve in leadership positions. The nonprofits also helped push numerous initiatives to change the conditions of teaching and learning, including the Wilmington Learning Collaborative, RISE UP Delaware and FaCE coalitions.

Among her degrees and certifications, Keleher has a B.A. in political science and M.S. in education from the University of Pennsylvania, and a doctor of education leadership from the University of Delaware.

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photo credit: Nick Halliday



Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



CHARLES V. WILLIAMS STADIUM, HOME OF THE SMYRNA EAGLES

BY GLENN FRAZER

This summer, the 302 Sports staff is proud to feature some of the high school football venues where we have been fortunate to broadcast and view games over the years. Our series of stories continues with Charles V. Williams Stadium, home of the Smyrna Eagles.

The stadium was dedicated in 1994 in the name of a man that served the school district for four decades, as principal, superintendent, athletic director and a multi-sport coach. Mr. Williams also served his country in World War II, receiving the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. He passed away in 2014 at the age of 91 years young—just one year shy of his beloved Eagles’ first state championship in football.

Prior to the opening of the “new” high school in 1970, the John Bassett Moore Middle School building was the

high school. The football field was located between Hamilton Lane and Frazier Street. The modern era of Smyrna high varsity football commenced in 1949 with a four-game slate under coaches Charles V. Williams, Frank Stellatella and Robert Everett. In 1950, lights were erected around the field and soon after that an electronic scoreboard with clock. The Eagles’ record from 1949-1969 was 89-71-6 at the JBM field. In the 60s, Smyrna competed in the original Diamond State Conference, which merged with the Henlopen Conference following the ’68 season.

In 1973, the Eagles won the conference title and in 1975 advanced to the state championship game in the newly-formed Division II, falling to Glasgow 38-30. It would take another 40 years before the Smyrna-Clayton

community could cheer on their beloved team in a state championship game. The first of three “back-to-back-to-back” titles was secured in 2015 at Delaware Stadium in overtime against Salesianum, as linebacker Eli Hutchinson tackled the Sals’ Colby Reeder for a loss on fourth and goal. The “sea of red” Smyrna fans in the East stands celebrated the win in one of the most exciting championship games ever.

Smyrna has enjoyed recent success at Charles V. Williams Stadium with capacity crowds in the bleachers and those that fill the fence line around the north end zone. The stadium is located behind the high school off Duck Creek Parkway, an easy ride from the north Smyrna exit off Route 1. The record at home since 2015 is 43-5 including a current streak of 14 wins. The atmosphere is electric on Friday nights, with an assist from the Regiment-of-Red marching band. Early in the season, the sun glare makes it a challenge for a broadcast crew calling the game from the pressbox, but as you can see from our photo, it also can provide an awesome setting.

Recent upgrades over the past few years include the entrance to the stadium, restroom facilities and concessions. The home side bleachers can accommodate many more fans than the visiting side, thus enhancing the intimidating atmosphere for an opponent.

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THE GRAVEYARD, SAINT MARK'S SPARTAN STADIUM

BY NICK ALESSANDRINI

This summer, the 302 Sports staff is proud to feature some high school football venues where we have been fortunate to broadcast and view games. Our series of stories continues with the home of the Saint Mark's Spartans, "The Graveyard at Spartan Stadium."

The Saint Mark's football program has historically been one of the most consistent and successful in the state of Delaware. Saint Mark's has won four Division 1 state championships, with the most recent coming back in 2010. As the Spartans embark on their journey in 2023, we take a look at the place they call home.

Few schools in Delaware have the same appeal as the campus on Pike Creek Road. As you turn down the entrance and drive up a winding road, you can begin to see what separates the school from some others in the

area. It's a campus that includes a soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball and football field. "The Graveyard" gets its name from being in close proximity to All Saint's Cemetery, which is directly next to the field. After winning the state championship for the first time since 1978 in 2010, changes were on the way. Due to an issue with the cemetery, it took the Spartans until 2011 to get lights put in so they could play night games at home. That same year, the school installed a new Bermuda grass playing field, improving the stadium on numerous fronts. The debut night game in Saint Mark's football history took place back on Oct. 15, 2011, a game I was fortunate enough to be a part of.

Now the Spartans have returned to Class 3A (Div 1) and are looking to find their way back on top with the

help of that home crowd. "The Graveyard" features a large hill on the north side of the field that allows for a huge crowd to have a unique viewing experience. There are bleachers on both the home and visitor sides, with the larger section belonging to the home team. The concession stand contains great choices, including the Chik-Fil-A chicken sandwich and a variety of drinks and snacks.

The Spartans also provide everything you need for a fall Friday game night. The multiple-time state champion Saint Mark's cheerleading squad and a fantastic Spartan band help set the mood and get the crowd going. Warm-up music over the sound system for pregame gets the crowd involved as well, building the hype early before kickoff. Not to mention one of the best public address announcers in the state in Brian Ratasiewicz, who always keeps the crowd informed and entertained. Not to mention the Spartan entrance, which has the players lined up in two rows as they walk down the hill in the dark for pre-game warmups. A unique tradition and one that is cool to see.

With the lights for the last 10 years, Saint Mark's has put itself in the discussion for the best environment for a football game. It has great spectating areas, a huge parking lot, fantastic food and entertainment. Having broadcast games at "The Graveyard" for the last couple of years I can say it's one of the better, more unique viewing experiences in Delaware.



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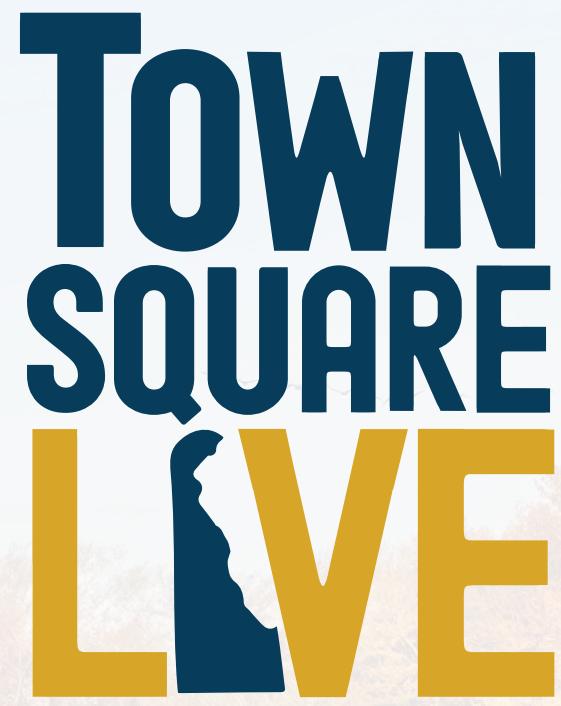
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