

photo link: Delaware Museum of Nature & Science

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

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October 26, 2023
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Big Ive's Turkey Drive



Registration Open for Low-Digit Tag Giveaway



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photo link: Delaware State Parks

Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





CRAFTERS RACE TOWARD DEADLINE FOR FESTIVAL OF TREES WREATHS, DECOR

BY BETSY PRICE

T-minus 23 days until the New Castle County Festival of Trees opens Nov. 17, and Kris Hable is calmly gluing berries on a tiny wreath in the basement of a Parkwood home. The chairman of the festival's Marketplace, which offers wreaths, decor and gifts for sale, Hable is one of a handful of designers and crafters who make the bulk of the items for the store.

"We are without question the best Christmas decorations secret anywhere because we try to make everything as original as we can," said Hable, who's surrounded by piles of holiday materials waiting to be made into another wreath lining the walls of the basement. "Don't even try to organize anything," she said. "It just doesn't work."

The bonus for Festival of Trees shoppers is that each item is individually made and almost all are one of a kind. "So you're not going to see these wreaths and decorations in any store," she said. "You're not going to see 50 of the same thing or anything of that nature. And quite frankly, our prices are fantastic."

The most popular size for wreaths, she said, is 24 inches. Those will fit well on doors and over fireplaces and go for \$30 to \$50, she said.

Marketplace sales account for about a quarter of the festival's total profits, with the majority coming from its decorated trees. Most of those are sponsored by businesses or philanthropists and decorated by volunteers

before they go to those companies or a nonprofit for the holidays.

This year's New Castle County festival will take place Friday, Nov. 17, through Sunday, Nov. 19, at Brantwyn Estate. Admission is free. In addition to shopping, the weekend features musical entertainment and the fun of seeing all the trees.

Hable got involved with the Festival of Trees about a decade ago helping create gift baskets for the Marketplace. "A friend of mine said, 'Kris is good at putting baskets together,' so I went to help them," Hable said.

She liked the operation, the people and the cause and gradually became more involved. In the last decade, she said, the number of crafters supporting the event has fallen, mostly because of attrition.

FESTIVAL OF TREES CYCLE

Now a core group of about six, mostly retired, starts meeting in March to create the majority of the wreaths in the basement of Tom and Linda Brennan Jones' home. "They lock us in," Hable jokes. "They don't even feed us."

They try to make items in a variety of holiday styles, so everyone who walks in can find something they like, Hable said.

"Every year we start the day after Thanksgiving, right after the festival ends and we go everywhere and start purchasing our supplies for next year." That's when Christmas decorations, ribbon and other materials start doing on sale for 50% off.

"We buy right through February," she said. "Sometimes we're lucky enough to get bulk items because the store purchases too many of them or something of that nature."

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



BIG IVE'S GOT BIG PLANS AS HE TAKES ON WILMINGTON TURKEY DRIVE

BY BETSY PRICE

Ivan Thomas wants to more than double the size of Stormin' Norman's 40-year-old Thanksgiving turkey giveaway for senior citizens and needy families. The event is now dubbed "Big Ive's Turkey Drive and Give-A-way," and Thomas hopes to be able to give away 3,000 turkeys in 2023 in Wilmington, Dover and other state locations. Last year's total was 1,400.

That number should feed about 24,000 people, said Thomas, executive director of DETV, during an information session Tuesday with partners.

"We have to do right," he said. "We all believe that no one should be going hungry, right, so we can start with saying no one should be going hungry on a holiday."

Thomas was tapped by Oliver last year to take over the turkey drive as he retired after a tenure that saw 250,000 turkeys into grateful hands during his four decades at the helm.

Plans for the Nov. 21 distribution—only 26 days away as of Wednesday morning—already involve help from D.A.R.T., police, firefighters, the Chase Fieldhouse, the Delaware Blue Coats and more.

TURKEY DRIVE NEEDS

Among the things Thomas and his organizing committee told its partners Tuesday during an informational session:

- The organization will continue Oliver's agreement with Food Lion in which the grocery chain will give them a certain number of turkeys and a cash donation. Big Ive's will take the donation and any other cash donations they receive and use the money to buy turkeys at a low bulk rate from Food Lion. Last year, they were Butterballs.
- Big Ive's would like to find a way to add sides to the turkeys. Right now the Black sororities and fraterni-

ties that belong to the National Panhellenic Council of New Castle County provide 11 sides for 150 people, which covers one senior housing development.

- The drive's big needs are cash donations of any size, which will be put toward buying less-expensive turkeys, and volunteer help upstate and down. Unloading and reorganizing the turkeys when they arrive from Food Lion and delivering several hundred turkeys in one senior highrise takes bodies.

Michelle Fidance of Multiplying Good worked with Oliver and is heading the logistics efforts for Big Ive's Turkey Drive. Food Lion came on as a corporate sponsor because its **Food Lion Feeds** program has a goal of providing 1 billion meals by 2025, she said. Oliver's turkey giveaway was a cause that could help them reach that goal.

Being able to buy the turkeys are a low cost per bird helps the organization avoid problems that can occur when someone promises 25 turkeys but then is only able to provide five, she said. It's also impossible to walk into any grocery store and just buy 2,500 birds at once, Fidance said, and that's what they hope to do.

Big Ive's Turkey Drive will accept donations of any kind, she and Thomas said. Even little amounts—such as \$1 per employee for a company— an add up to buy a lot of turkeys, they said.

The drive has set some sponsorship levels on their website, with a variety of price points, to give interested organizations the ability to choose one that suits their group.

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WILM. PRAYER BREAKFAST INCLUDES PLEAS FOR PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST

BY BETSY PRICE

The fighting and loss of life in Gaza and Israel was brought up several times during Oct. 19's annual **Delaware Leadership Prayer Breakfast**, attended by more than 500 people.

New Castle County Executive **Matt Meyer**, who is Jewish, asked for a moment of silence for those who were killed or suffering as a result of the fighting after Hamas terrorists attacked Israel. He followed that by reading Daniel 2:14-23 from the Old Testament. In it, Daniel has a vision after being told he and his friends would be put to death. He responds by saying:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.
He changes times and seasons;
He deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.”

Meyer's opponent in the race to be the Democratic nominee for governor, **Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall Long**, followed with 1 Peter 4:7-11 from the New Testament.

Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

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LITERACY DELAWARE WINS GRANT FOR HEALTHCARE LITERACY PROGRAM

BY JAREK RUTZ

A Delaware nonprofit focusing on ensuring First State adults can read and write announced it has been awarded nearly \$20,000 to carry out one of its programs.

Literacy Delaware helps adults to significantly improve their literacy skills to reach their goals of employment, parenting and civic engagement. Last year alone, the group's programming provided 7,000 hours of tutoring instruction to adults speaking 27 different languages.

The organization will get \$19,996.90 after being selected as one of the winners of **Quality Insights'** 50th anniversary grant program, which was created to support promising and innovative initiatives to improve health and healthcare quality. Quality Insights is a Wilmington-based group that aims to improve healthcare. It's

allocating a total of \$100,000 to celebrate its 50th year.

Literacy Delaware will use the funding to support its "Demystifying the Healthcare Journey" project. This is a health literacy education program for dialysis patients and their families to close the health equity gap. The main goal of this program is to improve patients' understanding and management of their health by providing them with the skills and tools necessary to navigate their journey to improve their health outcomes.

"The importance of health literacy cannot be overemphasized in today's world," said Cynthia Shermeyer, executive director of Literacy Delaware. "We are very excited to partner to develop and deliver a unique program for patients with chronic kidney disease."

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Literacy Delaware will also launch "The ABC's of Kidney Disease" later this month, which is Health Literacy Month. The program will be offered on Sundays beginning Oct. 29 at Christiana Care Hospital.

"We are deeply committed to improving health literacy, and it's an honor to support Literacy Delaware's innovative program aimed at demystifying the healthcare journey for dialysis patients and their families," said Sven T. Berg, chief executive officer of Quality Insights. "This project aligns seamlessly with our core values, bridging healthcare equity gaps and empowering patients to take control of their health outcomes."



photo link: Visit Delaware



Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



RIKARBON WILL ADD JOBS, EXPAND LAB SPACE WITH STATE GRANTS

BY BETSY PRICE

A Delaware environmental solutions firm will use \$60,000 in state grants to quadruple lab space and create 12 new full-time jobs. **RiKarbon**, based in Newark, will use the grants to expand from Delaware Technology Park incubator space to the Delaware Industrial Park.

The company, which will focus on carbon capture and utilization with the expansion, was founded in 2018 with support from a federal Small Business Innovation Research Grant from the Department of Energy. It's outgrown its 600-square feet of lab space and will renovate and outfit 2,540 square feet of new chemical research and development lab space in a former electronic device manufacturing facility on Dawson Drive.

The new positions will be in addition to its six full-time employees and two part-time employees.

RIKARBON'S FOCUS

The larger facility and staff will allow RiKarbon to scale up of 100% bio-based oils for emollients to formulate personal care products, bio-poly-alpha-olefin base oils for performance lubricants, products for upcycled plastics manufacturing and other cost-competitive offerings for domestic and international markets. A recently announced partnership with BASF—the world's largest chemical producer—includes bringing one of its emollient products to market by 2024.

The company also has received letters of intent from global customers to deliver products and is now raising investment funding to do so.

The Delaware Prosperity Partnership supported RiKarbon's request to the state Council on Development



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Finance for a Graduated Lab Space Grant of up to \$34,000 and a Jobs Performance Grant of up to \$26,000 from the Delaware Strategic Fund. The company must meet certain commitments to get the money.

“We are recreating similar ingredients that we use every day in our shampoo, conditioner, facial products or automotive engines, but making them in a socially responsible way from organic wastes that are causing environmental challenges globally,” said Basudeb Saha, CEO of RiKarbon. “It is very satisfying that we are able to deliver green and upcycled products to our customers to promote health and environmental efficacy while tackling climate challenges.”





BY BETSY PRICE

Four generations of women are working together in the bioscience industry and all bring different viewpoints, expectations and behaviors, attendees were told Oct. 19 during **Delaware Bio's** Inspiring Women in STEM 2023 Conference. They can all learn from each other, panelists said during a Bridging Generations session.

“A lot of times we are the ones that doubt ourselves or whether or not we’re capable of doing it,” said panelist Erica Woolridge, lead of AstraZeneca’s Global Supply Americase Regional Learning and Development. “We’re doing it, right? It’s happening. So this conversation around how we partner together generations is super important because there’s so much that we can learn from each other.”

The annual conference is designed to offer professional development and networking that encourages and inspires women in science, technology, engineering and math jobs. It’s the largest and longest-running Women in STEM program in the region, Kathi Vidal, director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, told attendees in a video address. The conference started

DELAWARE BIO'S WOMEN IN STEM CONFERENCE DRAWS 250 PEOPLE

about 10 years ago and during the early pandemic continued online.

About 250 women of all ages and a variety of jobs, including industrial and government scientists and engineers, academic researchers, educators, college students and entrepreneurs—attended Thursday’s conference at the University of Delaware’s Clayton Hall.

ENHANCING STEM CONFERENCE

Michael Fleming, president of Delaware Bio, said the organization had switched gears a bit this year and instead of focusing on speakers, it focuses on issues such as bridging generations and influencing as an individual.

Vidal, who is also an undersecretary for commerce, told the crowd that encouraging and incentivizing innovation is a key to creating more intellectual property, which is one of the cornerstones of the U.S. economy.

“Women represent the fastest-growing category of entrepreneurs worldwide,” she said, “but they’re less likely to be able to secure the capital and the intellectual property protections they need to attract investment and become sustainable.”

Women are also underrepresented as business owners. “According to the US Census Bureau’s annual business survey, men have an ownership stake in about 80% of U.S. businesses and a majority ownership share in 63% of U.S. businesses,” she said. “Meanwhile, women hold an ownership stake in about 37% of U.S. businesses, but only had a majority share in 21% of them.”

She said conferences like Inspiring Women in STEM will help women achieve more. “We need many more people to usher this new generation of radical innovation into the market,” Vidal said. “But none of this can happen without your involvement, and it will happen with your involvement. As STEM professionals each of you plays a vital role in keeping the American economy globally competitive. You play a crucial role in the onstant renewal of our industries and our culture.”

Women invent more empathetically, she said. They find a problem and seek solutions. “We need your energy, your enthusiasm, your drive,” she said. “We need your perseverance, and your knowledge, and programs like today’s Inspiring Women in STEM are pivotal to our success of bringing more women into STEM.”

Numbers were also a focus at the state of the Bridging Generations session. Baby boomers are aged between 77 and 59, Gen X is between 58 and 43, Millennials are between 42 and 27, and Gen Z is between 26 and age 11, said moderator Katie Lakofsky, associate director of Bioscience Workforce for the Delaware Biotechnology Institute.

But they’ve all faced similar problems, according to Lakofsky and panelists Woolridge; Tracy Shickel, associate vice president of corporate engagement of the University of Delaware; and Danielle Vozzo, manager of America’s Field Service Centers for Agilent.

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RITE AID TO CLOSE 2 DE STORES; PHARMACY WALKOUT LOOMS

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Downbeat stories are developing about all three of America’s biggest drugstores chains. Rite Aid announced Sunday that it’s filing for bankruptcy and followed up by saying it will close 154 locations, including stores in **Chestnut Hill Plaza** near Newark and at **Kirkwood Highway**, near Prices Corner.

Twelve CVS locations in the Kansas City area closed in September “because the pharmacists in charge staged an organized walkout,” **Supermarket News** reported.

Pharmacy staff at some Walgreens stores walked out Oct. 9, “citing harsh working conditions that make it difficult to safely fill prescriptions,” **CNN** reported.

And national and specialized media are reporting plans for a broadened walkout of pharmacy workers, possibly Oct. 30 and Nov. 1.

The last few years have been tough for drugstores. Demand for medicines and shots grew, while staffing

did not. One easily observed casualty: **shorter pharmacy hours**. Another: Hundreds of fewer drugstores, **CNN** reported.

RITE AID’S BANKRUPTCY

Rite Aid on Sunday announced the Chapter 11 bankruptcy in New Jersey, also saying it planned to sell its Elixir Solutions business to MedImpact Healthcare Systems. The announcement said that the company “will continue assessing its footprint and close additional underperforming stores.”

The Chestnut Plaza location has competition across the street from Walgreens and CVS. The Kirkwood Highway store has very local competition from the Prices Corner Pharmacy and pharmacies in Acme, Walmart and Walgreens.

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- URSULINE ACADEMY

An advertisement for two organizations. On the left is a close-up photograph of an elderly man with a wide, joyful smile, wearing a dark hat. To the right of the photo is the 'CITY Fare' logo, which includes a stylized building icon. Below the logo, the text reads 'VOLUNTEERS NEEDED (302) 293-0008'. At the bottom right is the 'ON MEALS ON WHEELS DELAWARE' logo, featuring a circular design with a wheat stalk and the text 'ON MEALS ON WHEELS DELAWARE'. The background of the advertisement is a mix of blue and white.

photo link: Visit Delaware

Food & Dining

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



DELAWARE'S BOOMING DINING SCENE: PIZZA, TACOS, ON TAP TRAIL

BY PAM GEORGE

There's no business like the food business. At least that was the case on Monday when the Delaware Restaurant Association held its Cornerstone Awards. And there's much to celebrate.

Despite several years of hardships, new spots are opening. The industry continues to give back to the community and seasonal specials are tempting diners to venture out during the week.

The [Delaware Restaurant Association](#) knows how to throw a party. Industry movers, shakers and supporters gathered at the [Lighthouse Cove Event Center](#) on Monday for the 21st Annual Cornerstone Awards.

[Nicola Pizza](#) and the Caggiano family received the 2023 Cornerstone Award, and the family was on hand for an emotional tribute. The [Lewes Oyster House's](#) Sean Corea, Tim Bartley and Tom Little received the Restaurateurs of the Year Award. In just over a year, the

downtown establishment has become a destination that has increased the historic town's culinary appeal. The Industry Impact Award was split between the [Food Bank of Delaware](#) and three food writers: Patricia Talorico, Bob Yesbek—aka the Rehoboth Beach Foodie—and yours truly.

More than 20 DRA members had food stations with tempting tidbits. For instance, [Curry & Spice](#) offered chicken tikka, [Dogfish Head Brewings & Eats](#) served red wine risotto, [Home Grown Café](#) presented beef sliders, and [DiFebo's Market](#) featured olive oil cake.

ALMOST TACO TIME

[Roja & Verde Taqueria](#) in Newark is putting the finishing touches on its College Avenue space, which should open in November. The restaurant is owned by Greg Vogeley, who has [Drip Café](#) next door and the flagship Drip Café in Hockessin. The [menu](#) includes

tacos, nachos, gordita, tamales and various sides. If you sign up for the Roja & Verde newsletter on the website, you could win a \$50 gift card.

NICK'S PIZZA OPENS

Nick Vouras of [Nick's Pizza](#) has slowly been testing the supply and demand for his Detroit and round pizzas as he prepares to open his brick-and-mortar restaurant at 1903 Newport Gap Pike, Wilmington.

Those in the know—namely those who follow him on Instagram—have been keeping up with the limited hours and offerings.

Today, Wednesday, Oct. 25, Nick's Pizza was open from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. with tomato pie, cheesesteaks and Detroit-style pizzas. Vouras will be closed on Thursday and Friday for jury duty and the shop will reopen for dining Saturday, Oct. 28, at 11 a.m. To be safe, call 302-842-2060 for hours and follow Nick's Pizza on social media to view menu items.

BREAST CANCER FUNDRAISERS

There's about a week left to contribute to research, support and awareness initiatives during Breast Cancer Awareness month, with several dining locations participating.

[Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant](#) is donating \$1 per pint of Pink Brambleberry Raspberry Farmhouse Ale to [Beer4Boobs](#). The organization has raised nearly \$450,000 for breast cancer research and the American Cancer Society.

On Sunday, Oct. 29, [Deep Blue at the Kitty Knight House](#) in Galena, MD, [Bayheads Brewing Co.](#) in Chesapeake City and [Broken Spoke Winery](#) in Earleville are partnering to present [Boo's Booze & Boobs](#).

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photo link: City of Newark, Delaware



Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BY JAREK RUTZ

Two Delaware lawmakers are looking to reinstate the death penalty for criminals convicted of the murder of a law enforcement or public safety officer.

State Reps. Tim Dukes, R-Laurel and Danny Short, R-Seaford, announced Thursday that they are planning to introduce legislation in the new year that would reinstate the death penalty under those conditions. The bill, known as the “Law Enforcement and First Responders Protection Act”, comes in response to this week’s life-in-prison conviction of the man who savagely murdered Delmar Police Corporal Keith Heacock in April 2021.

“Corporal Heacock didn’t die in vain and we continue to address this issue, hoping to bring it to the House floor for legislators to make that decision,” Dukes said. “I think people just want to know that we won’t forget. We’ll remember Corporal Heacock and his service to the community and that he didn’t die in vain.”

TWO STATE REPS. WANT DEATH PENALTY REINSTATED FOR SOME CASES

Randon Wilkerson, 32, was charged for the killing of Heacock. Wilkerson was convicted of 16 charges, including two counts of Murder 1st Degree and 11 other felonies. He will serve the rest of his life in prison. Several community members commented on social media platforms in response to this week’s sentencing saying that the death penalty should be reinstated.

In 2016, the Delaware Supreme Court struck down Delaware’s capital punishment statute. Before that, there were 22 aggravating circumstances that, when linked to the commission of a murder, could have warranted capital punishment.

The new bill will mirror legislation that was drafted by Rep. Short in 2020, but had not been officially introduced. The revamped measure will be focused on addressing the constitutional issues cited by the High Court in order to restore the current capital punishment law and to reserve the death penalty for only murders committed under the following aggravating circumstance: killing a police officer or public safety official.



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 de.gov/covidvaccine 



POLICE, COMMUNITY GROUPS CELEBRATE ONE YEAR OF WALKS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Wilmington Police, social service and public health partners will celebrate their first year of community outreach walks Thursday at 1 p.m. at 7th and Washington Streets. This initiative had the goal of addressing unmet social service and public health needs in Wilmington neighborhoods.

Every Thursday from 1 to 2 p.m., police officers are joined by a number of social service, public health and community service partners at a different location in Wilmington. The walks consist of a team of officers and outreach workers establishing a stationary location to distribute information to residents, another team walks through the surrounding neighborhood to share resources and make contact with residents.

“We know well that many challenges that face our residents are not best met by a traditional law enforcement response, and these walks are a prime example of the type of outreach that can provide our residents with the

resources they need to improve their quality of life,” said Police Chief Wilfredo Campos.

The community partners in the outreach walks include the [Wilmington Police Department](#), the Community Partner Support Unit Impact Team at the Winder Laird Porter State Service Center, the Porter Center Public Health Clinic, New Castle County Mobile Health Unit, Delaware Community Response Teams, the Wilmington Police Department Youth Response Unit, Westside Family Healthcare, Henrietta Johnson Medical Center and the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families, Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health.

There have been 42 walks thus far, with the following outreach successes:

- 1,512 contacts and referrals made by the Community Partner Support Unit at the Porter State Service Center
- 1,042 contacts made by the Porter Center Public Health Clinic

- 440 individuals provided with Narcan and given training on how to administer the life-saving medication
- 552 contacts made by Westside Family Health
- 811 contacts made by the Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
- 288 contacts made by the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families

Each week, residents have been connected with referrals to social service and public health partners, as well as COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, lead testing and other health services.

The series has also included the distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables, food, health and hygiene supplies, school supplies, children’s books and awareness materials related to public health and social services.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



BY BETSY PRICE

The Delaware Division of Motor Vehicles is now taking registration for residents who would like to enter a drawing to win low-digit car tags. The beloved and much-sought-after blue-and-gold tags will feature numbers only.

Delaware is one of the few states that allow speciality tags like the low-digit ones to be sold, sometimes for incredible amounts of money for a piece of metal and then considered an investment.

The DMV giveaway, called Tag-A-Palooza is an annual event. Those interested must register at dmv.de.gov/taglottery by Thursday, Nov. 2, for the daily drawings that start Monday, Nov. 6, and run through Friday, Nov. 10. You may register only once per driver license or identification card and you must specify which type of tag you are interested in receiving:

REGISTRATION ON FOR DMV'S LOW-DIGIT TAG GIVEAWAY

- PV – 5 Digit – Numbers Only (under 10,000 lbs. registered vehicle weight)
- C – Commercial
- PC – Passenger Car (under 10,000 lbs. registered vehicle weight)
- T - Trailer (regular trailers, utility, flat-bed or non-camping trailers)
- MC – Motorcycle (above 55cc's)
- RT – Recreational Trailer (camping trailers 5,000 lbs. and over, not regular trailers, see above)
- RV – Recreational Vehicle (car or truck under 5,000 lbs. or a motorhome)

If you would like to register to win a five-digit, numbers-only tag and your vehicle is under 10,000 lbs., please select tag type PV.

From Monday, Nov. 6, through Friday, Nov. 10, the DMV will randomly select (530) PV, (55) C, (145) PC, (406) T, (381) MC, (33) RT and (35) RV winners for each of the five days. Drawings will be held at 9 a.m. each day.

Registration does not guarantee you will receive a low-digit tag, the DMV stressed in an email but is required to be entered into the drawing.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

Halloween at Hagley

Saturday, October 28 • 11AM TO 3PM

Looking for a safe place to trick-or-treat this Halloween?

Children are invited to come in costume and visit treat stations throughout the beautiful surroundings of Hagley's powder yard.

LEARN MORE



BY BETSY PRICE

Lying politicians, disinformation, foreign threats, riots in the street, deadly epidemics, sex scandals in high places, open debates about the president’s competence, war threats, government censorship, fights on the floor of Congress and a society split in half by partisan politics.

Sound familiar?

That was politics in the United States in the 1790s, says John Sweeney, editor of “Delaware’s John Dickinson” and former editorial page editor at the *News Journal*. He will talk about “Infamous Scribblers: George Washington and the Press,” Saturday, Oct. 28, at the American Revolution Round Table of Northern Delaware.

It was the decade America almost failed. And it was just as crazy—maybe more so than today. “There was even a constant refrain that Washington was too old for the job,” Sweeney said.

Thomas Jefferson first whispered that Washington was getting too old to be president, he said. “Then Jefferson’s

THINK POLITICS TODAY IS CRAZY? TAKE A LOOK AT THE 1790S

allies in Congress and in press openly claimed the president was frequently forgetful and lost,” Sweeney said. “Later Jefferson’s enemy, Alexander Hamilton, tried to overturn the results of the 1800 election.

“In all, it was one of the most partisan, bitter, dirty and crazy political times in our history.”

The program starts at 7 p.m. at the Hale Byrnes House. Admission is \$5 at the door and includes coffee, tea and dessert. Well-behaved children are welcome.

The House is known as the meeting place of George Washington and his generals held a council of war on Sept. 6, 1777, before the Battle of the Brandywine. It’s also the location of the 300-year-old American Sycamore **Witness Tree** of Delaware, so called because it was alive during a historic event.

On Oct. 29, the Roundtable will go birding in a “Season of Change: Foliage and Feathers” walk from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. with Joe Sebastiani, director of Adult Engagement for Ashland Nature Center. Come prepared to walk. Admission is \$5 and includes coffee, tea and dessert.

The Hale Byrnes House is at 606 Stanton-Christiana Road, Newark, immediately left of the White Clay Medical Center at the intersection of Route 7 North and Route 4.



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photo credit: Christina School District



Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

School

WANT TO CHOICE YOUR KIDS INTO A SCHOOL? PROCESS OPENS NOV. 6

BY JAREK RUTZ

Applications for school choice in Delaware will open to parents in less than two weeks and districts and charters are trying to make sure families have an easy time navigating through the process. **Red Clay Consolidated School District** hosted a virtual school choice information session Tuesday night to share the timeline of the school choice window, tips to remember and new changes.

Most districts and charters have some sort of school choice information night at the end of October or early November, so check into a school of interest's website or social media pages to find dates and times.

Delaware is a school-choice state, which means families can apply to send their children to a school outside of their regular feeder pattern. The First State is one of 13 in the **country** in which parents are free to apply to any public school—district or charter—they wish to send their children to rather than sending them to the

neighborhood school associated with their address. There is, however, no guarantee of acceptance at that school. Districts use various methods to fill their classes and many students are put into a lottery or on waitlists.

The application process has recently gone digital to allow parents to submit information online and ease the burden of having to deliver paperwork to a school. Applications for the 2024-2025 school year open Nov. 6 and close Jan. 10, 2024.

“Kindergarten is that one exception and kindergarten choice is open until the first day of school,” said Kristine Bewley, who oversees the Red Clay’s Office of School Choice and is the district’s director of information systems.

Bewley said she recommends parents of rising kindergarteners apply during the school choice period because after a lottery has been completed, it’s first-come, first-served so students would be further down the waitlist the later they apply.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Only **34%** of Delaware students can read on grade level.

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DELAWARE STUDENTS STEERED TO CYBERSECURITY TRAINING PROGRAM

BY JAREK RUTZ

Cybersecurity is one of the hot, hot, hot areas of study and for employment. Delaware high school and college students can now apply for a national cybersecurity program, with scholarship money and advanced training up for grabs. **CyberStart America** and **Cyber Fast-Track** provide participants with the opportunity to explore their potential cybersecurity talent and assist in gaining problem-solving skills for a career.

The programs are split between high school students from freshman to senior level and college students. Any participant has the chance to win scholarship prizes as well as statewide recognition and further training.

“All Delawareans need to understand the potential of cybersecurity both for their professional and personal development,” Gov. John Carney said in announcing the program. “Whether cybersecurity is a potential career pathway or learning about self-protection against cyber criminals, it’s on all of us to learn more to keep Delaware secure.”

During the previous competition, Delaware had 261 high school student participants with six award winners in CyberStart America and 76 college students with five award winners in Cyber FastTrack.

Both programs offer a series of online challenges that allow participants to act as cyber protection agents to solve cybersecurity-related puzzles and explore related topics such as code-breaking, programming, networking and digital forensics. At the high school level, the program can be assigned as part of homework, form the basis of an extracurricular club or students can simply try it on their own. Participating students and their teachers do not need knowledge or experience in information technology or cybersecurity to take part.

“With cyber-attacks happening every day to well-secured, high-profile organizations, the need for this next generation to fill the skills gap in cybersecurity is essential,” said Gregory Lane, Delaware’s chief information officer.

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NEW CASTLE LEADERS CELEBRATE 'EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION'

BY JAREK RUTZ

A stunning sunset shone through the glass walls of the Community Education Building in downtown Wilmington Monday night as community leaders celebrated the state's educational advancements.

The "Excellence in Education" event brought together heads of schools, executives of local community organizations, education advocates, state politicians, teachers and more.

Those in attendance—some of whom gave brief speeches—included Sarah Baker, head of school at [Tower Hill School](#); Desa Burton, executive director of [Zip Code Wilmington](#); Aaron Bass, CEO of [EastSide Charter School](#); Julie Keleher, executive director of [First State Educate](#); Kendall Massett, executive director of the [Delaware Charter Schools Network](#); Linda Jennings, CEO of the [Community Education Building](#); and Matt Meyer, executive of New Castle County.

Speakers shared the belief that cross-collaboration between schools, districts and community organizations is paramount to academic and social success.

"What I really hope is that you come away knowing a little more about the broader community," said Ben duPont, board chair of Tower Hill.

Education can be subject to the same problems that occur in many industries, he said. "One school worries about itself and another school worries about itself and there's not much cross learning," he said.

duPont said he hopes Monday's event can become a regular one so schools and community organizations can bounce ideas off one another and collaborate to make progress for all students, regardless of where they live or what school they attend.

"I began teaching when I was 16 years old in Germantown because I realized that the community around me

wasn't able to have the same access and the same investment as my school," Bass said. "My high school had 100% graduation and the high school where I should have gone had 10%, just five blocks away from each other."

Government officials must invest in social and academic services and create public places for the community to gather, Bass said. It's also crucial that parents are actively engaged in their child's education, he said. That education should be structured in a way that takes into consideration a student's past trauma and mental health.

Leaders of the Community Education Building which is home to [Kuumba Academy](#) and [Great Oaks Charter School](#), repeated that equitable education is the equalizer for students coming from underprivileged backgrounds.

Zip Code Wilmington's Burton said her organization has provided access to quality technology training that many Delawareans previously would have needed to travel to Maryland to get. Her organization started in 2015 as a software coding bootcamp designed to be accessible and affordable to all with the talent and desire to attain a high-demand software programming career. It primarily trains adults around 30 years old in a 12-week program that consists of 80 to 100 hours of activity a week, Burton said.

"The mission is to help develop the economy of this region by training people who are talented, who have the ability but maybe didn't have the opportunity to become software developers and data engineers," she said. "We help folks go from average salaries of let's say \$20,000 to \$30,000 to salaries after they received the training of \$80,000 to \$90,000."

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53 SCHOOLS ON IMPROVEMENT PLANS TO BE RE-EVALUATED NEXT YEAR

BY JAREK RUTZ

The First State has 53 public schools on support and improvement plans due to consistent underachievement. They are divided into three categories, determined by factors such as whether the whole student body or only a student subgroup are underachieving and whether there's a pattern of underperformance from year to year.

Schools on support and improvement plans receive extra funding for programs designed to improve student success, which is usually an extra few hundred thousand dollars. That cash flow ends when the designated improvement period ends. It's usually three years, but the pandemic lengthened the term for some. Evaluations will take place after the 2023-24 school year ends.

Here are how the schools are classified:

Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)

CSI schools either score in the lowest 5% of all Title I schools' performance as measured by the statewide **accountability system**, or the school's graduation rate

is below 67%. The accountability system takes into consideration test scores, proficiency rates, graduation rates, student attendance and more.

Title I schools are those in which at least 40% of the student population lives below the poverty line. There are 147 **Title I** schools in Delaware, according to the **Delaware Department of Education's** most recent data.

CSI schools are identified every three years. Delaware's were identified in 2018 and 2022, since the pandemic caused some disruptions. There are 10 CSI schools in Delaware: AI DuPont Middle School (Red Clay); Bancroft Elementary School (Christina); Bayard Middle School (Christina); East Side Charter School; Edison Charter School; Harlan Elementary School (Brandywine); McCullough Middle School (Colonial); Newark High School (Christina); Shortlidge Academy (Red Clay); Stanton Middle School (Red Clay).

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DSU'S INVESTMENT CLUB GETS \$150,100 GIFT TO PUT TOWARDS STOCKS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The students in Delaware State University's Investment Club are getting \$150,100 to put into the stock market. Part of DSU's College of Business, the club's newfound pot of investment money comes courtesy of a \$125,000 pledge from the Graham Family Sustainable Investment Fund and a \$25,100 donation from the Markel Corporation. The Graham Family Sustainable Investment Fund was established by Tom S. Gayner, who is also the chief executive officer of Markel.

Dr. Michael Casson, Dean of the College of Business, said these recent gifts grants its students a tremendous learning opportunity.

"This financial support provides an innovative vehicle for students to learn the techniques and benefits of long-term investment strategies," said Casson, "and ultimately apply this knowledge to advance the growth of the College of Business' endowment."

Over the next 25 years, the club will receive \$5,000 annually for purchasing stocks.

Gayner visited DSU Oct. 11 to watch a club event in which members presented the stocks that they have decided to purchase and explained the rational that led them to invest in those companies.

The club has 43 student members, according to Greg Coverdale, who helps supervise the club and is the director of financial planning programs at DSU's Financial Literacy Institute.

For the first year of this investment initiative, the students have invested in the following stocks: **Boston Scientific**, **Exxon Mobil** and **Texas Instruments**.

"They wanted to use a mix and they wanted to find stocks that were growth oriented, as well as value oriented," Coverdale said. "They were trying to pick long-term picks and they're used to short term trading, so it was good learning a different strategy and also just having fun with it."




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DELAWARE AMONG STATES GOING AFTER META FOR TARGETING KIDS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware has joined a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general suing Meta in federal and state courts, alleging that the company knowingly designed and deployed harmful features that purposefully addict children and teens on Instagram and its other social media platforms.

As it did, Meta falsely assured the public that these features are safe and suitable for young users, said Attorney General Kathy Jennings Tuesday in a press release.

The attorneys general say Meta’s business practices violate state consumer protection laws and the federal Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act.

These practices have harmed and continue to harm the physical and mental health of children and teens and have fueled what the U.S. Surgeon General has deemed a “youth mental health crisis” which has ended lives, devastated families, and damaged the potential of a generation of young people, the press release said.

“As the case will reveal, Meta is aware of the unsafe and addictive nature of its products, yet consistently

chooses not to implement fundamental safety measures, opting instead to deceive the public. Companies prioritizing profits over the safety of Delawareans will be held accountable, irrespective of their size,” Jennings said.

The complaint, joined by 33 states and filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, alleges that Meta knew of the harmful impact of its platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, on young people. Instead of taking steps to mitigate these harms, it misled the public about the harms associated with use of its platform, concealing the extent of the psychological and health harms suffered by young users addicted to use of its platforms.

The complaint further alleges that Meta knew that young users, including those under 13, were active on the platforms and knowingly collected data from these users without parental consent. It targeted these young users noting, as reported in a 2021 Wall Street Journal [article](#), that such a user base was “valuable, but untapped.”

While much of the complaint relies on confidential material that is not yet available to the public, publicly available sources including those previously released by former Meta employees detail that Meta profited by purposely making its platforms addictive to children and teens. Its platform algorithms push users into descending “rabbit holes” in an effort to maximize engagement.

META FEATURES

Features like infinite scroll and near-constant alerts were created with the express goal of hooking young users. The press release said these manipulative tactics continually lure children and teens back onto the platform.

As Aza Raskin, the original developer of the infinite scroll concept, [noted](#) to the BBC about the feature’s addictive qualities: “If you don’t give your brain time to catch up with your impulses . . . you just keep scrolling.”

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Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



THE CORNER SCOOP: WEEK 7 FIELD HOCKEY TOP 10 RANKINGS

the Week: D2 St. Mark's at Sussex Academy Monday; D1 Polytech at Milford Thursday.

DIVISION 1

No. 1 Smyrna 12-0 The Eagles will round out their regular season with two games this week before going to Delmar on Saturday to play for the Henlopen Conference title. Tuesday at Polytech and Thursday Senior Night vs. Dover at home. Congrats on capturing the Henlopen North Division title.

No. 2 Cape Henlopen 12-1 Cape is coming off a big win over Delmar and will have two home games this week. They saw Sussex Tech Tuesday and then Sussex Central Thursday.

No. 3 Milford 11-2 The Bucs picked up a forfeit win against Laurel at the Turf Bowl and traveled to CR on Tuesday and finish up at home for Senior Night Thursday vs. Polytech. What an exciting season for the Bucs who will look to make some noise come tourney time.

No. 4 Middletown 10-3 They looked to cap off a great season with Senior Night Monday vs. DMA and then traveled to Newark Tuesday. We will see the Cavs in the tournament this year.

No. 5 Polytech 9-4 The Panthers have been on the move late in the season, but have their work cut out for them this week facing No. 1 Smyrna Tuesday and No. 3 Milford Thursday.

No. 6 Odessa 9-4 There are so many good things to say about the Ducks. The four losses they have are all but just one goal. I'll be interested to see how they fare this week as we head to tournament time. They went on the road Wednesday to Brandywine and then Oct. 30 to DMA.

No. 7 Charter School of Wilmington 7-5 The Force has struggled as of late with a three-game losing streak. They will try to rebound with three home games this week: Monday vs. Ursuline, Wednesday vs. Appoquinimink and Thursday vs. DMA.

No. 8 Appoquinimink 7-5-1 The Jags tied St. Georges in the Turf Bowl this weekend prevented them from climbing up a spot in this week's top 10.

No. 9 St. Georges 6-6-1 The Hawks tied Appo in the Turf Bowl last weekend but they grabbed the nine spot anyway. They will finish up their season with two games: Wednesday vs. William Penn and Friday vs. Brandywine.

No. 10 William Penn 5-6-1 The Colonials will only had one regular season game left on Wednesday vs. St. Georges for Senior Recognition Day.

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BY SHANNON TIMMONS

It's hard to believe we are entering the last week of regular season play already. What a season of field hockey it has been. Smyrna continues to dominate, remaining undefeated all season. Cape and Smyrna knocked off Delmar and D1 teams that have been a pleasant surprise are Milford and Odessa. I hope Odessa has enough strength of schedule to get the young Ducks into the tournament. Despite losses to D1 teams, Delmar is still a favorite for tournament time. Caravel and Newark Charter have made a name for themselves this season too. After watching them play and tracking their progress this season, I believe Caravel has one of the best defenses in hockey and Newark Charter has one of the best offensive fronts. But they will have to contend with Delmar in the D2 tournament. Games of



VIEW FROM THE BASELINE: WEEK 7 VOLLEYBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

We've reached the final week of the regular season. The next edition of the Baseline will include a look at the state tournament bracket, but a lot will happen between now and then.

The focus this week will be, for many teams, fine-tuning as the state tournament approaches. For others, however, whether they play past this week depends on how they play this week, along with how other teams finish up the season. It's a 24-team tournament, and as of Sunday night, 29 teams were .500 or better, so obviously that is not enough to guarantee a postseason bid.

The other activity that will be popular among coaches and volleyball enthusiast this week is counting bonus points. Those can play a significant role in tournament seeding. Entering the week, there were 19 teams whose

week will affect the number of bonus points they provide opponents.

Matches to watch this week: Padua at Saint Mark's, Tuesday; Wilmington Charter at Smyrna, Thursday, 6 p.m.; Wilmington Friends at Newark Charter, Friday, 5:15 p.m.; Ursuline at Saint Mark's, Saturday, 7:15 p.m.

No. 1 Saint Mark's has not lost a set since its five-set win over Smyrna. The Spartans wrap up the regular season with two tough matches against their longest-standing rivals, although both are at home. They have the inside track to the top seed in the state tournament.

No. 2 Smyrna keeps on rolling against an impressive schedule. Of the Eagles' 13 opponents, just four are currently below .500.

No. 3 Ursuline travels to Padua on Thursday for its

first match in nine days. The Raiders finish the regular season on Saturday at Saint Mark's in what has become a tradition in Delaware high school volleyball.

No. 4 Tower Hill has won 10 straight since losing to Ursuline in early September. Only Saint Mark's has a longer winning streak.

No. 5 Padua continues its solid play against one of the toughest schedules in the state. The Pandas have a pair of tough matches to close out the regular season as they continue to push for a first-round bye in the tournament.

No. 6 Caesar Rodney jumps a few spots as the Riders continue to impress. Last week included wins over a resurgent Delmarva Christian and Henlopen South champ Sussex Academy. CR will be favored in its final two matches, both on the road.

No. 7 Newark Charter has rebounded with four straight wins following a three-match losing streak in the middle of the season. The Patriots have a busy week, but should be hosting a first-round tournament match.

No. 8 Dover keeps motoring along, likely to earn a first-round bye. The Senators' three losses have come against opponents with a combined record of 32-7.

No. 9 Wilmington Charter has become the masters of five sets, having gone the distance in three of its last four matches. The Force have a brutal non-conference schedule, which continues in the regular-season finale Thursday at Smyrna.

No. 10 Middletown/Archmere sit in the final spot. The Cavaliers will have an extra match to prepare for the tournament as they face Concord in the Blue Hen Conference championship. The Auks had a tough week, which runs into this week on Tuesday at Tower Hill.



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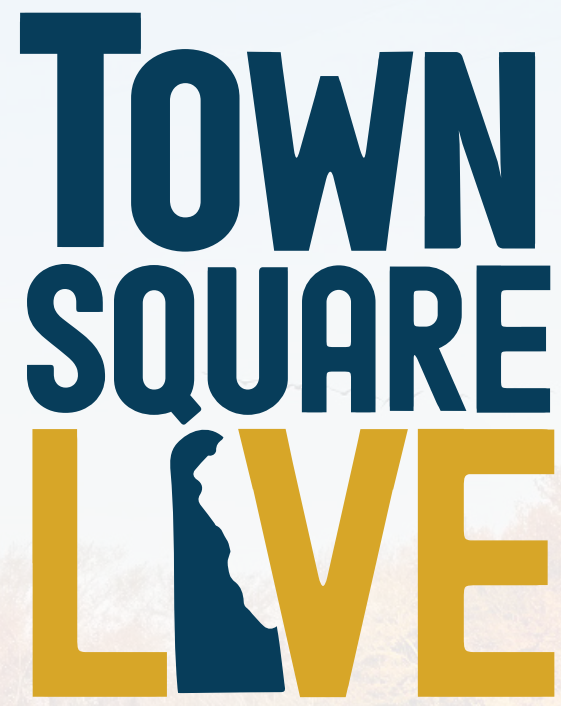
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