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SEPTA Train Service at New Claymont Station



Sussex Student Happy Principal Fired



Salesianum Soccer Wins Third State Championship



Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



WHAT TO EXPECT FOR THANKSGIVING 2023 IN DELAWARE

BY JAREK RUTZ

With almost 15% of First Staters expected to travel this weekend, here's what to know about Thanksgiving travel, weather and more.

TRAVEL

AAA Mid-Atlantic, a regional travel agency, expects nearly 150,000 Delawareans to be traveling for the Thanksgiving weekend, the third-highest travel volume for the holiday since 2001. Ninety-one percent of First State travelers, or 36,000 people, will be reaching their destination by driving. As a general rule of thumb, it's best to travel early in the day or wait until nighttime to hit the road.

Gas prices have been on a steady decline this year and the national average last Thanksgiving was \$3.58 per gallon, which has dropped to \$3.31 this year. In Dela-

ware, the average cost per gallon is \$3.17, with Kent County averaging \$3.18, followed by New Castle and Sussex at \$3.17.

WEATHER

Drivers should be cognizant of poor driving conditions, with Friday's forecast calling for rain and slick roads. According to the **National Weather Service**, Thanksgiving is expected to be sunny with a high of 53 degrees. Clouds will roll in during the evening as the temperature drops to 37 degrees.

Friday has the highest chance of rain, with a 30% chance during the day and 40% chance at night. The cloudy day will have a high of 54 and a low of 41.

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THE COVID-19 VACCINES HAVE RECEIVED THE MOST INTENSIVE SAFETY MONITORING IN U.S. HISTORY.

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SEPTA TRAIN SERVICE STARTS AT NEW CLAYMONT STATION

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

SEPTA commuter train service to the new Claymont Transportation Center starts Dec. 4, increasing the community’s attractiveness to businesses and residents, and reducing hassles for commuting into—and just visiting—Philadelphia

The new station is a centerpiece of redevelopment of 425 acres on Philadelphia Pike, just south of the Pennsylvania line, that for decades was a steel mill. **First State Crossing** is in various stages of creating commercial, office, retail and residential buildings. And maybe a park.

“One of Claymont’s greatest assets has always been our location in relation Philadelphia,” said Brett Saddler, executive director of the Claymont Renaissance Development Corp.

“We believe that in addition to that, this substantial regional rail project will strengthen the former Claymont Steel redevelopment prospects and also create welcoming access to the proposed Claymont Riverfront Park and Marina.”

When the Claymont Transportation Center was **announced** in 2019, it was called a \$71 million project due to be completed in 2021. Now it’s a \$90 million project, opening two years later.

“There had been some delays early on in the project due to a duct bank that was found that we had to design around/avoid, an eight-inch abandoned petroleum line that was found and a longer timeframe than anticipated to get necessary design approvals and the necessary railroad coordination for construction,” said Charles

“C.R.” McLeod, director of community relations for the Delaware Department of Transportation.

The new station will lead to three lanes exiting onto Philadelphia Pike. Exiting from the old station, by contrast, could easily back up on Myrtle Avenue.

A surface parking lot has 323 regular spaces, nine accessible spaces, four short-term spaces and eight spaces for charging electric vehicles, he said. A garage has 464 spaces, including 10 accessible and four EV charging. That adds up to 808 spaces. The old station had 497 parking spaces.

“The spots will be free, but DelDOT, which subsidizes commuter rail in the state, reserves the right for future parking charges,” *Delaware Business Times* **reported** in 2019.

TRAINS, BUSES AND PEDESTRIANS

SEPTA **runs** 16 trains from Claymont to Philadelphia on weekdays, with nine continuing to Newark. There are 16 trains weekdays from Philadelphia to Claymont, with eight continuing to Newark.

The SEPTA schedule includes nine trains from Claymont to Philadelphia on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, and eight from Philadelphia to Claymont. All continue to Wilmington, but none to Newark.

“No changes are planned for the current service during 2023,” SEPTA spokeswoman Kelly Greene said. “Minor changes are anticipated on Jan. 7, 2024, related to ongoing Amtrak bridge and track state-of-good-repair work south of Crum Lynne and Wilmington.”

The station has a dedicated bus loop and DART lists the new center on its Route 13 schedule.

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WHOVILLE, MORE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS IN GINGERBREAD AT HAGLEY

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Brandywine Hundred resident Joe Daigle is sharing his gingerbread artistry across Delaware this year. He became known for it after he won the Food Network’s “Holiday Baking Championship” in 2022, with friend Sean McGovern, pastry chef at the Urban Outfitters headquarters in Philadelphia.

Now, Daigle has created the featured house for Hagley’s sixth annual **gingerbread house contest**. He’s creating a display for **Lit for the Holidays**, the “annual extravaganza celebrating a long tradition of winter festivity at the George Read II House & Gardens” in New Castle. He’s crafting rooms from the house itself “in glorious gingerbread,” and an exhibit called “The Season in Miniature” also features miniature rooms from the **First State Mini Club** of Delaware.

Lit for the Holidays is Dec. 9, and the exhibit runs Dec. 10-Jan. 6. And he’s baking gingerbread cookies for the **Breakfast With Santa**, a Dec. 2-3 fundraiser for Camp Arrowhead in Lewes.

Hagley’s contest is titled “Treasures and Traditions,” and the 40 or so entrants are on display at the Hagley Barn, a short walk from Eleutherian Mills, which is decorated with the same theme.

“Local amateur bakers were challenged to create a gingerbread house that includes a wonderful treasure, maybe an heirloom or traditional decoration that holds special meaning during the holidays,” Hagley write on the contest page. Entries are on display Nov. 24-Jan. 1.

GINGERBREAD INSPIRATION

Daigle’s creation, as the featured house, is not part of

the competition. He competed (but didn’t win) at Hagley in 2022, with a whimsical carousel. His work this year is from “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas,” the 1957 Dr. Seuss book that has since been reinterpreted by multiple content creators.

He has created Whoville, with the townsfolk all happily singing around the huge Christmas tree in the town square. In the background: Flue’s Fireplaces, the mayor’s house, a restaurant and the house of Cindy Lou Who. In the distance: Mount Crumpit, the town dump, the Grinch, Max and that infamous sleigh.

Daigle said he has been improving his gingerbread skills. “I still have a lot to learn,” he said. “There are a million techniques.” He’s tweaked his recipe so it can be thinner, stronger and more pliable. He’s been experimenting with colors, so the gingerbread is not just that distinctive brown from the molasses.

His Whoville is “old-fashioned” in that it’s almost entirely gingerbread and royal icing, with a few candies. Daigle chose “The Grinch” because he has so many fond memories of watching the 1966 animated TV special with his family. It’s a tradition that continues at the Elkton, MD, home of his parents, Terry and Connie.

“It brings back memories of being a kid, in the same environment with the same people,” he said. “Nostalgic and warm.”

And when the family gathers this year, yes, he’ll be making gingerbread.





VETERANS HOME'S PLEA FOR FOOD, SUPPLIES SPARKS WELCOME AID

ness into a more stable life with jobs and a residence. He spoke for the house because executive director Heather Travitz was out sick.

As of Nov. 17, the house had 14 male residents, five female residents and two children, an infant and a 13-year-old, with a short waiting list for rooms.

Home of the Brave's supplies tend to go from feast to famine, said Samantha Morris, Horn's stepdaughter who posted on Delaware Free Stuff. "It's full and then it's not full," she replied to one commenter. "With 15 men and five women they go through a lot each week."

Horn said one woman from the Felton area bought \$100 of towels, washcloths and toiletries on her way to the home to donate. Some people have been looking at the list and sending items from Amazon directly to the home at 6632 Sharps Road, Milford 19963. Donations also may be dropped off there.

One big donation that came in, said Horn, is 20 turkeys from Procter & Gamble in Dover. Now, Horn said, he's hoping someone will be able to donate a chest freezer so he can freeze some of the turkeys and other donations for Christmas and New Year's dinners.

TRANSITIONING VETERANS

Canned and other goods can be kept in a supply shed, he said. The donated household items don't need to be new, Morris said in the post.

"If anyone is getting ready to throw away items that are in good condition, or replacing items, please look at

the list," she said. "Any local places willing to donate gift cards to clothing stores or food stores will be appreciated as well."

Home of the Brave allows residents to stay about two years, but many leave in six months to a year, Horn said. The house is outside Milford, essentially in a cornfield, Horn said, where they can all see the stars without light pollution of more populated areas.

"A lot of these residents find a lot of peace and serenity in this environment, because it's quiet," Horn said. "On a clear night, the stars will burn your eyes. It's so beautiful here."

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

BY BETSY PRICE

A Facebook post asking for help with supplies for **Home of the Brave** in Milford has given the Veterans transitional residence some relief, but officials there hope for more to restock their cabinets and get them through the holidays and into 2024.

The post on Delaware Free Stuff (Angels Among Us) asked for everyday housekeeping supplies, food items and side items for a Thanksgiving dinner. They include soaps and detergents, paper products, trash bags, cooking sprays, oil, eggs, milk, bread, spaghetti and other pantry staples.

The need is crucial, said Steve Horn, kitchen manager, partly because of limited government support for the nonprofit that helps Veterans transition from homeless-

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BRIGHTEN UP DARK NIGHTS WITH THESE MERRY LIGHT DISPLAYS

BY BETSY PRICE

If you're looking for a little holiday magic to brighten up the dark nights of winter, look no farther than the Wilmington Riverfront, where a two-mile stretch of the Riverwalk will be lit up for the Holiday Magic at Riverbright Wilmington.

It's one of more than a dozen of holiday light displays in the region, many of them free, like Riverbright.

Most open in the next week to 10 days.

Riverbright opens Friday, Nov. 24, with an opportunity to meet Santa at Riverwalk Mini Golf from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Santa will also be there from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Dec. 7, 14 and 21.

The trail stretches from Tubman-Garrett Park to the DuPont Environmental Education Center.

Walkers also may stop by Merry Mugs at the mini golf

site to buy hot chocolate, ice cream and other sweet treats from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, and from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Here's a look at what's glowing out there, divided by in-state shows and those nearby.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS IN DELAWARE

New Castle County

Rockwood Park, 4651 Washington Street Extension, Wilmington. Its grounds will be lit up in December for people to drive through. It's a compact but delightful display and perfect for people who want to take older folks or young children for a ride that won't wear them out. Visitors also can park and walk around the grounds. Dusk to 9 p.m. nightly. Bonus: Rockwood is a short drive from the Smith family's amazing display. Free.

The **Smith family** annual display at 1900 Prior Road, Wilmington. Drive-by or walk-through. Free. This family display, easily visible from I-95, looks like a holiday lighting factory exploded over two homes and yards. Dusk to about 10 p.m. nightly.

Yuletide at Winterthur, 5105 Kennett Pike, Greenville. Indoors and outdoors. Nov 19 through Jan 8. The former du Pont estate offers a Yuletide tour that includes multiple lighted trees and their annual showpiece, the dried flower tree. Admission ranges from \$8 for children 2-11 up to \$27 for adults.

Zoo Nights and Christmas Lights, 3 Palms Zoo, 1060 VanDyke Greenspring Road, Townsend. Walk-through. Admission \$6 per person. Open 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., weather permitting, Friday and Saturday nights Dec. 1-30. Themed displays. Some animals—such as foxes—still awake. Hot chocolate and more available for purchase.

Kent County

Gift of Lights, Dover Motor Speedway, Dover. Outside. Admission. The drive-through show on 1.5 miles of the Woodlands of Dover campground features more than 60 scenes and 3 million lights. It is open Thursday, Nov. 23, (Thanksgiving!) and ends Dec. 31. Through Dec. 17, the route is open Sundays through Thursdays from 5 p.m. until 9 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. From Dec. 17-31, it's open from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., weather permitting. Admission is \$35 per car and \$60 for buses and limousines. Tickets should be bought in advance here.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



WINTERTHUR'S ENCHANTED WOODS, IN WHIMSICAL GINGERBREAD

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Winterthur has moved its Enchanted Woods indoors this season as a delightfully detailed miniature form in gingerbread for Yuletide at Winterthur. The 150-pound creation features gingerbread, chocolate, fondant and icing. That's all edible.

The construction sits on a hardwood platform, edged with red ribbon, with styrofoam to create various levels. There are white lights in the Faerie Cottage and the Tulip Tree House and cloth ribbons on the maypole. That's all inedible.

All told, "it's magical and whimsical," said creator Diana Anello, head sugar artist for [Bredenbeck's Bakery](#) in Philadelphia. The gingerbread is on display Nov. 18-Jan. 7 in an alcove off the main entrance to the museum and early on, the enticing scent will guide people to its location.

While it was being installed, a visitor asked if the ribbons on the maypole were licorice. Licorice is an unreliable ingredient, she replied. It changes color and dries so much that it could fall off.

Yuletide at Winterthur goes back to 1979 and the six-week event now draws 25,000. The celebration features more than a dozen rooms decorated for the holidays, plus outdoor lights, a train display and a dollhouse.

The feature most loved on social media is the Christmas tree decorated with dried flowers, said Christine Heesters, director of technology and marketing. Its design varies annually. Associated activities include brunch with Santa and performances of "A Christmas Carol."

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Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



ASSOCIATED BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS AWARDS FIVE PEOPLE, 29 COMPANIES

BY JAREK RUTZ

One of the biggest challenges this year for Jimmy Strusowski of Seiberlich Trane Energy Services has been the company- and industry-wide crisis of getting parts and materials. Coping with that and other challenges helped him earn the Young Professional of the Year award last week at the [Associated Builders & Contractors](#), Delaware Chapter's annual Excellence in Construction Awards dinner.

"I don't really look at challenges as an issue or really stay too concerned with them," he said. "We will always have challenges with whatever we do and that to me adds the fun to work. My life challenge is the daily juggle of work, family and the extra after-work activities to be successful." Finding time for all, he said, can be difficult but can always be accomplished by being open for change.

Strusowski was one of five individuals and 29 companies honored Nov. 16 at Wilmington's Chase Center.

"The award to me exemplifies our hard work of staying focused and the challenges that are brought to being a young person in the construction field," Strusowski said. "The ceremony gave us all a platform to go in front of the association itself and say let's get involved and let's be one, let's be a stronger group moving forward."

Strusowski and other winners were nominated for awards from ABC members.

"The process involves filling out a nomination form, then coming in for an interview with a panel of committee members to best describe how you can forward the construction industry," he said.

ABC is a national construction industry trade association representing more than 22,000 members in 68

chapters. ABC Delaware Chapter has more than 500 members statewide. The group helps members develop its staff, win work and deliver that work safely, ethically and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which ABC and its members work.

Strusowski said he went for the award because he saw an opportunity to get in front of the association and thank his mentors.

"I also wanted to explain the difference ABC made in my career by getting involved and giving my part to the association to try and better it," he said. "The certain program that really pushed me forward was the ABC Next Gen mentor program, which partners a young professional with a board member."

He said the program helped him and others learn life experiences and can save young workers from going down a bad road or choosing a wrong decision in their career journey, as well as doubling down and getting reinsurance for good ideas.

"You can get smarter in a shorter period of time and it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up," said Strusowski, a graduate of the Delaware Military Academy and the York College of Pennsylvania.

For the 31-year-old, what pushed him the most as a young professional in the field was being involved in an association and putting in the extra time.

"I am a wrestling coach and wrestled all the way through college," he said. "What made athletes successful was not just going to practice every day, it was also doing the extras after practice."

Professional work life is the same philosophy, he said.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



MOUNTAIRE FARMS' 'THANKSGIVING FOR THOUSANDS' BREAKS RECORD

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

More than 350 community members worked elbow to elbow Saturday at **Mountaire Farms** shipping warehouse to pack 14,000 holiday meals for area churches and nonprofits to distribute to families in need.

“We’re only able to do this because of their help,” said Mountaire Farms Spokeswoman Cathy Bassett said.

MOUNTAIRE CARES

This is the 29th annual **Mountaire Cares’** “Thanksgiving for Thousands,” the poultry company’s signature annual charity event. The majority of volunteers participate in “Thanksgiving for Thousands” year after year, she said.

“I volunteer for every single one they do,” said Mountaire employee Bostik Johnson of Berlin, MD. “It’s an amazing thing they do for the community,” he said. “Times are rough right now and people like getting together and helping out.”

This year Mountaire broke its personal best record of number of Thanksgiving meals, each feeding a family of four, donated in one year since the food drive’s incep-

tion almost three decades ago. Three sister Mountaire facilities in North Carolina were simultaneously producing similar holiday meal coffers Saturday (Nov. 18), Bassett said, with a combined total of 152,000 individuals to be fed this Thanksgiving.

“This is a huge scale event,” said first-time volunteer Jana McVee as she handed a frozen fresh young chicken to Indian River High School junior Kendra Fehringer, a second-year volunteer.

Kendra and McVee, both of Millsboro, were stationed near the end of one of four assembly lines and had a great view of the venue brimming with busy volunteers.

“With this hard year, this is really needed,” said McVee, who is also a Mountaire employee. “I found a company that has similar values as mine.”

McVee joined Mountaire as a national food service account manager six months ago and has been pleased to discover how much her employer gives back to the community.

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ANOTHER RITE AID HAS CLOSED, THIS TIME IN CLAYMONT

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Rite Aid’s declaration of bankruptcy in mid-October was quickly followed by the **announcement** that it was closing two stores in Delaware—**Chestnut Hill Plaza** near Newark and at **3209 Kirkwood Highway** near Prices Corner. The only Rite Aid in Claymont closed Nov. 16, but without any announcement to customers. Rite Aid now **lists** 33 locations in Delaware.

The company did not respond to requests for information about the closure in Claymont or whether any other Delaware locations are scheduled to be closed.

On Take Back Claymont, a private Facebook group, posters said that the store’s last day was Nov. 16. People also said that they were surprised that prescriptions filed at the Claymont Rite Aid were transferred to

Walgreens. Others said that employees told them it was contractually or legally mandated to be transferred to the nearest pharmacy. Walgreens has a location at 1508 Philadelphia Pike.

After the bankruptcy, Rite Aid said it was closing 154 stores nationwide. Hundreds of more Rite Aid locations are likely to close, *The Wall Street Journal* **reported**.

Walgreens is also closing locations, the Take Back Claymont discussion continued. A Brandywine Hundred location at 4201 Concord Pike (near Silverside Road intersection) is permanently closed and there’s a Walgreens at 2119 Concord Pike, in the Fairfax Shopping Center.

Pharmacy closures are a trend. “More than 16 percent of the independently owned rural pharmacies in the



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United States shut down between March 2003 and March 2018,” *The Washington Post* **reported**, citing a **policy brief** by the RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis at the University of Iowa.

Drugstore chains “are closing thousands of stores, leaving gaps in communities for medicines and essentials. Researchers find pharmacy closures lead to health risks such as older adults failing to take medication,” CNN **wrote** in October. Pharmacies and pharmacists were hit hard during the pandemic and Delaware **lost** all of its 24-hour pharmacies.





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Food & Dining

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



TAKE A PEEK AT BARDEA STEAK'S NEW TASTING MENU

BY PAM GEORGE

From now until New Year's Day, many revelers will throw calories to the wind and there's no better place to indulge than **Bardea Steak**, which recently launched a chef's tasting menu that is perfect for holiday dining—and Valentine's Day.

The downtown Wilmington restaurant, located next to the critically acclaimed **Bardea Food & Drink**, offers the multicourse menu for \$150 per person (add \$75 for wine pairings). On our visit, the succession of small plates combined the flavors of Bardea Steak and big sister Bardea Food & Drink, known for Italian-inspired cuisine.

The chef's tasting is not Bardea Steak's only menu change. Owners Scott Stein and Antimo DiMeo, the executive chef, have also refined the offerings to reflect DiMeo's Italian roots, such as meatballs with yellow tomato and black tahini, tomato pie with burrata and crab gnocchi.

But it's far from an Italian restaurant. The "snack" section includes soup dumplings with lamb and shishi-

to peppers with ostrich sausage. Not to worry. Meat is still on the menu. However, DiMeo refuses to fit any typical steakhouse mold. The James Beard-nominated chef said he wants to cook food his way and Bardea Food & Drink customers will not doubt that the same mind is behind both menus.

While the tasting courses are small, you won't leave hungry.

BARDEA'S TASTE OF THE SEA

A tasting menu is about the chef's whims, a practice in Japan called omakase, which means "I leave it up to you." We had no idea what would come next, and, as it turned out, we had nine courses, some of which included multiple items.

First was the "taste of the sea," which included an oyster on a half shell with lychee foam and hackleback caviar. It was an explosion of ocean flavors with a touch of aji Amarillo, a spicy yellow Peruvian condiment. The dish also included a mini taco and tostada, perched on

a rock for a pretty presentation. The little taco hugged pink shrimp with a dash of Calabrian chili aioli and passion fruit reduction, while the tostada was a platform for lobster knuckle and claw meat, green goddess dressing and scallop ponzu. Like the oyster, these bites bloomed with unctuousness.

All three were meticulously garnished, a feat that undoubtedly required tweezers.

DiMeo stayed with seafood for the following course: gnudi colored with squid ink and topped with a tuft of crabmeat. The dumpling sat in a vivid pool of crab amatriciana sauce. Italian flavors came to the fore again with the tortellini au poivre, a beautifully folded, delicate pasta with tomato-leek gel.

TWEAKING THE TRADITIONAL

DiMeo has a deft way of transforming the familiar into the inventive. Take, for instance, the trio of "sandwiches," which included deconstructed veal parmesan featuring grain-fed veal skirt with fresh, seasoned tomato juice in a shot glass.

A diminutive porchetta featured a tower of provolone, pickled broccoli raab and red chili aioli, while the third sandwich sported salami, provolone foam and pickled vegetables that reminded me of a muffuletta.

Light-as-air arepas came with a fork-tender pork collar. We tucked the meat into the cornmeal cake and topped it with pear barbecue, pear mostarda, cole slaw and gochujang cream.

THE MEAT OF THE MATTER

After all, the restaurant is named Bardea Steak, so the tasting progressed toward such dishes as a blushing slice of venison with a potato-leek espuma and mushroom duxelles.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

photo link: City of Newark, Delaware



Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

BRANDYWINE PARK RAPIST BYRON MAYHAN CONVICTED ON 22 CHARGES

BY BETSY PRICE

A New Castle man convicted of 10 counts of rape, among 22 charges, faces a minimum mandatory sentence of five life sentences, plus 175 years at sentencing in early 2024. Byron Mayhan, 39, described by the Department of Justice as a habitual offender, was convicted Nov. 13 for his May 29, 2020, attack on a woman running in Brandywine Park.

He placed the victim in a headlock and threatened her with a knife before ultimately raping her underneath the Washington Street Bridge, according to a press release from the Delaware Department of Justice. Mayhan then stole the victim's phone, engagement ring and other belongings, kidnapping her and forcing her to drive to various ATMs to get cash from her account, all while threatening to kill her.

He made the victim drive to an industrial park in the New Castle area, where he raped her again before forcing her to drive him to another location in New Castle and drop him off.

Mayhan was convicted on 10 counts of rape first degree, as well as kidnapping first degree, robbery first degree, seven counts of possession of a deadly weapon during the commission of a felony, terroristic threatening, possession of a deadly weapon by a person prohibited and unlawful use of a payment card by a Superior Court jury.

"The defendant's history of violence shows that he is a danger to society and needs to be incarcerated for the rest of his life," said Attorney General Kathy Jennings. "Thanks to the dedication of our prosecutors and the

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Wilmington Police Department, he will spend the rest of his life in prison. While nothing can undo the horrendous harm that was done, it is my hope that this conviction will bring some peace to the victim and her family as they heal."

Mayhan's conviction started with an investigation led by Wilmington Police Department Det. Mary Quinn and prosecuted by Deputy Attorneys General Diana Dunn and Nichole Warner with the assistance of paralegal Jayna Quillen, social workers Carley Davis and Claudia Melton, and Administrative Assistant Monica Walker.



photo credit: Christina School District



Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE

SUSSEX CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

SUSSEX STUDENT HAPPY PRINCIPAL FIRED, WANTS CRIMINAL CHARGES

BY JAREK RUTZ

The family of a student whose breast was exposed during a fight at Sussex Central High School cheered the firing of its principal and expressed hopes criminal charges will be filed in the case, according to their lawyer. The student, Aniya Harmon, had sued former principal Bradley Layfield, the assistant principal and the district in the case for invasion of privacy, among other things. It claimed a meme circulated by Indian River School district officials used a still from a video of that fight, with Janet Jackson's photo imposed over the student's face.

Layfield's lawyer announced Monday that he had been fired by the district. There's been no official word about what happened to Assistant Principal Matthew Jones, who was also sued. Harmon's response indicates he, too, was fired.

"Aniya Harmon and her family are pleased by the school board's decision to terminate the employment of the individuals responsible for sharing video of her exposed breast at Sussex Central High School," said Harmon's lawyer, Emeka Igwe of Philadelphia, in a statement Tuesday. Harmon, 18, has since graduated from the school.

"Ms. Harmon and her family would like to see criminal charges for those responsible as a way to deter this from happening to another student at Sussex Central High School, any school in Delaware or around the country," Igwe stated.

Her suit accused the district, Layfield and Jones of invasion of privacy, conspiracy to invade privacy, intentional and negligent infliction of emotional distress and said Layfield and Jones were officials who should have known better.



The fight involving Harmon and another student was in early 2023. During the fight, a school official was trying to hold Harmon back when her clothes shifted and the breast popped out momentarily.

Layfield and Jones showed the video of the fight to several teachers and school officials, which Layfield's lawyer says is standard practice as part of safety procedures at the school. Thomas Neuberger said that in order for the breast to be seen the video must be slowed down to a frame-by-frame look.

The lawsuit against Layfield and others is ongoing in the Superior Court of New Castle County.





LAYFIELD FIRED BY INDIAN RIVER BOARD OVER STUDENT BREAST CASE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Bradley Layfield, the principal of Sussex Central High School in the middle of a lawsuit over a meme using a student’s exposed breast, has been fired. He had been suspended after a fight in which the breast was exposed and then he, other staff, the school and Indian River School District were sued for allegedly circulating a meme photo of the exposure.

Word of his firing was released Monday morning by Layfield’s lawyer in a statement saying the former principal received a written notice Saturday (Nov. 18) that he is being fired. Thomas Neuberger stated that Layfield is not charged with creating or circulating the meme in question.

“He is only charged with showing the surveillance video to staff who he felt had a need to know after a two

alarm dangerous school fight with racial overtones,” his statement read. “And, we now know that the adult student exposure involved cannot even be seen without a frame-by-frame forensic analysis of the tape, not by merely running the tape.”

The incident dates back to May, when multiple administrators were suspended after a fight broke out between students. The student involved, Aniya Harmon, 18, who has since graduated, claims district officials circulated a photo of her exposed breast to other staff with a picture of Janet Jackson superimposed on her face.

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STATE ED BOARD APPROVES SOCIAL STUDIES CHANGES, FOCUS ON CIVICS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The state Board of Education voted in its monthly meeting Nov. 16 to focus more on areas such as civics, economics and geography in its social studies curriculum. Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, fifth grade students will have a social studies curriculum focused on economics and geography, while seventh graders will also learn economics as well as civics.

With a polarized political landscape and an abundance of media consumed online, state leaders have repeatedly said they want to ensure Delaware's youth are informed citizens and are digitally literate to understand how to decode real and false information.

"Civic education is the bedrock for what makes an American citizen different from the rest of the world,"

said Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover. "Civic education and understanding the rights and obligations Americans have is vital to maintaining the greatness that this country offers not just to its citizens, but to those who seek to come to America."

The new changes in curriculum are mirrored in the state-administered assessments.

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Level 2: Students show a partial or incomplete understanding of the fundamental skills and knowledge articulated in the Delaware Content Standards.

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Level 4: Students show mastery and thorough understanding of the Delaware Content Standards beyond what is expected at the grade level.

[Read](#) the state standards for social studies.



HIGH-DOSAGE TUTORING PROVING VALUABLE TO HELP KIDS CATCH UP

BY JAREK RUTZ


Tutoring often is misunderstood as someone helping a student with their homework. It's much more than that, said Dorrell Green, superintendent of **Red Clay Consolidated School District**. Effective tutoring involves concentrated instruction, hiring reading specialists and coaches and spending time in and out of the classroom to improve.

Red Clay's Lewis Elementary School has been experimenting with high-dosage tutoring techniques to try to address low literacy and help students combat learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks to a \$1 million grant. The money comes from the States Leading Recovery Grant from Accelerate, a national nonprofit whose focus is making effective tutoring a standard feature of the American school day.

High-dosage or high-impact tutoring, usually includes at least three sessions per week in one-to-one work or very small—two or three student—group work sessions of at least 30 minutes and is often utilized to help some of the lowest performing students.

Red Clay is not the only district to use tutoring to help students. Christina School District used some of its COVID-19 dollars to pay for 600 students to access a virtual tutoring program designed to help them improve in math and reading proficiency. The district said about 60% of those who started during the summer had moved from below grade level to at least early grade level in both language arts and math.

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DSU PARTNERS WITH UNITED AIRLINES TO PUT GRADS INTO THE SKIES

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware State University is partnering with United Airlines to create professional opportunities for the school's 157 Aviation students. The agreement was signed Nov. 16, making DSU part of United Aviate, a pilot career development program.

"Under Lt. Col. Michael Hales' leadership, our Aviation program has grown threefold and is not just the largest in the HBCU community, but the high quality, low-cost provider among all aviation programs east of the Mississippi," said President Tony Allen.

The partnership with United Airlines and their aviate program has been worked on for several years, he said, and includes a deep, longstanding partnership with JP-Morgan Chase and Regional Market President Tom Horne, Allen said.

"Between the three of us, there is an unwavering commitment to build a substantive, inclusive talent pipeline of pilots and aviation management professionals for many years to come," Allen said.

As a university partner, DSU's aviation program professional pilot students who meet the eligibility requirements can apply to Aviate and upon acceptance receive a conditional job offer as a United First Officer. To be eligible, students must have completed at least two semesters of full-time coursework or graduated with an R-ATP eligible aviation major at DSU; be in good standing at DSU; possess a Private Pilots Certificate, FAA medical certificate; and have no more than three primary training failures.

"It is our intention to populate United Airlines with DSU graduates as pilots and various other aviation professionals at all levels of company management and leadership," Hales said. "This launch ceremony is particularly significant because it expands United Airlines' ability to gain access to recruit from our best and brightest students and graduates across all disciplines within Delaware State University, not just for our pilot graduates."

Delaware State University joins Elizabeth City State (NC) University and Hampton University as the first HBCUs to become a part of the Aviate Program. The DSU Aviation Program currently has 110 Professional Pilot students and 47 Aviation Management majors.

Established at the institution in 1987, the Aviation Program owns a fleet of 26 airplanes. They are maintained at Delaware Airpark in Cheswold, the program's base of flight training operations.

"Future Aviate pilots, many of whom we hope will hail from Delaware State University, will uphold the extraordinary standards that generations of United pilots have established for professionalism and expertise," said United Airlines President Brett Hart.

"Inspired by the Aviate motto, 'Love to fly, born to lead,' we look forward to working side by side with our partners at Delaware State University and we welcome the next generation of aviators to the flight deck."

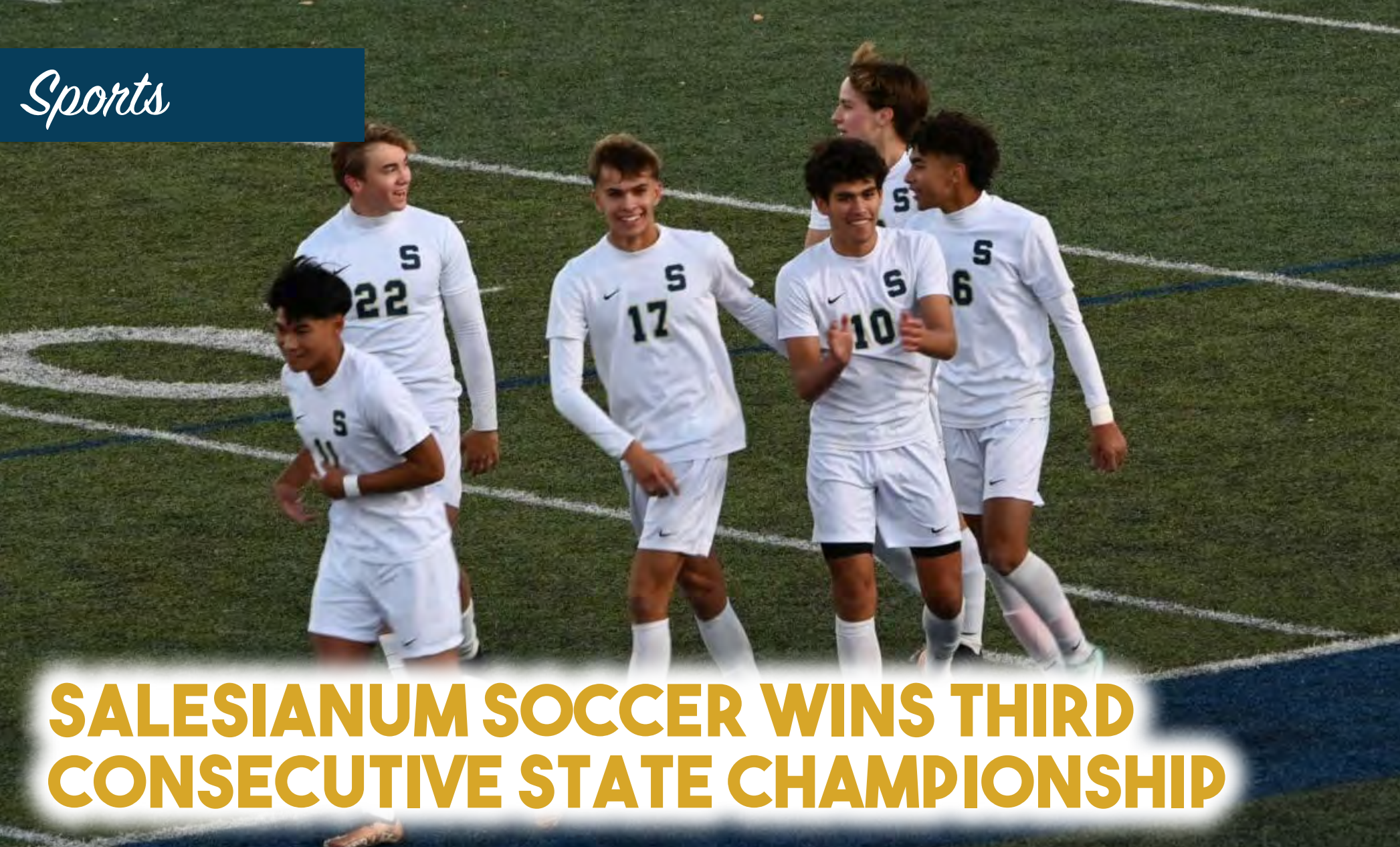


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Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



SALESIANUM SOCCER WINS THIRD CONSECUTIVE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The Salesianum boys soccer team won the state championship for the third consecutive year with a win over Cape Henlopen Saturday at Dover High School. The Sals were led by senior Gianluca Maronni who had a hat trick in the 4-2 victory over the vikings.

Marroni scored the game's first goal on a centering pass from Chase Esser in front of the net. Gianluca settled the pass and took a shot that went past a diving Cape goalkeeper Jake Hutchinson for a 1-0 lead.

With six minutes left to go in the half, the Vikings tied the game up. Cape's Brady Spiegel took a pass from Evan Burriss down the sideline then made a move to send the defender past him. Spiegel settled the ball before taking a shot that rolled into the corner of the net. The goal concluded the first half scoring and sent the game tied at one into halftime.

After 12 minutes of play in the second half, Salesianum broke the tie and took the lead back. Sals' Tyler

Cifa was taken down inside the 18-yard box which resulted in a penalty kick for him. Cifa slowly walked up to the ball to see if he could get Cape goalie Hutchinson to show which way he was going to move to block the shot. Cifa then struck the ball to the right side of the goal that hit the post, but the ball bounced right back out to Cifa who knocked the ball in the net.

The Sals then added two more goals, both from Marroni to cap off his hat trick. The first of two goals came with 14 minutes left in the second half when Cape tried to clear the ball out of the 18-yard box, but the ball ricocheted off a teammate and in front of the goal for Marroni to get a foot on it. The shot went off the hands of Hutchinson and into the back of the net. After a small talk between the referees who were checking to see if Marroni was offside, the Sals were then awarded the goal.

Two minutes later Marroni scored again. He took a pass in the center of the field from Esser, made a move to his left then came back right kicking it into the bottom left corner of the net out of the reach of Hutchinson.

Cape did tack on a second goal in the game's final minute. Cape's Cardin Benjamin kicked it out of the corner and in front of the net as Jerzy Haines headed the ball into the back of the net. That goal brought the score to 4-2 which was the game's final score.

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SALESIANUM ADVANCES TO DIAA FOOTBALL SEMIFINAL

BY JASON WINCHELL

B.J. Alleyne was not going to let something like the Smyrna defense stop him. The Salesianum senior running back, who had already scored four times against the Eagles in their DIAA Class 3A football quarterfinal on Nov. 17, lined up in the shotgun on fourth and goal from the two with seven seconds showing on the clock.

Alleyne took the snap from center, ran behind the right side of his line and snuck the ball over the goal line, giving the top-seeded Sals a 41-40 lead over the defending champion and No. 8 seed Eagles. Smyrna tried multiple laterals on the kickoff, but one went forward, so the play—and the game—was over.

The top-seeded Sals will host a semifinal Friday or Saturday against the fifth seed, Middletown. The Cavaliers advanced with a win Saturday against No. 4 Hodgson. The Sals defeated Middletown during the regular season.

The game turned into an entertaining shootout, a back-and-forth affair that thrilled the crowd. Smyrna took the opening kickoff and marched down, getting a five-yard run from Kahmaj Kearney. Sals quarterback Brady McBride threw a screen pass to Alleyne on their first play from scrimmage, gaining 35 yards to the Eagles' 20. McBride threw his next two passes to Ben

Anton, the second of which went for a touchdown and a 7-6 lead.

They increased the lead to 14-6 late in the first quarter on Alleyne's first score, a 33-yard burst down the right side. Smyrna answered with a plethora of offensive options, carving through the Salesianum defense to take the lead. The Eagles opened up their bag of tricks, running a double-reverse flea-flicker, ending when Tiberi hit a wide-open Kearney for a 43-yard score with 7:59 left in the half. An interception gave the Eagles possession at the Sals' 29 and it took four plays before Chrystian Carroll ran it in from 11. Both two-point conversions were good and the lead was 22-14.

The first half scoring was far from over. Alleyne had all five carries in a 40-yard drive for the Sals immediately after the Eagles scored, including a 16-yard score. Smyrna finished it up, getting a touchdown run from Brandon West with 38 seconds left in the half.

Salesianum took the opening kickoff after halftime and promptly tied the game on an Alleyne score. That began the seesaw. A Sals fumble later in the third gave the Eagles the ball at its 37 and Tiberi passed them down into the red zone. Finally, he found Henriquez open for the go-ahead touchdown. Smyrna missed the two-point conversion and its lead was 34-28.

A long Smyrna drive ended with a punt, giving the Sals possession at its 24 with 7:46 to go. They kept it on the ground, primarily with Alleyne, but with Jasir Gaymon and Lego also contributing. McBride added a 28-yard run. Alleyne finished with a one-yard run. There was 4:04 left.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



SUSSEX ACADEMY WINS FIRST-EVER SOCCER STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

BY NICK HALLIDAY

It was a day to remember at Dover High School on the afternoon of Nov. 18, as Sussex Academy made a little bit of history. The Seahawks outlasted Saint Mark's, 5-4, in penalty kicks to win the DIAA Division II boys' championship. It was the first team championship in school history.

No. 1 Sussex Academy trailed No. 6 Saint Mark's 1-0 for nearly all of the game. The Seahawks owned possession for most of the second half, but they were unable to penetrate the Spartans' defense and get anything on goalkeeper Ryan Betts. Finally, in the 74th minute, they got the break they needed.

A foul in the 18-yard box gave Sussex Academy a penalty kick and Andree Mendoza fired it into the left side of the net to knot the score, 1-1. Neither team could get anything into the net in the final minutes and the game headed to overtime.

Each team had one corner kick in the first overtime, but to no avail. The Spartans had the best opportunity to end it in the second overtime as a handball in the 18-yard box gave them a penalty kick. Thomas Stanley stepped up to the ball and fired low to the left of Seahawks' keeper Carter Norton, but Norton guessed correctly and knocked the shot away. Saint Mark's got a resulting corner kick but could not capitalize.

The Spartans had a few more chances before the second overtime ended, but they could not score and the teams went to penalty kicks. The teams traded goals before Norton made the stop that would give Sussex Academy the opening it needed. The kicker, Dan Otowski, had scored the Spartans' lone goal on a penalty kick in the 14th minute and perhaps Norton remembered where he had gone that time. He went to his right and rejected the shot.

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SMYRNA WINS FIRST VOLLEYBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP



BY JASON WINCHELL

No doubt, Smyrna got contributions from all six positions on the floor during the DIAA championship match on Nov. 16 at the Bob Carpenter Center. But the big three—Anna Richardson, Elise Carter and Eliza Schneider—were just too much for Ursuline as the Eagles captured their first state title with a decisive 3-1 win.

This was the first volleyball state championship for a program from below the canal and was the first time a Henlopen Conference team reached the final. It was also the first state championship in the sport for a traditional public school since Concord won in 1992.

“Being the first downstate team to win a state championship, it’s huge not only for our girls, our program, our community, but also for all those other schools downstate that are looking at this and saying, ‘Hey, if Smyrna can do it, maybe one day we can do it,’” Eagles coach Danny Wandless said.

Richardson and Schneider caused fits all night for the

fourth-seeded Raiders, as they have done to opponents all season. Smyrna, the second seed, entered the title match with a record of 17-1. It didn’t take them long to make their presence known in front of a big crowd at The Bob.

The Eagles had a 15-7 lead in the first before the Raiders scored four straight, capped by an Emelia Panunto ace. Schneider and Richardson answered, however, with consecutive bombs and after a Raiders error, Richardson sent a shot off the Ursuline block and to the floor. Brooke Berge served up three straight aces to get it to set point, and after three saves by the Raiders, Richardson went straight down to end it.

Wandless said a quick start was key. “I wanted to start fast. I wanted the girls to get on top of this team and finish the deal in the first set. That set the tone for the match.”

A Claire Kelly block gave Ursuline an 8-5 lead in the second, but Smyrna fought back, eventually taking a 12-11 lead on a kill by Carter, followed by a smash by

Schneider. This time, the Raiders would stick close, fighting back from five down to tie the score at 21 on another Kelly block. Richardson untied it with a blast and Schneider added her own before an attack error sent it to set point. A Raiders error ended this one.

The teams put on quite a show in the third. The score was tied 10 times by the time it reached 15-15, but the Eagles took a three-point lead and looked like they might roll on to victory. But Ursuline ran off six straight, including a pair of tape aces from C.C. DeCaro, to take a 21-18 lead. The Eagles answered with a 6-1 run to get to championship point, but they would be unsuccessful on four of them while trying to close it out. The Raiders took the set on an attack error and had new life.

But Smyrna quickly quashed any thoughts of a comeback with their performance in the fourth. Schneider and Richardson had consecutive kills to open the set and after a stuff by Kelly pulled the Raiders to within two at 9-7, the Eagles put it away. Carter was all over the place as the lead ballooned, reaching 12 points after Carter smacked down an overpass. Richardson’s final kill got the Eagles to championship point, and Schneider wrapped it up by sending one into the floor.

“I was crying the whole time,” Schneider said. “I was so happy. I didn’t know what to feel other than joy.”

“There were a lot of emotions,” Richardson added. “I played with a lot of the starters for five, six years, so it was really bittersweet.”

It was more likely sweet than bitter as a Smyrna police cruiser escorted the team bus out of the Carpenter Center back parking lot for what was certainly a loud ride back home.



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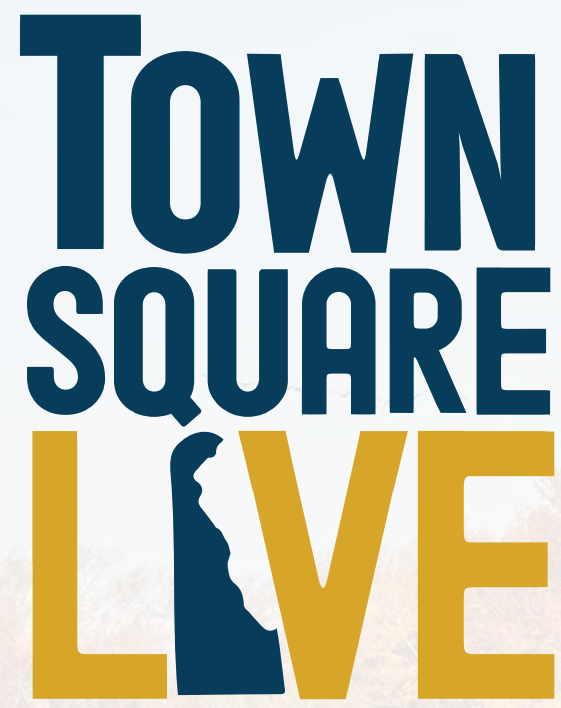
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