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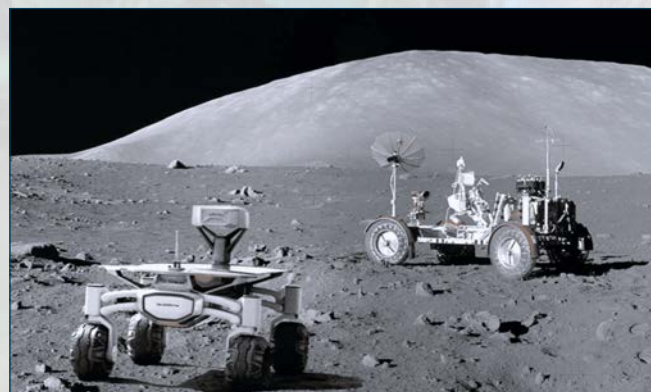
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photo link: Longwood Gardens
photo by Hank Davis

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St. Helena's Cancels Carnival



DSU Lands NASA Grant



Smyrna and Cape Henlopen Advance



Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



JANVIER JEWELRY STORE'S STUNNING MURAL WOWS CUSTOMERS

BY BETSY PRICE

Joseph Janvier Jewelers doesn't go out of its way to call attention to itself—from the outside. The Elsmere business is housed in a nondescript brick building on Kirkwood Highway. Customers walk from a modest parking lot to the front door and press a bell to be admitted.

They walk in, and their mouths drop open. "Wow" is usually the next thing they say, or maybe, "No way."

They're not reacting to the store's fine jewelry, glittering before them from brown and black wooden cases. They are talking about a dramatic 110-foot black, white, gray and red mural that wraps around the walls of the store. It's the work of landscape designer turned muralist Kent Krech of Wilmington.

"I wasn't trying to do an exact recreation by any means," Krech said. "I just kind of make it up as I go along."

The mural starts by depicting a swank jewelry row in a teeming metropolis (a fictional Philly?), shifting into a shopping and dining area in a smaller city (a fictional Wilmington?). It continues along a river waterfront (the Delaware? the Christina?) leading to a marshy bird sanctuary ([DuPont Environmental Education Center](#)?) with a biplane flying over the water in the direction of twin bridges (the Delaware Memorial?) that end with a scene featuring a sign pointing toward the beach.

Joseph Janvier had long told friends he didn't want big photos of jewelry on his wall. He wanted a mural of some kind. Then he met Krech at a networking event. Krech was subbing for a friend who couldn't make it and asked Krech to take his place and talk about his business.

"So what that means," Janvier translates, "is he had the opportunity to give a 30-minute commercial about himself."

Janvier invited Krech to his shop. "I want to show you something," he told Krech.

When Krech walked in and saw the blank gray walls, the artist said, "Man, here we go. I like this idea."

The original piece that Krech and store owner Joseph Janvier agreed on was the swank jewelry row, which takes up about 20 feet behind one counter. Krech showed him a crude sketch, complete with stick figures, and said he'd be back with a more detailed one.

"Yeahhhhhh. That's the idea," Janvier said, when he saw it. "You might as well make this your gallery," Janvier told Krech, reasoning "that way, he'd have time to do more than just my ideas. His ideas, too."

They chose the color scheme from a piece of Riley Rae art already hanging on the wall, partly to be set off by the store's red carpet. Krech started in late February 2020, intending to work mostly on weekends because of his landscaping jobs. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit and Krech was suddenly able to devote more time to it.

As the mural's jewelry row took shape, it was getting a lot of attention from customers, and both Krech and Janvier liked it so much that Janvier told him to do the next wall, then the next. Then the next.

Finally, "he was like, nah, let's do the whole store," Krech said. The artist has been working on the mural for almost four years.

As COVID-19 restrictions relaxed, Krech's landscape jobs picked up and he's more limited to work on weekends.

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ST. HELENA'S CANCELS ITS LONG-RUNNING CARNIVAL

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The springtime carnival at St. Helena’s Church, a tradition in North Wilmington that dates back at least to the 1960s, has been canceled. The parish council made the decision “with great reluctance and sorrow,” said Monsignor Stanley Russell, who has served the Bellefonte Catholic church since 1994.

The carnival was damaged by unfounded reports of trouble one night in 2022 and the parish increased security in 2023. But on May 6, the last night of the 2023 carnival, a group of young people climbed the fence surrounding the carnival, Russell said. When they were discovered without wristbands denoting that they had paid admission, they were ejected.

They then walked over to a nearby Wawa, ransacked the store and threw items from the store at vehicles moving along Philadelphia Pike, he said.

“Apparently, conditions are such that we cannot continue without fear of violence,” Russell said. “We came very close to having something terrible happen.”

Fundraisers like the carnival—rides, games, a food court, a beer garden and other draws—were a significant part of the parish budget. The fiscal 2019 budget totaled \$832,000 in operating income and “parish fundraising activities, less related expenses” totaled \$202,000, with the carnival generating more than half of that.

At least the parish is getting some steady income from the Brandywine School District renting part of its old elementary school building, he said.

The parish is working on how to turn the convent on its compound from an expense into an asset. The Sisters of St. Joseph moved out in 2016 and “we continue to incur the maintenance and repair costs for this aging building,” the 2019 budget said.

“A crowd of people at the event became alarmed April 30, [2022] when rumors of a person with a weapon circulated among carnival-goers,” The Dialog, the diocese newspaper, **reported**.

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EPA PUBLIC NOTICE

Explanation of Significant Differences/Proposed Cleanup Plan

Available for Public Comment

DELAWARE CITY PVC SUPERFUND SITE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed an Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) and Proposed Cleanup Plan for the Delaware City PVC Superfund Site, Operable Unit (OU) 3. The purpose of the ESD/Proposed Cleanup Plan is to implement land and groundwater controls to protect public health and the environment and to address groundwater contamination on the eastern side of the Site. The public comment period has been extended and is open until **December 19, 2023**. Details on how to review the proposed plan and submit comments are as follows:

Review the Explanation of Significant Differences/Proposed Cleanup Plan:

Online: www.epa.gov/superfund/delawarecitypvc

Files may be viewed online at the following locations:

Delaware City Public Library 250 Fifth Street Delaware City, DE 19706 (302) 834-4148	US EPA Region 3 1600 John F. Kennedy Boulevard Philadelphia, PA 19103 (215) 814-2396 <i>Please call to schedule an appointment</i>
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Submit public comments by 12/19/23

Mail: U.S. EPA Region 3
Attn: Evelyn Sorto (3SD24)
1600 JFK Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Email: sorto.evelyn@epa.gov
Voicemail: (215) 814-2010 *Please speak slowly and clearly and include your name and phone number.



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



HERE ARE WAYS TO HONOR DELAWARE HEROES FOR VETERANS DAY

BY JAREK RUTZ

Fighting in World War I officially came to an end in the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, and 105 years later, those who serve the nation continue to be honored every Nov. 11 on Veterans Day.

Delawareans can choose from a variety of events this weekend to pay their respects.

“Veterans Day is a tribute to the sacrifices that our veterans make every single day,” said Miranda Mal, acting director of the [Delaware Office of Veterans Services](#). “It is a day in which we pay our respects to the countless individuals who have stepped up to the challenge to defend our freedoms, values and democracy with their own lives.”

Some schools in the state also have events this week to honor past soldiers. [Mispillion Elementary School](#) in [Milford School District](#), for example, has for years had

a Veterans Day program for students to have a deeper understanding of the holiday and what it means to serve the country. The program is led by the school’s fifth grade students and includes a singing performance by students, essay contest winners reading about why Veterans are important to them, and a guest speaker who is a member of the Armed Forces.

Kelly Sharp, who runs the program, said this year’s guest speaker is Chief Master Sergeant Ford, who has more than 30 years of service and is currently stationed at the Dover Air Force Base. After the performances, Veterans and students have the chance to mingle with one another.

While the assembly is only attended by the fourth and fifth graders due to the size of the gym, all students in the school are invited to honor a Veteran, Sharp said.

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VIETNAM VETS HONORED IN WILMINGTON AT MEMORIAL STATUE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware’s Vietnam Veterans were honored Saturday morning (Nov. 4) at the 40th annual celebration of the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** in downtown Wilmington. About 100 people attended, many sporting formal military uniforms and others wearing military-themed jackets. A banner on the main stage displayed the message: “Never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another.”

The event, hosted by Delaware Chapter 83 Vietnam Veterans of America included musical performances, the presentation of Colors, the national anthem and a speech by Heather French Henry, a Kentucky native, daughter of a disabled Veteran and Miss America 2000.

“Memorials like this matter,” she said. “They matter to those of us who are children of Veterans. They matter to all you Veterans. And they matter to future generations who will become Veterans.”

French Henry repeatedly noted that memorials and ceremonies honoring Veterans combine both the grief and the healing process.

VIETNAM WARRIORS

The silver lining of the tragic terrorist attacks on 9/11, she said, was that everyone in America and politicians on both sides of the aisle realized the importance of the nation’s military and have since allocated an abundance of resources to help struggling Veterans, something former generations did not benefit from.

“Vietnam vets came home to a country that was divided, that treated us like crap, that’s the truth,” said Terry Baker, one of the officers at the Vietnam Veterans of America–Delaware Division. “God needed men and women with broad shoulders to show the world to never treat your warriors like this again,” he said.

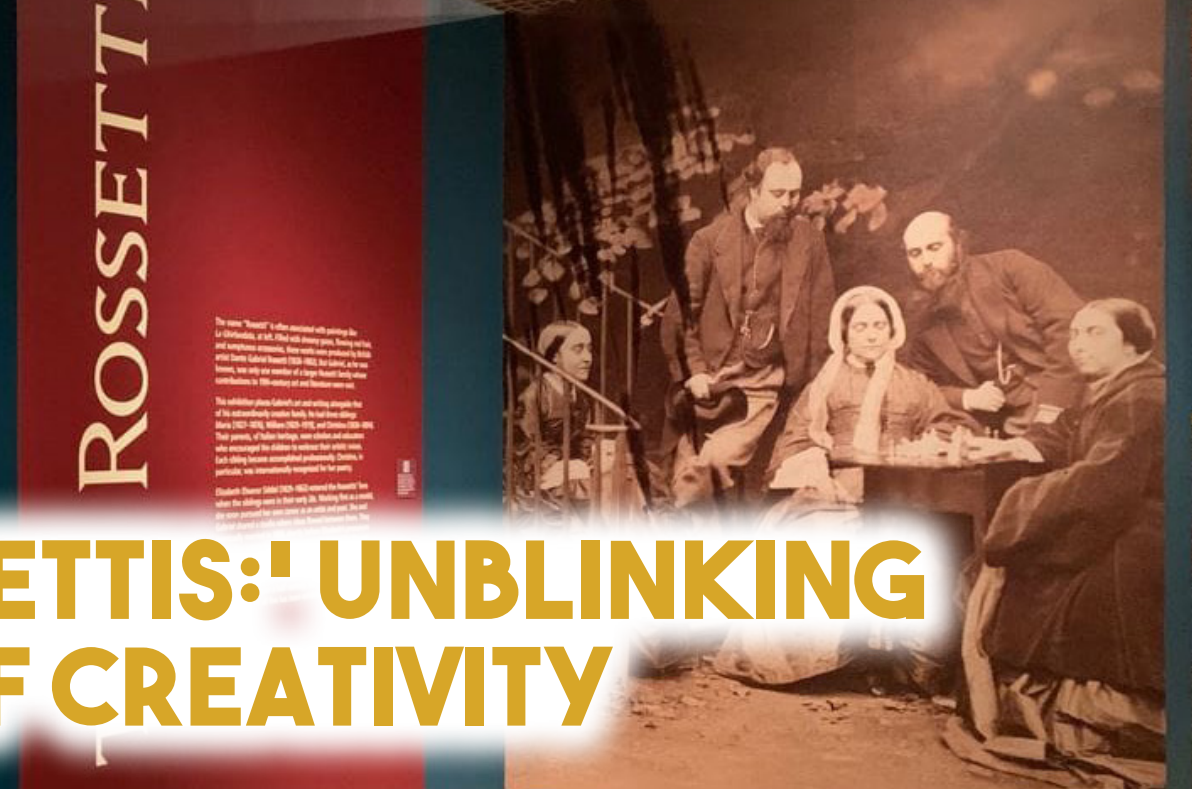
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DAM'S 'THE ROSSETTIS:' UNBLINKING LOOK AT COST OF CREATIVITY

BY BETSY PRICE

The Delaware Art Museum has used its archives and materials from another Delaware collection to expand and deepen “The Rossettis,” an exhibition that’s traveled to Wilmington from the Tate Britain museum in London.

The completely redesigned show, presented on striking blue and red walls that make the often jewel-toned artwork pop, follows the creative family of British Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti from the mid to late 1800s. Studded with the magnificent oil paintings of red-haired women that Rossetti is known for, the exhibition does not shy away from the cost of creativity in love, money or lives.

“The Rossettis” details the family’s interactions and the lasting impact of his wife’s death from the opioid laudanum, had on Rossetti.

It uses additional materials from Delaware to show how the artists’ creativity fed off each other’s works,

while also detailing Victorian society during the dawn of the industrial age, including the influx of people into cities, the rise of opioid addiction, and social ills such as prostitution and domestic abuse.

“I rewrote the text for a Delaware audience because I changed many of the groupings,” said Sophie Lynford, Annette Woolard-Provine Curator of the Bancroft Pre-Raphaelite Collection. “The galleries at the Tate are much bigger than our gallery here.”

The exhibition’s route to Wilmington began when the Tate asked to use several pieces of the Delaware museum’s own Pre-Raphaelite collection, said to be the largest outside Britain. The Tate exhibit ran from April through September.

In the First State, “The Rossettis” includes 144 works, including 32 from the Tate and many pieces from the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection of British literature and art, donated to the University of Delaware in 2017.

The Kentmere Parkway museum is the only place in the United States that the Tate exhibit will travel to.

The exhibit begins with a lifesize photo of the family taken by “Alice in Wonderland” author Lewis Carroll and Rossetti’s 1833 painting “La Ghirlandata,” a prime example of his paintings of striking red-haired women surrounded with lush botanical imagery.

In the photo are Rossetti himself; his mother Frances, a scholar and educator; brother William Michael, a writer; sister Christina Rossetti, a poet who was far better known than Dante in their lifetimes; and his sister Maria who eventually became an Anglican nun but also was a scholar of Italian literature and history.

Lynford says the painting is about more than mere beauty. He also shows honeysuckle, which represents passion, and blue aconites, which are poisonous.

“So you have this tension between love and death, passion and violence that is continually addressed from his earliest work,” she said. Those themes play out throughout the exhibit.

The Delaware museum’s Pre-Raphaelite collection is one of its three core collections. It was collected by Wilmington mill owner Samuel Bancroft and his wife Mary and donated to the museum in 1935.

The Pre-Raphaelite artists were a group of artists and writers including Rossetti and his brother William who disdained the Royal Academy’s focus on art in the holier-than-thou style of Renaissance painter Raphael. They took inspiration from the work of the medieval period—before Raphael—and focused on contemporary life.

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MBNA'S 'WYETHS' BECOME THE BIGGS' BIGGEST EXHIBITION YET

BY BETSY PRICE

“The Wyeths” took their darn sweet time getting to Dover. But now through Feb. 11, an exhibition of 70-plus works by the famous family of artists will fill nine rooms at the **Biggs Museum of American Art** and spark lots of other events. It is the biggest exhibition yet for the Biggs, which focuses on Mid-Atlantic art, said Michael Dudich, director of the museum.

The exhibit is culled from works that were bought by **MBNA**, a banking company that made its name on credit card processing and once dominated financial business in Wilmington and New Castle County. When MBNA sold to Bank of America, the art went with it and now is shown around the country in BOA’s **Art in our Communities** program.

“This is the first time that these works have ever been shown in Delaware, even though they were acquired in Delaware,” Dudich said. “One of the benefits of the Art

in the Communities program from Bank of America is they provide the entire exhibition. They send it to us, we then interpret it and we put it up on the walls and decide how to display it. And then we basically ship it back and it goes to the next location.”

Biggs Curator Laura Fravel chose how to display the paintings, including the color of the walls on which they are shown. The program is a boon for smaller museums who may not have the bandwidth to mount such a show.

The full name of the exhibition, “The Wyeths: Three Generations.” refers not only to famed painters N.C. Andrew and Jamie—father, son and grandson—but also Andrew’s sister, Henrietta, and her husband, Peter Hurd. The Wyeths lived in Delaware and Chadds Ford, PA, and many in the state consider them local artists.

The Biggs gave members of its annual gala a sneak peek of the show and had a private opening Thursday

(Nov. 2), during which Victoria Wyeth—Andrew’s granddaughter and Jamie’s niece—spoke.

The big Biggs bash is this weekend, Nov. 3-5, and included a talk Friday by Victoria on “Andrew Wyeth: Then and Now.” Admission to the Biggs is free on the first weekend of each month that “The Wyeths” will be running and that includes the weekend of Nov. 3-5. And the exhibit was the subject of a First Saturday Free Tour from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

THE WYETH PATRIARCH

The Biggs display is organized in chapters, with one dedicated to patriarch N.C., one to his son Andrew, one to grandson Jamie and one to Henrietta and Peter Hurd.

N.C. was an illustrator whose large paintings were sent to publishers, where they were turned into pages in books or magazines. One of the joys of the exhibit is being able to see something like N.C.’s paintings for “Rip Van Winkle” in the size he painted them and then see the cover of the book and the detailed frontispiece in a case next to the painting.

“We didn’t have photography,” Dudich said. “When we were printing magazines in the late 1800s, early 1900s, 1920s, this was the way in which they illustrated stories in the magazines and the envelopes.”

One fun grouping shows photos by famed photographer Margaret Bourke-White showing some of N.C.’s murals installed on office walls.

ANDREW WYETH

One of the reasons that Dudich likes Andrew Wyeth is because his art appears to be much more personal than that of N.C., who famously advised his son not to go into illustration because he would never be taken seriously as a fine arts painter.

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photo link: Visit Delaware



Business

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



PORT OF WILMINGTON GETS \$50M FROM FEDS FOR CONTAINER YARD

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

The federal government has awarded \$50 million to construct a container yard at the Port of Wilmington. It's the latest investment announcement for the port, which has gone through multiple operators in the last decade. The container yard will feature all-electric operations, a truck gate complex, terminal buildings, a 100,000-square-foot warehouse and inspection platform.

The port was built by Wilmington and opened in 1923. It was turned over to the state in 1995. In 2016, the Diamond State Port Corp., a corporate entity of the state that owns the port, bought the adjacent Chemours **Edge Moor site** for expansion.

"A 2016 strategic plan concluded it had to spend \$300 million in the next 20 years 'just to keep pace with current customers and natural growth,'" *Delaware Business Times* reported in 2018.

So, with much fanfare, the state announced a deal for Gulftainer, the world's largest privately owned port op-

erator, to run the port. Gulftainer signed a 50-year lease and planned to invest more than \$580 million on improvements and expansion, *Delaware Business Times* reported. By 2020, when Out & About looked at Gulftainer's plans, the investment figure had grown to \$670 million.

"Under the terms of the original concession agreement, GT USA Wilmington was required to spend \$250 million to advance the Edgemoor project by the end of 2020," *Delaware Business Times* **reported** this summer. Things did not turn out as predicted.

GTA USA Wilmington, the Gulftainer subsidiary that was running the port, "suffered continuous losses,... defended itself against a string of lawsuits, ...dealt with turnover in nearly all executive positions" and missed at least \$3 million in lease payments, DelawareOnline reported in 2022.

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Food & Dining

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





NICOLA PIZZA MOVE TO LEWES ONE YEAR AGO 'BETTER FOR EVERYONE'

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Dan Huber of Wilmington, a self-dubbed “weekend townie” who’s had a second residence in Lewes since childhood, vividly recalls being at Nicola Pizza in Rehoboth Beach when it opened half a century ago. He was 12 and said his family was the third or fourth group to be seated at Nicola’s First Street location on June 11, 1971.

“We felt like we were friends after the first time we left,” he said. “They were so friendly and the pizza was so good.”

He also was there last fall when Nicola opened its new 17,000-square-foot Lewes location on the Coastal Highway last October.

“The quality of the pizza hasn’t changed since day one,” said Huber. “It’s the best pizza on the planet.”

Nicola’s huge, free parking lot—a welcome amenity for customers who formerly had to hunt around Rehoboth for street parking—is almost always packed.

Owner Nicolas Caggiano gambled that his current customers would follow him and new customers would find him when he sold his downtown Rehoboth property for \$4 million and moved to the larger Coastal Highway site to expand.

“It worked out great,” said the Caggianos’ niece Kelly Munyan, who has been Nicola Pizza’s general manager since 2010 when their second restaurant opened on

Rehoboth Avenue to meet the constantly growing demand. “It’s been busy.”

Revenues are running ahead of forecasts and she credits that partly to the parking and the 260 indoor and 90 outdoor seats, but also to Nicola’s place in beach community culture. “If Nicola was their tradition, it has stayed their tradition,” Munyan said.

Huber feels like it’s more than that. The owners and staff have always been warm and friendly, he said. And the quality of the food is consistent. He should know.

NICOLA PIZZA HISTORY

Huber says he and his family ate there at least once a week after Nicolas and his wife, Joan, opened the original location in 1971. They had been selling pizzas out of their house to help pay their daughter’s medical expenses.

Like many other beach businesses, the restaurant was meant to be a seasonal operation. “They were supposed to close that first winter,” Huber said. The Caggianos planned to return to their jobs as teachers, only running the restaurant in the summer to earn extra money.

“By the end of that summer, you couldn’t eat there after 5 p.m. without waiting and everyone was content to stand in line and wait,” Huber remembers.

Betting that business would continue into the fall and winter, the Caggianos decided to quit their jobs and keep Nicola Pizza open.

“You felt like you were in someone’s home having pizza,” Huber said. “They were so friendly and the pizza was so good.”

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NEWARK WELCOMES HELEN'S SAUSAGE HOUSE

BY PAM GEORGE

It was 6 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 28, in Newark. Most college students were still snug in their beds, but a line had formed in front of [145 E. Main St.](#)

No, Taylor Swift was not in town to sign autographs. It was the grand opening of [Helen's Sausage House](#) and the queue was about meat, not music. Picture sizzling bacon, crisps scrapple, glistening pork chops on white bread, ham, fried bologna, steak and, of course, sausage. Out-of-towners would have scratched their heads at all the hoopla. But a Delawarean will understand.

The [original](#) Helen's Sausage House at 4866 N. du Pont Highway in Smyrna is a First State landmark with a culinary cult following. Indeed, the roadside stop once made headlines in *Gourmet Magazine*.

So why did it take 40 years to open a second? Why Newark?

We turned to Clifford J. Murphy III for answers about the family-owned restaurant.

EARLY HOURS AND ELVIS

Helen Achenbach, a Wilmington native, and her husband, Melvin (Mudge), opened Helen's Sausage House on Route 13 in 1983. The couple weren't new to the hospitality business—far from it. Helen had been a seasoned server since her teens, and the Achenbachs previously owned a Wilmington bar, Ackie's Café, with Mudge's brother, Ernest "Ackie" Achenbach.

Helen's opened at 4 a.m. to serve hunters, fishermen and truckers who traveled down Route 13 before the Route 1 bypass was built. The staff grilled with fast-food-style precision, and lines moved quickly, which appealed to tour bus companies.

The Achenbachs were crazy about Elvis Presley and decorated the restaurant with artful tributes to the King. Helen referred to the main dining room as the "Elvis Room," and she collected so much ephemera that the restaurant couldn't hold it all.

When Helen died in September 2023, Elvis Presley tunes were playing by her bedside, according to her obituary.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Mudge was Helen's second husband. The first was Clifford J. Murphy, with whom she had two children, Diane and Clifford J. "Butch" Murphy. Butch began managing the restaurant in the 1990s. "She would still pop in from time to time to tell him he was doing something wrong," said Butch's son, Clifford Murphy III.

The family helped run the restaurant, with Helen's sister, Joan, for instance, became a familiar face. Clifford's cousins, Richard and Kimberly, were also on hand.

When Helen died, Clifford told his dad he wanted to run the restaurant and open another location. Since the younger Murphy lived in Newark and is a Newark High School graduate, he looked for a site in his backyard.

"It's the right mix of townies, students and Smyrna customers who don't want to drive that far," he explained.

The new Helen's Sausage House is in the old Post House, which opened in 1957 to serve students, faculty and early risers craving eggs, sausage and scrapple before work. The brick eatery closed in 2012 to make way for a grilled cheese shop, followed by Duck Donuts.

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

The new Helen's will serve breakfast and lunch from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. every day except Sunday. The original restaurant will stick to a 4 a.m. wake-up call.

"Once I get my [Newark] crew settled in and trained, we're going to have some late-night hours on Thursdays through Saturdays," Clifford says. "People leaving the bars will be hungry."

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



NEW RESTAURANTS, PLUS THANKSGIVING MADE EASY

BY PAM GEORGE

The First State is witnessing a flurry of new openings, from casual takeaway to fine dining. Meanwhile, restaurants have released Thanksgiving menus. We'll keep you posted as more become available. And they are starting holiday gift card promotions.

NEW AND UPCOMING RESTAURANTS

The Brandywine will open on Nov. 14 at 2000 Pennsylvania Ave., Wilmington. That's the same building as Santa Fe Mexican Grill. The Brandywine calls itself an "upmarket brasserie" interpreting "classic Continental cuisine."

Roja & Verde Taqueria is preparing to open on North College Avenue in Newark and I got a sneak peek this week. Try the tamales—some of the best I've had outside Albuquerque. The small counter-service restaurant will announce the grand opening date on social media.

Between Lewes and Rehoboth Beach, **Henlopen Pizza Kitchen** has opened in El Dorado's old space. Briefly, the site was a second Dos Locos location. The restaurant is next to Coastal Taproom on Route 24 (18766 John J. Williams Highway) just off Route 1. Order online.

Dash In recently opened locations at 405 Middletown Warwick Road in Middletown and 154 N. du Pont Highway in New Castle. The fresh-food menu emphasizes breakfast and lunch items, including bacon, egg and cheese on a croissant, double meat pizzas, wraps, salads and wings. The website gives the items' calorie count. I'd avoid that page unless you want to read it and weep. The site also lists gas prices for each location.

More than 50 Dash In stores are now in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.

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Government

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



ONLY IN THE FIRST STATE: OUR OBSESSION WITH LOW-DIGIT TAGS

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

This week is prime time for one of Delaware’s odder rituals: a hunt for low-digit tags. The Delaware Department of Motor Vehicles every year runs an online **lottery** and in-person release of low-digit tags for motor vehicles.

This year’s online **lottery** drew 17,408 entries and is already closed, but the last two in-person events are Thursday. If you’re interested, you might want to get to the DMV early. Way early.

The first two people in line for Tuesday’s release at the Georgetown DMV office got there at 8 p.m. Monday—12 hours ahead of the office opening. They brought a generator to keep themselves warm, according to a post on Delaware License Plates, one of two private Facebook groups focused on, well, Delaware license plates (aka tags). The other one is called Delaware License Plate Collectors.

To some, low-digit tags imply deep roots in Delaware, suggesting they’ve been passed down for generations, as far back as 1909 when Delaware first issued license plates. The cachet starts with a single 1, for the governor. The lieutenant governor gets 2 and the secretary of state gets 3.

To some, the numbers have personal meanings (say 12787, if you were born on Delaware Day). And to some, money is a lure. One family’s collection of 17 Delaware tags, including three with just one digit, was worth more than \$3 million in 2016, Philadelphia magazine **reported**.

The owner of No. 5 turned down \$1 million for it, fan Jordan Irazabal told DelawareLive.com in 2020. Yowza.

THE LOVE OF LOW-DIGIT TAGS

Delaware is one of a small number of states where residents share a fixation with low-digit tags. The Delaware

License Plates Facebook group has 10,000 members and Delaware License Plate Collectors has 1,100. A business called **Delaware Tag Traders** has 5,000 Facebook followers. Irazabal’s **TheDelaware3000.org** has 5,000 Facebook followers interested in its collection of photos of 3,000 low-digit tags. There is probably a lot of duplication in those numbers, but they reflect a significant amount for a state with only a million people.

William D. Emmert and John T. Wakefield have sold hundreds of low-digit tags, mostly online, over the past 20 years, they write on Delaware Tag Traders. They sell 35 to 50 at auction each year. This week, they are listing about 100, with the most expensive being 1471 for \$20,000.

Although the biggest draw is low numbers, Delaware complicates the situation by starting some tags with letters: C for commercial, PC for passenger car, T for trailer, MC for motorcycle, RT for recreational trailer and RV for recreational vehicle. Some fans therefore want sets—matching or related numbers across or within the various categories.

Wilson’s Auction in Lincoln maintains a page on its prices for Delaware tags and highlights this year include \$16,500 for RT3 and \$14,200 for T40, T45 and T46. Each.

The DMV’s online lotteries, which end Friday, involve 1,585 tags each day of various types. The in-person events include 100 tags. The final two in-person events are at the DMV offices near **Wilmington** and **Delaware City**, starting at 8 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 9. Or earlier, if you count the wait.

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DEL. NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE KICK OFF HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware officers kicked off their holiday toy drive Nov. 3, which produced 750 gifts for the state’s youth last year. Delaware Natural Resources Police will be accepting and distributing toys through Wednesday, Dec. 8 in New Castle County and Sunday, Dec. 10 in Kent and Sussex counties. The presents are given out through the local branch of the **U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots** program.

“The effort has grown every year through the commitment of these law enforcement officers to help bring joy and holiday gifts to the state’s less fortunate children,” said Joanna Wilson, public relations manager for the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

The Toys for Tots program collects new, unwrapped toys appropriate for children of all ages and distributes them as holiday presents to underprivileged kids in communities across the country.

Officers from each of the three Delaware Natural Resources Police units—Fish and Wildlife, Environmental Crimes Unit and State Parks—are once again leading this holiday effort, which began in Sussex County in 2015. Toys can be taken to the following drop-off locations with Toys for Tots donation boxes:

- All Delaware State Park offices statewide, including the Brandywine Zoo in Wilmington and the First State National Historical Park in New Castle County, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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- Delaware Natural Resources Police office in Sussex County at 23530 Campbell Circle, Georgetown, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 - Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control’s Richardson & Robbins Building, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- “The three police units hope to surpass last year’s Toys for Tots effort toward stocking Santa’s sleigh,” Wilson said. “Delaware Natural Resources Police also encourage the public to help put smiles on the faces of more children for the 2023 holiday season by giving generously.”



photo credit: Christina School District



Education

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



BY JAREK RUTZ

Christina School District held a community town hall Tuesday night to allow parents, district staff and students to ask questions and share concerns with the school board. This was the first town hall the school board had held in two years.

“We want to know the good things that are going on in the district, we want to know the challenges are in the district,” said board president Don Patton. “We want to know what you think about the district so that we can go back and speak with the leadership tomorrow or days following so that they know what the public feels and thinks.”

Part of the responsibility of being an elected school board member is making sure there’s connections and engagement with the residents that voted them in, he said. Christina is expected to have at least one more town hall during the school year.

CHRISTINA SCHOOL DISTRICT HOLDS FIRST TOWN HALL IN TWO YEARS

In Monday’s meeting, the dozen people to address the board were parents of students, district residents or staff. Comments dealt with teaching civics, the cost of being a volunteer and the lack of specialists.

“This event itself is a manifestation that this board wants more voices,” said board member Naveed Baqir. “I was hoping that we’ll have some students here as well, because this is open to everyone, but the turnout makes me feel that we probably need to have another town hall just with the students, too.” Even so, Baqir said, the district is planting the right seed and hopes more students will take advantage of the opportunity.

Alethea Smith-Tucker, a board member, said she’d like to see parent advisory councils developed in the district.

“It’s very important for parents to have actual say, on par with principals...in the formation of what takes place in our schools,” she said. “It’s important for us to be able to start thinking of how we educate our children differently from the parent perspective.”

Christina’s “clients” are its students, she said, and parents should have valued input into how students are served.

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DSU LANDS NASA GRANT TO HELP FIND LIFE RESOURCES ON MOON

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware State University instructors have been awarded a \$899,000 grant from **NASA** to contribute its engineering and optics services to the future moon Lunar Land Rover Mission. DSU's Mohammed Amir Khan, professor and director of the Engineer Physics Program, and Yuri Markushin, associate professor, will be leading the three-year project.

Khan and Markushin will design and develop infrared sensing and laser technology for installation on the Lunar Land Rover that will enable the detection and correlation of water isotopes with the characteristics of the elemental composition of lunar rocks and dust.

In layman's terms, the work will help the rover find potential resources for living creatures.

Khan said he and Markushin will collaborate with the **Goddard Space Center** in Maryland on the project.

"NASA wants to use the moon to see how humans can live outside of the earth's environment," Khan said. "The detection of water isotopes is an important factor in that question."

The grant is part of a larger \$14 million initiative that NASA is investing in U.S. colleges and universities to grow their STEM capacity in order to participate in critical spaceflight research. The initiative also aims to prepare a new generation of diverse students for careers in the nation's science, technology, engineering and math workforce.

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DSU has been involved with space exploration for some time. Nouredine Melikechi, a former DSU professor of physics, and Alissa Mezzacappa, then a second-year optics Ph.D. student, played a critical role in the development of the ChemCam technology used on NASA's Curiosity Rover that landed on Mars in 2012 and explored the planet's surface.

DSU's science students will be engaged in the different parts of the current project, Khan said, including assisting in the design of the opto-mechanics and electronics of the experiments with the laser prototype.





RED CLAY SETS 2024 REFERENDUM TO MATCH STATE CAPITAL FUNDS

BY JAREK RUTZ

For the first time in more than a decade, the state has approved a certificate of necessity request by the Red Clay Consolidated School District, opening the door for \$289 million in funding for capital projects.

The projects will affect 29 schools in Red Clay, one of the largest districts in the state. Red Clay will now hold a referendum in which residents will vote on whether to raise local taxes. The new revenue is needed to match state money for the projects. The split is usually somewhere between 60-40 and 70-30, with the state paying the larger portion.

If passed, Red Clay district residents would pay an average of \$404 more over three years. It would include \$242 more in fiscal year 2025, \$81 more in fiscal year 2026 and \$81 more in fiscal year 2026.

The certificate of necessity is a document that districts submit to the Department of Education that certifies

that a district's projects are necessary and also helps them set cost limits for each.

If approved, the state pays the majority of the funding, while a smaller chunk of funding is local, usually generated by a tax increase on property in the district.

"At this point, the board has been publicly discussing and unanimously supporting our CN applications for years now," said Jose Matthews, board president of Red Clay on Monday. "Well, that work and advocacy has certainly paid off given that DOE has finally approved Red Clay's application."

The \$265 million request includes \$61,215,575 for capital improvement, \$204,947,371 for deferred maintenance and \$22,837,054 for programmatic costs.

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SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION WINDOW NOW OPEN; CLOSES JAN. 10

BY JAREK RUTZ

Monday, Nov. 6, was the first day Delaware’s school choice window opened, allowing parents to file applications to send their children to a school outside of their neighborhood.

“Every child learns differently, which is why Delaware being a ‘school choice’ state is so important,” said Kendall Massett, executive director of the [Delaware Charter Schools Network](#). “This week, the school choice window opens and parents will have an opportunity to put in applications for the schools that they believe will best fit the needs of their child.” The window will stay open through Jan. 10, 2024.

Only **12 other states** have school choice, allowing parents to apply to as many public schools—district or charter—as they wish for their children. States that don’t offer school choice assign children to schools based on where they live.

Delaware’s children are no different—each are assigned to a school based on their residency, but they also have the hundreds of other state public schools as options.

There’s about 25,000 applications submitted each year. “It isn’t always an easy process, though,” Massett said, “There are two top things to remember.”

First, she said, there are many choices out there and not all are going to be right for every child. For example, a student interested in the arts should probably apply to choice into a school like the [Cab Calloway School of the Arts](#) and a child passionate about science or math could consider the [Conrad Schools of Science](#).

“If your child doesn’t like wearing a military uniform, learning military history, having extra physical fitness training and marching, then they should not go to either of the two military charter schools,” Massett said. “If your child doesn’t want to learn a trade or have vocational and technical training as part of their high school journey, a vo-tech school will not be right for them.”

The opening of school choice can serve as a perfect time for parents to find out what is available and what might be the right fit for their child.

Virtually all districts and charters have some sort of an information night, sometimes several, during which parents can learn more about a school and its academic programs, as well as have a chance to meet teachers and other faculty.

Massett said the second important factor to remember is that Delaware now requires students to be registered in their district of residence before choice applications can be accepted. Even if a parent has no intention of sending their child to their assigned residential school, they still have to go through the registration process.

Delaware does not have a universal registration process, but it does have a universal choice application. Each district has a different online process, she pointed out, so parents must check the district’s website for what they need to do.

“Most importantly, parents need to know that applying for school choice is your right,” she said. “Do not let anyone make you feel bad or wrong for making decisions that you believe will best fit your child’s educational needs.”

Schools also have specific preferences for future students. Some students who apply to a school will get preference if they have a sibling in the school or if they live within a five-mile radius of the school they are applying to, for example.

Families will be informed of a decision sometime in February 2024 and will have until March 15 to decide where their child will attend school next year.

Schools that get more applications than they have seats usually start a waitlist, because sometimes their accepted students choose another school.

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JUST DUCKY! ODESSA BAND TO PERFORM IN '25 LONDON PARADE

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Ducks of **Odessa High School** will be flocking their way across the pond for New Year’s Day 2025. The **Appoquinimink** school’s marching band on Nov. 2 was formally invited to perform in the **London’s New Year’s Day Parade** in 14 months.

“Since the start of our program three years ago, we have been working tirelessly to become the best versions of ourselves,” said student Ruby Wall, one of the leaders of the marching band.

An announcement ceremony was held in Odessa’s Performing Arts Center. Bob Bone, the founder and chair of the parade, and Duncan Sandys, a parade ambassador, congratulated the band members. The two were cracking up the crowd of students and parents as they juxtaposed Britain and America, saying that it was the audience that had funny accents and NOT them, in addition to the fact that America’s biggest parade is named after a retail store.

They also joked that they no longer give teacups to American school leaders who they invite to the parade. “We worked out the history between your country and our country, and tea is not exactly something we should present,” Bone said. They now give coffee mugs.

District and school administrators also received other presents like cufflinks and pins that celebrated King Charles III’s coronation.

The band was praised for starting out on Zoom call with seven members, to winning two state marching band championships and having dozens of students participate—and the school only opened in 2020.

The London’s New Year’s Day Parade began in 1987 and now has about 8,600 participants, Bone said, which is double the participation of Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York.

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Sports

TOWN SQUARE LIVE



SMYRNA AND CAPE HENLOPEN ADVANCE

BY SHANNON TIMMONS

The rematch is set as Smyrna and Cape Henlopen advance to the DIAA field hockey tournament finals. These two faced off in 2021 and 2022 in the finals, with Cape winning in 2021 and Smyrna winning in 2022. In the regular season game, the advantage went to Smyrna 2-1. I want to extend congratulations to both Milford and Charter School of Wilmington for their seasons and making it to the semifinals of the tournament. I am excited to watch your programs continue to grow.

No. 2 Cape Henlopen vs. No. 3 Milford

These two schools sit 21 miles apart in southern Delaware, but made the trek to Newark to face off for the second time this season. Cape started out slow in the first quarter, which was dominated by Milford. Cape would eventually score with just 1:47 left in the quarter to take the lead 1-0. Much of the play happened inside

the 25-yard lines and was a back and forth like a tennis match. Adjustments were made in the break after the first quarter, Cape took over and never looked back. Hannah Maney, Grace Wiggins, Addie Basile and Devon DeGregory had a big night for the Vikings. Cape's big hitters controlled the pace of the game and they had support in all layers. As coach Kate Austin admitted in our interview "a lot went right tonight." Their connections and passing allowed for quick ball patterns and transitions from defense to midfield to attack. The third and fourth quarters were much of the same, Cape just dominating, but Milford gave it its all and never quit playing.

Hannah Zimmerman, Isabel Betts, Erin Dunlap, Carley Mackert and Leah Metzner were all standouts for Milford. Dunlap, Mackert and Metzner were a force

on defense. Unfortunately, Milford just could not string together any offensive runs and find the circle. Maney would upset many Milford attempts on offense.

Cape Henlopen goals were scored/assisted by Wiggins/Maney 1:47 (Q1); DeGregory/Maney 7:02 (Q2); Wiggins/Sabbagh 1:04 (Q2); Wiggins/ unassisted 13:46 (Q3); Miller/Basile 10:55 (Q3); DeGregory/unassisted 8:56 (Q3).

Congratulations to Andrea McPike, her coaching staff and the Buccaneers on a great season and congratulations to Austin, her coaching staff and the Vikings on winning and advancing to the finals.

No. 1 Smyrna vs. No. 5 Charter School of Wilmington

The Force from Charter showed up ready to play. They took Smyrna out of its game plan and scored first. They dominated the offensive end of the game and just unsettled Smyrna and their typical aggressive style of play. The 15-minute first quarter came and went with no score, despite Wilmington Charter creating four penalty corners and scoring opportunities. The Force played low with sticks on the ground and stopped the big hits from Smyrna. The Force struck first with a goal by freshman Adelina DiNicola with an assist from Jillian Villafuerte a minute into the second quarter. She was impressive all night and was an impact player for the Force. The surprise of the night was that it took Smyrna 20 minutes to find the cage. Coach Loveita Moffett admitted they talked about controlling what they could control after the first quarter and playing Smyrna hockey. The Eagles made adjustments and scored three goals in the quarter to go ahead 3-1 going into halftime.

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BY SHANNON TIMMONS

Delaware field hockey is at a fever pitch after the first round in Division 2 on Nov. 1 and quarterfinals on Nov. 4, along with quarter final play in Division 1 on Nov. 3. Championship field hockey is always exciting and dials up the intensity as games move to the fast turf at Rullo Stadium at the University of Delaware this week. Many teams are repeat tournament players and will use that experience to try to win and advance. After all, it's a one-game season at this point. Win and the dream of being a champion lives on, or lose and go home.

Most of these teams have played on this style of turf before, either in the Turf Bowl or in the 2022 DIAA tournament. Field conditions can make a difference. The UD turf is a wet AstroTurf where most high school teams play on Bermuda grass or a taller field turf.

Why play on watered turf? Colleges and universities install this turf because falls on these surfaces are less likely to leave players with abrasion injuries to their skin, as the surface of watered turf is softer, easier on

THE CORNER SCOOP: STATE TOURNAMENT SEMIFINALS

joints and cooler to play on. Hockey balls move at a consistent speed on watered surfaces and offer a faster, more responsive style of play with a ball that runs more freely than it does on other field surfaces. The high school teams had to adjust.

DIVISION 1 SEMIFINALS

Nov. 7: No. 2 Cape Henlopen (15-1 overall) vs No. 3 Milford, (14-2 overall)

These teams are no stranger to each other. A year ago, they met in the quarterfinals with Cape advancing after a 6-0 win. In the head to head regular season matchup Cape defeated Milford 6-2. To get to the semis, Cape Henlopen handled the Odessa Ducks, who had a phenomenal season of 12-0. Milford narrowly escaped the clutches of the Polytech Panthers 3-2 in overtime. Milford needed to find a way to stop Cape's offensive attack with Atia Sabbaugh, Hannah Maney, Addison Basile and Grace Wiggins. But most importantly, how will the Bucs get past the defense of Devon DeGregory, Lina Frederick and goalkeeper Morgan Newcomb? Milford's Hannah Zimmerman, Isabel Betts and Madison Hitchens will need to put the Bucs on the board and make any penalty corners count. On defense, Carley Mackert and goalkeeper Madison Stahl need to play big to help their team win and advance.

Nov. 7: No. 1 Smyrna (16-1 overall) vs No. 5 Charter School of Wilmington (11-5 overall)

These teams have not seen each other yet this season, but I'm sure their coaches have watched film. A year

ago they met at the same point in the tournament with Smyrna just edging the Force by a 1-0 score to advance. Anyone playing Smyrna needs to figure out how to contain Dru and Bree Moffett, not an easy task. Look for the long, hard drives from the Moffett sisters who are reminiscent of the Hollamon sisters when they played together at Delmar. Combine that with Ava Pierce, who has pure speed and goalkeeper Haile Geiger and you have your work cut out for you. Charter is not a team I've seen play in person this season, but stats show a strong offensive front from Alexa Guarneri, Kelsey Shahan, Ella Stack and Elizabeth Terravova, leading their offense in goals and assists. Sophomore goalkeeper Larysa Pohorlyo has 43 saves and has only allowed 11 goals.

DIVISION 2 SEMIFINALS

Nov. 8: No. 2 Delmar (15-2 overall) vs No. 3 Caravel (14-2 overall)

Delmar stands as the Division 2 state champion, looking for number eight. Coming off the Henlopen championship and convincing 7-1 win over Sussex Academy, the Wildcats will look to head to the finals once again. With Jordyn Hollamon leading the offense with 65 goals, more than anyone in the state, the speedy Laela Brown, Emily Bitters and Baylie Phillips, their offense is a force to be reckoned with.

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VIEW FROM THE BASELINE: STATE TOURNAMENT QUARTERFINALS

BY JASON WINCHELL

Two-thirds of the field has been eliminated and eight teams remain in the hunt for the state championship. The DIAA tournament resumes Thursday with four quarterfinal matches, which for the first time in memory in a non-COVID year will be played at home sites.

No. 5 Padua at No. 4 Ursuline The longtime rivals likely looked at the bracket when it was released and wished they could have been just about anywhere else for the quarterfinals. The Raiders defeated the Pandas twice this season, but Padua knows its archrival as well as anyone and a three-peat is no easy task. Get your tickets early for this one; Laffey-McHugh Gymnasium should be packed and rocking.

No. 9 Tower Hill at No. 1 Saint Mark's The only game not featuring the highest seed possible is this one, as the Hillers "upset" eighth-seeded Middletown over the weekend. Tower's athletic hitters have caused fits for opponents all season. They'll test the Spartans' defense, both up front and in the back. Expect large and loud student sections from both schools in this rematch of the 2022 state championship.

No. 7 Newark Charter at No. 2 Smyrna Smyrna lost just nine sets all season and none since an Oct. 17 match at Dover. The Eagles play a lineup of almost all seniors, which will be a contrast with the Patriots. Newark Charter has recovered nicely from a midseason swoon

when they lost three straight and is on an eight-match winning streak. As far as the Baseline can tell, this will be the first-ever match between the two programs.

No. 6 Wilmington Charter at No. 3 Caesar Rodney Between these two programs, all seven losses have come to teams still alive in the postseason and five of those went five sets. Charter has one of the state's best setters delivering to some elite hitters, while the Riders have a pair of hitters who have just overpowered opponents this year. CR is back in the quarters for the second straight season, while the Force is back for the first time since 2020. During that season, the Force defeated the Riders in the second round, which is the last time they met.

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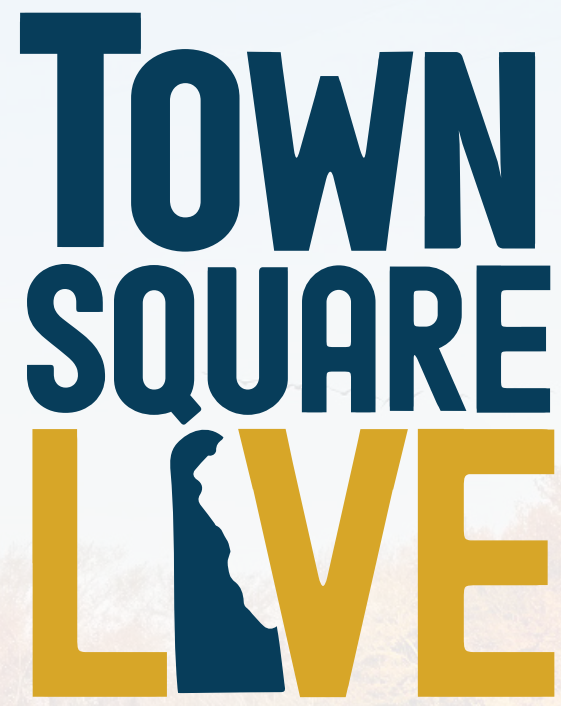
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