

# TOWN SQUARE LIVE

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February 1, 2024

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photo link: Delaware Art Museum





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photo link: Mt. Cuba Center

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“Natural” Burial Method



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Courtside View — Week 6

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# Community

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





# SALSTHON KEEPS \$175K GOAL, WILL BENEFIT ST. PATRICK'S CENTER

BY JAREK RUTZ

Wilmington's Salesianum School has started fundraising for SALSTHON 2024, which has a goal of \$175,000 to benefit **St. Patrick's Center**. St. Patrick's provides emergency food, meals, respite for the homeless, clothing, transportation and recreational activities for people in need.

"People are pumped up to raise money, and they're excited to go," said Frank Holodick, a senior and student council president at Salesianum.

The annual event brings together the communities of Salesianum, and fellow Wilmington Catholic schools, **Padua Academy** and **Ursuline Academy**.

The announcement of its goal and focus, comes as **National Catholic School Week** kicks off.

"It really just shows the spirit of the three schools, there's so much passion for each of our schools by the students here," Holodick said, "and that's really reflected by how much they get into that fundraising and different events that lead up to the actual SALSTHON as well as the event itself."

### ABOUT SALSTHON

The student councils from each school help organize SALSTHON, which is an all-night dance party inspired by **Penn State University's THON**, to raise funds for local charities. Many high schools and universities across the country have adopted some version of Penn State's THON. One change this year is that the event will take place Saturday, March 16, from 5 p.m. to mid-

**“**  
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night, rather than going through the early hours of the morning as in previous years.

"It was in the interest of student safety," said Alison Hildenbrand, a college counselor at Salesianum. "We were concerned about having students up all night and then seeing them drive home. We think this change could bring more energy to the event and hopefully increase student interest and participation, too."

The center was actually the beneficiary of the event 10 years ago, and several faculty and parents from all three schools have been or are currently involved with Saint Patrick's, according to Hildenbrand.

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# WILMINGTON BUYS GIBRALTAR, PLANS TO HELP PRESERVE IT

**Register of Historic Places**, a list of places the U.S. government says are worth protecting and preserving.”

“For too long, well-intended neighbors and other interested parties have not been able to see eye-to-eye on what to do with this property, but everyone seems to agree on one thing — Gibraltar should not be allowed to further deteriorate,” said Purzycki. “City residents should understand that after decades of neglect we are at a crossroads when it comes to Gibraltar. Either we commit to preserving it or it will inexorably rot beyond salvation.” Purzycki said he was following in the steps of former Mayor James Baker who, as a chronicler of local history, also believed that the deteriorating property at 2505 Pennsylvania Avenue, should be preserved.

### GIBRALTAR’S FUTURE

He said he wanted to see the 19th century country estate “fully restored so that it can be enjoyed by future generations of city residents and visitors.” The mayor, who lives next to Gibraltar, said he’s watched its decline for years.

“Some have suggested a personal conflict of interest. There is none,” he said. “Much as I’ve done throughout my career on the Christina Riverfront and as mayor in preserving neighborhoods, this is about giving new beauty and purpose to part of our city and its history.”

The money for the purchase was provided by the Delaware General Assembly after the mayor traveled to Dover to present the importance of saving Gibraltar. He called the purchase price a bargain — especially for six acres in one of the city’s highly desirable upscale neighborhoods. As part of the deal, the city also transferred a city street bed, which will require City Council approval, to the former owners of the estate, Gibraltar Preservation Group LLC. Gibraltar has been transferred to the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Landbank with which the city will work.

Purzycki said he has some ideas about how the property could be used and plans to explore them with city council members, neighbors and other interested parties.

**BY BETSY PRICE**

The city of Wilmington has paid \$900,000 for the elegant Gibraltar mansion on Pennsylvania Avenue and will work to preserve it for future generations, Mayor Mike Purzycki announced Jan. 26. There are no definitive plans at this time for the property, Purzycki said in a press release.

The property, the focus of both commercial and cultural interest for decades, hasn’t been able to find a workable development project, despite intense interest in the grounds, which include gardens laid out in between 1916 and 1923 by famed female landscape architect Marian Cruger Coffin. It was built around 1844 by John Rodney Brincklé, grand-nephew of Caesar Rodney, who signed the Declaration of Independence and was Delaware’s first governor.

Brincklé named it Gibraltar because the property overlooked Wilmington in an allusion to the Rock of Gibraltar, a limestone is a monolithic limestone promontory located in the British territory of Gibraltar, a limestone cliff that juts out near the Mediterranean. A press release from the city called Gibraltar, which sits on six acres, “one of the most significant properties in Wilmington. It’s listed on the **National**

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# PROPOSED LAW OFFERS LOOK AT ANOTHER 'NATURAL' BURIAL METHOD

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware’s lawmakers are ironing out the details of an increasingly popular way Americans have dealt with death: allowing the body to naturally return to the soil. It’s one of a variety of ways to deal with bodies other than the modern, and costly, traditional services involving embalming and burial in a big casket.

Eco-friendly methods of burial are becoming more popular, said Nancy Goldenberg, chief executive officer of Philadelphia’s **Laurel Hill Cemetery**. That’s partly because there’s simply going to be a lack of land for people to get buried in caskets, particularly for urban areas, where land is precious.

“I think this is something we don’t often talk about,” Goldenberg said. “We cannot continue to build cemeteries. The land just isn’t there and cemeteries are going to fill up.”

Delaware’s legislature is considering natural organic reduction, a burial method that is slightly different from most natural or green burials, called natural organic

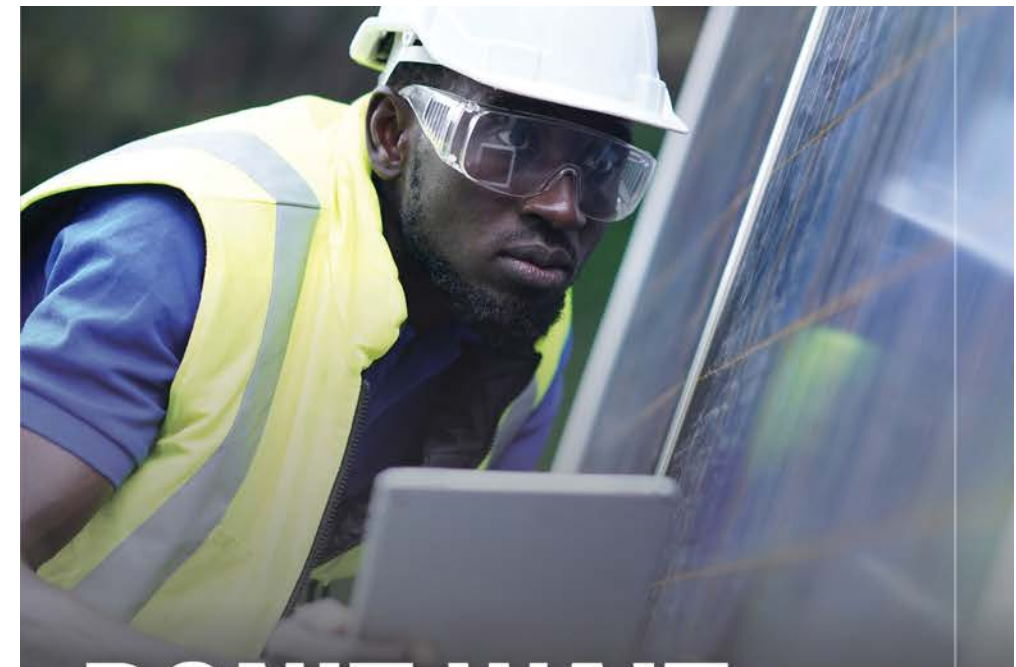
reduction. It accelerates the decomposition of the body so it more quickly becomes soil. Some people call it human composting.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Natural reduction uses large vessels to enclose human remains with straw, wood chips or other natural materials for about 30 days. The contents of the vessel are mixed with warm air and periodically turned to reduce the body. The remains then can be given to the deceased individual’s family.

This burial is considered a more eco-friendly alternative because it doesn’t use the formaldehyde used in embalming, and doesn’t release of carbon dioxide and mercury into the atmosphere, like cremation does. It also uses 1/8 the energy needed to perform a cremation.

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*Business*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# CHAMBER DINNER CELEBRATES JOBS, INVOLVEMENT, INCYTE'S GROWTH

BY BETSY PRICE

A night to celebrate all things business and jobs started Monday with a call for Delaware to ready itself to become a manufacturing hub. China long has been a magnet for manufacturing, but its decision to limit couples to one child soon will mean there's not a big enough workforce to man factories, said Mike Quaranta, president of the **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce**, at its annual dinner.

"Manufacturing has to go somewhere and in the next 10 years, it's going to depart China and look for places around the world to locate," Quaranta said. "There's a great opportunity for us."

The desire to draw attention to Delaware's wares is the motivating force behind the chamber's new Coolest Thing Made in Delaware **contest**, he said.

"We need speedy, permanent, reasonable environmental policies that support manufacturing and manufacturers," he said. "We need to embark on an industrial expansion not seen in our country in almost five decades.

And we need policies that embrace this coming reality. "The opportunity here is to double down on our manufacturing capabilities where local workers can fill local orders for local customers. And when we're done, we'll have the supply chain largely immune from international shocks and a more diverse economy."

Gov. John Carney emphasized the state's need to grow its jobs. "We need to win the competition with other states for good jobs," he said, especially jobs in science and technology.

The Chamber also announced several honors.

Gary R. Stockbridge, former regional president of Delmarva Power, was honored with the Josiah Marvel Cup. It is considered the chamber's highest honor and is given to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the state, community or society.

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# COMPACT MEMBRANE TO SPEND \$3.1 MILLION TO EXPAND

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

New Castle’s **Compact Membrane Systems** will spend \$3.1 million to expand to meet market demand and triple its workforce, with state grants paying about one-third of that. Founded by a former DuPont scientist in Wilmington 30 years ago, CMS creates technology to capture and reduce carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions. It will get \$875,480 from the state to help fund its growth.

A Graduated Lab Space Grant of up to \$760,480 will go toward 15,080 square feet of lab space, and a \$115,000 Jobs Performance Grant will help add 38 new full-time jobs by 2026.

“It’s vitally important we keep legacy companies like CMS in our communities growing and thriving,” said New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer. “We have the talent right here in our state, and this expansion

presents opportunities for our workforce to stay right here at home.”

The grants were approved by the state Council on Development Finance and are dependent on the company meeting certain outlined commitments.

CMS recently moved most of its operations on Water Street, Newport, to a temporary site near the new facility that will be constructed on Reads Way. The expansion includes building 10,864 square feet of research and development and manufacturing-focused lab spaces along with more than 4,216 square feet of additional space. The lab will meet the growing need for membrane fiber for the carbon capture and sequestration market, a press release said.

The company has gotten a lot of attention for being a women-led company in energy technology and in the membrane industry.

## COMPACT MEMBRANE HISTORY

Founded in 1993 by Stuart Nemser, CMS is now run by his daughter, Erica. She also chairs the Delaware Sustainable Chemistry Alliance Board. Its goal is to find technology solutions that capture and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, avert global warming and transform the industry into a long-term sustainable enterprise.

CMS has been shifting away from being a small, research-based company reliant on federal grants to take its place as a growing commercial entity that tries to marry commercial success with social responsibility while by delivering innovative new products. As the company has evolved, it raised \$16.5 million in a Series A venture capital round in 2023.

In considering where best to grow, it looked at Houston, TX, and areas further west before deciding to stay in Delaware and continue to expand its engineering, manufacturing and sales footprint.

“CMS has grown up as a Delaware company and, through this state support, is excited to cement our future in Delaware,” said Erica Nemser, CEO. “We love the resources and opportunity Delaware has to offer, from excellent scientific and technical talent to the commitment to manufacturing advanced technology to address climate emissions.”







# 600 DELAWAREANS OWED BACK WAGES; HERE'S HOW TO SEE IF YOU ARE

BY BETSY PRICE

Nearly 600 Delaware workers are owed approximately \$398,000 in back wages recovered by the U.S. Department of Labor's **Wage and Hour Division**. This includes 268 workers in Kent County, 104 workers in New Castle County and 172 workers in Sussex County.

In many cases, the employees change jobs or change addresses and cannot be notified of the money due to them. Name changes or an employer's failure to retain contact information can also make it difficult for the Wage and Hour Division to find employees and put back wages into their hands.

The Wage and Hour Division can only hold unclaimed back wages for three years before it is required to turn it over to the Department of the Treasury.

## BACK WAGES SEARCH TOOL

In an effort to reach out to people and help them claim the money they are owed, the agency has developed an

online search tool, **Workers Owed Wages** (WOW) that allows workers to enter information to find out if the division is holding back wages on their behalf.

The WOW system is currently available in English and Spanish, and allows workers and their advocates to answer a series of questions to determine if they are owed wages and to easily claim them.

For assistance with the Workers Owed Wages system, workers and advocates can contact the Wage and Hour Division's Philadelphia District Office at (215) 597-4950. Calls can be answered in more than 200 languages.



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# PHYSICAL THERAPY, MOVEMENT HELPS SENIORS THRIVE IN RETIREMENT

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Keep it moving — that’s the top tip for longevity from local experts to Delaware’s aging population.

“As we get older, we get lazy,” said 71-year-old Rick Stetler. Stetler was wrapping up a session at Milford’s **Aquacare Physical Therapy** last week. He is one of the hundreds of retirees pouring into Delaware yearly and expected to dramatically increase the size of the state’s older population in the next 25 years, as the younger population is expected to shrink.

Keeping retirees as healthy and mobile as possible will be important to Delaware and its booming retiree segment. Aquacare and **Pace Your Life** are two of the

organizations focusing on that in Milford, which is one of the Delaware’s magnets for out-of-state retirees.

“Honestly, movement is the key,” said Occupational Therapist Alicia Adkins, who works at PACE Your Life and Polaris Healthcare Rehabilitation Center, both located in the Milford Wellness Center building by Silver Lake, where Aquacare can also be found.

Mobility is Stetler’s goal and he began therapy because of a suggestion from his rheumatologist four years ago.

“I was bent forward and not walking very well,” Stetler said. He said not keeping his core strong caused it. “If you don’t keep your core strong you’re going to fold over like a tree,” Stetler said.

He said his rheumatologist told him he saw a 60% improvement in Stetler’s mobility after only two sessions with Aquacare. “I want to get to 90 percent,” he said.

While Stetler has had back issues since his 20s, it was when others began to notice that he took it seriously.

“I was walking very bent over. I kept getting remarks (about his bent back) from people I know that I only see occasionally,” he said. After trying other therapy locations, Stetler found Aquacare to be the right fit for him.

The physical therapy business has been around for 25 years and Aquacare physical therapist Amanda Petner said about 60% of patients are retired people or have Medicare, the government insurance for older people.

## THERAPY AFTER COVID

Pace for Life’s Adkins has seen an uptick in the Boomer population where she works.

“I think COVID impacted a lot of them,” she said. “It took the movement factor away, with the aging population affected most,” she said. Several years later, therapists are still seeing the effects of it.

Petner said Aquacare’s one-on-one therapy is one of the business’s specialties. “We are with the patient the whole time,” Petner said.

“She watches everything I do. She pays attention,” Stetler said.

By doing that, Petner and fellow therapists can catch even the slightest changes in mobility, which can be a critical observation. One therapist will tell another if they see anything in any of the patients or have a recommendation or suggestion that could aid in their therapy, Petner said.

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photo link: Alex Munsell / Unsplash



*Food & Dining*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





# NEED WARMING UP? DIP INTO ONE OF THESE FLIGHTS OF SOUP

BY PAM GEORGE

January was more like Janu-dreary, and if February follows suit, restaurants will need more soup options on the menu. That’s because few foods warm the body and soul like soup. Granted, multiple choices can create a challenge. Which one to pick? Happily, several Delaware eateries came up with a solution: a flight.

If it seems like a strange idea, consider that there are beer flights and wine flights. La Casa Pasta in Glasgow has a pasta flight trio on Tuesdays.

Here’s where to find the nourishing goods.

### PIZZA BY ELIZABETHS

Ten years ago, the Greenville restaurant gave customers a sip of three soups, including the much-ballyhooed tomato, the flight’s anchor. Indeed, on a recent visit, selections included tomato soup, chicken with lemon and rice and French onion for \$15. House-made breadsticks come with a cute presentation.

### MILTON DOUGH BAR’S SOUP

Like Pizza by Elizabeths, Milton Doug Bar makes a good pie. But after a Facebook post of a soup flight, people have been ordering the \$18 offering of four soups. Selections might include chicken and dumplings, shrimp-corn chowder, tomato bisque and chili. Call before you pop in to ensure the soups are still in the kettles.

### UNCLE JOHN’S BBQ

John Berl carries up to five soups — “as much as possible, all homemade” — at his brick-and-mortar location on Philadelphia Pike. Varieties have included chicken and dumplings, vegetable with brisket, crab bisque and chicken tortellini. Choose four 8-to-10-ounce portions for \$20.

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### DORCEA

Chef Michael Bomba put Jamaican carrot soup on the Mid-Town Brandywine eatery’s specials menu one day, and regulars won’t let him take it off. The spicy soup joins French onion and crab bisque as standard selections. However, there are also one to two soups of the day, such as Maryland crab and chicken tortellini.

“You can do any three, besides French onion, on the soup flight,” says co-owner Tony Bomba. The cost is \$10.

### SONORA

When a guest asked owner Melissa Ferraro to consider a soup sampler, she didn’t hesitate. A recent \$15 flight at the Newark restaurant included fire-roasted tomato bisque, seafood chowder and carrot ginger.







# DELAWARE CHEFS EMBRACE EVERYTHING BAGEL SEASONING

BY PAM GEORGE

If it seems like everything bagel seasoning is, well, everywhere, that's because it is. Avocado toast, pizza, Pop Tarts and arepas are among the food getting that deli treatment in Delaware, and they're not alone. A National Restaurant Association poll of culinary professionals found that the addictive seasoning was named a top flavor for 2024.

The mix typically includes dried garlic and onion flakes, poppy and sesame seeds, and salt — toppings left over after making specialty bagels. Combining them is a lesson in waste-not-want-not.

There's something about the blend that conjures the feeling and taste of a New York deli, says Kyle Berman, executive chef at **The Pines** in Rehoboth Beach.

"It has all the ingredients people love," he said.

In 2017, Trader Joe's captured the magic in the Everything But the Bagel Sesame Seasoning Blend. Since then, the food and hospitality industry has turned the humble

mix into a culinary must-have. Here are some creative ways to use it.

## EVERYTHING BAGEL'S NOSTALGIA

As Berman noted, everything bagel mix has a nostalgic taste. He took it further by dusting Parker House rolls with the seasoning and he's not alone. The **Brandywine Restaurant** in Wilmington has also used the blend on the rolls, a sweet, fluffy milk bread invented in the 1870s in Boston's Parker House Hotel.

During the Riverwalk Farmers Market season in Milford, customers line up for **Fat Cat Farms'** everything English muffins. The Camden farm uses eggs from free-range hens and a special sourdough starter.

## SAVORY NOT SWEET

Everything bagel seasoning instantly adds depth to savory pastries — there's no mistaking them for their sugary cousins.

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*Government*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# CARNEY'S PROPOSED \$6.1 BILLION 2025 STATE BUDGET UP 9% FROM 2024

help make their salaries more competitive with private and other state jobs. The budget will pony up \$93.9 million to pay for employee health insurance plan shortfalls and \$56.1 million for a one-time donation to the fund set up to pay retirees' health insurance, which is woefully underfunded.

The state Medicaid program alone needed \$100 million more for its program, partly because of losing extra federal funding during the COVID-19 pandemic. The healthcare spending alone will crowd out other investment in schools, affordable housing, childcare ad raises for state employees and state retirees, Carney said.

Carney's budget also includes \$66.5 million for Grants-in-Aid, which helps nonprofits; \$943.7 million in state capital projects, and one-time supplemental appropriation of \$91.8 million, which includes money to the retiree insurance fund.

Carney's proposed budget, which would take effect July 1, the start of fiscal year 2025, must be ratified by the General Assembly before June 30.

### BUDGET STABILIZATION

The governor had a warning for the legislature during a media preview of his budget.

"One of our primary messages to legislators is to be careful in this year because of the softening of revenues next year and the year off after," he said. "You don't want to build in spending in the budget that you're not going to be able to sustain in the out years."

Delaware is coming off three years of revenues that produced close to \$1 billion of surplus money and allowed the state to give raises, fund projects like clean water initiatives and put money into the state's budget-smoothing fund. This year's budget was built on expected revenues, which provided about \$350 million in supply money. However, revenues are expected to be flat in 2024 and 2025.

"It's hard to forecast 2026," said Secretary of Finance Rick Geisenberger. "We may well need to draw up parts of the Budget Stabilization Fund next year. That would be our current forecast right now...based on current revenue forecasts."

That's what it's there for, he pointed out.

"So if you grow the operating budget a whole lot this year, then you're almost certainly going to be drawing that Budget Stabilization Fund down," Geisenberger said, "and perhaps putting yourself back in the same challenges we had prior to this administration...to do budget cuts and tax increases."

Carney took office in 2018 facing \$350 million in budget shortfalls. He issued an executive order to create the Budget Stabilization, which the state also used in 2020 because COVID-19 whacked revenues.

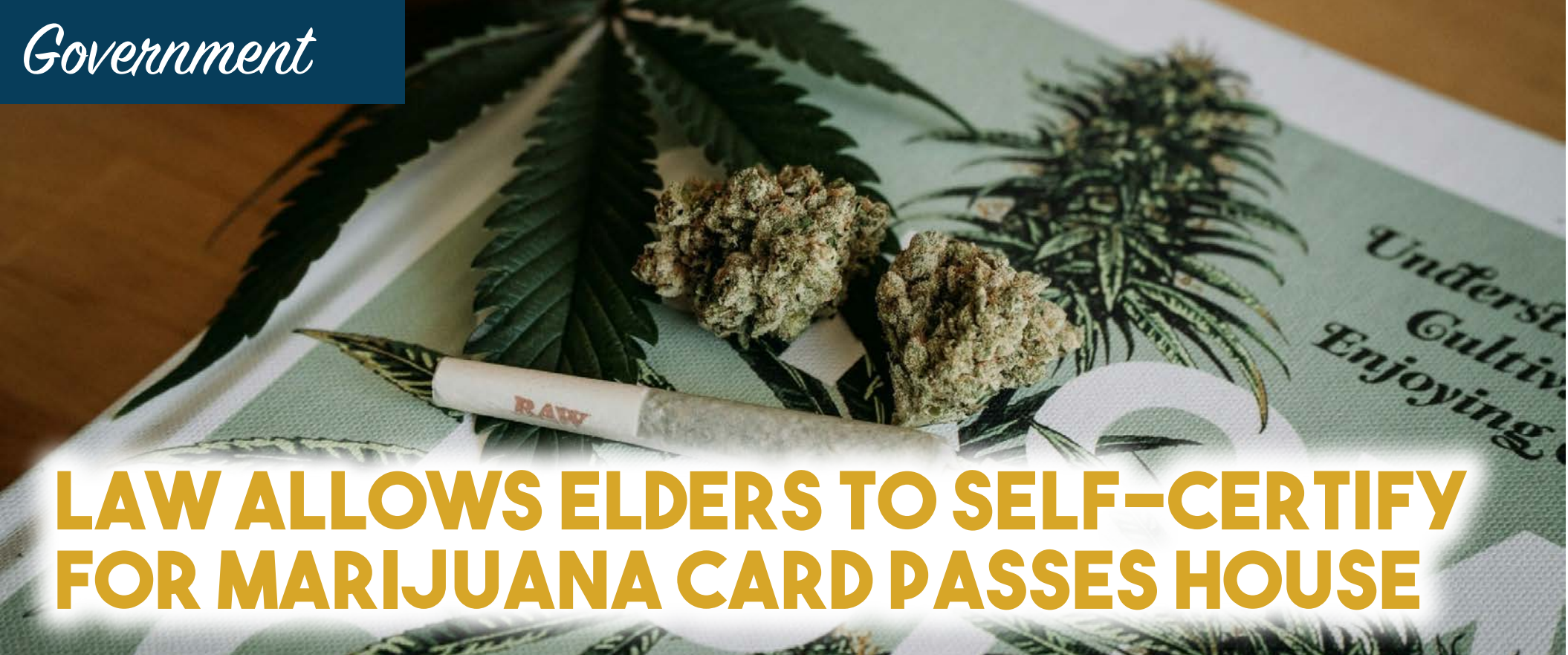


### BY BETSY PRICE

Gov. John Carney's **proposed** 2025 state budget of \$6.1 billion pours \$2.1 billion into education, \$2 billion on healthcare for employees, retirees and Medicaid recipients, and \$129 million into environmental initiatives. It's another record state budget, up nearly 9% from 2024's \$5.6 billion.

Nearly 65% of the growth in the budget over last year's is salary policy and health-related costs, Carney said. Educators and state employees are targeted for raises to





# LAW ALLOWS ELDERS TO SELF-CERTIFY FOR MARIJUANA CARD PASSES HOUSE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Another marijuana law sponsored by the apparent champion of cannabis in the state legislature, received some opposition in the House Jan. 25 before ultimately passing. **House Bill 285**, sponsored by Rep. Ed Osienski, D-Newark, who has been a champion of marijuana in the state legislature, would allow Delawareans 65 or older to obtain a medical marijuana card without their doctor's approval got some pushback Jan. 24 in a legislative hearing.

It would allow them to get the card without a certification from a health-care provider, circumventing the doctor-patient relationship. It would also:

- Remove the requirement that a patient must have a debilitating medical condition to qualify for a registry identification card. Instead, health-care providers would determine whether a patient has a diagnosed

medical condition that would benefit therapeutically or palliatively from the use of medical marijuana.

- Modify the issuance process of medical marijuana registry identification cards, which facilitate the acquisition, delivery, possession or transfer of medical marijuana.
- Allow for flexible expiration dates on registry identification cards, enabling 1-, 2- or 3-year expiration dates.
- Allow card holders of other states to use their card for purchases in Delaware.

There's 17,000 Delawareans who have medical cards and about 5,000 of those are 65 or older.

Just as he did when the bill was first discussed in a committee hearing two weeks ago, Rep. Jeff Hilovsky, R-Long Neck, expressed opposition. Older folks typi-

cally have reduced hearing, sight, smell and cognitive abilities so it wouldn't be a good idea to allow them access to marijuana without consulting a doctor, he said.

There were also concerns about how users would be able to properly know their correct dosage, to which Osienski said it's always recommended to go low and slow when a person starts using marijuana. He also pointed out there's no dosage requirements for harmful substances like alcohol and tobacco, and it is the responsibility of the consumer to use them responsibly.

Osienski also said there will be labels that recommend users to consult their doctor before consuming any form of marijuana.

"That doesn't connect," said Rep. Valerie Jones Giltner, R-Georgetown. "If we're recommending that they should already be talking to their doctor and we're suggesting it then why are we allowing them to self certify?"

Hilovsky also challenged Osienski's comments that there are no harmful health effects of marijuana, citing that there's research that shows it increases the chance of psychosis. Most products at marijuana dispensaries do have a label that indicates its usage might increase the risk of psychosis.

The bill was passed with a vote of 25 "yes" to 10 "no", with all 10 votes against coming from Republicans.





photo credit: Cab Calloway School of the Arts



*Education*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





# WLC BUILDING COMMUNITY COUNCILS, STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Partnership was the word of the night in the **Wilmington Learning Collaborative's** January meeting Tuesday night. Dorrell Green, superintendent of **Red Clay Consolidated School District** and a member of the governing council for the group, said they need to make sure they spend the millions of state funding wisely while strengthening community partnerships with groups that provide help, such as wellness centers, out-of-school activities and social services.

"I'm excited about continuing to engage in that work to ensure that our schools solidify partnerships that are going to not only look at during school, but after school as well as out of school time around that whole-community, whole-child approach."

Red Clay, along with **Brandywine** and **Christina**, are the three districts that make up the collaborative, established in November 2022. The group, which is penciled in for \$10 million in Gov. John Carney's recently announced 2025 recommended budget, is meant to improve academic and social outcomes for students of

nine elementary schools in the city of Wilmington. It hopes to do this by collaborating with community organizations and involving various stakeholders including parents in decision-making for policies and programs.

Partnership asset-mapping is one of the key components of the site-based community councils being established at the nine WLC schools.

"We have many partners doing great work within our school communities, and given the nuances and complexity of our days, those partners don't always have a space to collaborate and to really braid their streams of work," said Laura Burgos, the collaborative's executive director. "We want to make sure that we do a deep dive on those assets that currently exist, so that when we're structuring the community councils, those voices are present, and they play an active role in the design process."

The asset-mapping, she said, will evaluate the current needs that are being served and identify those existing needs that are not served through the existing partnerships.

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# CCAC OPENS INNOVATION CENTER TO HELP CLOSE TECHNOLOGY GAP

BY JAREK RUTZ

The **Christina Cultural Arts Center** unveiled its new and improved Innovation Center Wednesday, which leaders call a major milestone for the group.

“We envision that Christina becomes the one of the primary technology hubs in the city,” said James Ray Rhodes, executive director of the Christina Cultural Arts Center, “for students to collaborate globally, nationally, internationally, with technology, not just computers, but how we use technologies to bridge the technology gap.”

The Innovation Center is open to all members of the public and Rhodes hopes it brings together people from all over the city of Wilmington and beyond. Spreading about 500-square-feet, the center features nine computer

stations, a 3D printer, a smart board and a regular desktop printer. The **Mike Clark Legacy Foundation** funded the room’s equipment and upgrades, which cost about \$125,000.

“In the Black and Brown communities, there’s this technology gap, and this is a way we reduce that gap by providing access to more families, at no cost,” Rhodes said. The center is located at 705 North Market Street in Wilmington.

The idea for it originally came more than five years ago to expand the Cultural Arts Center’s computer center, but the pandemic caused delays, and in fall 2022, the center hired an architect and found a few contractors to get the project going. Previously, the computer

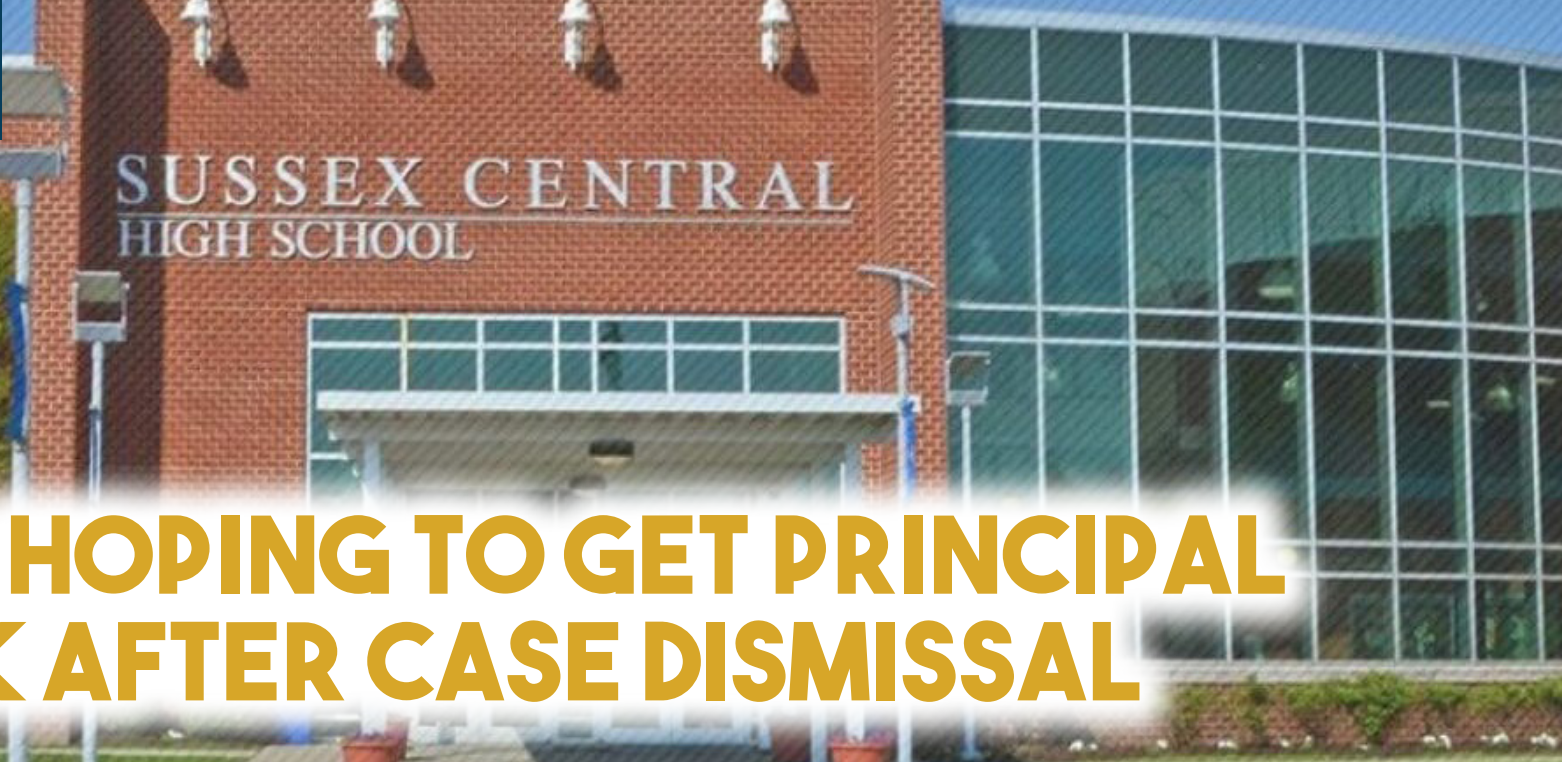
center just had four computers. The nine in there now are a mix of Macs and PCs.

Students will have access to AutoCAD and Archicad where they can design projects, buildings and houses in 3D. There’s also a tutor hub after school hours and people can also come to learn the different applications in the Microsoft Suite, like Microsoft Word, Powerpoint, Excel, Outlook and more.

“You just come in and sign up, put your name on a schedule. You want to do research or want to do a job search, it’s there,” Rhodes said. “Oftentimes families don’t have access to this technology, whether it be through internet access, or to have the tool like a computer or desktop.”







# LAYFIELD HOPING TO GET PRINCIPAL JOB BACK AFTER CASE DISMISSAL

BY JAREK RUTZ

An ousted Sussex County school principal, who was sued by a former student, is trying to get his position back after the lawsuit was dismissed in court. Bradley Layfield, the former principal of **Sussex Central High School** in the **Indian River School District**, was among those sued by former student Aniya Harmon, who claimed they circulated a video and a photo of her breast, which was exposed during a 2023 fight.

Layfield, the school district and Assistant Principal Matthew Jones were sued for invasion of privacy, conspiracy to invade privacy, intentional and negligent infliction of emotional distress and the idea that Layfield and Jones were officials who should have known better.

## BACKGROUND

Harmon alleged she was approached and attacked by another student in May, and as a faculty member attempted to pull Harmon away from the scene, her shirt was pulled down, exposing her full right breast. It was

captured by a surveillance camera and, according to the complaint. Layfield subsequently shared the video — without editing or blurring Harmon’s breast — with other faculty members at the school.

Harmon claimed that Layfield and Jones created and circulated a meme using a still shot of Harmon and her exposed breast, superimposed with the face of Janet Jackson over Harmon’s face. The image is in reference to Janet Jackson’s wardrobe malfunction when her breast was exposed during the 2004 National Football League Super Bowl halftime show.

On Monday, Judge Calvin L. Scott Jr. of the Superior Court of Delaware dismissed the lawsuit, which Layfield and his representation — the **Neuberger Firm** — have been requesting for months. Harmon’s representation, the **Igwe Firm** in Philadelphia, declined to comment immediately on the suit’s dismissal.

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# NEW 'FUTURE FLEXIBLE' TATNALL SCHOOL LIBRARY DRAWS MORE STUDENTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Tatnall School's new \$1 million library lets students just get on with the business of learning, says a student at the private college preparatory school in Wilmington.

"We have a whole bunch of open classrooms, movable whiteboards and desks, and then we have a whole bunch of charging stations for them to work by themselves," said junior Nate Hunter. "It's really just letting them get to work on their own and a space that they can really feel comfortable in."

He and his classmates have benefited from self-learning and also from the help from tutors and teachers in some of the conference rooms.

Ensign Simmons, director of innovation and technology at the pre-K through grade 12 school, said there has been a surge of students using the space since its upgrade over the summer.

"I think we probably had about four or five students in here each period up until last year," he said. "This year, we have close to 20 students each period in here, so we're talking about a four- or five-fold increase in the number of students that are using this space throughout the period and throughout the day."

The largest contribution to the \$1 million project was a \$475,000 grant from the Longwood Foundation. The remaining funds came from other local foundations and Tatnall alumni, parents and board members.

"This will also drive admissions," Simmons said. "We had an admissions event in the space yesterday for our lower school students looking at the middle school, and some of those lower school parents...walked in and just saw what a space like this could provide in terms of opportunities for their kids as they grow up and go through the different grade levels."

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# COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 6 GIRLS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The girls' basketball season will heat up this week as there is a lot of big conference games coming up.

The Diamond State conference could be decided on Thursday night as the two undefeated teams in conference play meet as Archmere travels to St. Elizabeth.

The SL 24 Unlock the Light tournament starts this Friday and Saturday at Chase Fieldhouse. There are three girls' games over the two days as Padua and Saint Mark's play Friday night. Archmere faces Kennett (PA) and Ursuline plays Imhotep Charter (PA) on Saturday.

Here are the top 10 for this week voted by our Delaware Live Crew.

**No. 1 Ursuline** (10-3) (LW No. 1) The Raiders lost to South Shore (NY) in the Bronx on Jan. 27. They will face Imhotep Charter (PA) on Saturday at the Chase Fieldhouse.

**No. 2 Caravel** (12-2) (LW No. 2) The Bucs went 3-0 last week including wins against No. 8 Archmere and No. 4 St. Elizabeth. They host No. 5 AI DuPont on Thursday.

**No. 3 Sanford** (8-5) (LW No. 3) The Warriors won three conference games last week. They host No. 4 St. Elizabeth on Saturday.

**No. 4 St. Elizabeth** (11-2) (LW No. 4) The Vikings went 3-1 last week with a pair of overtime wins against Saint Mark's and Padua and lost to No. 2 Caravel. They host No. 8 Archmere on Thursday and travel to No. 3 Sanford on Saturday.

**No. 5 A.I. DuPont** (12-3) (LW No. 5) The Tigers beat William Penn and Howard last week. They travel to No. 2 Caravel on Thursday night.

**No. 6 Padua** (10-3) (LW No. 6) The Pandas went 1-1 last week beating DMA and losing to No. 4 St. Elizabeth in overtime. They face Saint Mark's Friday night at the Chase Fieldhouse.

**No. 7 Dover** (13-2) (LW No. 7) The Senators went 4-0 last week including wins over No. 9 Cape Henlopen and Smyrna. They traveled to Sussex Tech Tuesday.

**No. 8 Archmere** (9-5) (LW No. 8) The Auks went 3-1 last week with wins over Howard, St. Georges Tech and Middletown and losing to No. 2 Caravel. They travel to No. 4 St. Elizabethon Thursday and face Kennett (PA) on Saturday morning at the Fieldhouse.

**No. 9 Cape Henlopen** (7-5) (LW No. 9) The Vikings went 2-1 last week with wins over CR and Sussex Tech and losing to No. 7 Dover. They host Sussex Central on Thursday.

**No. 10 Delmarva Christian** (12-1) (LW No. 10) Delmava went 2-0 last week. They host The Salisbury School on Thursday and travel to Salisbury Christian on Friday.







# COURTSIDE VIEW – WEEK 6 BOYS' BASKETBALL TOP 10 RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

Last week saw a bunch of close games that have affected the Delaware Live Rankings for this week. The SL 24 Unlock the Light tournament starts on Friday night and Saturday and will feature five boys' games over the two days at the Chase Fieldhouse. The games will feature two top 10 match ups on Saturday night — Howard vs. St. Elizabeth and Sanford vs. Sallies.

The Blue Hen Flight A Conference has been fun to watch this year and the champion might not be decided until the last week of February. There is a big showdown on Friday as No. 3 Middletown hosts No. 5 William Penn. The Cavs are holding a 20th anniversary of its 2004 State Championship.

Here are the top 10 for this week voted by our Delaware Live Crew.

**No. 1 St. Elizabeth** (12-0)(LW No. 1) The Vikings beat Newark Charter and Saint Mark's last week. They travel to Archmere on Thursday and face No. 10 Howard on Saturday.

**No. 2 Dover** (11-2)(LW No. 2) The Senators won three conference games last week. They host No. 9 Sussex Central on Thursday.

**No. 3 Middletown** (6-3)(LW No. 4) The Cavs defeated Sallies 57-55 as part of their 2-0 week. They traveled to Mount Pleasant on Wednesday and host No. 5 William Penn on Friday.

**No. 4 Sallies** (6-7)(LW No. 3) The Sals lost at Middletown 57-55 in their 11th road game of the season. They host Smyrna on Thursday and face No. 6 Sanford on Saturday as part of the SL 24 Unlock the Light tournament.

**No. 5 William Penn** (8-3)(LW No. 5) They went 4-0 last week after a couple of make-up games. They travel to No. 3 Middletown on Friday night.

**No. 6 Sanford** (10-3)(LW No. 6) The Warriors picked up three conference wins last week. They host No. 10 Howard on Thursday and play No. 4 Sallies Saturday night at the Chase Fieldhouse.

**No. 7 Seaford** (13-0)(LW No. 10) The Bluejays remained unbeaten after three wins last week, including a 65-62 win over No. 8 Lake Forest. The two teams meet again Saturday at Seaford.

**No. 8 Lake Forest** (11-1)(LW No. 8) The Spartans went 2-1 last week with wins over Sussex Academy and Indian River before the loss to Seaford. They travel to Milford on Thursday and Seaford on Saturday.

**No. 9 Sussex Central** (9-3)(LW Unranked) The Golden Knights have won six in a row, including a 54-50 win over then No. 9 Smyrna. They travel to No. 2 Dover on Thursday night.

**No. 10 Howard** (9-2)(LW Unranked) The Wildcats went 2-0 last week with wins over Appoquinimink and AI DuPont. They travel to No. 6 Sanford on Thursday, you can watch the game on Delaware Live, and face No. 1 St. Elizabeth on Saturday at the Chase Fieldhouse.







# DIFCA AWARDS BANQUET ANNOUNCES COACHES OF THE YEAR

organizations still face declining numbers to adequately cover games. Interested individuals can contact ndfoa.org or dfoa.net for more information.

One of the highlights of the night came at the end of the banquet when the three coaches of the year were announced. In Class 1A, Brendon Ireton of state champion Tatnall was honored. Ireton guided the Hornets to the school's first title.

The Class 2A Coach of the Year was John Reed of Caravel. Coach Reed led the Buccaneers to an undefeated season and the program's first title since 2012.

The final award went to Class 3A Coach of the Year Mike Frederick who guided Cape Henlopen to the championship game. It was the school's first appearance in a championship game since 1984.



### BY GLENN FRAZER

The Delaware Interscholastic Football Coaches Association (DIFCA) held its 20th annual awards banquet Monday night at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover. The All-Class teams were awarded trophies, including players of the year.

Two officials were honored during the ceremony. John Patterson from the Northern Delaware Football Officials Association (DFOA) was awarded a plaque for his services since 1975. Terry Handy of the Delmarva Football Officials Association was also given a plaque recognizing his 15 years as a referee. The two major officiating

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# ST. ELIZABETH HOLDS OFF SAINT MARK'S

BY NICK HALLIDAY

On a rare Monday night boys basketball matchup, a packed St. E's Canter watched No.1 undefeated St. Elizabeth Vikings and a one-loss Saint Mark's Spartans face off. This is the first of two games for these two teams in less than two weeks as they will face off again on Feb. 2.

The Vikings came out hot right from the opening tip taking a quick 8-2 lead which forced the Spartans Head Coach Lonnie Wright to take a quick time out. The time-out worked as the Spartans were able to bring the score to within three points by the end of the first quarter as the Vikings led 15-12.

However, the Spartans' leading scorer and rebounder Alassan N'Diaye got three fouls in the first quarter which led to coach Wright having to pull him out of the game in the second quarter. The Vikings took full advantage of the Spartans with N'Diaye on the bench. They outscored the Spartans 19-7 in the second quarter to take a 34-19 lead into the half.

St. Elizabeth kept its foot on the throttle in the third quarter as well. The Vikings scored 15 points in the quarter while holding Saint Mark's to single digits which ballooned the lead to 22 points as they led 49-27 after three quarters.

The Spartans did go on a late run in the fourth quarter as N'Diaye scored 14 of his game-high 20 points, but the lead was just too much for the Spartans to climb out of. The Vikings were able to hold off the late surge of the Spartans to remain undefeated (12-0) with a 63-48 victory.

The Vikings were led by Wright who scored 18 points while Aiden Tobiason added 14 with two coming off an amazing alley oop dunk on a pass from Wright.







# FIELD HOCKEY PLAYERS NAMED TO ALL MID-ATLANTIC TEAMS

BY NICK HALLIDAY

MAX Field Hockey has announced its All Region Players and Teams. They look at data throughout the year of each graduating class of players in their selection process. A lot goes into the decision to place players in the Top 10, Top 100, Top 150, the Watch List and to the All Region Team.

They work class-by-class, sorting through data about the Nexus/USA Program, High School Team performance, Club Team performance, as well as MAX player profiles, National Player Combine profile, coach recommendations, player profiles, highlight videos and college commits.

Three of our Delaware field hockey players have been named First Team All Mid-Atlantic Region and three have been named to the Second Team. In addition, three Delaware High School Field Hockey Teams were ranked in the Top 20 for the Mid-Atlantic Region.

“As we start working on a specific class, we sort through it all. The top players tend to rise to the top, especially for the top 50-80 players or so. Beyond that is where it is starting to get harder and harder.”

While there may not be a set formula, MAX does feel as though the level of play in the region a player is in matters. Teams with players competing at the highest level is worth more than a player with potentially better stats playing in a weaker area.

Athletes don't necessarily have to spend a lot of money, attend the National Player Combine, etc., to be selected but they cannot just have a recommendation.

We need some sort of “proof.” Our motto for the events we've added: “Prove it on the field.” It doesn't have to be at one of our events, ...but you do have to prove it somewhere, somehow.”

Delaware high school field hockey players have done just that. They have proved they are the best of the best and have earned the recognition they deserve.

The MAX Field Hockey All Mid-Atlantic Region First and Second Teams were announced Jan. 16. They also rank the Top 10 in each class, players on the Watch List, and they rank the Top 20 Teams in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

We will look at each of these awards and recognize our Top Field Hockey Players and Team selected by MAX Field Hockey for the 2023 season.





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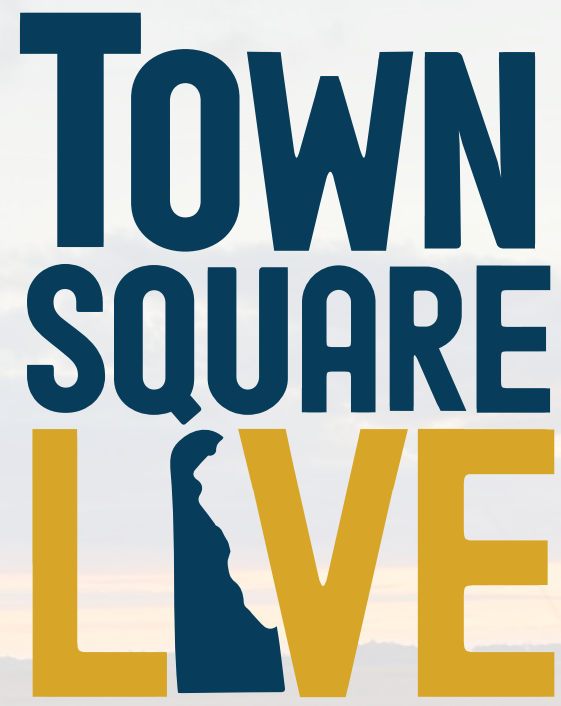


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