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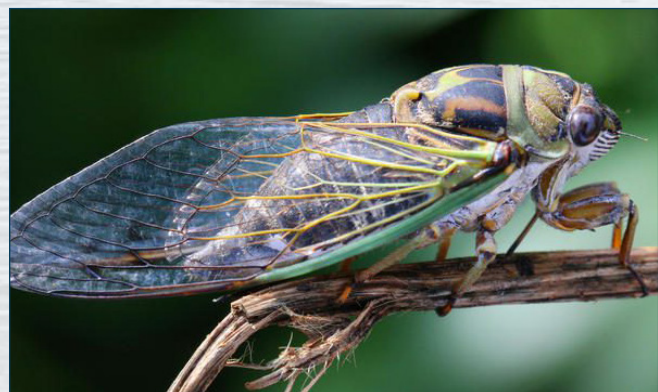
April 11, 2024  
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On the Pitch: Week 3 Girls' Soccer Top 10





*Community*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**





# ROCKWOOD PARK AND MUSEUM ASKS WHAT IT SHOULD BE AND DO

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

**Rockwood Park and Museum**, for the first time in its five-decade history as a New Castle County park, is developing a strategic plan.

“This plan is helping the museum to visualize a new mission to be of service to a wider variety of our neighbors,” said Ryan Grover, who’s been directing Rockwood for just over two years.

When interviewing for the job, he said that he was aware of Rockwood’s “quality programming” but concluded that “part of the interpretation and the stories we were telling about the past here at Rockwood weren’t really connecting with a big portion of the population.”

That’s why Rockwood has cut back on costumed interpreters and is devoting less effort to “venerating” the families that lived there for more than a century. A **survey** that’s part of the plan asks if Rockwood should prioritize a wide-ranging list that includes birdwatching, farming, contemporary art and “fun, welcoming and accessible” interpretations of history.

“They’re all happening in small quantities now,” he said. “We probably will do them all in some measure, but the survey will help us to define and rate what would be the most important.” And the survey “hopefully also leaves the door wide open enough that we can get other ideas that we hadn’t even conceived of.”

The survey, which is open to the public to fill out until April 20, asks about these eight potential priorities:

- Outdoor offerings such as nature exploration, gardening and/or birdwatching.
- Historic preservation, as well as exhibits and experiences that tell the story of the people who lived and worked at Rockwood.
- Programs, events and exhibits that present history in fun, welcoming and accessible ways.
- Serving as a space for community gatherings.
- Innovative programming and use the buildings and grounds for forward-looking experiences, such as contemporary art installations.
- Developing interpretation of its farming past to distinguish itself from nearby estates and proximity to urban Wilmington.
- More funding sources from public sources because it is a county-owned and -operated property and an important cultural asset of the community.
- Developing private sources of support, such as contributions from individuals, foundations and businesses, to supplement what the county provides.

On April 18, from 5:30-6:45 p.m., Rockwood will host a public meeting at the **North Market Street Library**, planned to “send participants through several stations to impart some local wisdom and interesting points of view. We will even have a visioning station for kids.”

Planning also includes meetings with Chief Dennis Coker of the Lenape Tribe of Delaware, local artist/architect Samara Weaver and a large group of area educators.

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# HERE'S THE BUZZ: NO BIG CICADA DEAL FOR DELAWARE

Periodical Cicada

Annual Cicada



**BY JAREK RUTZ**

While parts of the country will be swarmed with the convergence of two periodical cicada broods, it's a regularly scheduled appearance for the insect in Delaware. "The double brood this year involves 13-year cicadas and 17-year cicadas," said Chris Wade, the pesticide section administrator at the [Delaware Department of Agriculture](#).

The closest brood to Delaware will be in southern Maryland with Brood XIX cicadas, which come around every 13 years. Illinois will be hit the hardest with both the 13-year and 17-year bugs migrating from their burrow underneath trees. The next periodical cicada emergence in the First State will be Brood X — one of the 15 types of periodical cicadas — in 2038.

"So a normal year for Delaware is the annual cicadas. Those are the ones that are green and brownish colored," Wade said. "The periodicals are black with the red eyes. They're a little bit smaller but their colors are brighter so people can see that, and they get more excited than the regular ones."

A normal cicada season involves an ascension of the insects in late June or early July. Their arrival will be almost impossible to miss with their clicking mating sound and their exoskeletal shells left on trees and the ground. The female cicadas make slits at the end of tree branches to lay their eggs.

"Then those larvae emerge and fall into the soil beneath the tree," Wade said, "and they burrow into the ground and they feed on the tree roots and other plant roots in the area." By September, the larvae are all buried, the adults have died off and the cicada season is over. "The adults can feed a little bit, but they don't really feed a lot," Wade said. "Their main purpose is to reproduce, and then they pass away."

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

For the parts of the country experiencing a double brood, Wade said there are not real concerns or negative impacts, but excessive egg laying can damage the tips of some trees.

"We're not going to have that problem here, but they are considered beneficial because they do produce a lot of food sources for pretty much anything that eats insects," he said. "When the cicadas emerge, especially with the double brood, there's an extra supply of food for all the wildlife so animals anywhere from birds, squirrels, racoons and more feed on these cicadas." He said tree damage or death is only a real issue if a bunch of cicadas decide to place their eggs in a small sapling or freshly planted trees.

While the insects spend most of their time on Earth in the ground, they're still productive members of society. They aerate the soil while they're digging through to get to roots, and the aeration helps with water flow and drainage through the trees.

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# JAMIE WYETH: BACK ON THE WALLS AT THE BRANDYWINE

BY VICTORIA ROSE

As you walk into “Jamie Wyeth: Unsettled” at the [Brandywine Museum of Art](#), you are greeted by an experience designed to let you know immediately that this is not a typical Wyeth exhibit. An automaton, a hidden music box spreading sinister tinkling tones and a taxidermied doglike critter on a vintage flotation device stand across from a projection portraying the automaton in full motion in all its grotesque glory.

Wyeth didn’t create them, but he did collect them and the assemblage is the first hint that the exhibit will ask visitors “Are your perceptions trustworthy?” said Amanda C. Burdan, senior curator at the Brandywine Museum of Art and curator of this exhibition.

In more than 50 works, the celebrated artist shows a side many would never expect. Each invites closer inspection.

## WYETH PSYCHE

What may look like a traditional oil painting in the Brandywine Tradition has unnerving elements, sharp shards of a fallen tree or the wingtip of a threatening bird. It is presented in the vein of a haunted house, Burdan said. As the viewer moves through the spaces, they become “nervous about what comes next in the narrative.”

Carrion is displayed in all its visceral clarity and walls in shades of gray and green with mullion-overlaid text panels highlight the shadows of both the natural world and the mind.

With other pieces from Wyeth’s own collection, this exhibition not only shows Wyeth’s perspective, but “introduces you to the mysterious world in which Jamie lives on a daily basis,” Burdan said.

Wyeth led a tour of the exhibition for the press last month. He started with the automaton, noting these robotic creatures were not an instant hit.

“It was a confusing, threatening thing where they put machines into these figurines,” he said.

The music box tones follow as he walks past his other works, where dark figures peek out from behind trees or nature bursts from canvas to envelop the frame.

“Most of my paintings are done in bed at night, dreaming,” said Wyeth. He keeps a notebook by the bed and frequently wakes to scattered pages covered in indecipherable marks, which he translates in his studio to intense, fantastically detailed paintings.

In this exhibition, “Visitors can explore their darker side,” he added. “It is not what you see. It is how it affects you.”

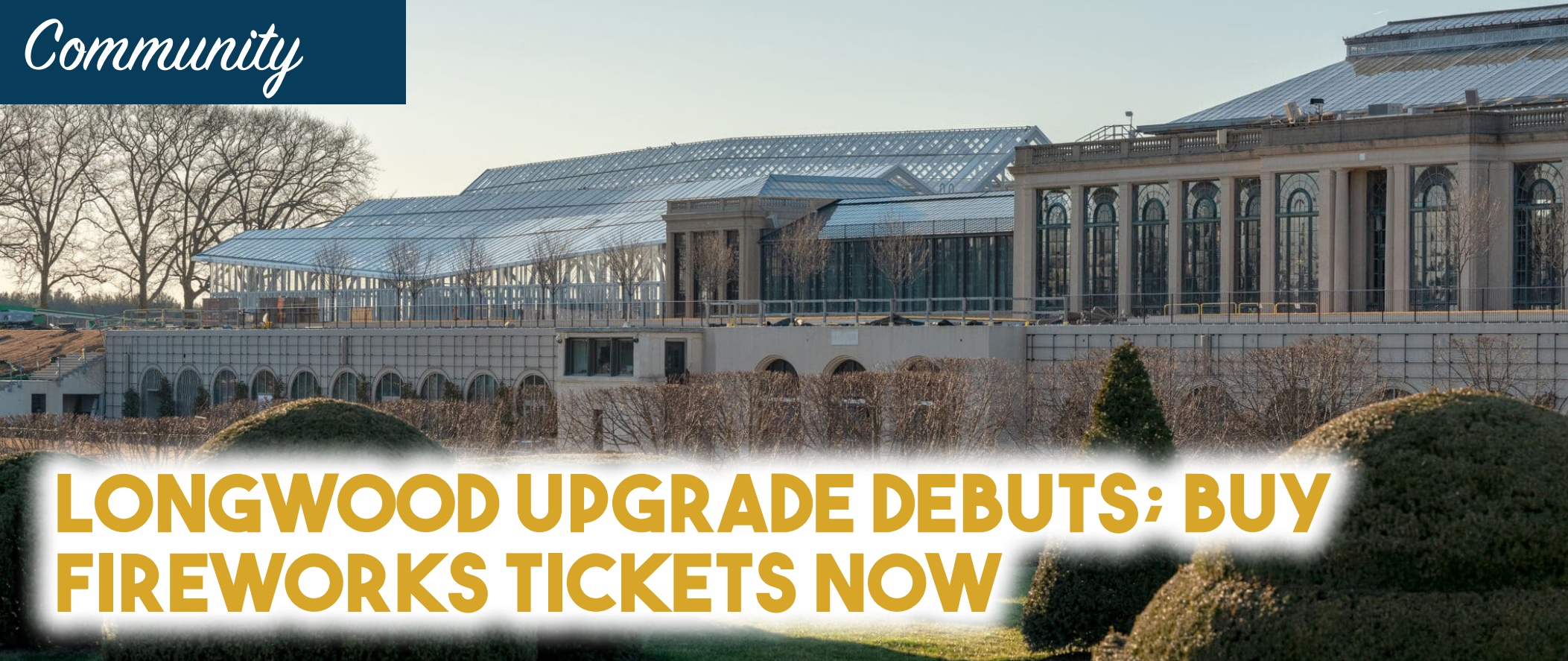
Wyeth, in his dandified disheveled outfit, bright red sneakers highlighting the single red button on his vest, echoes decades, if not centuries, of changing fashion. His paintings and their surroundings reflect that as well. While some have simple wooden frames, others are set in giant gold rococo frames, screen doors, broken glass or dioramas. It is an unexpected use of mixed media.

Perhaps the most intriguing piece is Butcher Shop, a tableau vivant featuring a man at work at his thick wood table, surrounded by the implements and detritus of his craft. It is not a vision for the faint of heart, with bloody streaks down the walls lined with animal carcasses, but the tiny details are exquisite.

One viewer, stunned, said, “Oh, that is the same tile that was in my kitchen as a child,” recreated in perfect miniature.

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# LONGWOOD UPGRADE DEBUTS; BUY FIREWORKS TICKETS NOW

BY BETSY PRICE

Longwood Gardens has announced an early holiday present for its fans: Its \$250 million revitalization project — announced in 2021 as the most ambitious of its upgrades — is expected to open to the public Nov. 22, just in time for A Longwood Christmas and its deluge of visitors.

It also started selling tickets for its popular Fireworks and Fountain Shows starting Tuesday, April 9, and — new this year — they come with designated seat numbers. The shows, which feature illuminated water displays choreographed to classical and popular music start during the July 4 holiday weekend and end Oct. 13.

## LONGWOOD CHANGES

A former du Pont estate, Longwood has not hesitated to spend big bucks on additions to its offerings, often with a focus on better stewardship of the natural world.

It added a meadow garden in 2014, partly as a message about providing habitat for native plants, insects and animals which thrive in the nontoxic environment instead of manicured and chemically support turf.

It's not afraid to have fun, either. The five-year, \$90 million restoration of its formal fountains was the largest in the United States and draws huge crowds to its illuminated fountain shows, sometimes accompanied by fireworks in the summer.

The shows, which went on sale at 10 a.m. Tuesday, often sell out, particularly the July 4 ones. The new reserved seating plan means you choose your seat when you buy a ticket, so there's no need to haul your own chairs to the gardens and jockey for a sightline.

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# MEMORIAL BRIDGE 'DOLPHINS' DESIGNED TO STOP SHIPS LIKE DALI

BY PETER OSBORNE

Could it happen here?

That’s the question Delawareans have been asking since watching the horrific images of the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsing after a cargo ship rammed it last month.

There are no guarantees, but efforts have been underway for 10 years to protect the Delaware Memorial Bridge from ships even larger than the Dali, which hit the Key Bridge March 26, and the state has been running bridge loss scenarios for years.

Drivers on and near the Delaware Memorial Bridge connecting Delaware and New Jersey can take some comfort from the huge cranes that are part of a \$95 million project to update the system that protects against ships crashing into one of the spans. Construction work

on the Delaware Memorial Bridge project began in late July 2023 and is on target to be completed by September 2025. The Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) is installing eight stone- and sand-filled “dolphin” cylinders, each of which measures 80 feet in diameter. Two will be on each side of the bridge’s piers.

“This is a \$95M insurance policy,” said Delaware River and Bay Authority Public Information Officer James Salmon. “You never think you’ll have to use it. You hope it goes untouched, but you will be glad you have it if you need it.”

DRBA is a bi-state governmental agency that owns and operates the bridge, five airports and two ferry systems that connect New Jersey and Delaware.

Meanwhile, the Delaware Emergency Management

Agency conducts annual Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments using different scenarios that test how they would impact the region and its options for responding. At least one focused on how the state would handle a collapse of a bridge like the Delaware Memorial Bridge or the large bridges spanning the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal in 2022, said Director and Homeland Security Advisor A.J. Schall.

In January 2017, DRBA had the Center for Homeland Defense and Security conduct a tabletop exercise involving a ship hitting the Delaware Memorial Bridge. The next year, the bridge had to shut down for more than six hours after a leak of ethylene oxide from the neighboring Croda plant on the high-traffic Sunday evening after Thanksgiving.

The C&D Canal is a 14-mile sea-level ship canal connecting the Chesapeake Bay with the Delaware River. It includes six major automobile and railroad crossings, including the Summit Bridge, the St. Georges Bridge and the William V. Roth Jr. Bridge.

Bridges on the C&D Canal are maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers, which did not respond to requests for an interview.

## MEMORIAL BRIDGE DOLPHINS

The Delaware Memorial Bridge project has been in the River and Bay Authority’s Capital Improvement Program for 10 years between design, permitting, federal funding and COVID, so planners are much further along than other states responding to what happened in Baltimore. Still ...

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# HOW CITY THEATER GROUNDS 'DANCING AT LUGHNASA' IN IRELAND

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

For Michael P. Toner, the vocal coach in the **City Theater Company** production of “Dancing at Lughnasa,” two of the most important things he offered coaching on were “dancing” and “lughnasa.” “Dancing” was important because it’s pronounced differently in Ireland, where the play is set. Think of a broad “a,” as in family or random, he explained, contrasting it with the flat “a” in the Philadelphia accent that he grew up with (and shed).

Dancing also represents a thematic motif in Brian Friel’s memory play revolving around the lives and loves of five sisters in a small Irish town. “They want to break out of their boredom and monotony through dancing, even if it’s only momentarily,” he said. “It’s quite magical.”

“Lughnasa” is a pre-Christian harvest festival that also represents a time for men and women to find potential spouses, he explained. And it’s pronounced LOON-uh-sah. City Theater closes its 30th season with the play, April 19-27, at The Delaware Contemporary on the Wilmington Riverfront.

The autobiographical drama, dedicated to Friel’s mother and aunts, plays out through the memories of its narrator, who recounts the events of a single summer from his childhood in 1936 Ireland. It debuted in Ireland in 1990, won three Tonys in 1992 and was filmed with Meryl Streep in 1998.

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# ST. MICHAEL'S: \$1M FOR CONSTRUCTION, MORE AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A \$1 million federal allocation puts a Wilmington nursery and early childhood education center serving vulnerable families on the doorstep of its \$6.5 million in capital projects. **St. Michael's School & Nursery** now has \$5.5 million raised for its construction needs, which the school started on about a year and a half ago in late 2022.

The most recent funding source came last week, a \$1 million allocation through **Community Project Funding**, which are federal grants that invest in many unique projects like housing, homelessness prevention, workforce training, public facilities, parks, resilience planning and other critical infrastructure and service.

“We are in construction and have been for over a year, we’re almost done and in June, we will have the first

phase of our construction done,” said Lucinda Ross, executive director at St. Michael’s, “and that’s the point of which we will have two new classrooms, we will have six classrooms totally renovated on one half of the building and then they’ll start on the other half of the building.”

The school has not closed during the ongoing construction, largely due to the demographics that it serves. “80% of our families come from subsidized households,” Ross said, “and they struggle day to day, so we did stay open.”

At the beginning of the projects, the school was serving 100 students. After the construction is done — which Ross hopes will be by this October — St. Michael’s will be able to serve about 185 students.

## LACK OF CHILD CARE OPTIONS

In February 2023, **Rodel** — an educational advocacy group that aims to strengthen the state education system and workforce through partnerships and sustainable solutions — published a report that indicated Delaware families do not have adequate access to affordable child care.

In a survey with hundreds of Delaware families aimed at gauging their feelings about child care services, Rodel found that caregivers of children five years and younger shared common complaints about long waitlists, high prices and a lack of options around them. The problem is even worse in Kent and Sussex counties.

Child care affordability and access has been an ongoing problem, so much so that Gov. John Carney made changes earlier this year, such as capping co-pays for families at 7% of family income, removing all co-pays for families below 150% of federal poverty level and increasing compensated absence days from five days to 10.

“It means a lot,” Ross said. “I’m happy to see that there will be more slots open because we have probably around 50 children total on the waitlist, so the need is there.”

Ross applauded Carney’s administration and said she’s thankful it is fighting a battle that isn’t always a popular one with investing into early education and childhood care.

Carney’s administration has more than doubled investments in Purchase of Care and the Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP), to \$83 million in Purchase of Care and \$15.7 million in ECAP for the fiscal year 2025 budget.

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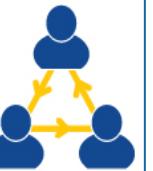
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photo link: SoDel Concepts

# *Food & Dining*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE







# CHEF LHULIER LEAVING SNUFF MILL, SEEKS TO OPEN NEW EATERY

Lhulier, Bill Irvin, and David and Joanne Govatos opened Snuff Mill in 2021, and the steak-centric restaurant was a hit from the start.

“Our guests appreciated the high-quality ingredients, the service and the attention to detail,” he said. “They trusted us to deliver on our promises.”

The Govatoses left the restaurant in 2022 to concentrate on Swigg, their boutique wine store across the Independence Mall parking lot from Snuff Mill.

## LHULIER’S EXPERIENCE BEYOND SNUFF MILL

Lhulier, a 57-year-old Delaware native, has cooked in multiple restaurants, with one of his first jobs after college at Air Transport Command near the New Castle airport, “a kitschy concept built around a World War II theme,” *Out & About* reported.

He later worked in places with finer cuisine, such as The Green Room in the Hotel du Pont and Piccolina Toscana in Trolley Square. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America, he was the opening chef of Deep Blue Bar & Grill in downtown Wilmington.

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BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Chef Robert Lhulier is leaving **Snuff Mill Restaurant, Butchery & Wine Bar**, the Brandywine Hundred establishment that *Delaware Today* said in 2022 is “staking its claim as Delaware’s hottest new eatery.” He is looking for space for a restaurant that he can run, ideally in northern Delaware. “Creatives need to create,” said Lhulier, who majored in art at the University of Delaware.

“There is a large population of sophisticated diners in this area who support independent restaurants. We witnessed the demand at Snuff Mill and people want more options.

“I was a minority partner at Snuff Mill and that was fine. I learned so much and forged strong friendships. Now it’s time to move to the next step.”



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photo link: Town of Newark, Delaware



*Government*

**TOWN SQUARE LIVE**



IQ1 - Initial Questions

# EXPERTS: 'UNAUDITABLE' DELAWARE UNEMPLOYMENT FUND BRINGS RISK

BY KARL BAKER

Delaware's hefty unemployment insurance fund appears to be poorly managed, in need of more staff and may not be able to track companies that fail to pay into the system, according to a panel of national accounting experts. But it does not appear to be at risk of failing to pay jobless claims into the near future.

*Spotlight Delaware* interviewed three accounting professors to gauge their reactions to a **report** last week from Delaware's auditor that called the state's unemployment insurance fund—currently estimated at \$344 million—"unauditable."

It was a grave report card for a key part of the government that serves as a financial backstop for tens of thousands of workers in the state. The report, which relied on an investigation from an outside accounting

firm, concluded that officials within the Delaware Division of Unemployment Insurance couldn't verify how certain dollars had flowed through the fund, and had even stopped their own internal audits on parts of the system last year.

Those problems followed others identified in previous years within the unemployment division, and came even as the state had been paying consultants to reform how the multi-million-dollar pot of money is managed.

The auditor's report also came amid a series of notices about other administrative blunders within the state government. In late March, a federal watchdog stated that Delaware's Medicaid office had paid monthly premiums to health care companies on behalf of people who had already died.

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# COUNCIL APPROVES \$363K FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ON COP RESPONSES

BY JAREK RUTZ

The **Wilmington City Council** approved a resolution Thursday night that pairs mental health clinicians with police officers to respond to calls for service to support individuals experiencing a crisis. **Resolution 0413**, sponsored by Councilwoman Yolanda McCoy, District 6, authorizes the **Wilmington Police Department's** grant application to the **Delaware Criminal Justice Council** in the amount of \$363,000.

The funds will be used to support the police department's **Partners in Care Co-responder Program**. The program is a collaborative effort with **ChristianaCare**, which will supply two mental health professionals and a community health liaison to work alongside police officers. Funding will support the continuation of the city's contract with ChristianaCare Health Systems,

as well as training for program staff, the purchase of equipment and other expenses related to this program.

"I do want the public and my colleagues here to understand how we are in front of this," said Councilwoman Maria Cabrera, At-Large. "The benefits of having a mental health specialist, having someone there for certain police calls...I believe we will see a difference in the outcomes of those interactions between police and community members, which has also been a concern across the country with some of the behaviors we have seen."

Councilman Chris Johnson, District 7, said this is one of the moments in which he's honored and privileged to serve on council.

"This is actually emotional for me because we have worked with Councilmember McCoy, Councilmember

Oliver, went up to Newark, NJ, years ago and talked about CPS," Johnson said. "I talked about all this and to finally see this in action, really makes it worth it."

He said regardless of the negative press the council sometimes gets, it is doing a lot to move the city of Wilmington forward, and prioritizing and understanding the importance of mental health is crucial.

Cabrera said this resolution shows how Wilmington is more progressive than many other cities.

"This is a council working together to solve large problems," Johnson said. "This is one of my proudest moments on council."

Councilwoman Zanthia Oliver, District 3, gave kudos to ChristianaCare for being open to the partnership.

"You know, it's an addiction, it's a mental problem that people just don't like to discuss, but it's relevant," she said, "so I'm just glad."

Several other council members said they were proud to be able to invest in this mental health service.

"We have a lot of people who are really having issues, and this program is going to be essential to be a little bit more proactive about those types of things," McCoy said.

On the Wilmington Police Department's website, Chief Wilfredo Campos stated that on a daily basis, his police officers encounter individuals suffering from mental and behavioral health challenges who require assistance beyond the scope of a traditional law enforcement response.

"Our new Partners in Care Program will help connect individuals in need with resources that are better tailored to address their needs," he said.

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photo credit: Appoquinimink School District



*Education*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





BY JAREK RUTZ

The vice president of **Appoquinimink School District**'s Board of Education warned the community that disaster will ensue if the district's second attempt at a referendum fails this month.

"We have to cut 91 positions. That's about 5% of our staff," said Vice President Richard Forsten, who describes himself as a fiscal conservative.

The district is hoping to raise about \$77.8 million in local revenue: \$11,126,000 for operating costs and \$66,663,550 for capital costs.

"It's a significant percentage, and we have to make \$5 million in cuts, starting with the budget that begins July 1 if the operational ask fails," he said.

The district will need to accommodate an additional 3,000 students next year and classroom student numbers could swell to 45 in some cases, he said. "That's not a threat," he said. "Just look at the numbers."

Appo's first try at a referendum failed in December 2023. It was a tight decision. Here are the votes:

# APPO VP: 'UGLY CUTS,' 45 KIDS IN CLASS IF REFERENDUM FAILS

- Section I: 3,243 votes against; 2,989 for. Raising taxes 43 cents per \$100 of assessed property value for operating expenses, including educator compensation and technology.
- Section II: 3,303 votes against; 2,963 for. Raising taxes three cents per \$100 of assessed property value for capital projects, including a Summit middle school and high school and Green Giant Road elementary school.
- Section III: 2,583 votes against; 2,577. Raising taxes one cent per \$100 of assessed property value for safety and a bus lot at A.G. Waters Middle School.

The average assessment in Appo is \$92,700, so for the average homeowner, if both the capital and operating components of the referendum pass, their tax bill would go up \$396 per year, \$33 per month or about \$1.08 a day.

Using Appo's **tax impact calculator**, a home value of \$150,000 will result in a \$53.63 per month tax hike for the family, a \$250,000 value equates an \$89.38 per month increase and a \$400,000 home value will result in a \$143 per month tax hike.

Appo's second and final attempt to have a successful referendum is Tuesday, April 23, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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# WILLIAM PENN, DEL TECH LAUNCH PATHWAY TO EXPAND NURSING PIPELINE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A newly-funded career pathway partnership between a state college and a high school aims to tackle the national nursing shortage while giving students college credits to advance into a career in health care. **Delaware Technical Community College** and William Penn High School in the Colonial School District announced Monday the launch of the Patient Care Technician/Nursing Pathway Program. The partnership gives up to 15 sophomores at William Penn the opportunity to earn college credits before they receive their high school diploma.

“We have 15 current sophomores, going to be juniors next year, who will be traveling to Del Tech campus every other day for half of their school day,” said Jordan Hudson, who’s a teacher for the **Allied Health** program at William Penn.

Allied Health is a major designed to be a springboard for students to develop the skills and behaviors necessary to enhance their knowledge and practice of general health and wellness. With a focus on Health Care Technician, students explore and prepare for several medical professions. The partnership with Del Tech bolsters that program.

“They will be taking about 12 college credits between junior and senior year, and they will be able to earn certifications in CNA [certified nursing assistant], patient care technician, as well as the current phlebotomy and EKG [electrocardiogram] certifications that are programs here on campus that William Penn already offers.”

The selected students will earn those workforce credentials that will allow them to start jobs in the health care industry while they are completing their college degrees.

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# GET TO KNOW DELAWARE'S 2X POETRY QUEEN, MAISS HUSSEIN

“When I was first reading through it, it just was a feeling that I knew this is the one, that if I were to make it to the third round, that’s how I would want to end it off,” she said. “It put the icing on the cake and it talks about hope and what hope is supposed to feel like, and even when you don’t ask for hope, it’s just always there in the air, and I really resonated with that.”

Her round one poem was “**Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear**” by Mosab Abu Toha, and her round two poem was “**If They Should Come for Us**” by Fatimah Asghar.

“Dickinson’s poem took both of the ideas of poem one and two, and I thought it kind of mixed them together and said “This is what my poems are and this is what they mean to me,” Hussein said. “And that’s why I absolutely love that poem by Emily Dickinson. She really rounded it off and put it to a nice ending with the other two.”

“Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear” is about what is lost in war and what is preserved, both tangible and intangible. Its author, Mosab Abu Toha, is Hussein’s favorite poet.

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**BY JAREK RUTZ**

The back-to-back scholastic poetry champion won her most recent crown with a poem she says was way out of her comfort zone, but served as the perfect finale.

A proud Palestinian, a powerful performer and a hopeful dentist with blooming curiosity, Hodgson Vo-Tech senior Maiss Hussein’s victory this year in the state **Poetry Out Loud** competition was just as sweet as her first-place finish in 2023.

Hussein’s third-round and final poem in this year’s contest was “Hope is the thing with feathers” by Emily Dickinson, which captures the theme of hope metaphorically inside a strong bird that lives within the human soul.

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# DE DOE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT, COACHING FOR COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID

BY JAREK RUTZ

College is more expensive than it's ever been, but a state agency is trying to financially ease the burden for Delaware students looking to advance their education post-high school. The **Delaware Department of Education** announced April 4 that it's offering support to students applying for financial aid for college who have been affected by delayed federal financial aid determinations.

"We will continue to look for ways to remove hurdles and provide direct support to help students interested in pursuing their education after high school find the resources and assistance they need to succeed," said Mark Holodick, Delaware Secretary of Education.

The **U.S. Department of Education** recently transformed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. The newer FAFSA reflects changes to processes that were 40 years old, including changes to

the length of the form and eligibility calculations. These changes ultimately will benefit more than seven million students who will be eligible to receive a Pell Grant, which provides a maximum of \$7,395 a year for low-income families.

However, the new FAFSA roll out has had challenges, including a three-month delay in the opening of the 2024-25 FAFSA application and delayed responses. As of March 1, 2024, 32 percent fewer Delaware high school seniors have filed a 2024-2025 FAFSA than last year, reflective of the national trend. Regionally, 35.7 percent fewer students have filed a FAFSA.

Both the state's SEED and Inspire scholarships require FAFSA completion so it is imperative that students complete the FAFSA before the fall 2024-25 semester begins.

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*Sports*

TOWN SQUARE LIVE





# ON THE PITCH: WEEK 3 GIRLS' SOCCER TOP 10

BY JASON WINCHELL

The weather doesn't look good again this week as the girls' soccer resumes play for the final four week sprint to the state tournament.

This week we have a Division 2 semifinal rematch as Saint Mark's travels to Friends on Tuesday. These teams split the two matches last season as Friends won 3-0 at Saint Mark's on May 8. Then these two teams met in the semifinals on May 31 at Saint Mark's. The Spartans won 4-2. This is the rubber match in the last 12 months as the Quakers host the Spartans.

The Padua Pandas tough schedule continues this week as they face two more ranked teams. They opened the season at Division 1 No. 2 Appoquinimink, then played Division 2 No. 2 Saint Mark's. Now this week they have a pair of road matches against ranked teams.

They play No. 3 Wilmington Charter and No. 6 Smyrna. Here is the week 2 Delaware Live Rankings after the third week of competition.

## DIVISION 1

**No. 1 Middletown (3-0)(LW No. 1)** The Cavs return from the break with two home games, as they hosted Christiana on Tuesday and play DMA on Friday.

**No. 2 Appoquinimink (3-1)(LW No. 2)** The Jags had a road match at Newark Charter on Monday night and they hosted No. 8 Odessa on Wednesday.

**No. 3 Wilmington Charter (3-1)(LW No. 4)** The Force hosted No. 7 Padua on Tuesday and host MOT Charter on Thursday.

**No. 4 Polytech (3-0-1)(LW No. 5)** The Panthers have a busy week against some of the toughest Henlopen

teams. They traveled to No. 6 Smyrna on Tuesday night, then travel to Division 2 No. 4 Sussex Academy on Thursday.

**No. 5 Sussex Tech (3-0-1)(LW Unranked)** The Ravens traveled to Delmarva Christian on Tuesday and Delmar on Thursday night.

**No. 6 Smyrna (1-2)(LW No. 3)** The Eagles have a big week as they hosted No. 4 Polytech on Tuesday night in a big Henlopen North match, then host No. 7 Padua on Thursday night.

**No. 7 Padua (1-2)(LW No. 7)** The Pandas traveled to No. 3 Wilmington Charter on Tuesday and visit No. 6 Smyrna on Thursday night.

**No. 8 Odessa (2-1-1)(LW No. 6)** The Ducks hosted No. 9 Delcastle on Monday and traveled to No. 2 Appoquinimink on Wednesday.

**No. 9 Delcastle (2-1)(LW No. 9)** The Cougars traveled to No. 8 Odessa on Monday and hosted St. Georges Tech on Wednesday.

**No. 10 Caesar Rodney (3-1)(LW Unranked)** The Riders traveled to Milford on Monday and then visits Division 2 No. 6 Indian River on Thursday.

## DIVISION 2

**No. 1 Caravel (3-0)(LW No. 1)** The Bucs hosted ECHS on Wednesday and travel to Tower Hill on Saturday.

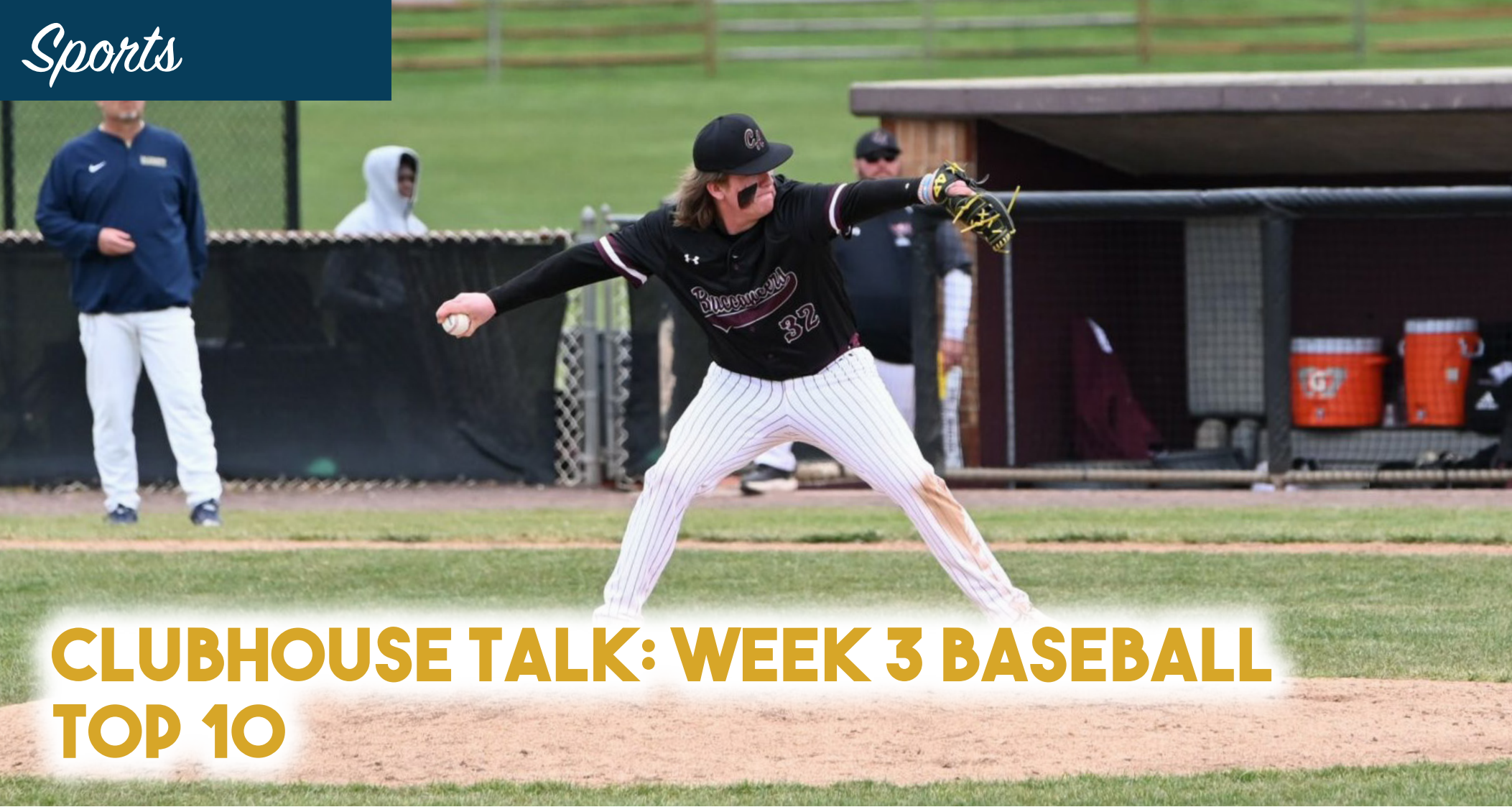
**No. 2 Saint Mark's (2-0)(LW No. 2)** The Spartans traveled to Friends on Tuesday.

**No. 3 Archmere (2-0)(LW No. 4)** The Auks traveled to No. 7 Conrad on Wednesday and host Ursuline on Friday.

**No. 4 Sussex Academy (2-0)(LW No. 6)** The Seahawks hosted Woodbridge on Saturday, then host Division 1 No. 4 Polytech on Thursday.

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# CLUBHOUSE TALK: WEEK 3 BASEBALL TOP 10

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Rain, rain, rain and rain was what we saw last week. Four straight days of rainouts that rescheduled a lot of games this last week. There were a few games played over the weekend, including our No. 1 team who finally saw the field.

No. 1 DMA finally got a game this week and picked up where they left off in their championship run last season. The bats were hot for the Seahawks who totalled 11 hits and scored nine runs. Charlie Porter and Tyler Leech provided the power as Porter hit two home runs including a grand slam, while Leech added a triple and a home run.

Cape, Sussex Central and Saint Mark's all are still undefeated. Sussex Tech and Sanford each suffered losses last week. So we will have some changes in our top 10 from last week.

This week a lot of games that we should get in with the weather finally looking like springtime. We have some more top 10 teams in action and a big top five matchups that could shake up our top 10 rankings. Now let's take a look at weeks' top ten rankings.

**No. 1 Delaware Military Seahawks (DMA) (1-0)** finally hit the field last week and made a splash. They defeated Conrad 9-3 to get their first win of the season.

They scored nine runs off of 11 hits while Hunter Dicarantonio picked up his first varsity win on the mound. The Seahawks have three games this week and they hit the road for all of them. They headed to Newark Charter Tuesday, Dover on Thursday and No. 6 William Penn on Saturday which is a top 10 matchup. This game will be streamed live on our [channel](#).

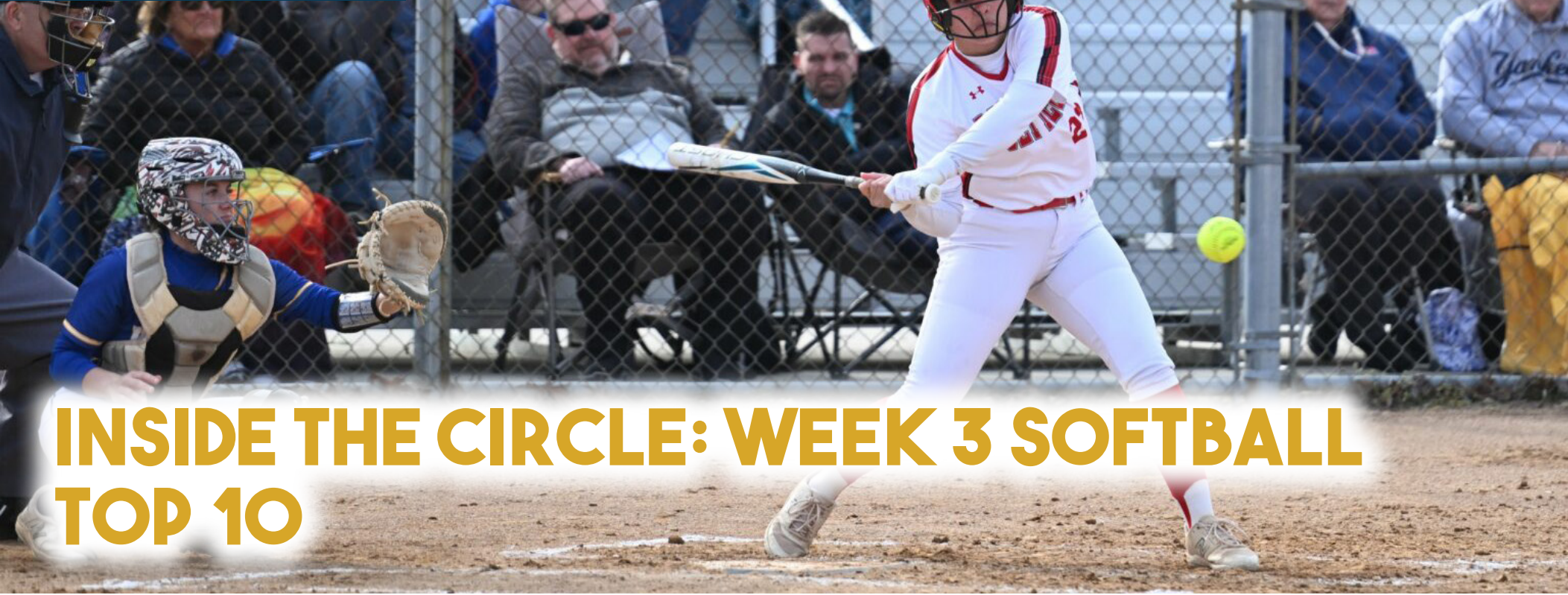
**No. 2 Cape Henlopen (6-0)** two wins last week and another shutout. The Vikings defeated Dover and blanked Appoquinimink 10-0. Transfer Brad Marks got his third win for the Vikings. Cape will host all three games this week. They faced Indian River on Tuesday, No. 3 Caravel on Wednesday in a top five matchup, then face Conrad on Saturday.

**No. 3 The Caravel Buccaneers (3-0)** got a win last week over the Shipley School out of Pennsylvania. Timothy Tyler got his second win of the season. They traveled to No. 2 Cape Henlopen on Wednesday for a big top five matchup. Then on Saturday they travel downstate to play Laurel. Wednesday's matchup was the first matchup of the top five teams.

**No. 4 Sussex Central Golden Knights (6-0)** defeated Milford and Salesianum last week making a statement with a 15-2 victory over the Sals. Joaquin Rodriguez got his third win of the season for the Golden Knights while the offense continued to stay hot. Central has two games this week and both of them are away. They traveled to Lake Forest on Tuesday, then to Stephen Decatur (MD) on Thursday for an out of state game.

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# INSIDE THE CIRCLE: WEEK 3 SOFTBALL TOP 10

BY GLENN FRAZER

The old saying goes, “April showers, bring May flowers”. For the softball teams in the state it means postponements and rescheduling games. Many teams will be adjusting schedules in the coming weeks. Here is our “week 3” Top 10.

**No. 1 Caravel (3-0)** The Buccaneers got one game in last week, winning 9-1 at Sussex Tech as Kasey Xenidis threw a no-hitter through the first four innings. She also had a double and a triple at the plate. Catcher Zayda Rocke homered in the win. Caravel hosted last year’s finalist Indian River on Monday and play No. 8 Cape on Saturday.

**No. 2 Sussex Central (4-0)** The Golden Knights picked up two wins last week versus Milford and Nandua (VA). In the Milford game, Madge Layfield recorded 17 strike-

outs including the 800th of her career. The Knights have two games scheduled this week vs. Delmar and Stephen Decatur (MD).

**No. 3 St. Marks (5-0)** The Spartans improved to 5-0 with a 6-3 win over Indian River. Gabby Saggione and Liv Datillo combined for the win in the circle. Chloe Bedwell scored three runs to lead the offense. Brandywine is up next for Saint Mark’s, then a game Saturday against No. 5 Laurel.

**No. 4 Appo (3-0)** The Jags have only one game until April 16, as they were supposed to meet Red Lion under the lights Tuesday. Appo alum Tayler Vitola (Class of 2020) was honored as the CAA female Scholar-Athlete of the year for the 2023-24. Vitola plays infield for the UNCW Seahawks.

**No. 5 Laurel (3-1)** The Bulldogs defeated No. 10 DMA by a score of 5-1 last week. They will be tested this week with games against No. 9 Smyrna and No. 3 Saint Mark’s.

**No. 6 Lake Forest (5-0)** The Spartans improved to 5-0 and made a slight jump over Polytech in our poll. Those two will meet at Lake Thursday, however (guess what?) rain is in the forecast. Carah Sumpter is at it again as she not only picked up the win, but went 3-for-4 at the “dish” versus St. Georges Tech. Lake is scheduled to face CR and Polytech this week.

**No. 7 Polytech (2-1)** The Panthers only scheduled game was rained out last week. Polytech has four games this week against Caesar Rodney, Seaford, Lake and SGT.

**No. 8 Cape Henlopen (1-0)** Coach Mike Tkach and the Vikings can’t catch a break in the weather with just one game played this season. The Vikings will make up for the lack of play with four games this week starting with Dover, then Sussex Academy, IR and Caravel Saturday.

**No. 9 Smyrna (3-2)** The Eagles’ only losses have come at the hands of No. 1 Caravel and No. 2 Sussex Central. The Eagles’ game Saturday, April 6, at Red Lion was postponed. The No. 5 Laurel Bulldogs are the next opponent for Smyrna.

**No. 10 DMA (1-1)** The ‘hawks fell to No. 5 Laurel 5-1 last week and will take on Newark Charter, Sussex Academy and Conrad this week.

There are some teams hoping to break our top 10 like last year’s finalist Indian River (2-2) with losses to No. 3 Saint Mark’s and No. 5 Laurel. The Middletown Cavaliers (2-1) are also on our radar, with their lone defeat at the hands of No. 3 Saint Mark’s.





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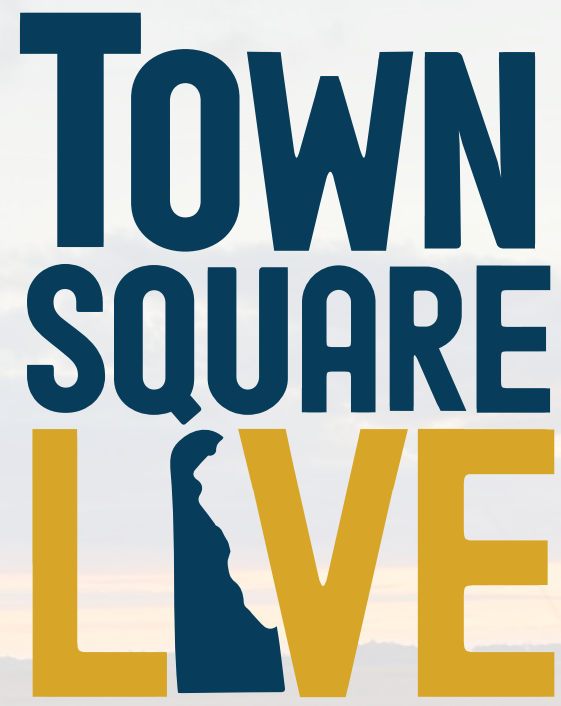


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