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Greek Pastries and Coffee Brewed in Sand



Addie Till Wins Girls' Wrestling National Title

photo link: Brandywine Creek State Park



Headlines

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IS PRIMARK HEADING TO CONCORD MALL? HERE'S THE TRUTH

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

“I guess Concord Mall isn’t completely on its way out after all,” the Facebook post read. “The landlord is telling tenants that Primark is going where Sears once was.”

DelawareLive.com called **Concord Mall** to get the truth. “No,” said mall manager Tom Dahlke. Ours was the third that he has received about the rumor, he said. “Completely and absolutely BS.”

“Sears still owns its building, and what happens is up to them,” he said, adding that he believes that Sears would only be interested in selling the building and not renting it. That said, “Primark would not be a bad choice” for the vacant department store. Sears closed its store in 2020.

Primark is a clothing retailer that began in Ireland in 1969 as Penneys but it doesn’t use that elsewhere because of JCPenney. It also sells beauty products, home-ware and accessories.

In 2015, it opened its first store in the United States.

“Today we have 17 stores in the US with plenty more in the pipeline,” according to the store’s website. The nearest to Delaware is in King of Prussia, PA.

In May, the company announced it’s opening two stores in New York and one in New Jersey.



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REPUBLICAN BILLS ON EV REGULATION MEET COMMITTEE OPPOSITION

BY SAM HAUT

Two Republican bills that would stop DNREC from implementing an unpopular electric vehicle mandate failed in House and Senate committees.

Senate Bill 96, sponsored by Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, would forbid the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) from making any rules or regulations that would restrict the sale of gas-powered vehicles.

House Bill 123, sponsored by Rep. Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek, has almost the exact same language as Pettyjohn's bill, except that Ramone's bill retroactively applies starting Mar. 1, 2023.

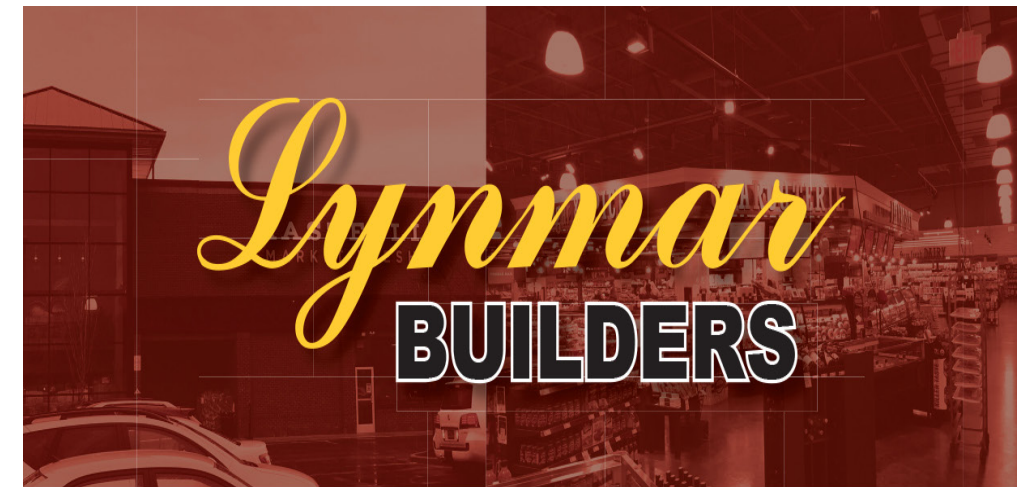
SB 96 was heard Wednesday in the Senate Environment, Energy & Transportation Committee, and HB 123 was heard in the House Natural Resources & Energy Committee. Senate committees don't vote publically on

bills. Members sign the bill and the results are reported on the state's online bill trackers. At 5:15 p.m. Thursday, 24 hours after the hearing, the results still were not reported online.

In the House hearing, the bill failed 5 to 4, but Hefferman agreed to get the votes of everyone on the committee because five members were absent on a day crowded with hearings. About 5 p.m. Thursday, a notice went up that the bill didn't have enough votes to be released.

Neither bill requires a fiscal note. Both have the same 20 additional sponsors and cosponsors, all Republicans.

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DELMARVA POWER RESIDENTIAL ELECTRICITY BILLS UP 9.91%

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Delmarva Power's electricity rate for Delaware went up June 1, the company said, and "the average residential customers will see their overall electric bill increase 9.91% or \$12.47 a month." The new rates—there are 16 of them on a flier distributed with the latest bill—were approved by the state Public Service Commission, it said. The flier also has been posted online.

Delmarva Power in December filed a plan to increase rates by \$72.3 million, the state said, following a \$16.7 million increase approved in 2021. The public advocate, a state employee who, well, advocates for the public, quickly blasted the proposal.

The flier explains hikes for Standard Offer Service customers, meaning people who buy electricity from

Delmarva, not from a firm that promises to be cheaper or more environmentally friendly.

There are four rates for residential supply service charges: residential (Rate R), residential space heating (Rate RSH), residential time of use non-demand (Rate R-TOU-ND) and plug-in vehicle charging (Rate PIV). Each of those rates has a summer rate (June-September) and a winter rate (the rest of the year).

Rate R has two distribution rates, one for the first 500 kWh, and another for excess beyond that. These distribution rates don't, at the moment, differ.

Rate RSH has four distribution rates, for the first 500 kWh in summer, another for excess beyond that in summer, the first first 500 kWh in winter and the rest

in the winter. Once again, the excess rates are the same as the base rates, but the winter rates are more expensive.

Rate R-TOU-ND has two distribution rates, with the rate for peak usage about 2.4 times as expensive as off-peak rates. Rate PIV has two distributions rates, with the rate for peak usage about 3.5 times as expensive as off-peak rates. The peak PIV rate is Delmarva's most expensive rate on the flier and the off-peak rate the least expensive. It's their way of encouraging people to charge their vehicles overnight.

But, wait there's more! This writer examined his Delmarva Power bill and failed to find his rate code. But knowing that he doesn't have space heaters nor a vehicle charger and didn't sign up for non-demand or an alternative supplier, he's concluding that he's a basic Rate R.

His bill for electricity includes 11 charges: customer charge, distribution charge, low-income charge, green energy fund, renewable compliance charge for wind and solar, renewable compliance charge for qualified fuel cells, distribution system improvement charge, energy efficiency surcharge, EDIT credit six year, transmission capacity charge and standard offer service charge.





Culture

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photo link: Clear Space Theatre Company





PLAYHOUSE SEASON TO INCLUDE FAMILIAR SHOWS, FAMOUS NAMES

BY BETSY PRICE

The rhythm won't be the only thing that gets you in The Playhouse on Rodney Square's 2023-24 season. The season includes six musicals, many with familiar names, and solo shows by Broadway stars Alan Cumming, Sutton Foster, and husband-wife David Foster and Katharine McPhee. The four-show Broadway in Wilmington subscription series will feature:


- "Pretty Woman: The Musical," drawn from the beloved Richard Gere-Julia Roberts movie, Oct. 13-15.
- "On Your Feet!," the story of Cuban-American musicians Gloria and Emilio Estefan's rise to stardom, March 7-10, 2024.
- "Come from Away," an ultimately uplifting story of a small community that welcomed airplanes from around the world after the 9/11 attacks, April 19-21, 2024.

- "Little Women," a retelling of Louisa May Alcott's classic story of sisters growing up during the Civil War, May 9-12, 2024.

Two crowd-pleaser extras will round out the season: "Million Dollar Quartet Christmas" in November and "Annie," who in the doldrums of January (5-7) will promise us all the sun will come out tomorrow.

"Million Dollar Quartet Christmas," which will run Nov. 17-19, imagines Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins gathering a second time, as they were known to do in December 1956, but this time singing holiday fare such as "Run Rudolph Run," "Jingle Bell Rock" and "I'll Be Home For Christmas."




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FORMER DE POET LAUREATE JOANN BALINGIT WINS FULBRIGHT

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware's 16th poet laureate is headed to the Philippines to teach creative writing and conduct research. JoAnn Balingit, who was the First State's top and official poet from 2008 to 2015, has been named a 2023-2024 Fulbright U.S. Scholar.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government's international educational exchange program, supported by American agencies and partner countries around the world. It's funded through an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Balingit, an advocate for art education, has directed state-wide programs such the Delaware Writing Region of Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for middle school and high school students. She's led poetry workshops and writing retreats for adults, and has taught poetry writing at the University of Delaware, as well as teaching creative writing classes at New Castle County Libraries for the Creative Aging program, which focuses on storytelling through memory work. She has been a coordinator and teaching artist for Delaware's Poetry Out Loud program for the past 15 years.

Her project "WHAT WERE the NAMES of the TREES? A Memoir" is a lyrical work about growing up bi-racial in the American South, and coming of age in the aftermath of the violent loss of her parents.

Separated from her eight younger siblings, the lonely teen in the novel enters adulthood desperate to belong. She seeks an understanding of her Filipino family history and the forces that shaped her father's education and environment as a U.S. colonial subject before he migrated to the United States. The memoir explores her attitude toward her mixed identity.

More than 800 U.S. citizens will teach or conduct research abroad for the 2023-2024 academic year through the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program. The program also includes more than 2,000 American students in over 100 fields of study to learn, teach English and conduct research overseas. [Learn](#) more about the program.



DELAWARE JUNETEENTH CELEBRATIONS RUN THROUGHOUT MONTH



BY JAREK RUTZ

The First State has a number of events and ceremonies to celebrate and honor a newly-established federal holiday in mid-June. Juneteenth, short for June 19, is a holiday that celebrates June 19, 1865. That day, Union Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger and his officers arrived in Galveston, TX, to free any remaining slaves. It was two months after the Civil War had ended and more than two years after the **Emancipation Proclamation** was signed by President Abraham Lincoln.

The date became a national holiday in 2021, when President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, making the day America’s 12th federal holiday. A flag raising ceremony kicked off the celebrations Monday at **Route 9 Library and Innovation Center** in Wilmington.

Other Juneteenth events include:

- The **Chase Center** in Wilmington is holding a Juneteenth Gala Sunday, June 11 at 5 p.m. Cost is \$100 per person or \$750 per table of eight. Proceeds go towards the Juneteenth Family Enrichment Program that hosts the Delaware Miss Juneteenth Pageant.
- **Delaware Historical and Cultural Affairs** is hosting “Mock Freedom: Delaware’s Black Codes” Saturday, June 17 from 2 to 4 p.m. at **Zwaanendael Park** in Lewes, adjacent to the Zwaanendael Museum. It centers on the discriminatory laws passed in Delaware from the 18th to 20th centuries. Using primary sources and other historic examples, historian Alex Rumm and participants will explore this part of Delaware’s legal history and the lasting ramifications. Admission is free.

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SPEEDING CAMPAIGN SET JUNE 9-17 ON MAJOR DELAWARE ROADS

BY JAREK RUTZ

A campaign against speeding is planned for June on Delaware's major roads. **Operation Braking Point 2.0** runs June 9 through June 17 on Interstate 95, Interstate 495, US Route 13, US Route 113 and State Route 1. Delaware State Police call it a "zero-tolerance, high-visibility traffic safety and enforcement campaign." Speeding contributed to one-third of all fatal traffic crashes in 2022, according to the Delaware Office of Highway Safety.

The first Operation Braking Point **ran** in January on I-95, I-495 and Route 1. "Troopers completed 57 directed patrols during the first Operation Braking Point, resulting in 464 tickets being issued, 270 of which were for speeding," according to Senior Corporal Leonard DeMalto. There were 27 traffic fatalities on those three highways last year. Of those fatalities, 37% were speed-related.

For the latest Operational Braking Point, 96 patrol blocks can be worked, with 12 given to each troop, "but it is not guaranteed that each assignment will be filled," DeMalto said. "These Operation Braking Point patrol blocks will significantly increase the police presence on the aforementioned roadways."

"Patrols will be conducted with a zero-tolerance approach throughout all hours of the day," the State Police announcement said. Electronic signs and boards will remind drivers to slow down or be ticketed.

The campaign also involves police departments from Blades, Delmar, Dover, Milford, Newark, New Castle County, Newport and Selbyville; the state Office of Highway Safety; and the Delaware Department of Transportation.

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Business

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CLEAN HYDROGEN COMPANY WINS REINVENTING DE CONTEST

BY SAM HAUT

A company that would build a plant in Delaware to create clean hydrogen won the 2023 Reinventing Delaware program sponsored by the Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation.

If implemented, a manufacturing plant would use fresh water in an electrolysis process that splits water into hydrogen gas and oxygen gas. The idea championed by Andrew Cottone, CEO of Adesis, a chemistry contract development and research organization, won the group \$15,000 to pursue the idea.

Clean Hydrogen was one of four projects in the running for the title. The three other top ideas include Spotlight Delaware, championed by Allison Levine; zero homelessness, by Jeffrey Ronald and Judson

Malone; and #Move2Delaware, by Linda Parkowski, Shelly Cecchett, Scott Malfitano and Troy Mix.

“While all four ideas will make Delaware better, Clean Hydrogen was clearly the boldest,” said Thère du Pont, board chair of the foundation, named for his father and former Delaware governor.

In order for Cottone to claim the prize money, he must start a company that will develop the idea of clean hydrogen. That could include the first wind-sourced hydrogen electrolysis plant in the country. Byproducts of the process, heavy and semi-heavy water, would also be used in some way.

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Providing Big Support For Delaware's Small Businesses




business.delaware.gov

photo credit: Jorge Zapata / PEXELS



Food & Dining

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BY PAM GEORGE

While contemplating career choices, Antonios Fessaras flipped through a family photo album and saw an image of his grandfather.

“He had a coffee shop back home in Greece, and that’s the business that my father grew up in before the family came to America,” said Fessaras, who studied business at Wilmington University.

In Greece, the “kafenio” shop is the hub for socialization and relaxation but also contemplation, if you’re sipping your coffee alone. While Delaware has no shortage of coffee shops, Fessaras saw a niche.

In May, he opened **CafeNeo** at 139 S. Main St. in Newark. The restaurant features Greek pastries and novel Greek coffee. Unlike many grab-and-go coffee

CAFENEO'S OFFERINGS: GREEK PASTRIES, COFFEE BREWED IN SAND

shops in Delaware, CafeNeo invites guests to sit and sip for a spell.

“In Greece, you see groups of people by the droves just hanging out, having a coffee, exchanging stories, things like that,” he said.

The Appoquinimink High School graduate is bringing his family legacy full circle in more ways than one. His father is the original owner of Daffy Deli, a much-loved sandwich shop for UD graduates in the 1970s and ’80s.

COFFEE SERVED WITH GROUNDS

So, what is Greek coffee? It’s more of a process than a type of bean. Finely ground coffee—finer than espresso grounds—is placed with water in an ibrik, a copper pot with a long handle. The pot is nestled in hot sand to brew, after which the contents are poured into a small cup—grounds and all.

“You wait for the grounds to settle and just drink it as is,” Fessaras explained. “It doesn’t require any dairy product—it’s extremely smooth. But the coffee grounds specifically stay in the drink for potency.”

If Greek coffee seems similar to Turkish coffee, consider that the Ottoman Empire once covered most areas of Greece, which explains the similarities in food throughout the region.

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Government

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CHANGING 'WOMAN' TO 'PERSON' DOESN'T STOP MATERNITY BILL

BY SAM HAUT

Republicans and Democrats went back and forth in arguing about the definition of woman in a maternity health bill, but all agreed on the need to raise awareness about human trafficking.

Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 106, sponsored by Sen. Kyle Gay, D-Elsmere, would replace the words “woman” and “women” with “person” and “people” in the Delaware code on maternal health and also change the term maternal depression to perinatal mood and anxiety disorder. The bill’s number was changed from Senate Bill 106 about half an hour before the Senate came into session on Thursday.

While both bills are similar, the substitute removes reference to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and adds information on perinatal mood and anxiety disorder to anyone who is pregnant, rather than just for people experiencing symptoms of

the mood disorder. Sen. Elizabeth Lockman, D-Wilmington, said that the bill would focus on moms and dads.

“The bill also updates the language to ensure that we are not just focusing on moms, but we are also recognizing that one in 10 dads will develop postpartum depression and up to 18% of new dads will develop clinically significant anxiety disorder. So by ensuring that moms and dads are both getting the help that they need, we can better serve the mental health concerns of our constituents.”

The bill passed 14 to 6. It now will go to the House.

Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, said that the gender silencing legislation the Senate passed, **Senate Bill 97**, has an exemption for areas where references to gender are necessary. He wondered why that wouldn’t apply with Senate Substitute 1. Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, said he was upset about being given the substi-

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tute bill so soon before voting on it and doesn’t want the legislature to change the word “woman” to “person”.

“When I’m presented with a bill that asks me to strike maternal and women from pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood, I’m not doing it,” he said. “It’s not my intent to disparage anybody,” Buckson said. “It is simply to say that words matter and so do moms and motherhood.”

Sen. Dave Lawson, R-Marydel, said he feels the bill is demeaning to women.

“It puts me in quite a quandary here,” Lawson said. “You know, my mother, my wife and daughter are all women. To strike them from a bill that absolutely involves them directly and put in ‘person,’ certainly is demeaning to every woman.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)



GUNS IN SCHOOL ZONES, POLLING PLACES BILLS PASS HOUSE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Two laws restricting the presence of guns in school zones and election polling places passed the House and are headed to a Senate committee for debate.

House Bill 201, sponsored by Speaker of the House Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, aims to enable a police officer to act immediately when they see or suspect a person with a gun in a safe school and recreation zone.

Schwartzkopf cited that as of April 4, 74 people have been killed or injured by guns in schools in 13 separate school shootings across the country. School shootings hit a record high in 2022 with 46 shootings, he said, surpassing 2021's record of 42 shootings. In 2022, 43,450 children experienced a school shooting.

Under the bill, the crime of possession of a firearm in a safe school and recreation zone is a class E felony, which means the culprit could face up to five years in prison. Only police officers, constables or active-duty military personnel who are acting in an official capacity are allowed to have a gun in the school zone, per the bill. However, it allows holders of a valid license to carry concealed weapons only if the firearm is in a vehicle.

Exemptions also include if a gun-holder is on private property not part of school grounds; if the firearm is in a locked container or locked firearms rack that is on or in a motor vehicle; or if a gun-holder is engaged in lawful hunting, firearms instruction or firearm-related sports on public lands not belonging to a school.

A student who possesses a firearm in a safe school and recreation zone will be expelled for at least 90 days, but the local school board or charter school board of directors may, on a case-by-case basis, modify the terms of the expulsion.

Rep. Rich Collins, R-Millsboro, was against the bill. "I don't think the concealed carry folks should have been included," he said, "and what I'm concerned about is all it's going to take is just a careless mistake taking the gun in and now that person is in serious legal trouble."

House Minority Leader Rep. Mike Ramone, R-Pike Creek South, clarified that the law doesn't include Delaware's institutions of higher education.

House Bill 202, sponsored by Rep. Cyndie Romer, D-Newark, limits individuals who possess a firearm at a polling place on an election day to law enforcement officers, commissioned security guards or constables acting in their official capacity or active-duty members of the United States Armed Forces and Delaware National Guard acting in their official capacity. This includes local district elections.

Also Thursday:

House Bill 129, sponsored by Rep. Ronald Gray, R-Bethany Beach, adds definitions for negligence, misconduct and incompetence for the **Council of the Delaware Association of Professional Engineers** to determine whether a licensee is subject to discipline. It also removes the requirement that an applicant who fails the Principles and Practice of Engineering examination four times must go through additional steps before taking the examination another time. Gray said ditching that requirement will eliminate barriers to licensure.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



CLIMATE BILL PASSES HOUSE AFTER VOTE ON TWO AMENDMENTS

BY SAM HAUT

Rep. Rich Collins on Tuesday begged House Democrats to join him in opposing a bill that set greenhouse gas emission limits in Delaware.

“I have begged you to stand up one time and not just take this direction that apparently is so overwhelmingly powerful in this chamber,” the Millsboro Republican said. “And I know I’ve lost. I tell you it’s more than a loss on the bills, folks. This is a lifetime goal. And I’ve lost. And if that gives you satisfaction, more power to you.”

Democrats not only ignored him, but two of his fellow Republicans—Mike Smith, R-Pike Creek, and Kevin Hensely, R-Middletown—joined Democrats in passing the bill 27 to 13.

House Bill 99, sponsored by Rep. Deb Heffernan, D-Bellefonte, would require net greenhouse gas emissions in Delaware to be 50% of the 2005 levels by 2030 and have net zero emissions by 2050.

There were two amendments to the bill, one by Heffernan and the other by Collins. Heffernan’s amendment, which passed unanimously by voice vote, would:

- Have the state consider labor and energy costs in reaching the climate goal.
- Requires DNREC to adopt rules at least 18 months before the effective days of new regulations on emission reductions.
- Changes the name of the Scientific Committee on Climate Scenarios to technical climate advisors.
- Requires the names of the technical climate advisors to be posted publicly.
- Sends the climate action plan to more people than are now scheduled to get it.
- Forces the climate action plan to also include ways to offset emissions.

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UNION MEMBERS SPEAK IN FAVOR OF DUES DEDUCTION BILL

BY SAM HAUT

Several representatives of Delaware unions praised a bill that would allow state tax deductions for union dues, a practice no longer allowed on federal taxes.

Senate Substitute 2 for Senate Bill 72, sponsored by Sen. Nicole Poore, D-Delaware City, would let people claim up to \$500 in a tax credit to pay union dues on state taxes. Opponents say it's unfair to allow union members to get credit for dues when others cannot claim membership dues, but the bill passed the House Revenue & Finance Committee with seven yes votes and two Republican members voting against it. Voting no were Rep. Ronald Gray, R-Bethany/Millville/Fenwick Island and Rep. Mike Smith, R-Pike Creek.

Among those supporting the bill were members of the AFL-CIO, Plumbers & Pipefitters UA Local 74, Sheet Metal Workers Local 19 and the Delaware State Education Association.

Robert Gadsby, a business agent with the Sheet Metal Workers Local 19, said the bill would help its members deal with inflation.

“Not only am I a union member, but I’m also a resident of Kent County who has been struggling with inflation like many of us here,” Gadsby said. “So I think this is a good bill. It’s a strong bill. This would help a lot of our members.”

James Maravelias, the president of the Delaware AFL-CIO, said they support the bill because of the positive impact it will have on their members after the deduction was taken away by the federal **Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017**.

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Education

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LAKE FOREST'S DANA CAREY NAMED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PRO 2023

Lake Forest School District—the Felton, Kent County district servicing 3,600 children—is small, she said, but mighty.

“I am very proud to be a Spartan,” she said, “I would also like to thank my family, my mom, my husband and my three beautiful children, Emma, Mason and Luke.”

She won over nominees from 18 other districts and one charter school.

Carey gets a \$10,000 award—\$5,000 to pocket and \$5,000 for the educational benefit of their students. The other 19 finalists receive \$2,000. Eligible candidates have worked at least three years as a behavioral health professional and hold a certification or licensure credential through the Department of Education and/or the Professional Regulation Board.



BY JAREK RUTZ

Dana Carey, counselor at **Lake Forest North Elementary School**, is this year’s behavioral health pro of the year.

“I would like to first thank my Lake Forest family,” she said. “Thank you so much for being here to support me and love me.”

School behavioral specialists are typically psychologists, counselors, social workers or nurses. They assist teachers by working one-on-one with students who might be disruptive, students who are disengaged due to something like ADHD, or any other behavioral interferences to a child’s learning.



SCHOOL OFFICERS, CONSTRUCTION NEEDS FOCUS OF HOUSE COMMITTEE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Bills dealing with school construction, junior ROTC, Department of Education background checks and school resource officers were sent to the House ready list Wednesday by the Education Committee.

House Bill 169, sponsored by Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton and committee chair, requires the secretary of education—currently Mark Holodick—to publish and deliver a report to the General Assembly detailing requests for certificates of necessity that are not included in the proposed capital budget.

Certificates of necessity are funding requests by districts, usually for capital projects and deferred maintenance that districts lack the local funds to complete. Sometimes, the certificate of necessity includes a smaller percentage of local share that must be voted by district residents through a referendum. Certificates include reasons why they need the money and must be approved by the state.

The report must include reasons for any rejection and a ranking of the rejected projects by need. It also would include a breakdown of the current and previous five years of state spending via certificate of necessities, as well as priority level (1, 2 or 3) of all approved and rejected applications.

“This legislation will provide an opportunity for more transparency for the members of the Bond Committee along with the members of the General Assembly,” Williams said. “With a billion dollars in deferred maintenance across school districts, this legislation will allow for more information about the current status of buildings throughout our state.”

John Marinucci, executive director of the **Delaware School Boards Association**, said he supports the bill and appreciates the legislature’s effort to ensure transparency with funding.

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SENATOR OPPOSES MENTAL HEALTH DAYS FOR STUDENTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

A Republican senator believes Delaware's youth needs to toughen up so they aren't lost in the world when they grow up. Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, said in Wednesday's Senate Education Committee meeting that anxiety is a vital part of a child's development and he was opposed to a bill that would allow students to take mental health days.

House Bill 3, sponsored by House Majority Leader Rep. Valerie Longhurst, D-Bear, provides excused absences for the mental or behavioral health of a student. It also specifies that any student missing two days due to mental health to be referred to a behavioral health specialist.

According to a recent CDC survey, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated an existing mental health crisis for students.

"One in five school aged children has a mental health condition and 45% of children may have experienced a

traumatic event," said Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin and chair of the committee. "Each school district and charter school are able to determine the maximum number of excused absences allowable."

Creating more opportunities for students to miss school is a problem when the state is already challenged with rebounding from the pandemic, both in terms of student achievement and absenteeism, Buckson said.

"There are plenty of kids that have real mental conditions," he said, "but when you take a young person who just needs to go through stuff, it's vitally important that in our schools they develop those calluses learned in a hallway or by having to get up and go to school if they don't want to by facing their anxiety."

He recalled the nerves his own daughter had when entering middle school.

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photo by Benny Mitchell



FAMILIAR FACES END UP IN NEW PLACES IN DOWNSTATE FOOTBALL

BY BENNY MITCHELL

Two new faces will roam the sidelines when high school football kicks off in September. Well, maybe two not so new faces, but familiar faces in new places.

After eight seasons Sean Strickland will leave Milford High School and take over at his alma mater Caesar Rodney. Strickland led Milford to the 2017 Division II state finals. The Riders had 65 athletes participating in their Delaware Interscholastic Football Coaches Association (DIFCA) spring team camp. Strickland said he was pleased with the turnout since the athletes he shares with baseball, lacrosse and track were still competing in their respective state tournaments.

“Being back as CR is absolutely surreal. The first day just standing at midfield and blowing the whistle realizing I am back home, it was truly a dream come true,” Strickland said.

The move to Caesar Rodney will take Strickland from Class AA to Class AAA competition this fall. He said the spring camp is very important to help his approach to get back to basics.

“These kids are hungry and the coaches are eager, so getting the basics down and focusing on discipline and the little things will make the new offense and new defense much easier to grasp,” Strickland said.

The alumni theme continued when Milford selected Jed Bell as their new head football coach this spring.

Bell left his position at the DIAA last winter and took over as the Milford athletic director just prior to the beginning of the spring sports season. It has been a two-year coaching hiatus for Bell who last coached at Woodbridge High School leading the Blue Raiders to the state finals in 2019 and a state tournament appearance in 2020.

“It’s exciting. Coming home you walk on the first day and it feels like you never left. You are connected to the community because you grew up here.” Bell said.

The Bucs have welcomed 54 athletes out for their DIFCA spring team camp.

The landscape of Delaware high school football has changed in the two years Bell was absent from the sideline. The DIAA moved to a three-tier system to replace the former two division system, but Bell was well aware of what took place as he served as the assistant director of the DIAA and played a part in the restructuring. Milford moved from Division I to the new Class AA, which is the largest of the three classes.

“What I like about the new system is that our district will be just like the old Henlopen South. We will see Delmar and Woodbridge again. Plus the Lake Forest game will go back to week 10 like it always should have been,” Bell said.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



BY NICK ALESSANDRINI

Saint Mark's High School has a wrestling national champ and *her* name is Addie Till. Till stood on top of the podium at 118 pounds in Salisbury, MD, on May 6 as the MAWA Eastern National Champion. Hard to believe it was just three years ago when the Spartan freshman decided to get involved in the sport of wrestling. "When I found my love for the sport of wrestling, I had been coming off a back injury and went to my younger brother's wrestling practice and saw a few girls out on the mat," Till said. "I was so interested and figured I could try it out since I had been a high-level gymnast for the past 10 years of my life and had the

SAINT MARK'S ADDIE TILL WINS GIRLS' WRESTLING NATIONAL TITLE

strength to compete mentally and physically on the mat."

Till, a freshman, became the first female varsity wrestler in Spartan history this past year, wrestling at 113 pounds for the historic program. She won her first match as a Saint Mark's varsity wrestler this season and the achievements continued. Till won the Girls Wetzel Classic and the Girls Halloween Havoc, while placing fourth at the first female Beast of the East High School Wrestling Tournament this past winter. She placed eighth at the Independent Conference Championships in 2023, making her a two-time Conference place winner, going back to 2022 when Till was just an eighth grader.

There has been a recent uptick in female wrestlers at the high school level and here in Delaware. The first official Girl's Beast of the East tournament took place this past winter at the University of Delaware and highlighted some of the best female wrestlers on the East Coast. Other Delaware female wrestlers, Caravel's Natalie Radecki and Delaware Military Academy's Alyssa Mahan each won Beast of the East championships in 2022. Till will look to get back to work in 2023-24 and improve on her skill set. "I always have to better my best. My ultimate goal is to be the first female in Delaware to place at States," Till said.





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2023 BLUE GOLD BASEBALL GAME AND ROSTERS ANNOUNCED

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The Blue Gold All Star baseball game was played June 7, at Frawley Stadium. The game was live streamed [HERE](#). During the game, the All State Awards for first team, second team and honorable mention were given out at the start of the game. See below for the rosters for both teams including coaches. Notable players to look for:

Jaryn Sample: Sussex Tech 1st Team All State
 T. J. Morris: Sussex Central 1st Team All State
 James Breen: St. Georges 2nd Team All State
 Donovan Brooks: St. Georges 2nd Team All State
 Nick Cox: Cape Henlopen 2nd Team All State
 Kayden Shockley: Laurel Honorable Mention
 Bobby Stewart: St. Georges Honorable Mention
 Timothy Hitchcock: Cape Henlopen
 Honorable Mention
 Ben Cordrey: Indian River Honorable Mention
 Chase Fleming (1B/P): Appoquinimink
 Honorable Mention
 Jacob Macey: Smyrna Honorable Mention
 Roman Keith: Indian River Honorable Mention
 Andrew Callaway: Delmar Honorable Mention

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