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All-Star Softball Thriller

photo link: Fifer Orchards



Headlines

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LEARNING COLLAB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRONTRUNNER SETS PRIORITIES

BY JAREK RUTZ

The only finalist for the job of executive director of the Wilmington Learning Collaborative established her goals, described her stances on key education issues and answered some fun personality questions during a town hall Tuesday night.

“The pace of change doesn’t always align with what we want to see immediately,” said Wilmington resident **Laura Burgos**. “I think we have an opportunity to really identify two or three strategic priorities for the year ahead, where we can test out and pilot some solutions in our respective schools and do it in a way where there’s some cohesion and some continuity across our efforts.”

Burgos, an experienced educator with lots of work in philanthropy and advocacy, appears to be in prime position to be hired after the other finalist, **Edward Ryans**, withdrew last week.

Ryans has worked as a teacher and administrator in primary and secondary education and is in his 30th year working in **Prince George’s County Public Schools**, Maryland’s second-largest school system with more than 130,000 students. The reason for his withdrawal, which came last Tuesday, is unclear.

The **Wilmington Learning Collaborative** is a state agency created in November 2022 that aims to improve the educational and societal outcomes for children in nine city elementary schools across Brandywine, Red Clay and Christina school districts. By giving families a voice in policy making, it hopes to empower city residents and combat challenges like low test scores and graduation rates and high absenteeism, as well as improving other achievement metrics.


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STATE: COMPLICATED TO ASK FEDS TO TAG SMOKY DAYS AS UNUSUAL

BY SAM HAUT

A conservative institute wants Delaware to move to make sure that it's not tagged by the feds with several bad air days because of last week's smoky, hazy days caused by wildfires in Canada. David Stevenson, director of the Center for Energy & Environment at the Caesar Rodney Institute, has urged Delaware's Department of National Resources & Environmental Control (DNREC) to declare it an exceptional event.

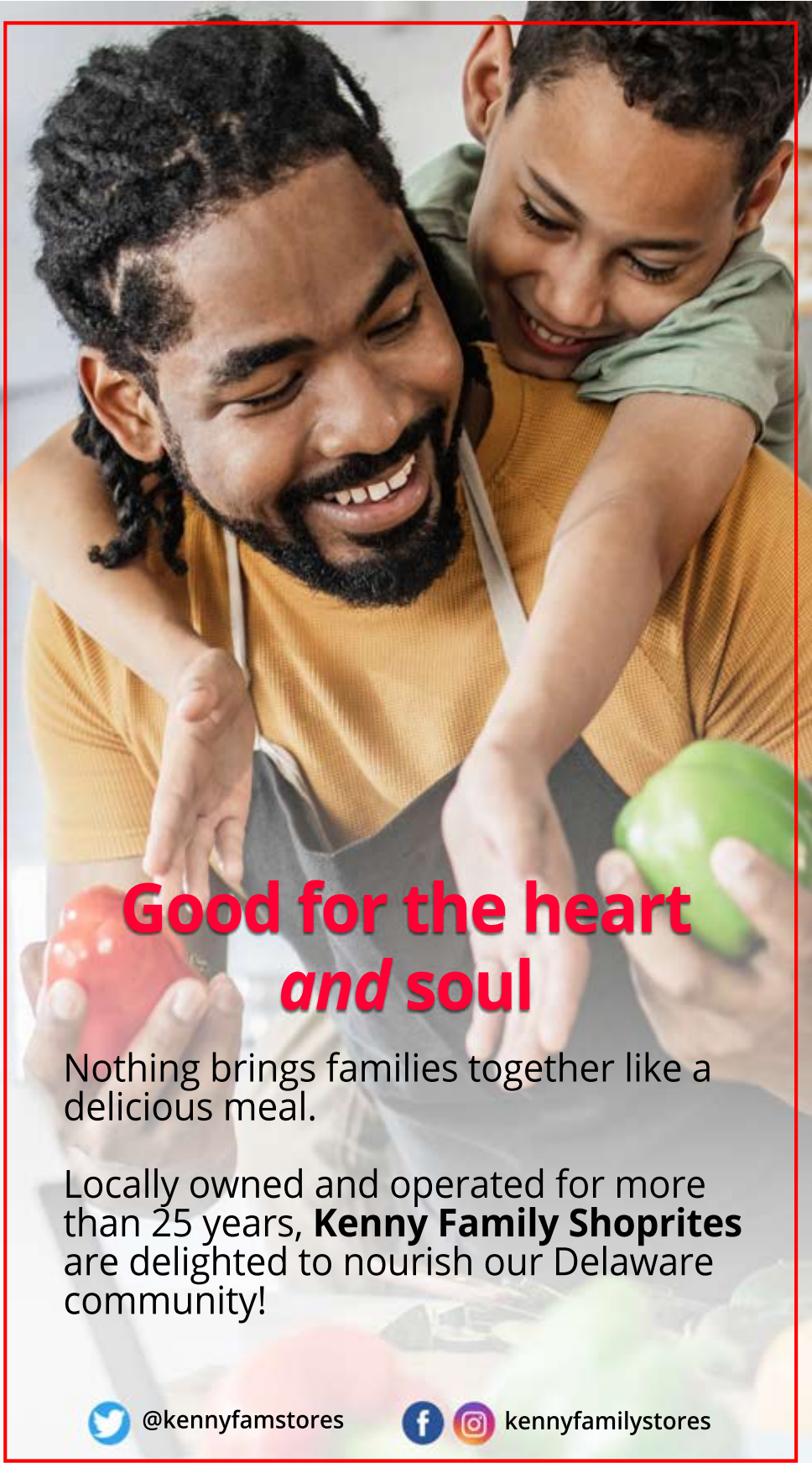
An exceptional event involves DNREC asking the EPA to exclude certain days that far exceed the federal limit for air pollution because the event was both not reasonably controllable and not reasonably preventable. Angela Marconi, director of the DNREC Division of Air Quality, said that the agency was considering that option, but wasn't sure if it would be declared an exceptional event.

"Preparing an exceptional event request is a laborious task, so it's not as simple as just saying, 'Hey, EPA, we think this was an exceptional event,'" Marconi said. "It does require putting the data together in a pretty significant package, but we are looking into that."

Stevenson counters that it may suit DNREC to allow the pollution counts to stand so it can continue to issue regulations that may prevent new businesses from opening.

Stevenson and Marconi describe the amount of pollution using the federal jargon "attainment," which means that an area is at or below the Environmental Protection Agency's allowable limit. That number is based on a three-year average for six different types of emissions: ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and nitrogen dioxide.



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MEET COUNSELOR DANA CAREY, DE BEHAVIORAL PRO OF THE YEAR

BY JAREK RUTZ

Lake Forest School District's Dana Carey, Delaware's behavioral health professional of the year, almost turned down the job for which she won the state award.

"Once I started teaching, I loved it so much, I actually passed up on a couple opportunities to take a school counseling job," Carey said. "Even though that was my passion and what I really wanted to do, I'm one of those people where if it's not broken, don't fix it."

A counselor at [Lake Forest North Elementary School](#), Carey has been an educator for 20 years. She graduated from the University of Delaware with a bachelor's in psychology with a minor in disability studies. She later received a master's from UD in education for school counseling. Her first job was teaching special education

classes in the [Seaford School District](#) at [Blades Elementary](#).

Part of her hesitation to leave teaching is she loved helping students with special needs and seeing their growth throughout the year. After teaching special education at Blades from 2005 to 2011, she did accept a counseling position there before moving to Lake Forest North in 2016.

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.

The pandemic has created challenges for more students, she said, especially with social skills, anxiety and separation angst away from their families.

"I also think technology plays a huge part," she said. "When I was a teacher, my students just loved gathering around for story reading. They were engaged and listening. Now we're competing with all this technology, and they're used to their developing brains being stimulated 24/7."

This has made it harder for students to have the stamina for learning, she said. All students go through worries, anxiety and other mental health struggles, she said, but it becomes an issue when it starts impeding on their ability to learn.

Mental health is just as important as physical health, she said. Just like someone would go to the emergency room for a broken bone, students struggling emotionally need to get the help they need to function in a healthy way.

"I offer about four to six individual sessions, and then if a student is still struggling after my help and my service, the families and I have a conversation and then I do an outside community referral," she said. If a student needs ongoing therapy, Carey will connect them with someone outside of the school system.

One change in Delaware schools that would be beneficial, she said, is creating jobs for therapists within the school district.

In a typical day, Carey starts her day with car rider duty, which she says plays two essential roles: helping the school function and stay organized as students enter, and getting a sense of what students might be struggling at the start of the day.

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Culture

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photo link: Clear Space Theatre Company





ANOTHER ST. ANTHONY'S FESTIVAL, ANOTHER DEBATE ON PARKING

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

St. Anthony's Italian Festival has been drawing the crowds to Wilmington since the 1970s, and it's likely that there have been parking issues all along.

"St. Anthony's has gone too far for this Festival," Christine Ciccone began her [post](#) on nextdoor.com. "Starting tomorrow we are not able to park on 8th & N. Scott St. for two weeks due to Festival. Where are we suppose to park? We are seniors. Not fair."

Also not the whole truth.

The Wilmington Police Department traffic unit has "worked with residents and festival organizers to set aside parking for residents that would be affected by temporary parking restrictions related to the St. Anthony's Italian Festival," John Rago, deputy chief of

staff for Mayor Mike Purzycki, explained in an email. "The effort was to preserve parking spaces for residents so they would not be taken by festival visitors."

The thread points out the installation of temporary "no parking" signs all day July 7 through July 20—and how they were edited to say 5-9 p.m. Some posts debate residents' ability to "reserve" parking spaces in front of their homes with parking cones or even lawn chairs.

Although most of the posts on the thread were negative, N. du Pont Street resident Paul Puskarczyk said "on the signs not normally blocked by police it says 'Resident Parking Permit required' so I was initially upset but in reality they are trying to help the situation by not having randos park outside our homes."

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St. Anthony's offers free secured parking near Salesianum School, about 1.5 miles away, with continuous shuttle service from 30 minutes prior to opening through 30 minutes after closing daily.

In January, the city revised the system for residential parking permits for its 26 neighborhoods. "Residential Parking Permit holders are exempt from time limits in their residential zones but must obey all other regulations," **according** to the city. "RPPs are digital and use License Plate Recognition technology for enforcement. Residents utilize web-based technology to apply for, receive and renew their RPP."

The festival runs 6-10:30 p.m. Friday, 4-10:30 p.m. Saturday and 2-6 p.m. Sunday.

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CANDLELIGHT WHODUNNIT MAKES YOU WONDER WHO'S REALLY WHO

BY BETSY PRICE

Candlelight Theatre patrons often ask actor Shawn Yates, as he's serving their dinner, for hints about who the killer is in the Arden Playhouse's production of "The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940." Yates, who plays composer Roger Hopewell, always tries to give a vague sort of hint, but it's easier said than done.

Many of the 10 actors in the show play multiple roles. "There's four primary suspects, but everyone winds up being a suspect at some point," Yates said. Even Hopewell has secrets, Yates said.

"Almost every actor is pretending to be somebody they're not," said Bob Kelly, the theater's artistic director. "One actor who's playing an Irish actor is actually somebody else who then actually winds up being somebody

else, so it becomes a very involved plot of multiple identities."

Fun, food and farce is the order of the evening at Candlelight, which offers dinner before the shows. In a holdover from COVID-19 restrictions, patrons choose entrees and dessert from a menu rather than visiting a buffet themselves. Servers—several of them performers in the show—deliver food to their table.

CANDLELIGHT DINNER

Choices include shrimp with cocktail sauce, ricotta-stuffed pasta shells topped with marinara and mozzarella, flank steak with mushroom gravy, salmon with coconut cream sauce and more. Vegetarian meals can be provided.

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TONY AWARD WINNER STARRED IN DELAWARE THEATER PLAY LAST YEAR

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware audiences got an upclose look at one of Sunday night’s Tony Award winners last year when she starred in a play at Delaware Theatre Co.

Bonnie Milligan, who won on Sunday night, won the 2022 Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical for her role in “Kimberly Akimbo,” was in “Other World,” a special effects musical extravaganza that also featured a wide range of diverse actors.

Milligan, known for her wide vocal range and ability to belt out a song, played Lorraine in the Delaware production. Her father created a popular video game, only to disappear one night. She is lured into a search for him by Sri, whose mother worked with Lorraine’s father and also disappeared. Lorraine is dismissive about the idea and the game, singing, “Boys and their toys, just a lot of noise, I don’t get it.”

Matt Silva, executive director of the Delaware Theater Co., said Milligan is a magnificent talent as well as a compassionate artist who was amazing to have around.

“She astonishes audiences, bring the goods every night as a real pro,” he said. “We were grateful to be working with her at DTC.”

Silva remembered that the first time he hear her sing he thought, “Man, that a voice that’s gonna be on Broadway stages for a long time to come.” He expects there to be additional productions of “Other World” in the future, but couldn’t say when.

“Other World” was one of the many plays working their way toward Broadway that Delaware Theatre Co. has presented. In “Kimberly Akimbo,” Milligan plays the Kimberly’s shiftless Aunt Debra. Silva thinks that musical will have a long life on Broadway.



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Business

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CARVERTISE OPENS HEADQUARTERS ON WILMINGTON RIVERFRONT



BY BETSY PRICE

A home-grown company that puts advertising on cars celebrated its sleek new headquarters Thursday.

Carvertise's operations and dispatch crews moved under I-195 from its warehouse and production facility in Wilmington's Browntown neighborhood to a \$1.2 million, 15,000-square-foot home in the Shipyard Center on the Christina riverfront. The space, renovated in a modern industrial design with whites and grays and a touch of blondish wood beneath exposed black HVAC ducts, bears no resemblance to the outlet store and bank that once occupied at 974 Justison St.

Most importantly, said CEO Mac Mcleod during a Thursday tour of the space, the new offices will allow the company, which wraps cars in vinyl decal material, to continue growing. It's seen a 55% year-over-year sales growth in 2022—Mcleod won't say exactly what reve-

nues are—and the staff has grown from 20 in 2021 and then 30 in 2022, before hitting 55 right now. The building has room for 150, he said.

Carvertise wanted to stay in Delaware, where it began a decade ago when Mcleod co-founded it with Greg Star, while the two were students at the University of Delaware. One of their first customers was ShopRite grocery stores. CEO Chris Kenny remembers Alan Levin of the Delaware Economic Development Office asking him to take a chance on the two. Kenny, who also is owner of Delaware LIVE, did.

"I think the growth is amazing," he said Thursday before the grand opening. ShopRite's headquarters and flagship store now is just across the river from Carvertise's new headquarters.

"They never gave up. They kept pressing and charging

forward," Kenny said. "It's a really nice home-grown success story."

EXPANDING NATIONALLY

Even though Delaware business now accounts for only 5% of the company's revenues, and it boasts national work with Coca-Cola, Netflix, NBCUniversal, 7-Eleven, EA Sports, NASCAR and GlaxoSmithKline, Mcleod said they wanted the headquarters to stay local.

"This area is the heart and soul of our organization, and we're excited to invest and grow in the community that grew and shaped us," Mcleod said in a press statement. "It feels right."

After searching for the right space for a few years, Pettinaro showed the company the riverfront space and Carvertise spent the next 18 months planning the renovation with Mitchell & Associates.

The time spent picking designs and sourcing materials seemed to move like molasses, McLeod said. It was tricky to balance the design so it was elegant but not off-puttingly posh. The two-phase construction flew by, he said.

Pettinaro Construction did the remodel, sharing some of the expenses now. They will be loaded back into company's 10-year lease in a deal referred to as a tenant improvement allowance, Mcleod said.

Phase one was the front of the building, with executive offices down a dark corridor and dispatchers sitting in the windows fronting the building. Phase two was the back two-thirds of the building, with conference rooms and offices running along one wall and offices on the other. The space between them holds desks.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



HOW'S THE DE HOUSING MARKET? DEPENDS ON WHO YOU TALK TO

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

My uncle, a resident of Bethany Beach, liked to say that people who lived at the beach talked about three things: real estate, the weather and where to eat. Here are a few interesting numbers to spark a conversation about real estate:

- The Lewes area is Delaware's hottest market in terms of rising prices, according to the real estate site Redfin. "The median sale price of a home in Lewes was \$784K last month, up 30.7% since last year," it said. Contrast that to the Laurel area, where prices are down 11.7%.

- Sussex County has Delaware's priciest homes, \$450,648 on average, a 26.96% increase from 2021. That's the conclusion of [New Jersey Real Estate Network](#) in looking at data from Zillow. The statewide average is \$365,168.93, up \$18.3%.

- Delaware has the nation's oldest homebuyers, with 38% of buyers age 55 and older, compared to the national average of 20.7%, Delaware Public Media reported in April.

These stats demonstrate, in different ways, the trend of people retiring to the Sussex beaches. And Redfin users looking at homes in the Lewes area are most likely coming from the Washington, D.C., area.

Yet.

Delaware's real estate transfer tax collections soared during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, but have been much lower in recent months, the Delaware Economic and Financial Advisory Committee has repeatedly reported at meetings. Transfer tax is one of the many indicators they watch to assess the state's finances.

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LAND CLEARED FOR MULTI-USE SILVERSIDE ROAD DEVELOPMENT

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Development has finally begun on the site of what was the oldest building built for free public education in the United States. The Forwood School, which was built before 1800, was knocked down months ago and plans are to use its stones in a leasing center.

The development is on 11.7 acres in the heart of Brandywine Hundred, on Silverside Road, across from Branmar Plaza, and just west of Marsh Road. Forwood Commons, according to plans prepared by an engineering firm, will include 38 townhomes, all with two-car garages, and four buildings for retail. Almost five acres will be paved, according to county records.

The retail includes a 7,000-square-foot restaurant with outdoor dining; a 13,400-square-foot site for a pharmacy or retail; a 4,000-square-foot bank; and a building with a 5,920-square-foot retail space and a 1,920-square-foot coffeeshop.

Developer Joe Setting bought the property in 2014 and by 2015 had proposed 35 three-story townhouses and five commercial buildings with the same mix of tenants. Various governmental reviews ran from 2015 to 2019. Setting did not return requests for updates.

NEIGHBORS COMPLAIN ABOUT DEVELOPMENT

When crews began clearing the site, a thread on nextdoor.com generated dozens of comments, complaining about the green space and wildlife habitat lost and the traffic congestion gained.

“I felt sick to my stomach looking at the destruction of that beautiful wooded area where all our innocent wildlife once lived. So sad,” Dawn Groover wrote, ending her post with a broken heart.

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Food & Dining

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BY PAM GEORGE

Every respectable VIP tent boasts a bar and lavish buffet, and you can expect both in the private area at the **Rocking the Docks** concert series, which kicks off on June 21 at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry terminal.

But the 10-week series' new private section will also emphasize décor. Picture picnic games, a photo backdrop, a neon Rocking the Docks sign, beachy lounge chairs with ottomans and accessories that complement the performers and the waterfront setting. Credit Jessica Jones of **Dewey Beach Picnic Co.** for the atmosphere.

"I'm enhancing the experience," explained the New Jersey native, who honed her skills working for a high-end wedding and event company in Key West, FL.

Jones has more than an eye for detail; she can also spot the trends. The luxury picnic business is a cutting-edge cottage industry that has bloomed since the pandemic.

DEWEY BEACH PICNIC CO. TURNS ORDINARY INTO EXTRAORDINARY

A COASTAL CAREER

"Luxury picnic" is not a term that people used around Ocean City, NJ, where Jones grew up. But she was certainly familiar with the beach lifestyle, complete with summer jobs down the shore, where she met husband-to-be Hunter.

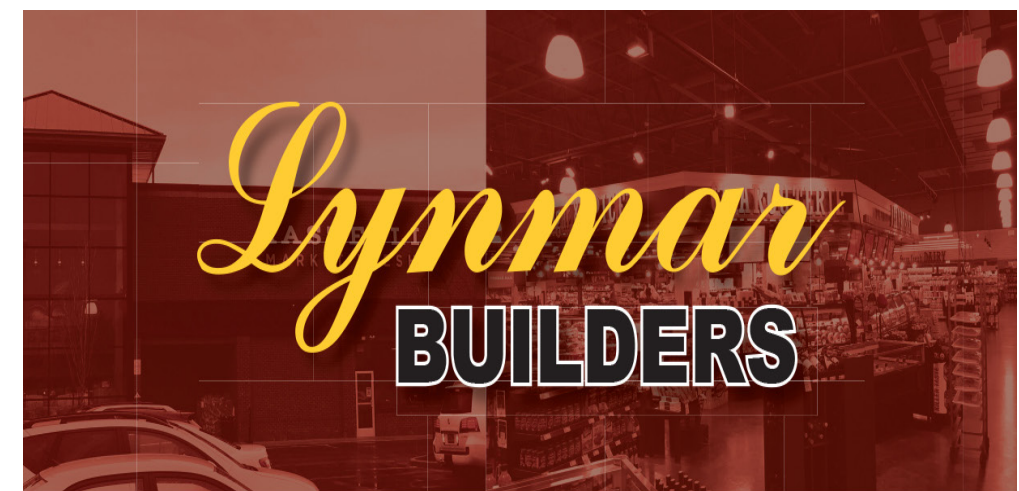
The couple gravitated toward the water. For instance, Jones had a gig on a pirate excursion boat; he learned the ropes with a parasailing operation. Their experience led to positions in the Virgin Islands and Key West, and they eventually moved to the Florida island.

By chance, Jones met the owner of Simply You Weddings, which had a job opening. Jones didn't hesitate, and she learned all she could from her mentor until the couple's newborn daughter "changed my life," she said.

Having a baby and juggling the many details of someone's special day—plus the long hours—proved problematic.

Meanwhile, the couple's family friend, Justin Sikora, owned **Dewey Beach Parasail**, now in its 19th season. The Jones moved to Rehoboth so Hunter could work with the business, which the couple purchased in 2018.

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Government

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SPIEGELMAN TALKS NAZIS IN OPPOSING LGBTQ PANIC DEFENSE BILL

BY SAM HAUT

A bill that would ban the use of the LGBTQ panic defense in Delaware courts passed the state House Thursday, but not before one representative brought up Jews and Nazi Germany.

House Substitute 2 for House Bill 142, sponsored by Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Glasgow, would not permit a defendant to claim they reacted violently when they realized that someone else was of a certain sexual orientation or gender identity.

Before it passed, Rep. Jeffrey Spiegelman, R-Townsend/Hartly, offered an **amendment** that would have changed the bill to include anyone who is a member of a protected class instead of only being based on someone's sexual orientation, or gender identity. Spiegelman said he'd withdraw his amendment if Morrison could promise him that there won't be a Jew defense in Delaware.

"In Nazi Germany there was a Jew defense in the 1930s," Spiegelman said. "If you're talking to somebody and it turns out that they are a Jew, you are allowed to use violence against them. And the courts backed that up again and again in Nazi Germany. Promise me that that will never be set in this country. And it will never be used in Delaware. And I'll scrap this amendment right now."

Spiegelman said the amendment should be made so Delaware would be protecting all residents.

"There should not be one protected class that gets the benefit of being protected from this kind of thing," Spiegelman said. "It should cover the entirety of all the protected classes that we as Delawareans in our position as state officials have decided to cover."

Morrison opposed the amendment, which failed 14 to 25.

While Morrison said during the committee hearing for the bill that he was not aware of the defense being used in Delaware, he corrected the record Thursday. According to the LGBTQ section of the Delaware Bar Association, there are at least five times when the defense has been used in the First State, he said. Morrison didn't specify when or where.

Morrison also talked about the 1988 case of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming and 1995 case of Scott Amedure of Pennsylvania where the defense was used.

"One of Matthew's murderers put forth the gay panic defense, arguing that he was driven to temporary insanity by Matthew's alleged sexual advances upon him," Morrison said. "Fortunately, the judge in that case did not allow the defense.

"You may also remember that in 1995, Scott Amador was fatally shot by acquaintance Jonathan Schmitz after Mr. Amador revealed a secret crush on Mr. Schmidt's on the Jenny Jones Show. The gay panic defense was allowed in that case, but was unsuccessful."

Morrison said the bill was supported by the Delaware Department of Justice, the LGBTQ+ section of the Delaware Bar Association, and Equality Delaware. The bill passed 27 to 10, with Spiegelman not voting. Morrison thanked the legislature for passing the bill during pride month.

The bill, which doesn't require a fiscal note, has 23 additional sponsors and cosponsors, all Democrats except for Michael Smith, R-Pike Creek. It now heads to the Senate for consideration.





HOUSE JUDICIARY OKS ONE CHILD ABUSE BILL, TABLES ANOTHER

BY SAM HAUT

The House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday discussed in detail two bills that look to change how Delaware handles child abuse cases. One was passed, the other tabled.

Senate Bill 124, sponsored by Sen. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Arden, would clarify that people have to orally report cases of child abuse, neglect or trafficking to the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families. If a case of suspected abuse, neglect or trafficking doesn't fit certain criteria, people can submit it orally or through the department's online portal.

Those criteria include sexual abuse, child death, a child with a current physical injury, a child needing medical attention or a mental health evaluation, or a child who is living in hazardous conditions.

The bill also will not allow people who are licensed under the Delaware Division of Professional Regulation

and the Department of Education to remain anonymous when they are making reports of child abuse or neglect.

Rep. Sean Lynn, D-Dover, asked Trenee Parker, the director of the Division of Family Services, if anyone has access to the name of the person who reports a case of child abuse. Parker said that information would be confidentially stored in their database.

Lynn asked how the bill applies to the confrontation clause in the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which states that during criminal trials, the accused has the right to see the witnesses involved.

Tania Culley, a child advocate with the state of Delaware, said that if a case where someone anonymously reported abuse went to trial, the defense attorney would be able to confront that witness, but not the people accused.

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ALLOWING ABORTION WORKERS TO MASK ADDRESSES OK'D BY SENATE

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Senate passed bills Tuesday pertaining to confidentiality for abortion providers, minority party representation on an emergency health committee and payouts for employment discrimination.

Senate Bill 158, sponsored by Sen. Kyle Evans Gay, D-Arden, focuses on confidentiality rights for medical providers. The bill allows anyone who is a reproductive health care services provider or employee to apply for participation in Delaware's **Address Confidentiality Program**. That program allows participants to keep their actual address confidential by applying to the Department of Justice for a substitute address for their mail to be delivered.

Gay said the bill is in response to the threat of closure for abortion clinics after the Dobbs decision that overruled Roe v. Wade. She said Delaware clinics also face pro-life backlash and cited a Newark clinic that was fire-bombed in 2020.

“In addition to actual violence, we know that providers have a fear for their safety,” Gay said. “In the Judiciary Committee when this bill was heard, we heard from a representative of Christiana Care, one of our largest health providers, who had collected stories from providers who quite understandably did not want to stand in front of the Senate.”

The bill was passed unanimously and heads to a House committee.

Senate Bill 66, sponsored by Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, adds the Senate minority leader and the House minority leader as members of the Public Health Emergency Planning Commission.

As in federal government, a minority leader is someone who represents the party that is not in power. Right now, that's the Republicans. The Senate minority leader is Gerald Hocker, R-Ocean View, and the house minority leader is Michael Ramone, R-Pike Creek South.

The bill also would require the commission to meet within 30 days of the initiation of a state of emergency due to a public health emergency. The goal would be to help craft the response to the emergency.

Those who opposed Gov. John Carney's orders for businesses to shut, schools to go online and masks to be worn complained again and again that the Legislature and the public had no input into the moves.

“Nearly every other board or commission has minority party representation,” Buckson said. “It's necessary that the minority party, whether it be Republican, Democrat or other, and the constituents they represent have a seat at the table when discussing these important matters.”

SB 66 heads to a House committee.

Senate Bill 145, sponsored Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin, bumps the limit of financial compensation or punitive damages based on the number of employees at a place of business that has been cited for discrimination.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



EV BILLS INCH CLOSER TO LAW AS GOP CONTINUES OPPOSITION

BY SAM HAUT

Several energy-related bills waltzed through the House Resources and Energy Committee Tuesday, despite Republican opposition.

Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 7, sponsored by Sen. Stephanie Hansen, D-Middletown, would update the responsibilities of the State Energy Office to include developing the State Energy Plan, the state's Climate Action Plan, and transitioning Delaware towards more renewable energy.

The bill is a change from **Senate Bill 7** that the Senate Environment, Energy & Transportation Committee approved on May 16, which only mentioned supporting clean energy, not transitioning towards it, and didn't bring up the state's Climate Action Plan.

It passed the committee with four votes in favor and four votes on its merits. It now heads to the House Appropriation Committee.

Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 103, sponsored by Sen. Sarah McBride, D-Wilmington, would require new single-family homes with building permits issued after Jan. 1, 2024, and multi-family homes with an application for final site plan approval submitted after Jan. 1, 2025, to have electric vehicle charging stations.

The bill is a change from **Senate Bill 103** that the Senate Environment, Energy & Transportation Committee approved on May 10, which had included a minimum of 40 amperages and 208/240 voltage in the definition of an electric vehicle capable parking space, which was removed from the most recent bill.

It passed the committee with six votes in favor, one vote on its merits and one vote against. It now heads to the House floor for consideration.

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FINANCIAL LITERACY MAY BECOME GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware students may soon be required to take a financial literacy class in order to graduate. [House Bill 203](#), sponsored by Rep. Jeff Hilovsky, R-Millsboro, would require public schools to teach financial literacy, which is essentially how to make smart decisions about money. A unanimous vote in the House Education Committee Wednesday sent it to the House ready list for debate on the floor.

The bill requires high schools to provide a minimum of a half-credit course on financial literacy, beginning with students entering ninth grade in the 2025-2026 school year. Students will need to pass the course to graduate in order to earn their diploma.

Opponents argued they were worried that financial literacy means different things to different communities and that it would be hard for some schools to incor-

porate a half-credit class into their schedules.

Hilovsky previously pointed to data that shows 60% of U.S. households live paycheck to paycheck, 40% of Americans have less than \$300 in savings, 33% of Americans have saved nothing for retirement, 95% of Americans have not saved enough for retirement and 87% of American teens admit to not understanding their finances. Some of the topics in financial literacy courses include budgeting, insurance plans, saving, student loans, mortgages, interest rates and even simple matters like how to fill out a check and balance a checkbook.

“This is going uplift and give people a win in life,” Hilovsky said.

Schools are in the opportunity business, he said. Part of that needs to be teaching students how to reach their

full potential in practical matters, too. No one dreams of being in poverty or struggling financially, he said. Teaching financial literacy will help level the playing field.

“This bill includes all Delaware high school students and gives them the opportunity to understand and navigate the complex and challenging world of personal finance,” he said. Some financial mistakes can hinder and trap a young adult for the rest of their lives, he pointed out.

Many schools do teach some sort of financial literacy, but most of the schools that don't are in poorer neighborhoods. Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Glasgow, said it's important to recognize that a student's background, like race and family's socioeconomic class, largely determines their financial literacy needs.

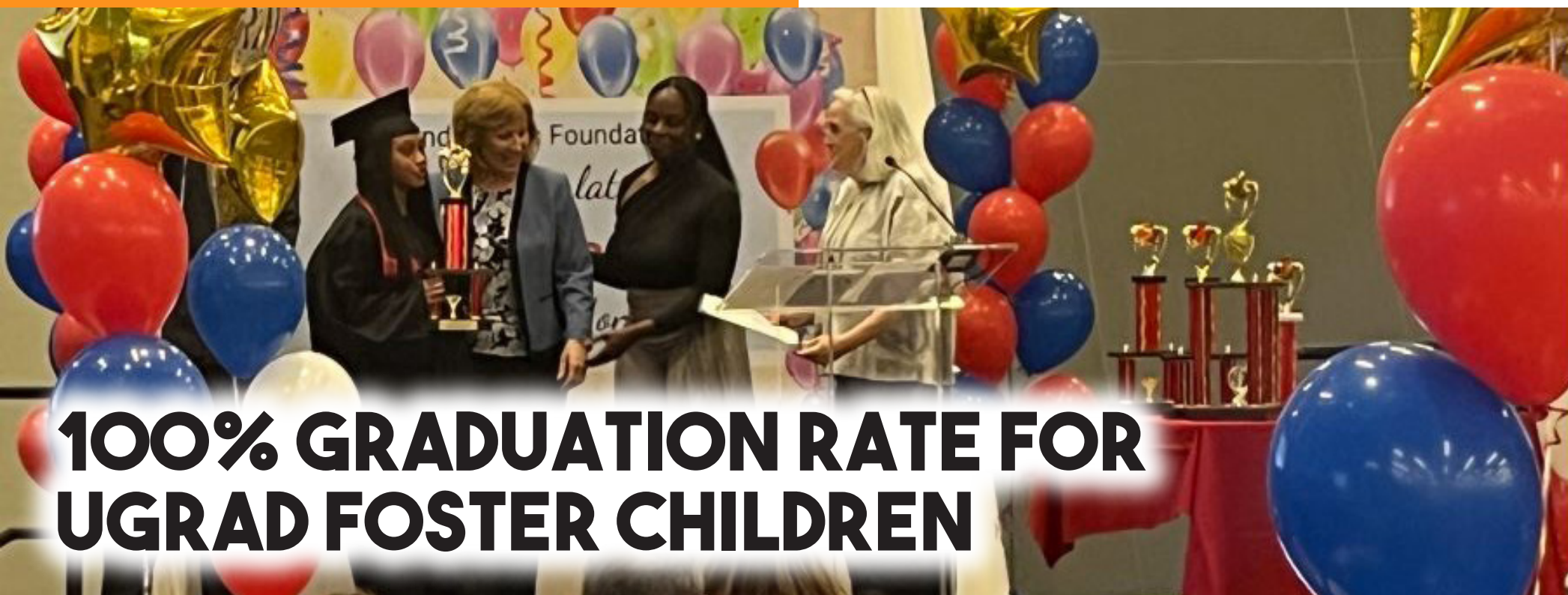
That's why, Holovsky said, the bill allows local control and each district can adopt a curriculum that fits their needs.

“It's probably going to be a little bit different instruction like in a town like Laurel versus somebody in center city Wilmington,” Hilovsky said. “Their life experiences are different so I think they should have the right to pick and choose which individual subjects they're going to teach within the course.”

Morrison was upset about one line in the bill that says one teaching point would be “comparing financial systems, including what works and what does not and why.”

The country has record highs of financial inequality in America and different systems work for different individuals, he said. Hilovsky agreed to strike that line from the bill.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



100% GRADUATION RATE FOR UGRAD FOSTER CHILDREN

BY JAREK RUTZ

Eighteen of Delaware’s foster youth were honored in a ceremony Monday night for persisting in the face of multiple problems to graduate from high school and college, often exhibiting excellent work in school.

UGrad Education Program, which started in 2011, has served more than 18,000 foster children throughout the state with academic support. The program pairs struggling students with mentors who help the students evaluate their needs, negotiate with teachers and schools and complete the work they need to graduate. Shay Drummond credits it with her success in college.

“It helped me transition smoothly from high school to college and the program bridged gaps that I wouldn’t be able to handle,” she said. She recently earned a bachelor’s in legal studies from Widener University.

This year, UGrad served 60 students and will expand to 75 by September, with a waitlist of several others who

want to join. Students are recommended for the program by their schools or advisors.

Only 10 workers and three tutors are employed by UGrad, which receives federal, state and private funding to make up its operating budget of \$1.2 million. The tutors are school teachers who are hired by UGrad. They typically have hour-long sessions on the weekends, one-on-one with students, to help with different academic subjects. They often will check in during the week and offer an additional session during periods of heavy work loads.

“If it’s an emergency session, like someone has to have help with a term paper being due, we may extend it for a couple hours or whatever we need,” said Caroline Jones, president and founder of the **Kind to Kids Foundation**, which runs the program.

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SENATOR WANTS \$9K TUITION FOR TRADE STUDENTS TO CONTINUE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that would prolong a program giving financial help to students pursuing a trade was heard in the Senate Banking, Business, Insurance and Technology Committee Wednesday.

Senate Bill 154, sponsored by Sen. Brian Pettyjohn, R-Georgetown, repeals the sunset of the Focus on Alternative Skills Training Program. That program provides up to \$9,000 in training for graduating high school students into a non-degree program for certification and credentialing. It's for students who enter a trade rather than going to college.

Per the bill's fiscal note, the program's operating costs to the state will be between \$78,000 and \$1 million for each of the next three fiscal years.

"This was originally funded through federal money, so it did not hit our state budget," Pettyjohn said.

Rachel Turney, deputy secretary for the Department of Labor, said there's plenty of money in pandemic relief funds that need to be spent by the end of 2024 that could help the state pay for the program. On average, she said, a student in the program receives about \$8,000.

No opposition was voiced, but the outcome of the bill was uncertain because Senate committees do not take votes in public. The vote tallied away from the committee and posted on the bill tracker.

Pettyjohn said he would hate to see a program that has helped kids succeed die when the kind of skills they provide are a hot commodity right now.





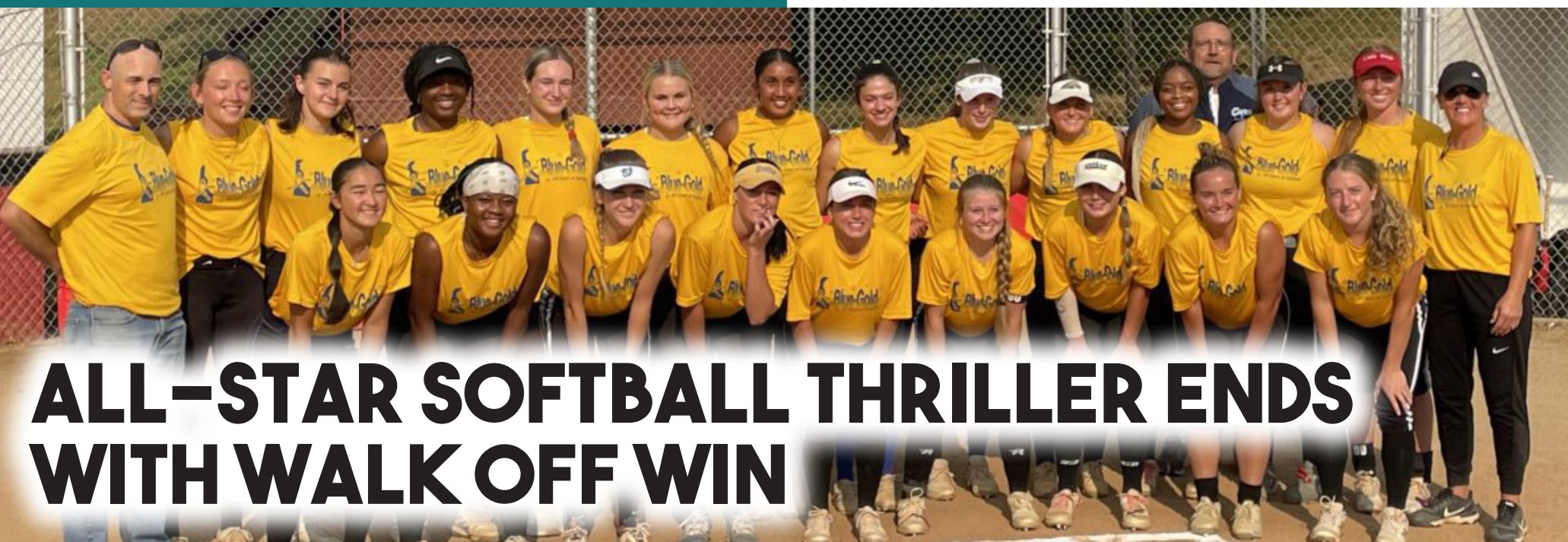
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Sports

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ALL-STAR SOFTBALL THRILLER ENDS WITH WALK OFF WIN

BY GLENN FRAZER

Over 40 of Delaware's best seniors took the field for their final high school softball game at the Smyrna Little Lass complex Tuesday evening. The "picture-perfect" weather complimented an outstanding performance by the Blue and Gold all stars in front of a large crowd.

The Gold team included players from Caesar Rodney, Delmar, Delmarva Christian, Indian River, Laurel, Sussex Academy, Sussex Central, Sussex Tech, Woodbridge and Brandywine. First year head coach Rachel Fetterman (Delmarva Christian) was assisted by Cape Henlopen's Mike Tkach and Michael Oberly (Brandywine). While the Blue was coached by Nicki Shirey of Smyrna, who is retiring, and was named the Coach of the Year by her peers. Shirey was assisted by Sean Brennan from Milford and Jon Thomas of Saint Mark's. The Blue team consisted of players from Appoquinimink, Archmere, Caravel, Charter School of Wilmington, Conrad, DMA, Middletown, Milford, Red Lion, Saint Mark's, Smyrna

and William Penn.

The Gold squad won the pregame skills competition to be designated as the home team for the extended nine inning game. The skills competition consisted of a home run derby, bunting accuracy, throwing drills, speed around the bases and an "around-the-horn" contest with the Gold barely edging the Blue.

The game was officiated by a group of upstate and downstate umpires who volunteered their time and travel for the event that benefits the DFRC. Jim Miles, Ed Morris and Dave Wilson represented the Delaware Umpire's Association, and alternated with Ron Kinslow, Rob Maloney, Ozzie May and Ron Lynam from the Delaware Softball Umpires Association.

The Gold scored two unearned runs in the first inning on an error, single, and two batters being hit-by-pitch and added a third run in the second inning to take an early 3-0 lead. Blue came back with a single run in

the fourth and tied the game on Sabrie Purnell's two-run home run in the fifth. Both teams scored later to set up the dramatic ninth and final frame tied at 4-all.

If the Gold didn't score, the game would end in a tie. The drama built as the Gold's leadoff batter (Ella Hadley-Brandywine) reached on an error. Following a strike-out, Indian River's Jaya Schaub drilled a single up the middle sending Hadley to third base as Schaub alertly advanced to second on the throw. After another strike-out, Shaniya Lewis was intentionally walked to load the bases and set up a force out at any base. Shaniya's sister, Laniya worked a 3-0 count and eventually walked to force in the winning run to end the game.

Both pitching staffs turned in impressive performances. Savannah Laird from Appo high recorded seven strikeouts, while Milford's Khylia Reynolds "fanned" six, and Middletown's Reese Founds retired five via strikeout for the Blue. The Gold pitchers were led by Delmarva Christian's Kaylan Yoder with a game-high eight-K's, Hailey Justice from Sussex Tech set down three batters and Indian River's Kinsley Hall was the only pitcher that didn't allow a run in her three-innings of work to start the game. The Gold MVP award went to Sussex Tech's Shaniya Lewis who doubled, singled, and walked in her three plate appearances while scoring a run. The Blue MVP went to Sabrie Purnell from William Penn, with her two-run homer to center field. It was the only home run of the game.

The game was well played by both teams and a fitting tribute to the finest senior softball players in the state, playing the game they love for the final time in their high school careers.





BY NICK HALLIDAY

Jake Gelof, formerly of Cape Henlopen high school now at University of Virginia, is heading back to the College Baseball World Series (CWS) in Omaha.

After winning a state championship at Cape Henlopen in 2018, Gelof transferred to IMG Academy to finish out his high school baseball career. At IMG, he earned a scholarship to play his college baseball at the University of Virginia. In his freshman year at Virginia, Gelof and his Cavalier teammates earned a trip to the CWS in Omaha. The Cavaliers went 1-2 in Omaha and had an early exit.

However, Gelof was outstanding. He went 7-of-12 at the plate hitting two doubles with two RBI and scored three runs. That is a stat line that will be hard for him to duplicate this year as he returns to Omaha with his Cavaliers teammates.

FORMER CAPE SLUGGER HEADING BACK TO COLLEGE WORLD SERIES

UVA defeated Duke in the NCAA super regional on the last play of the game to punch their ticket back to Omaha.

Gelof now is a junior and has emerged as the power hitter for the Cavaliers. Gelof became the all-time Virginia home run leader April 11 with his 38th career home run, a solo shot in the fifth inning against Richmond. Last season, he hit 21 home runs and was the first college player in the nation to reach 14 home runs.

This season, he already hit 23 home runs to lead the Cavaliers again. He also holds the all-time record for UVA with five home runs in NCAA tournament games.

The No. 7 Cavaliers opened the CWS Friday night as they took on No. 2 Florida. The game aired on ESPN and stats can be followed at www.VirginiaSports.com.



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ACC FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

TOMMY

Men's Swimming & Diving

FORMER SALESIANUM ATHLETE NAMED TOP ACC FRESHMAN SWIMMER

BY JASON WINCHELL

Tommy Janton's freshman season at the University of Notre Dame ended with a bang. The Salesianum School alum was named the Atlantic Coast Conference Freshman of the Year. Janton, who graduated from Sallies in 2022, set program records for the Fighting Irish in both the 100- and 200-yard backstroke. He also was part of Notre Dame's 200-yard medley relay team that also set a school record. His times in the backstroke at the 2022 U.S. Toyota Open qualified him for the Olympic Trials next year.

In addition to his conference honors, Janton was named Notre Dame's Rookie of the Year. He is a member of the 2023 All-ACC Academic Team and an honorable

mention all-American in the 100 and 200 back.

Janton swam for the Wahoos at the Western YMCA near Newark. While he was at Salesianum, the Sals won four consecutive state championships, and Janton was a key member of those teams. He won two individual events as a sophomore, junior and senior, and a part of two winning relay teams all four years.

An economics major, Janton also earned a place on the ACC's all-academic team this year.

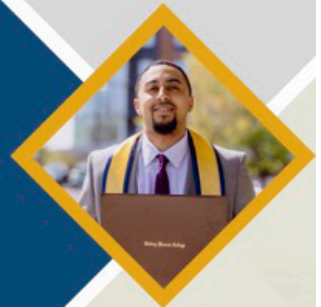
Notre Dame finished 18th this year in the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championships in Minneapolis, their highest placement ever.



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