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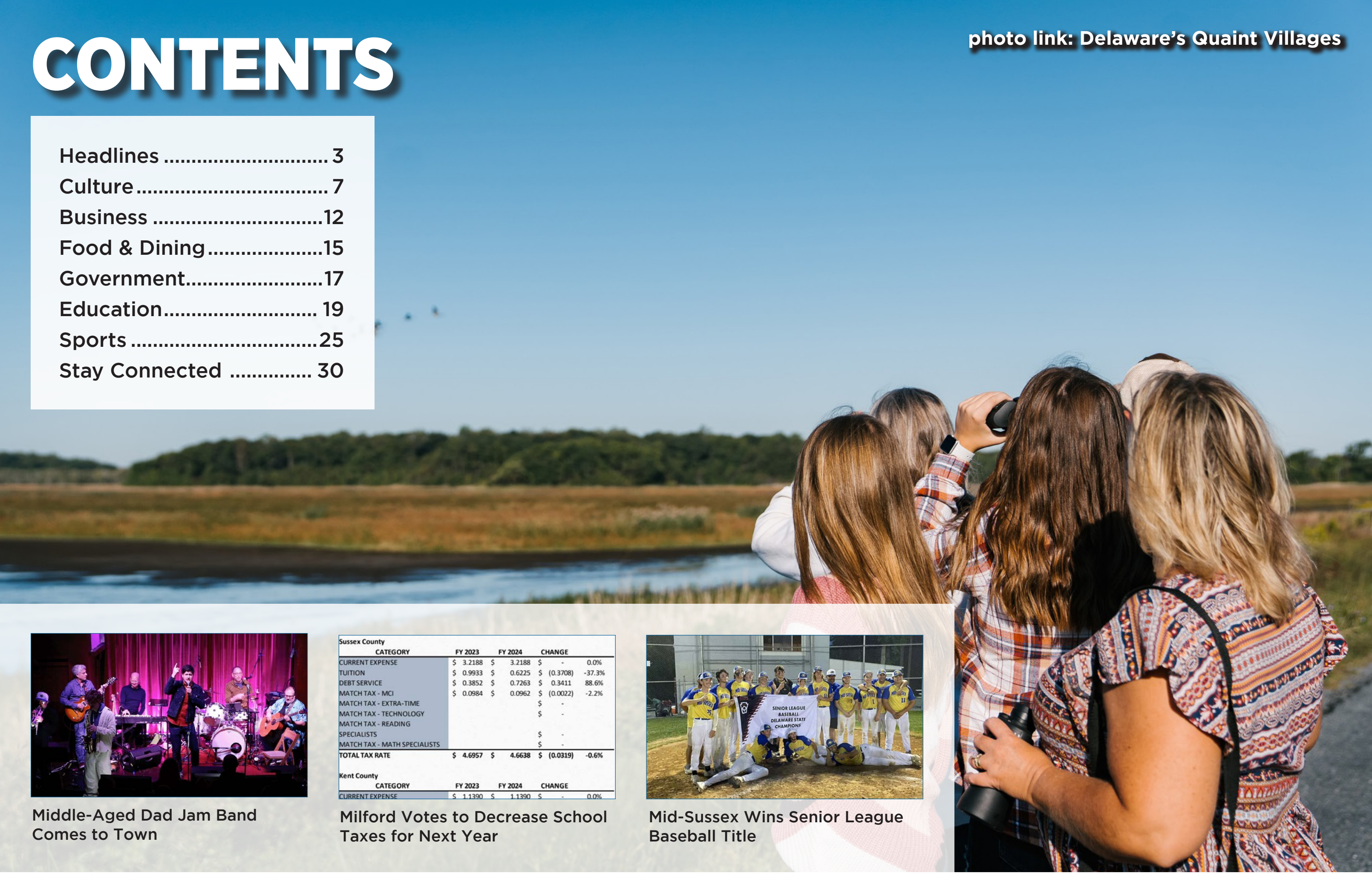
photo by S. Woodloe



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Middle-Aged Dad Jam Band Comes to Town

Sussex County			
CATEGORY	FY 2023	FY 2024	CHANGE
CURRENT EXPENSE	\$ 3.2188	\$ 3.2188	\$ - 0.0%
TUITION	\$ 0.9933	\$ 0.6225	\$ (0.3708) -37.3%
DEBT SERVICE	\$ 0.3852	\$ 0.7263	\$ 0.3411 88.6%
MATCH TAX - MCI	\$ 0.0984	\$ 0.0962	\$ (0.0022) -2.2%
MATCH TAX - EXTRA-TIME			\$ -
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MATCH TAX - READING			\$ -
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TOTAL TAX RATE	\$ 4.6957	\$ 4.6638	\$ (0.0319) -0.6%

Kent County			
CATEGORY	FY 2023	FY 2024	CHANGE
CURRENT EXPENSE	\$ 1.1390	\$ 1.1390	\$ - 0.0%

Milford Votes to Decrease School Taxes for Next Year



Mid-Sussex Wins Senior League Baseball Title

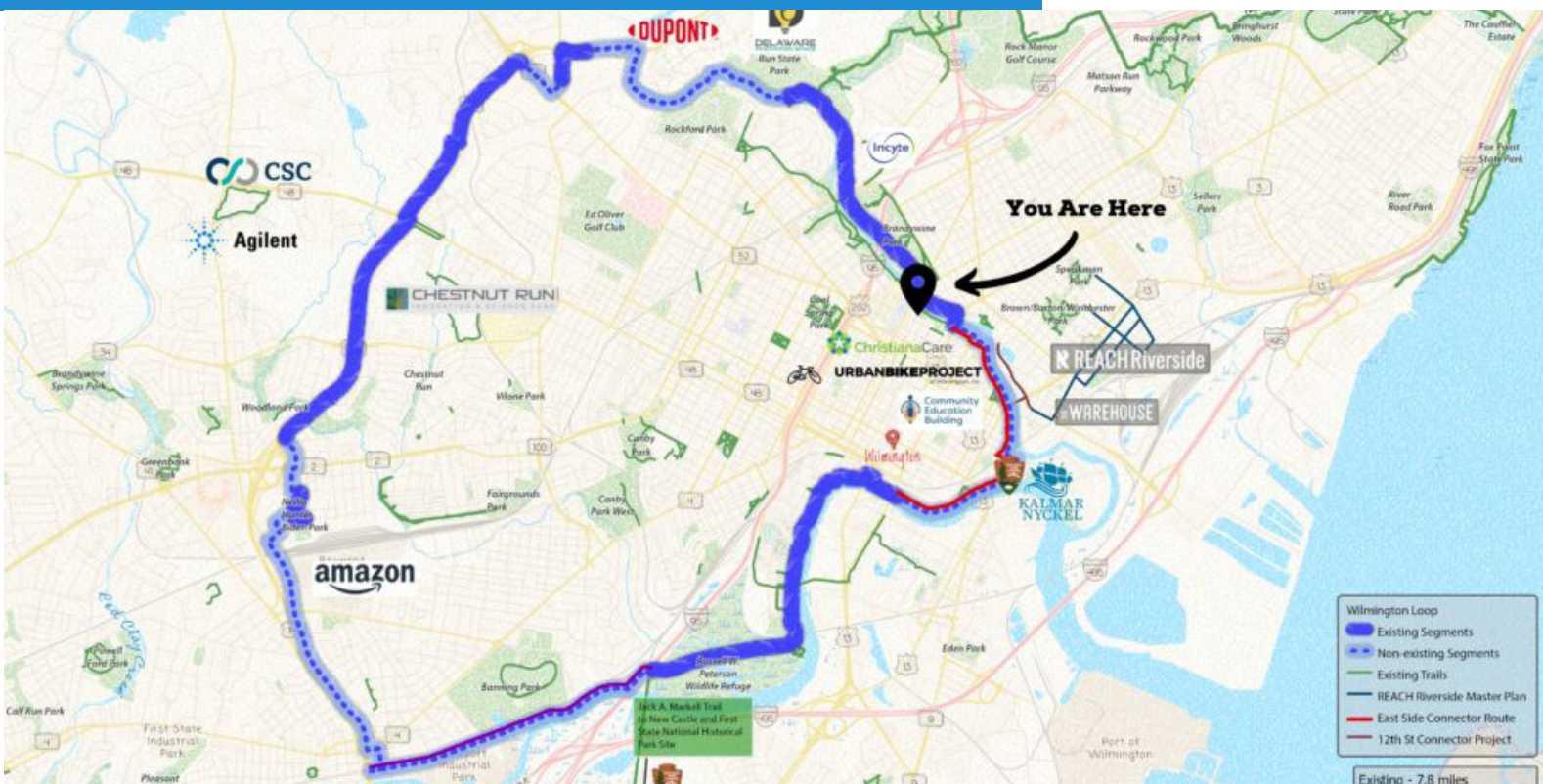
photo link: Brian K. Leonard



Headlines

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LOOP COALITION: FINISH WALKABLE BIKE TRAIL AROUND WILMINGTON

National Heritage sites, state and local parks and hundreds of thousands of people with great jobs, restaurants and cultural attractions, the coalition said in a press release. Johnson pointed to the Atlanta Beltway in Atlanta, Georgia, the Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville, SC, and the Arlington Loop in Arlington, VA, all of which run through city, park and natural lands.

“You look at any small, big or medium-sized city that has done this, and it’s changed the whole benefit of accessibility around the city,” said Johnson, who is an avid biker and runner. No state in the region offers such an amenity, the coalition said.

Completing the loop would require building three links: one between Newport and Kirkwood Highway; one through Rockford Park; and a 2.1-mile piece through Wilmington’s East Side, where transformation already is taking place with the building of new neighborhoods in what had been a blighted area. The East Side Connector would link the Brandywine and Christina River trails, both of which end on the East Side, giving every neighborhood in and bordering the city safe and easy access resources and recreation, Johnson said.

It’s an idea that Logan Herring Sr., chief executive officer of the **WRK Group**, says speaks real truth to the issue of community investments and connections. His group is building the new East Side houses and operates the Teen Warehouse.

“Transportation is one of the biggest barriers to access resources,” Herring said from Boston, where he was attending a conference. “So if we’re going to think about innovative ways of connecting the community so things aren’t seen as ‘best for them and it’s not for me,’ one of the simplest ways to do it is through a mode of transportation.”

“That’s not necessarily a bus line that you have to walk blocks to get to and so forth. You know, everybody can hop on a bicycle or walk, and I believe—and it’s very optimistic—but I believe that it’s possible.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

BY BETSY PRICE

A group of business, community and government leaders would like to see several New Castle County walkable bike trails connected to become a seamless 16-mile **Wilmington Loop**. Doing so, says leaders of the coalition, would transform the city’s economy and quality of life because it would:

- Connect communities, jobs, schools, cultural institutions and state and national parks.
- Create safe paths for people to walk or bike for recreation or to get to work.
- Enhance and remove barriers for isolated and underserved neighborhoods.
- Encourage direct economic development in the form of stores, restaurants, offices, homes and entertainment venues along the path.
- Become the kind of destination amenity that attracts residents and corporations to the area.

“It would change the whole dynamic,” said Scott Johnson, leader of the Wilmington Loop Coalition and a developer with **Johnson Commercial Real Estate**.

A Wilmington Loop would tie together the Northern Delaware Greenway Trail, the Jack Markell Trail, the cities of Wilmington, Newport and New Castle, multiple



TEACHER ABSENTEEISM CALLS FOR STAFF FLEXIBILITY, STRATEGIES

BY JAREK RUTZ

A human resources director for the largest school district in Sussex County shocked a House Education Committee hearing in April when she told them about 300 of its 1,000 educators are off on any given school day. About 800 of those educators are teachers, and their absenteeism rains down problems for the district, said Celeste Bunting, director of human resources at Indian River School District.

They may be off because they are sick themselves, they need to care for a sick child or spouse, they have a doctor's appointment, or other reasons including a vacation day. But the district must then scramble for substitute teachers or find another way to take care of their classes.

"We do have paraprofessionals who aren't certified teachers who can fill in," Bunting told the committee.

"We may have in a seven-period day, seven different teachers who are willing to give up their planning period to fill in during that time. Or, we combine classes and sometimes kids have to go into the gym to have a larger space."

Indian River is not the only district dealing with that issue, but not all districts are. Colonial School District in New Castle County and Milford School District in Sussex County have the same problem, but Caesar Rodney School District and Capital School District say it's not a problem for them.

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BY JAREK RUTZ

Christina School District will no longer hold its graduation at the **University of Delaware**. The Tuesday night decision by the school board came after a recent incident in which UD police arrested an 18-year-old star student on graduation day.

Holding graduation on UD's campus has cost Christina \$98,129. That includes access to a campus building and parking lot as well as hiring UD security for the ceremony.

"I plan to bring this issue back on the agenda until this issue is resolved and in each meeting we'll progressively sanction UD," said board member Naveed Baqir, who has been leading the charge to punish UD. He plans to demand a refund for the 2023 graduation from UD at Christina's August board meeting "for failure to provide appropriate and compassionate event security leading to a violent arrest."

The board voted near the end of a five-hour plus board meeting to move its graduations out of UD's Bob Carpenter Center unless UD admits their treatment of the Mohammed Sanogo was wrong and drops the charges against him.

"We are waiting for the results of the case to determine possible additional actions or steps," said board President Don Patton.

CHRISTINA VOTES TO STOP GRADUATIONS AT UD AFTER STUDENT ARREST

Dozens of community members have spoken out against UD police with accusations of police misconduct, excessive use of force, and racial and religious bias. Sanogo, a student with a grade point average above a 4.0 and plans to attend the University of Maryland to pursue aerospace engineering, was arrested at UD June 15. It happened less than 45 minutes after receiving his diploma during Newark High School's graduation.

Sanogo was charged with resisting arrest and reckless driving and accused of trespassing. The incident began when officers approached a handful of people including Sanogo who were engaging in a Muslim group prayer in the parking lot. A UD police officer told them they had to leave.

Three cars of teenagers were on their way out of the parking lot, but as Sanogo's car left, his car made a screeching noise, which witnesses blamed on new tires. Two police cars "boxed in" Sanogo. Sanogo opened his car door at an officer's request and officers dragged him out and pinned him against the car after Sanogo was struggling and slightly resisting, according to witnesses who are friends of Sanogo. An officer picked up Sanogo and slammed him into tall grass. Sanogo has asthma and kept repeating that he couldn't breathe. He was arrested and held overnight, released at 4 a.m. with a \$200 unsecured bail.

Baqir, witnesses and dozens of public commenters characterized the event as an abuse of power, excessive force and driven by religious or racial biases. The university has adamantly denied any allegations that its police officers acted with racial or religious bias.

UD has not released police body-cam footage. It did issue a statement saying UD Police applied appropriate de-escalation techniques in dealing with a suspect who was resisting arrest in order to ensure the safety of all who are involved, including the suspect.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



Culture

photo link: Delaware Art Museum
photo by S. Woodloe



MIDDLE-AGED DAD JAM BAND BRINGS CALAGIONE FRIENDS TO TOWN

BY PAM GEORGE

Sam Calagione has friends in all the right places. His former roommate is Ken Marino, an actor, comedian, director and screenwriter, who, with fellow thespian David Wain, was on MTV's "The State." The duo is also known for "Wet Hot American Summer" and its spinoffs.

Admittedly, Calagione is no slouch. The James Beard Foundation Award winner and his wife, Mariah, are the founders of Milton, Delaware-based **Dogfish Head Craft Brewery**. But in the early '90s, the roommates were just starting. They lived in a third-floor walk-up apartment in New York that was so large Marino and Wain's comedy sketch group could rehearse in it.

Calagione, meanwhile, brewed his first beer, Cherry Pale Ale, in the space and it was there that he declared to all involved that he was going to own a brewpub.

On Wednesday, July 19, the old friends will reunite at **Dogfish Head Brewings & Eats** in Rehoboth Beach. But this is no typical burger and beer-belly reunion of

men in midlife. Marino and Wain will perform with their band Middle Aged Dad Jam Band, a free show beginning at 9 p.m. And, of course, there will be comedy.

Calagione and Marino met via their third roommate, Joe Deluca. Calagione wasted no time experimenting with beer.

"Back then, Sam had these two small kegs, and he was constantly trying new recipes," recalled Marino, who took the time with Wain for a quick interview Wednesday. They wrote the movie "Wanderlust" starring Paul Rudd and Jennifer Aniston.

"If he succeeded, it was great; we drank it. If it wasn't good, we got rid of it and started again. That's how he came up with so many awesome flavors," said Marino, a Long Island native.

Wain agreed. "I remember sipping all his ales and feeling like this guy has the magic touch."

Meanwhile, The State perfected their skits in the

apartment. "We would hang out, and while we wouldn't ask for Sam's approval, we'd look out of the corner of our eye to see if Sam was laughing," Wain said.

The friends stayed in touch to the point that Wain and Marino loaded a van with video equipment and shot promotional material for Dogfish Brewings & Eats in Rehoboth when it opened in 1995.

"I wish I still had the footage," Calagione said.

Marino looked for opportunities to plug Dogfish Head in his films and TV shows whenever possible.

"I would try to sneak it in there anyway I could possibly do it," said Marino, who wore a Dogfish Head baseball cap for his recent Zoom interview. "And for that, Sam gives me half-priced fries whenever I'm in town."

THEY'RE WITH THE BAND

Wain, meanwhile, sought the chance to play drums whenever possible.

"Most of the music I've played over the years happened when I hired myself to play the drums in a TV show or movie," said the writer and director, who had played in high school bands.

But during the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, he started recording his playing and asked friends to sing or perform other musical parts. They had so much fun that a group met in Wain's Los Angeles garage to play when people began socializing again.

"It evolved very organically," Wain said.

"We looked forward to doing it all week," Marino added. "Anytime we got an email from Dave about rehearsing, we immediately responded."

Many rehearsals were truly jam sessions, with artists dropping in to join the core group, who are all in the entertainment business.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



LIFEGUARDS SHOW OFF SKILLS IN REHOBOTH'S REGIONAL COMPETITION

BY RACHEL SWICK MAVITY

University of Delaware student Meredith Lockwood has lifeguarding in her DNA. Her father, Don Lockwood, was a **Rehoboth Beach Patrol** lifeguard from 1985-88 and after being a lifeguard elsewhere last year, Meredith followed him into the patrol this year. So during Wednesday's Mid-Atlantic Regional Lifesaving Championships in Rehoboth, Meredith came to win. And have fun, of course.

As she warmed up her legs during the United States Lifesaving Association event, held for the past 27 years in Rehoboth Beach, her dad and supporters watched and encouraged her. They weren't disappointed.

In the first women's 90-meter sprint, Meredith qualified among the top times. In the finals for the sprint, she came in second, earning her big hugs and a smile from dad.

Meredith was among 20 female beach patrol lifeguards and about 50 male guards from the Mid-Atlantic region

to compete in a variety of speed and skill races. Events include the 90-meter sprint, 2K beach run, 4 x 90 soft-sand beach relay, 400-meter surf swim, swimmer rescue race, landline rescue race, paddleboard rescue race, run-swim-run, surf dash and beach flags.

Finishing just ahead of Lockwood in the final 90-meter sprint was Sophia Gulotti, a four-year Rehoboth Beach Patrol lifeguard.

"The level of local and regional talent competing will put on a show not to be missed," says Gulotti. "We performed well last year, and everyone is excited to see who has what it takes to win a championship and qualify for nationals in Virginia Beach."

That's what all the competitors were aiming for—a spot among the top guards from the region. They will travel together as a team to the national competition.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

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DELAWARE SHAKESPEARE'S 'MACBETH' COMES TO ROCKWOOD THIS MONTH

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware Shakespeare returns to Rockwood Park this month with the three witches taking on a more central role than usual.

“The witches enjoy chaos as a tool for learning,” said AZ Espinoza, who returns to DelShakes to direct the Scottish play, in a press release. “They lean into the power of the natural world to seek balance and to remind us that we have more to learn from making choices than passively accepting fate.”

DelShakes’ annual productions in the back yard of the Rockwood Mansion are one of the cultural touchstones of summer in Wilmington. “Macbeth” will be its 21st Shakespeare production under the summer stars there.

Last staged by DelShakes in 2010, “Macbeth” is the story of a triumphant general who doesn’t resist the lure of rising to king via murder.

One of Shakespeare’s most popular plays, includes many phrases that theatergoers are familiar with: “Is this a dagger which I see before me,” “double, double toil and trouble,” “Out! damn spot,” “knock, knock. Who’s there?” and “something wicked this way comes,” the latter a comment made by one of the Weird Sisters as Macbeth approaches them.

‘MACBETH’S’ WITCHES

The three witches will be portrayed by a mix of returning and new DelShakes performers. Rachel O’Hanlon-Rodriguez was an audience favorite as Stephano in “The Tempest.” Kimie Muroya began her professional career as a DelShakes performance apprentice in 2015’s “The Taming of the Shrew” and returns after performances with the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, InterAct Theatre Company and Theatre Exile.

Rounding out the three witches is DelShakes newcomer CJ Higgins, who is the operations and programs coordinator for Theatre Philadelphia and has played Puck in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” and Algernon Moncrieff in “The Importance of Being Earnest.”

DelShakes Artistic Squad member Mariah Ghant takes to the stage as Macbeth. Ghant played Titania for DelShakes in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at Rodney Square and has directed and produced many of the company’s “Beyond Shakespeare” and “Social Shakespeare” events over the last two years. She is also the artistic associate for Wilma Theater and an improviser with ComedySportz Philly.

“I feel like I’m training for a marathon,” said Ghant. “Macbeth is constantly battling with his mind, his heart and the forces of the natural (and supernatural!) world. Keeping up with that emotional push and pull is enough, but then there’s more! Upholding this titan of a classical figure in Shakespeare’s canon can get heavy.”

The cast also features Ciera Gardner as Lady Macbeth, who returns to DelShakes after serving as text coach for “The Tempest.” Gardner also has performed with Arden Theatre Company, Theatre in the X and Shakespeare in Clark Park.

Patrons may bring their chairs or blankets as well as their own food or drink, or buy from the DelShakes concessions tent, which features wine from Swigg, beer from Wilmington Brew Works and light fare from Janssen’s Market, plus soda and snacks courtesy of Kenny Family Shoprite.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



WEEKLY CONCERT SERIES STARTED WEDNESDAY AT NEW AMPHITHEATRE

BY BETSY PRICE

A weekly Wilmington series of free concerts designed to help bring the community together through live music debuted Wednesday, July 12. **DuPont Brass** will headline the first of weekly 6:30 p.m. concerts, designed to be family friendly, at the Urban Artist Exchange Amphitheater, created on the site of the city police's former stables. Wilmington hip-hop artist **Young Seda** will open at 6:30 p.m.

The Wednesday night concerts will continue into mid-October. The series is dubbed the Levitt AMP Wilmington Music Series, after the nonprofit that gave the city a \$90,000 matching grant to pay for three years of concerts.

"The Levitt AMP Wilmington Music Series offers a diversity of artists and genres that amplify the Levitt

Foundation's mission, which aligns with the core mission of the Urban Artist Exchange Amphitheater and Mayor Mike Purzycki's promise to provide Wilmingtonians and visitors with a vibrant place to live, work and play," said Tina Betz, director of Wilmington's Office of Cultural Affairs and Cityfest Inc.

"All concerts will be free and open to the public to experience the power of live music," she said. "In addition to the Levitt AMP Wilmington Music Series, UAE Amphitheater audiences will also enjoy other unique and creative live performance offerings such as the Saturday, July 15th, SQUONK! Opera."

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Business

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photo link: Delaware Division of Small Business



DRBA DETAILS MILLIONS GOING TO BRIDGE, AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware's infrastructure stole the show in Wednesday's State of the County for New Castle County. Stephen Williams, deputy executive director of [Delaware River Bay Authority](#), told an audience of about 200 that the Authority is focusing on the importance of replacing aging infrastructure and investing in the Delaware Memorial Bridge, which links the First State to New Jersey. Some of the authority's priorities with old infrastructure, he said, include bridges, I-295, ferry vessels and airports.

"Over \$300 million for the next five years is to be spent on bridge initiatives alone," he said.

Williams was one of more than a dozen speakers at the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce meeting held at the University of Delaware. It focuses largely on government, business and development, not social issues.

After an introduction from County Executive Matt Meyer, the conference was split into four sections: real estate development, infrastructure improvement, innovative ecosystem and a panel with the mayors of Middletown, Newark and Elsmere.

While the other portions contained information on community partnerships, newly-built apartment complexes and stores, renewable energy, internet access and more, the 30 minutes on infrastructure offered the most meat.

The Authority is in year nine of a 12-year rehabilitation process for the Memorial Bridge, Williams said. So far, it's completed tower elevator replacement, pier rehabilitation, cable preservation, and tower pin and link replacement.

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STATE OKS ENSTRUCTURE TO OPERATE PORT OF WILMINGTON

BY BETSY PRICE

The Diamond State Port Corp. announced Wednesday that Enstructure LLC has been approved as the new operator at the **Port of Wilmington** and that it will invest as much as \$65 million in the facility. Enstructure is a U.S. marine terminal and logistics company with a network of 21 marine terminals.

The company will take over in a matter of days after the deal was approved by legislative leaders designated by the state's Joint Capital Improvement Committee.

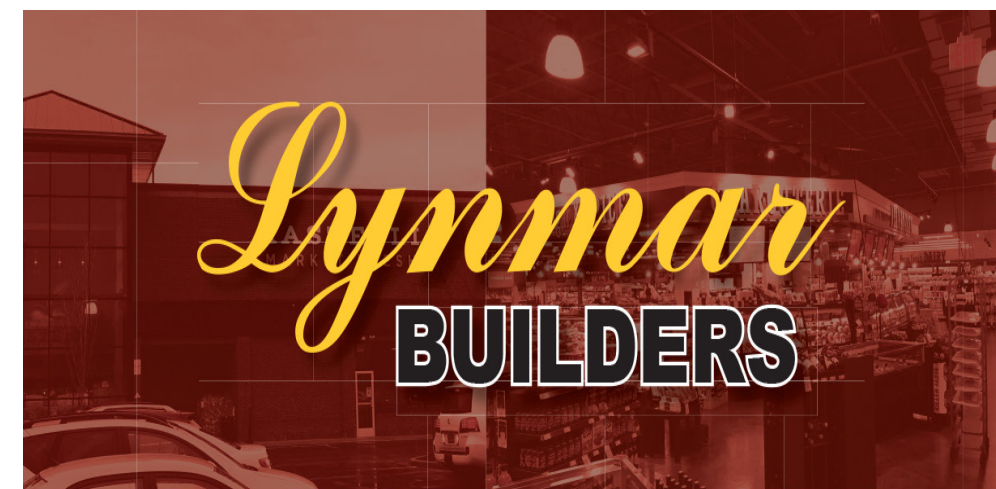
House Speaker Valerie Longhurst, D-Bear, and Senate President Pro Tempore David Sokola, D-Newark, along with Joint Capital Improvement Committee Co-Chairs Rep. Debra Heffernan, D-Bellefont, and Sen. Jack Walsh, D-Stanton and Controller General Ruth Ann Miller gave their approval Tuesday on the unanimous decision by the board of the port corporation to replace GT USA Wilmington LLC.

PORT AGREEMENT

As part of the approval, Enstructure secured an agreement to work closely with the International Longshoremen's Association as well as a project labor agreement with the Delaware Building and Construction Trades Council. ILA and Trades Council representatives spoke in support of Enstructure and their proposal at the July 7 DSPC Board meeting.

Enstructure is also partnering with the state on the potential expansion at Edgemoor, where Gov. John Carney has committed \$50 million from American Rescue Plan Act funds.

"The Port of Wilmington and its workforce are critical to Delaware," Longhurst and Sokola said in a joint statement. "Thousands of Delaware families rely on the good-paying jobs that come from our port. We look forward to working with Enstructure as the new long-term operator and investor in one of Delaware's most important assets."



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Food & Dining

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BODHI KITCHEN OPENS IN REHOBOTH; MY SISTER'S FAULT REOPENS

BY PAM GEORGE

Right on schedule, **Bodhi Kitchen** opened this week in downtown Rehoboth. This is the second new project for the culinary minds behind **Drift**, and it seems as though Bodhi will make a similar splash in the coastal resort town.

There's no missing the theme. Cocktails sport names like Happy Buddha, East Meets West and Quiet Meditation, and the menu features noodles and rice dishes, dim sum (soup dumplings and pork belly steamed buns), lettuce wraps and Southern Thai fried chicken. The price point is \$12-\$15 for small plates; \$7-\$15 for dim sum; and \$18-\$29 for noodle/rice dishes and large plates.

ANOTHER COUP FOR MILFORD

My Sister's Fault has reopened after a two-month expansion and renovation. Owners—and sisters—Angie and Rous Robles purchased the building on SW Front Street, where they'd rented space for five years. (The

location was once home to the Milford Chronicle). The restaurant can now properly showcase the sweet and savory sides of the sisters, who moved to Delaware from Puerto Rico in 2009 and opened the bakery in 2017.

Since then, the business has received numerous awards, and last year, My Sister's Fault received an EDGE Grant from the Delaware Division of Small Business to purchase new equipment for custom cake orders, hire additional staff and extend operating hours for special events.

The fresh interior includes the work of artist Nadia Zychal, whose trompe l'oeil also graces the walls of nearby Benvenuto, and much of the wall décor was gifts from customers. The redesign also includes a fun kids' picnic table.

Empanadas remain the Robles' claim to fame, but you'll also find platters with rice, such as pork chops or shredded pork shoulder. The menu includes Cubano

sandwiches, breakfast dishes and, of course, such sweets as guava cake, tres leches and cream cheese flan. Don't be surprised if some dishes are creative takes on the traditional. Nutella empanada, anyone?

While the staff gets accustomed to the larger digs, My Sister's Fault recommends online ordering [HERE](#).

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Washington, D.C., natives know all about **Lebanese Taverna**, which also has locations in Arlington, McLean and Baltimore. Now beach residents can see what all the buzz is about.

During the pandemic, the Middle Eastern restaurant group started a neighborhood delivery service, including stops at the beaches. It was so popular that the trips resumed. On Friday, July 21, the truck will come to Lewes, Rehoboth and Bethany Beach. Order [online](#) in advance and show up at the designated time to pick up your meals. For instance, the Lewes delivery is to St. Jude the Apostle Church parking lot off Route 1 near the Nassau bridge.

When the truck pulls in, you'll see everyone streaming from their cars like kids around an ice cream truck. It is genuinely that good.

SUMMERS SIPS IN THE GARDEN

The Delaware Restaurant Association's **Women of Hospitality** initiative is hosting an industry networking event at **Bardea Garden** on Tuesday, July 18, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. The garden is between Bardea Food & Drink and Bardea Steak in downtown Wilmington.

The ancillary events lead up to the **Women of Hospitality Conference** on Nov. 8 at The Queen Theatre in Wilmington.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



photo credit: Delaware Greenways

Government

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WILM. CITY COUNCIL ADAMANTLY REFUSES TO CENSURE OLIVER

BY JAREK RUTZ

A resolution to censure Wilmington councilwoman Zanthia Oliver was slammed by city council members in the group's meeting Thursday night, losing by a vote of 10 to 2.

Resolution 0333, sponsored by Councilwoman

Shané Darby, was a public censure of councilmember Oliver, following the public reprimand issued in April by the city of Wilmington Ethics Commission.

"I have already come in front of the ethics committee and this has been discussed and it has been handled, and this is all I have to say" Oliver said. "This committee gave me my reprimand and I've accepted it and I'm done with this conversation."

Oliver was given a public reprimand by the city's ethics commission after voting during a previous meeting to allocate \$200,000 to her brother's nonprofit. Norman Oliver's organization, **Our Youth, Inc.**, offers physical and educational services for children in New Castle County to help them stay on the right path and set them up for success in their future endeavors.

According to the Wilmington Ethics Commission's **public reprimand**, the councilwoman voted in 2020 for

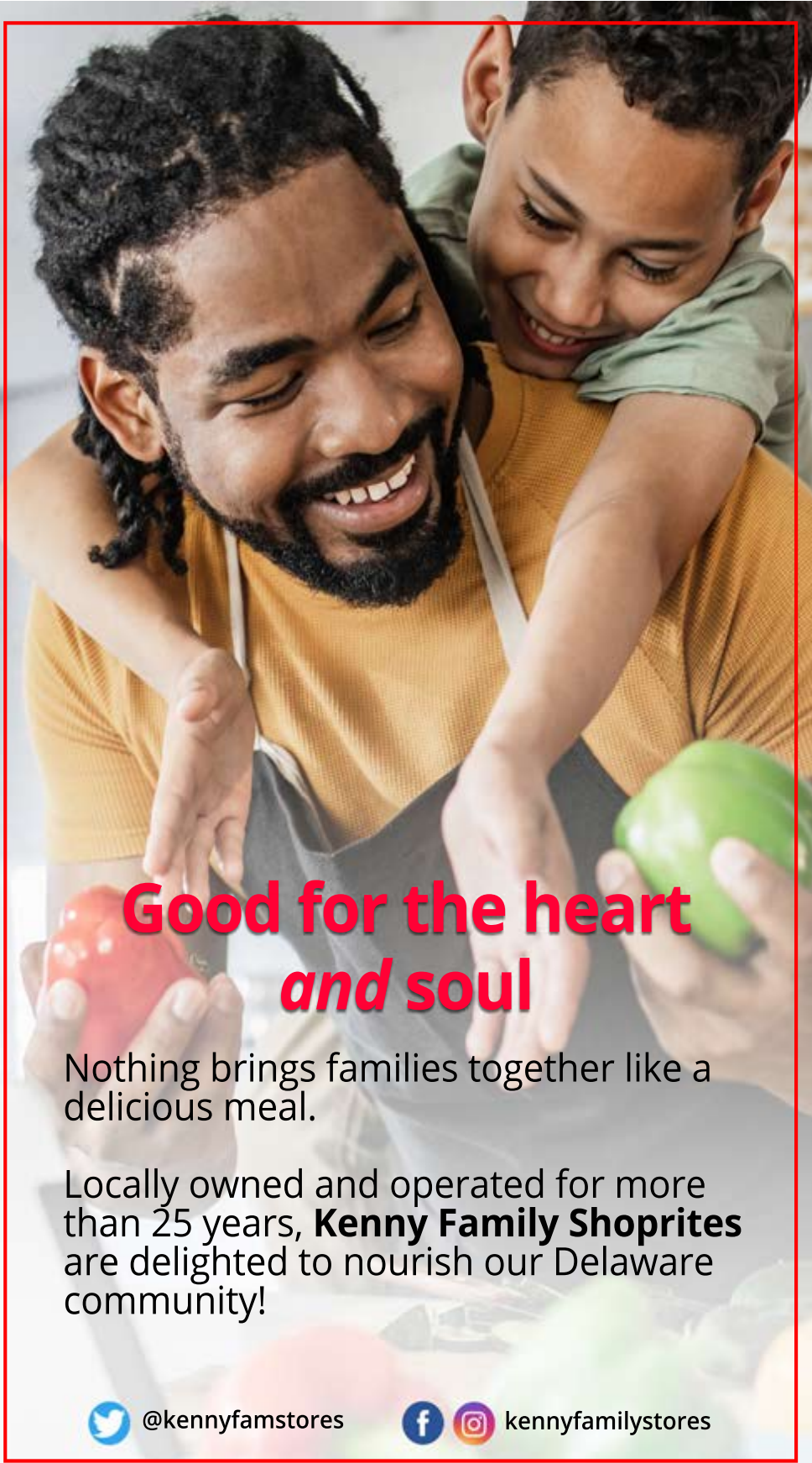
a 196-page resolution which laid out numerous beneficiaries of different grants, one being her brother's group. No one on the council argued that Oliver's actions weren't wrong, but the strong majority said that the situation has already been handled and Oliver has been through enough public humiliation and punishment.

Darby said she wanted to file her resolution to censure sooner. "Back in April, I did request for this but I really can't control the timeline of the law department and when they were going to be able to produce it and then put it on the council agenda," she said. "I wanted it to be in the same timeframe but it was out of my control."

Darby said there are so many obstacles in the way of holding city council members accountable when they do things that are unethical, that the behavior will continue.

"I can't be fired. I can't really be removed," she said. "The only thing that can happen is for me to resign or people not to vote me in the next session." The city's funds were mishandled which brought harm to the community, she said.

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photo link: Delaware Museum of Nature & Science



Education

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MATCH TAX - READING			\$ -	
SPECIALISTS			\$ -	
MATCH TAX - MATH SPECIALISTS			\$ -	
TOTAL TAX RATE	\$ 1.6615	\$ 1.6503	\$ (0.0112)	-0.6%

BY JAREK RUTZ

Residents of the Milford School District are officially getting a tax decrease for the seventh straight year. After the district’s chief financial officer Sara Hale presented the tax proposal for the 2023-24 school year at the school board’s June meeting (to much applause and gratitude from members), the board voted unanimously Monday night to approve next year’s tax rate.

“Since the 2016 referendum and the 2017 implementation of the tax rate increase, our local rate has decreased 13.5% in total,” Hale said. “For a homeowner with an assessed value of approximately \$30,600 in Sussex or \$86,478 in Kent, the decrease would be approximately \$222.63 during that time.”

MILFORD VOTES TO DECREASE TAXES FOR NEXT YEAR

Those that live in the district—which spans parts of Kent and Sussex counties—will pay .6% less in school taxes for the 2023-2024 school year. See chart at left.

Milford residents in Sussex County will pay \$4.6638 per \$100 of assessed property value, and those living in the district in Kent County will pay \$1.6503 per \$100 of assessed property value.

Since the proposal was to decrease taxes, the school board had the final say. If the plan was to increase taxes, the district would have needed to go to referendum to allow residents to vote.

Several board members thanked Hale for the work she’s done in order to maintain fiscal responsibility in the district. The golden goose of this all is Milford’s Middle School Project, which is part of the district’s new Strategic Plan. Hale said the district has the finances to complete the project without increasing revenue through taxes.

The project is designed to create an innovative and modern learning environment for 1,000 students in grades five and six which is expected to be completed by fall 2025.

Also at the meeting, the district’s newly elected school board members Ashlee Connell, Victor “Butch” Elzey and Jennifer Massotti were sworn into their seats.

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APPO TO SEEK INCREASE TO PROPERTY TAXES FOR 23-24 SCHOOL YEAR

BY JAREK RUTZ

The [Appoquinimink School District](#) voted this week to approve a tax increase because of rising costs. The school board will ask for a rate increase by 1.42 cents per \$100 of assessed home value.

According to Danielle Pro-Hudson, district chief communication officer, the tax increase is part of the tax rate that is locally determined by the board, not voted through referendum by Appo residents. The last referendum was four years ago and passed. With a tax increase, Appo expects nearly \$4 million more in revenue than last year, or \$229,392,205.

“With rising expenses, certainly the revenue is not keeping pace with that,” said Eric Loftus, the district’s director of finance.

Most Delaware school boards are unveiling preliminary 2023-24 school year budgets and tax rates this month. They are expected to take official votes on whether to approve the proposal in August.

Appo also swore in newly-elected school board member Tashiba Graham. Michelle Wall was re-elected to serve as board president and Richard Forsten was voted to serve as vice president for next school year.





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RED CLAY, WILM U PARTNER FOR PROGRAM TO CREATE MORE TEACHERS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Red Clay Consolidated School District is joining forces with Wilmington University to combat the ongoing teacher shortage. District superintendent Dorrell Green told the board an exclusive partnership with **Wilm U** will create alternate paths for Red Clay workers to get their teacher certification. The program will start this fall.

“As we know, again, the teacher and educator shortage tends to be a challenge and a lot of that also has to deal with certification,” Green said.

The teacher shortage has been a focus of educational and governmental groups for several years. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many teachers and substitutes leaving the field, and educators have said that there are fewer college education majors. As that’s happened, surrounding states have been raising the

starting salaries of teachers, forcing Delaware to look at its education pay structure, too.

The employees who may want to get their certification could come from many jobs, including paraprofessionals or secretaries. Green said the first group of employees will take online classes this fall.

Pathways that will be available include certificates for K-12 special education, early childhood exceptional teacher, paraeducator to teacher alternative route to certification and traditional dual certified alternative route to certification programs.

“This offers Red Clay employees a combination of benefits including discounted tuition, eligibility to apply for financial aid and eligibility for tuition reimbursement,” Green said.

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SEVEN DELAWARE STUDENTS RECEIVE \$2,500 MOUNTAIRE SCHOLARSHIPS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Seven Delaware high schoolers will save \$2,500 in college tuition thanks to **Mountaire Farms**, the nation's fourth largest chicken company. The company awarded a total of \$80,000 to 32 students in the Delmarva region and North Carolina in its latest round of scholarship funds given out to children and grandchildren of employees, growers and grain producers.

"We are proud of this program because it embraces everything that we care about—our employees, our growers, our grain producers and their families," said Phillip Plylar, president of Mountaire Farms. "These students have all demonstrated a commitment to their education, and to their communities, which we believe should be celebrated."

Delaware's recipients are:

Ryan Baker, Lewes, is a freshman at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, where he plans to study mechanical engineering. His father, Mark Baker, is a grain producer for Mountaire for the Millsboro location.

Ethan Patey, Delmar, is a sophomore at Delaware Tech Community College where he studies agribusiness

management. His grandfather, Howard Webb, is a grain producer for Mountaire.

Alexis Buckley, Millsboro, is a sophomore at Wilson College in Pennsylvania studying veterinary nursing. Her father, Paul Buckley, works in IT at Mountaire and her mother, Jennifer, works in accounting in Millsboro.

Mindy Blevins, Selbyville, is a junior attending Wilmington University studying organizational leadership. Her father, Charles Blevins, is a feed mill superintendent in Frankford.

Sofia Lopez, Harrington, will attend the University of Delaware in the fall to major in engineering. Her father, Federico Lopez, is a shipping manager in Selbyville.

Jillian Collins, Selbyville, will attend Delaware Valley University in the fall to study animal science. Her father, Scott Collins, leads the security team in Selbyville.

Camille Bello, Millsboro, is a junior at the University of Delaware majoring in health behavior science. Her mother, Lily Bello, works in purchasing in Selbyville.



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SMYRNA HIGH SHINES AT NATIONAL EVENT FOR FUTURE EDUCATORS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Smyrna High School shined in the [Educators Rising National Conference](#) in Orlando, FL, as 11 individuals or teams of the school earned top 10 finishes in competitions. Delaware had 18 individuals or teams total that landed in the top 10 of events.

Throughout the four-day conference, which ended July 2, students engaged in professional and personal development opportunities, networking and competitive events. The competitions are performance-based events in which aspiring educators demonstrate their knowledge, skills and leadership in education.

Delaware Teacher Academy students and advisors from across the state attended the conference, and the state was represented by students from Appoquinimink High School, Concord High School, Cape Henlopen

High School, Sussex Central High School, Laurel High School, Howard High School of Technology, McKean High School, Seaford High School, Smyrna High School and Delaware Technical Community College.

Here are the Delaware winners of the junior varsity division competitions:

Mekenzie Square-Ward of Smyrna High School finished first place in the job interview competition.

Alexandra Passero of Smyrna High School finished first place in the exploring non-core teaching careers competition.

Brianna Kalb of Smyrna High School finished fourth place in the exploring student support services competition.

Malika Opelogo of Concord High School finished fourth place in the creative lecture (TEDTalk) competition.

Delaware winners in the varsity division are:

Gala Meseguer-Molina of Laurel High School finished first place in the children's literature—Spanish competition.

Madison Retzlaff of Smyrna High School finished second place in the exploring education administration careers competition.

Hailey Ennis of Smyrna High School finished second place in the exploring student support service careers competition.

Allexi Steele of Smyrna High School finished third place in the creative lecture (TEDTalk) competition.

Taylor Colman of Smyrna High School finished third place in the educators rising moment competition.

Emma Kate Reist of Cape Henlopen High School finished third place in the exploring student support service careers competition.

Zachary Naar of Cape Henlopen High School finished fourth place in the exploring non-core teaching careers competition.

Olivia Marzullo of Sussex Central High School finished fourth place in the job interview competition.

Marlayna Pennington of Smyrna High School finished fifth place in the job interview competition.

Abigail Long of Smyrna High School finished sixth place in the impromptu speaking competition.

Leah Bonsignore of Smyrna High School finished sixth place in the public speaking competition.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



photo credit: Glenn Frazer



FOUR LOCAL BASEBALL STARS FIND OUT THEIR FATE IN MLB DRAFT

BY NICK HALLIDAY

The 2023 MLB Draft concluded on Tuesday after 20 rounds of picks were selected. When all was said and done, three #delhs players and a player with Delaware ties found out their fate moving forward.

Trey Paige of Delaware State was selected by the St. Louis Cardinals in the 17th round on Tuesday afternoon. Paige, who hails from Reading, PA, was a stud for the Hornets across three full seasons. He batted .372 during his career at Del State with 32 career home runs, 27 of which came during the past two campaigns. Paige also smoked 46 doubles during his time in Dover. Perhaps the most impressive thing about Paige is his ability

to put bat on ball and not strike out. Less than 100 strikeouts in his three+ seasons, with an on-base percentage of .473.

Paige was honored with the 2022 MEAC POY award and is the second-highest DSU player ever selected into the MLB Draft behind only Eric Carter in the 2004 Draft.

Now to our former Delaware high school standouts.

Tyler August (DMA) shockingly did not hear his name called during the three-day event, something that surprised many across the 302 sports community. August touts a fastball that has topped out at 97 mph and after

a Gatorade POY run that culminated in August leading his DMA Seahawks to second DIAA State Championship in three years, he will fulfill his commitment to the University of Delaware this upcoming year. August will be eligible again for the 2026 MLB Draft.

Brett Callahan starred at Newark Charter from 2017-2020 while earning first team All-State and Diamond State Conference POY honors during his time in the 302. He then went on to star at St. Joseph's (PA) for the past three seasons before being drafted in the 13th round by the Detroit Tigers. Callahan was strong at the dish during his three seasons on Hawk Hill, batting .352 with 30 doubles, 10 triples and 22 dingers, while stealing 48 bases over 139 career games. He also shined in the field this past year, only committing one error and posting a .991 fielding percentage.

Lastly, we have Jake Gelof, whom we highlighted pre-draft as a potential early round pick. The highly decorated homerun king of the University of Virginia was taken later than expected, but in a very special draft position on Sunday. The Los Angeles Dodgers selected Gelof with the 60th overall pick in the second round. Why is that special? Well it's the exact same draft position his brother Zack was selected by the Oakland A's in the 2021 draft. The 60th pick has a slot value of \$1.336 million. Both Gelof brothers are out west, in California. Who's up for a road trip?





BY PATRICK GARYANTES

The news just keeps getting better for the Gelof family this week. Jake Gelof was selected 60th overall in the 2023 MLB Draft by the Los Angeles Dodgers on Sunday after setting the new home run record at the University of Virginia this year, and now his older brother Zack is getting called up to the Bigs.

Gelof, who played high school ball at Cape Henlopen, made his Major League debut Friday, June 14, for the Oakland Athletics as they start the second half of their season against the Minnesota Twins. Gelof is not currently on the 40-man roster, which means that someone will be designated for assignment in order to make room for Zack.

CAPE'S ZACK GELOF GETS CALLED UP TO THE BIG SHOW

Gelof has been RED HOT for AAA Las Vegas during the past month, including hitting home runs in four consecutive games. He leaves Las Vegas batting .304 with 12 home runs, 21 doubles and 44 RBI. Gelof has also already stolen 20 bases this season while only being caught five times, this is already seven more than his career high.

Gelof is the Athletics No. 3 overall prospect and has been primarily playing second base this season. Second base for the 25-67 A's has primarily been occupied by Tony Kemp, who's batting a miniscule .197 on the campaign. The hot bat of Zack Gelof is worth a try for the A's who will look to gain some momentum as the season hits the back half.

Unfortunately, unless you have an MLB package that shows out of market games, this game was not visible. However, you can follow the Gamecast and box score [HERE](#).





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MID-SUSSEX WINS SENIOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TITLE

BY GLENN FRAZER

Mid-Sussex grabbed an early lead, then had to come from behind to secure the Delaware Little League “senior division” championship 9-6 over Camden-Wyoming. The Millsboro and Georgetown senior league programs (ages 14-16) combined this year to form Mid-Sussex in District 3, and the “merger” proved to be quite successful. After falling in the opening round June 6 to District 2 champ (Naamans), the Mid-Sussex team defeated Naamans in an elimination game on June 8. That result set up a meeting with District 1 host Camden-Wyoming, and since Mid-Sussex already had one loss, they would need to win twice to secure the state title.

The District 3 champs won Monday 5-3 to force a second and “winner-take-all” game for a spot in the Eastern Regional. One of the interesting facts about that win on Monday was the decision by Pete Onuschak to leave Georgia at 4 a.m. to pitch in the 7 p.m. game. He arrived exactly one hour before the scheduled first pitch. He then went on to throw a complete game, allowing only one earned run while striking out eight, thus sending his team into Tuesday night’s final.

Mid-Sussex scored three times in the first inning on a hit batter, catcher’s interference and a solo home run by catcher Chet Furmanek. Camden-Wyoming cut the lead to 3-2 in the top of the third, as Jordan Sims singled and

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Conner Heritage doubled to lead off the inning. They both scored on a wild pitch and an RBI by Rhett Lancaster. Mid-Sussex answered as Furmanek doubled and scored in the bottom of the third to make the score 4-2.

In the top of the fifth inning, Camden-Wyoming loaded the bases with two outs and Colby Rall smashed a grand slam homer to left field, giving his team its first lead of the night at 6-4. That advantage would last just one inning as Mid-Sussex scored five runs in the sixth frame on five hits, a walk and an error. Furmanek again reached base on a fielder’s choice that also resulted in an error and plated two runs.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



FORMER BLUE HEN WHITEHEAD EARNs SPOT ON BUCS

BY NICK ALESSANDRINI

Former Middletown Cavalier and Delaware Blue Hen football star Kedrick Whitehead will be sticking around Tampa, FL, this summer. The Tampa Bay Buccaneers signed the Delaware native to their 90-man offseason roster on May 15 after the rookie minicamp tryout period. Whitehead was one of three players signed by the Bucs after the rookie mini camp, alongside East Central (OK) wide receiver David Moore and Charlotte outside linebacker Markees Watts.

Whitehead was undrafted out of the University of Delaware and will play safety for the Bucs, the same position the All-American played so well for the Blue

Hens. Whitehead “stood out” during the rookie mini-camp after being on a tryout contract with the team. Whitehead will now have a chance to show what he can do during the NFL preseason and hopefully make the 53-man roster come late August. Whitehead was a former 9x All-American, 4x All-CAA Defensive Back, and 3x team captain with the Delaware Blue Hens while recording 295 career tackles, ranking 21st all-time in program history and sixth among DBs.



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