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August 20, 2023

Vol. 4, Issue 33

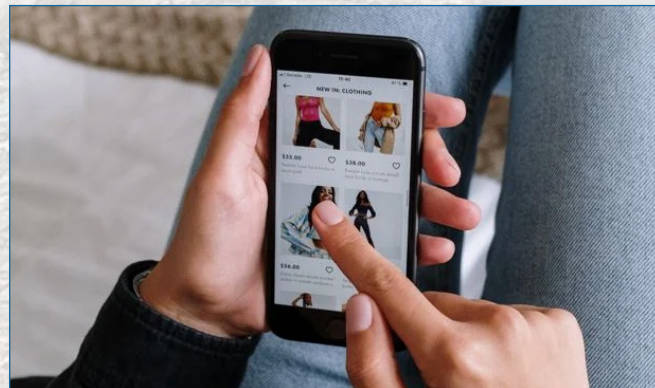
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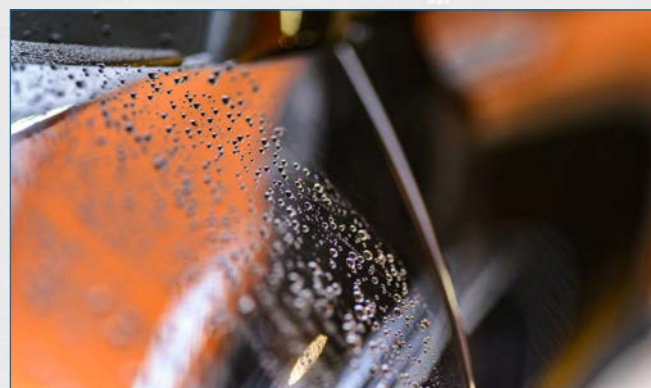
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photo link: Delaware Greenways

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Anura Named to Inc. 5000



Camden Mayor Resigns



UD Womens' Soccer Beat Syracuse

photo link: Scott Evers



# Headlines

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# 17 SCHOOLS SHOW LESS THAN 10% PROFICIENCY ON STATE TESTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Seventeen Delaware schools had single-digit proficiency rates in math, reading or the SAT on state-administered tests. More than 200 public schools take part in the Smarter Balanced test, which measures the knowledge of students in grades three through eight in math and reading, and the SAT for all juniors in high school. Ten of those grammar and middle schools had less than 10% of their students score as proficient on the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Another seven had single-digit proficiency in the SAT, which once stood for Scholastic Aptitude Test, but now just goes by its initials.

Delaware is one of eight states that give the SATs to all 11th graders, which lowers the state's scores. In most states, it is usually taken only by students headed to college.

If a student is not proficient, that means they do not meet grade-level expectations and standards in a given

subject, but it doesn't necessarily mean they cannot read, write or do math.

"While we want to see all schools at or above the state average for proficiency, we need to remember that these scores are just one data point," said Kendall Massett, executive director of the [Delaware Charter Schools Network](#). "Students and schools are much more than one test score, which is why our Delaware report cards have multiple measures for schools."

However, Massett said, it is encouraging to see a decrease in the number of schools with single-digit proficiency over the last few years. Last year, 10 schools had single-digit proficiency scores for SAT, and 16 for the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

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BY BETSY PRICE

The trees that seemed to take the brunt of the Aug. 7 storm through northern New Castle County were poplars and ashes, an arborist says.

“They’re just more brittle,” said Tony Marsalo, arborist with Strobert Tree Service Inc. Their root systems aren’t as deep, but it wasn’t the roots that got them.

“These trees were just snapped in half,” he said. “They have very little flex in them, so they just snap.”

Another big problem was trees with a forked trunk. Many of those just split in half, he said. Marsalo has been working steadily in Hockessin and other areas helping

# ARBORIST: TREE DAMAGE SHOWS NEED FOR ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

to clean up storm damage. He has a specific recommendation for anyone who is out evaluating their own property or trying to clean it up themselves: Look up.

“You have to look up because what’s down on the ground is not going to kill you,” he said. “What’s barely hanging on by a strand of wood above you will kill you.”

He also recommends that people put on a helmet—any kind of helmet, even a son’s or daughter’s hockey helmet—when walking their property after a storm.

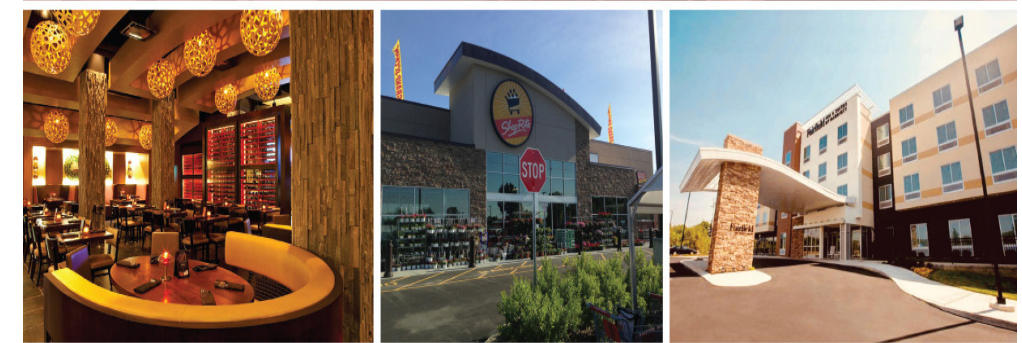
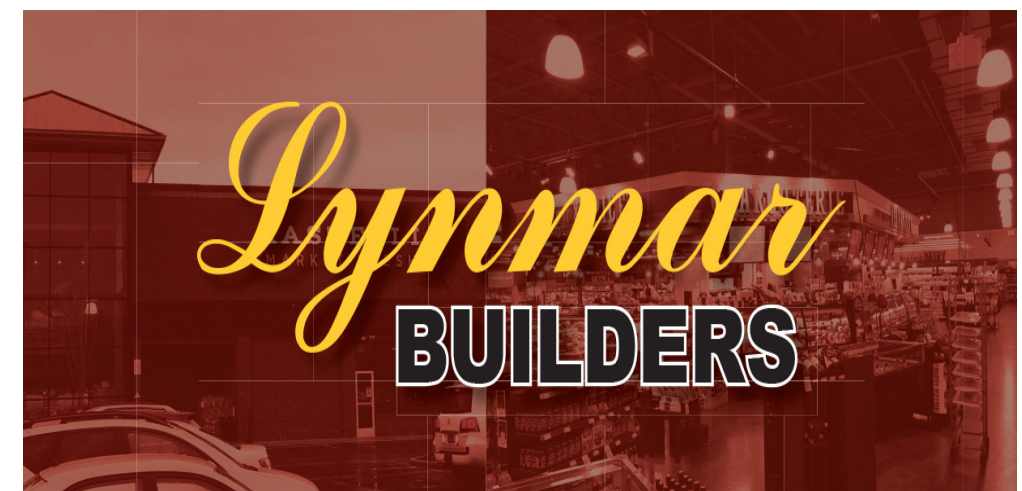
“Put it on and be looking up, not down, to assess the damage,” he said.

Even that’s not a perfect safety solution. His crews have had trees that did not appear to be damaged by this storm topple over as they work on a nearby tree.

Marsalo, a certified arborist, hopes that one thing people take away from the experience of seeing so much damage is that they should maintain their trees just like they maintain the house by servicing their heating and air conditioning systems or having pest control come annually.

“We have different things checked every year in our house and probably the most important thing is that 100,000-pound tree about 10 feet from your house,” he said.

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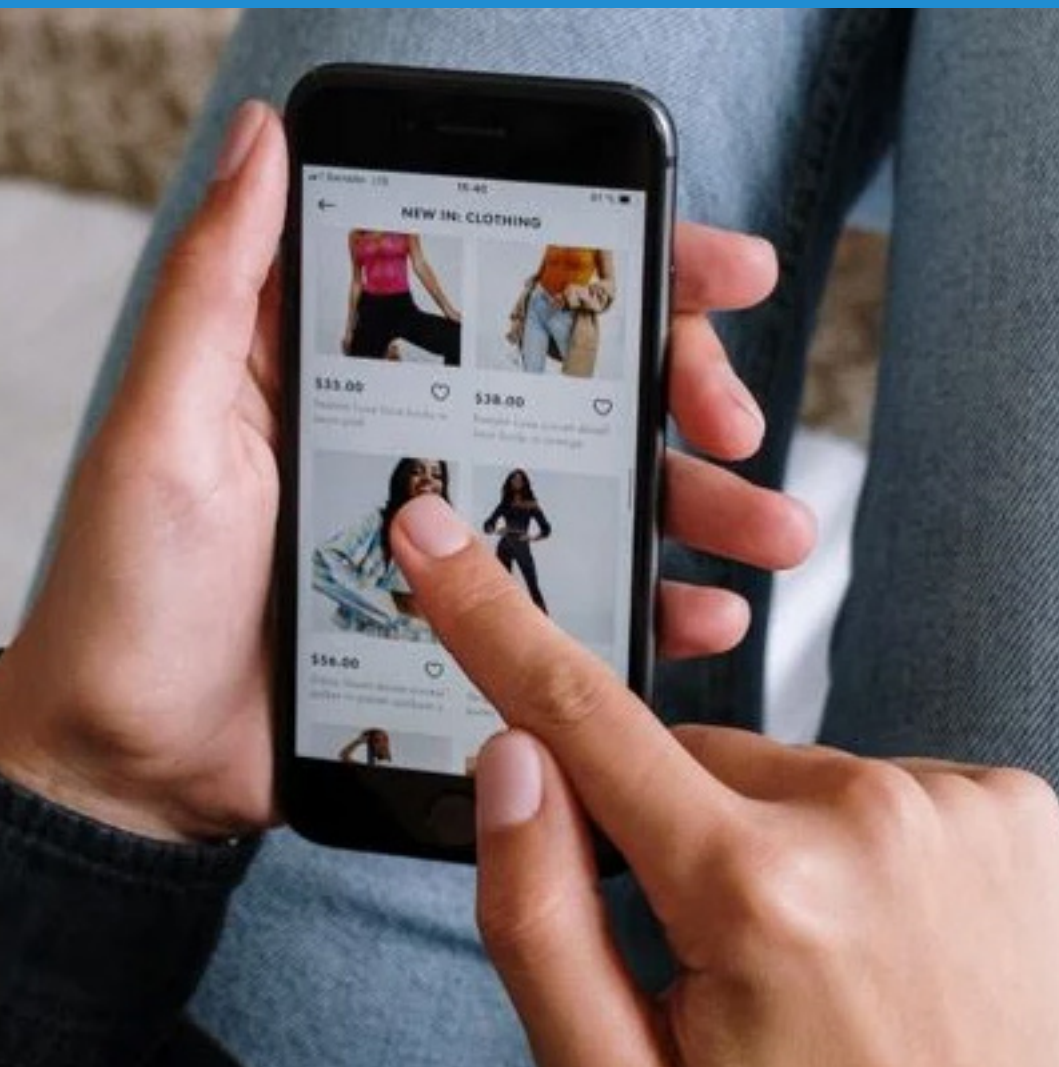
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BY BETSY PRICE

A Middletown cybersecurity company providing software that helps digital advertisers weed out bots, malware and human fraud has been named to the Inc. 5000 Fastest-Growing Private Companies for 2023.

**Anura Solutions LLC** was ranked No. 1731 on the list created by the magazine Inc., which caters to entrepreneurs. The company's software exposes fraud in real time and is used by two million domains, according to its website. Anura is part of a huge economic sector that many people don't even realize exists.

"Fraud is projected to cost advertisers \$100 billion this year, totaling millions of dollars each day," said Sherrii

# MIDDLETOWN CYBERSECURITY COMPANY ANURA NAMED TO INC. 5000

Brentari, Anura's director of marketing. There aren't any laws in the U.S. specifically aimed at ad fraud, she said. "The battle against ad fraud is ongoing, but understanding the laws and the challenges of enforcement is the first step," she said. "Combining this knowledge with powerful solutions like Anura, marketers can protect their campaigns, budgets and, ultimately, their businesses from the damaging impacts of ad fraud."

## ANURA GENESIS

Anura was founded by New York high school sweethearts Beth and Rich Kahn, who now live in Middletown. Rich, a software developer, wrote the first 150,000 lines of code that created the software to combat the ad fraud that was affecting another of their businesses, a digital marketing firm named eZanga.

Within eZanga they launched an internal ad fraud solution called Traffic Advisors to pre-filter clients' traffic. He thought he could come up with a solution that was better than anything on the market at that time to tackle fraud in any environment, Brentari said.

The Kahns realized, after a year or so of testing, that the solution he created stood to be more profitable than the marketing company he originally wrote the code for, so they began transitioning away from eZanga to focus on Anura, she said.

"It's an honor to be featured in the Inc. 5000 List of Fastest Growing Private Companies for 2023," said Beth, Anura's chief financial officer. "We believe our growth

is a testament to our amazing team and we are all fully committed to achieving Anura's vision of eliminating ad fraud and helping our clients grow."

Household brand names such as Facebook, Chobani, Under Armour, Microsoft and others gained their first national exposure as honorees on the Inc. 5000, the Anura press release said.

Chief executive officer Rich described Anura as a bootstrapped company. He has been a founding partner on five separate multimillion dollar businesses. eZanga was featured in the Inc. 5000 list five years in a row.

"I enjoy the challenge of starting from scratch," Rich said. "For the most part, it's just being very careful with money and being very strategic with the day-to-day operations of the business to ensure growth year over year. Being in the public eye to know who you are and what makes your product or service unique is the most important thing to drive a business."

Anura is a subscription-based solution and provides subscribers with a robust dashboard to track fraud in real-time.

"We offer extremely responsive customer support and do monthly reports and quarterly reviews with all clients," Brentari said.

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photo link: Delaware Art Museum  
photo by S. Woodloe

Culture

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## CANDLELIGHT IN '24: 'DOLLY,' 'FANTASTICKS,' 'EDWIN DROOD

BY BETSY PRICE

A beloved musical, a show featuring Dolly Parton tunes and a dramedy during which the audience decides the outcome of the story all will be part of the **Candlelight Theatre**'s 2024 season.

The season will open with matchmaker classic “Hello, Dolly” Jan. 20-Feb. 25, followed by “The Mystery of Edwin Drood” March 16-April 21. “Drood” is based on Charles Dickens’ unfinished novel and asks the audience to pick which character will be the murderer. It’s followed with “Moon Over Buffalo” May 11-June 16, a farce in which everything that could possibly go wrong for two fading stars doing rep in Buffalo, New York, falls apart.

“The Fantasticks,” which ran off-Broadway for 42

years, will play Candlelight July 13-Aug. 25. That story of love, family, friendship and surviving adversity remains a theater favorite.

The working woman’s anthem “9 to 5, The Musical,” featuring songs by Dolly Parton, will be on stage Sept. 14 to Oct. 20.

The Arden theater isn’t telling what its holiday show will be but it will run Nov. 16-Dec. 22.

“We are sworn to secrecy for now but know you’ll love this classic Holiday show at the Inn...at our barn,” the theater’s press release said.

### CANDLELIGHT SHOWS

“Our 2024 schedule offers our audience a season rich in history and tradition, filled with humor, mystery,

laughter and knockout production numbers,” said Bob Kelly, Candlelight’s artistic director. The shows come with dinner, often served by actors in the productions.

The six-show season will sell for \$335, which is 25% less than buying single tickets for each show. Season ticket holders get preferred seating if they reserve before Oct. 15. Tickets prices will rise by less than 2%.

“We are working to keep the ticket price affordable to our patrons,” said Terry Healy, president of the Board of Directors. “We anticipate that 2024 season sales of season tickets will surpass our record from last year. We are grateful to all our patrons for their support.”

Tickets are available by calling the box office at (302) 475-2313 or on the [website](#).

### Here’s more about the productions:

**HELLO, DOLLY!:** Based on Thornton Wilder’s play, “The Matchmaker,” the musical follows matchmaker Dolly Gallagher-Levi. It recently was a smash hit in New York with Bette Midler at the helm. The show has won 10 Tony Awards and features songs by Jerry Herman.

**EDWIN DROOD:** This Rupert Holmes show, presented as a show-within-a-show, with Dickens’ novel presented by Victorian actors in British **pantomime** and **music hall** traditions. It’s not meant to be a straight retelling of the work.

**MOON OVER BUFFALO:** The Ken Ludwig comedy focuses on George and Charlotte Hay, who acting in “Private Lives” and “Cyrano de Bergerac” in Buffalo, NY. Their marriage is faltering, and then they hear that Frank Capra is coming to see their matinee with an eye toward casting them in a movie.

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## HEAVY HEAVY APPEARED AT ARDEN GILD HALL

BY BETSY PRICE

The Brits are came...to [Arden Gild Hall](#).

[The Heavy Heavy](#), a retro rock band from Brighton, England, played an outdoor concert in the north Delaware community on Friday, Aug. 18.

“I would say they kind of have an early 70s rock sound influenced by Fleetwood Mac, Crosby, Stills and Nash,” said Ron Ozer, executive director of the hall. “They say their goal is to make records that sound like their favorite records, so you can kind of get that they’re not trying to sound edgy. In that sense, it’s a retro sound.”

The 170-year-old barn that serves as the home for concerts and other kinds of community events has played host to a variety of music in the concert series’ 25 years.

“We try to cover a lot of ground with rock, bluegrass, singer songwriters, world music, jazz and comedy,” Ozer said.

This season will include the Irish quartet Lankum (Sept. 27, \$28), Dar Williams (Oct. 6, \$45), Suzanne Vega (Oct. 7, \$65), the all-women jazz band Artemis (Oct. 13, \$34), comic Ophira Eisenberg (Dec. 9, \$34). Visit [www.ardenconcerts.com](http://www.ardenconcerts.com).

Ozer, who is a trustee at The Grand, said the concert gild’s choices rarely conflict with acts that are chosen by The Grand or The Queen. That’s largely because they both are booking bigger venues, he said.

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# DU PONT GARDENS *of the* BRANDYWINE

## FIVE AREA DU PONT GARDENS CELEBRATED IN NEW BOOK

BY BETSY PRICE

A new book explores the rich heritage of five Delaware-area gardens that belonged to members of the du Pont family. “[Du Pont Gardens of the Brandywine Valley](#)” (Monacelli, \$60 hardcover) looks at [Hagley Museum and Library](#), [Nemours Estate](#), [Mt. Cuba Center](#), [Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library](#) and [Longwood Gardens](#). Written by [Marta McDowell](#) and featuring photos by [Larry Lederman](#), the book is 240 pages with 220 photos.

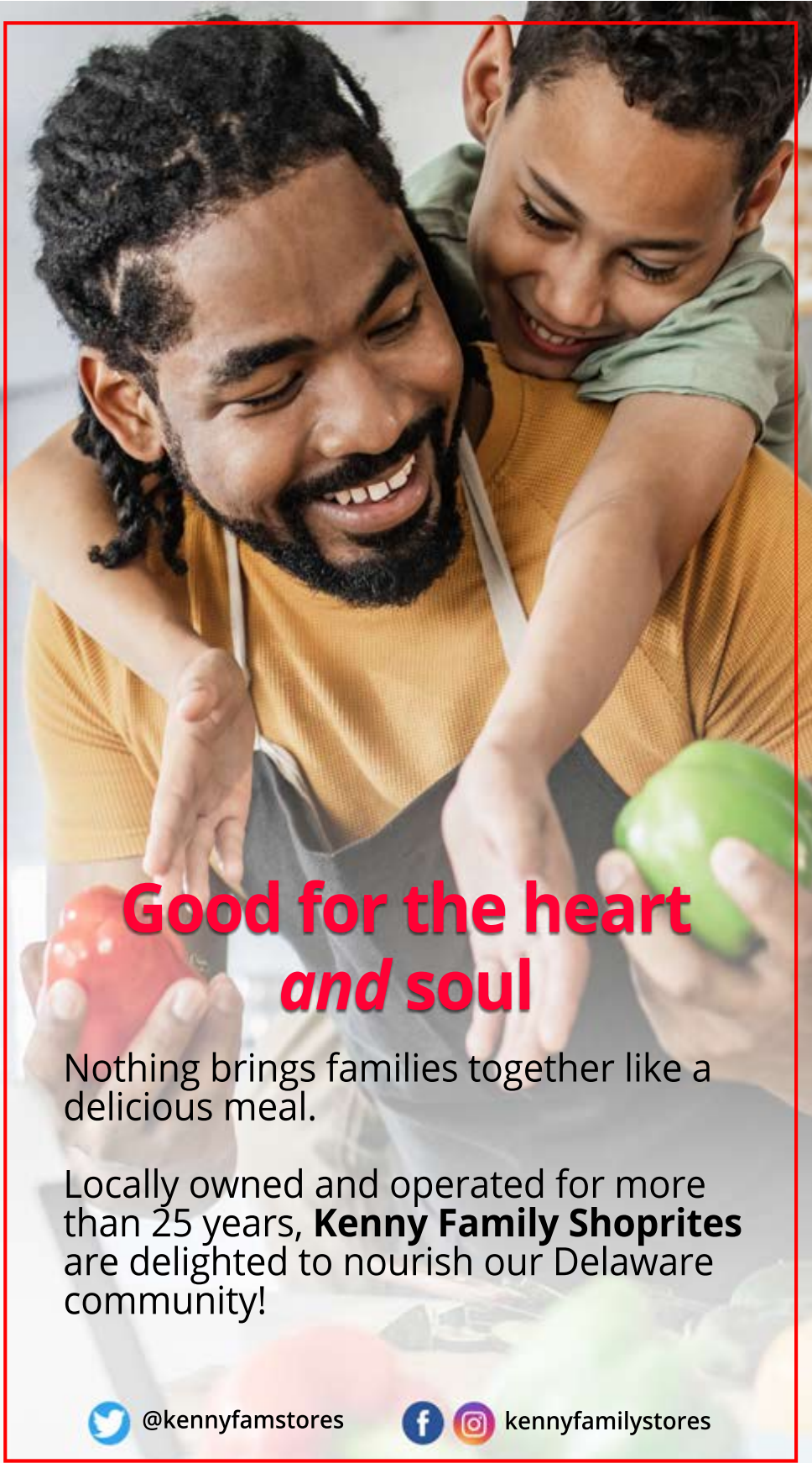
McDowell focuses on the stories of these gardens and their commitment to the future through strategies for sustainable management and growth.

“The Brandywine Valley is home to some of the most spectacular gardens in the world and so much of that

beauty is owed to the thoughtful vision of the du Pont family, who created and preserved these estates for all to enjoy,” said Paul B. Redman, president and CEO of Longwood Gardens.

The [du Pont family](#) arrived in America in 1800 and made a fortune first with their gunpowder mills before the family company moved into chemicals. While the family name became internationally recognized for its business, the family members became philanthropists, preservationists, collectors and ecological stewards.

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# MILLSBORO MAN WITH 17 MOLOTOV COCKTAILS GETS SEVEN-YEAR SENTENCE

BY JAREK RUTZ

A Molotov cocktail—no, not a fruity adult beverage, but a hand-thrown destructive weapon—has landed a Millsboro man in federal prison for more than seven years. Job Gillette, a 25-year-old, will serve 87 months for possessing 17 Molotov cocktails, additional raw materials, an AK-47 semi-automatic rifle, ammunition and a ballistic vest.

The weapons were discovered after Gillette had threatened to “blow up or burn down” the group home where he lived. According to court records, he also believed in the New World Order, a conspiratorial idea that powerful entities are manipulating governments to create a one-world totalitarian government.

Gillette took measures to maximize the harmful impact of his weapons by adding styrofoam to his Molotov cocktails to “help the burning liquid adhere to the

target and create clouds of thick, choking smoke.” He also added screws and nails to increase their destructive impact.

“Had Mr. Gillette been able to follow through with his plot, the impact could have been devastating for the group home and its residents,” said David C. Weiss, U.S. Attorney. “This sentence should serve as a deterrent for anyone considering this similar violent conduct.”

Gillette was charged with four counts of possession of an unregistered destructive device, one count of possession of a firearm by a prohibited person and one count of possession of a firearm with an altered or obliterated serial number.



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# Business

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photo link: Delaware Division of Small Business





# WJBR SOLD TO EVANGELICAL RADIO CHAIN VCY AMERICA

BY BETSY PRICE

WJBR radio station in Wilmington has been sold to an evangelical Christian radio chain **VCY America**. The New Castle station was the only Delaware station owned by **Beasley Media Group**, which is headquartered in Florida. VCY is headquartered in Milwaukee, WI. Details of the deal were not released. The sale must be approved by the Federal Communications Commission.

Until then, 99.5 WBJR will continue business as usual, including holding its 2023 Help Our Kids Radiothon to support Nemours Children's Hospital in September.

Beasley owns six other stations in the Philly region, according to the Radio and Television Business Report.



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# NEW PROGRAM HELPS ON-THE-MOVE MILITARY SPOUSES FIND JOBS

**BY JAREK RUTZ**

Military spouses in the First State have a new service to help them land jobs. The **Military Spouse Transition Network**'s new career program is a partnership between Delaware and the **National Association of State Personnel Executives** (NASPE), an organization dedicated to improving the communication and exchange of information among state government personnel executives nationwide. The program is designed to help military spouses employed by state government agencies in the NASPE member states.

Delaware's **Department of Human Resources** is extending an invitation to assist with career placement to all military spouses and their dependents relocating to the state.

To reach a wider audience, Delaware has been engaging with different military branches and sharing information at local hiring events. The process starts when the military member receives a Permanent Change of Station notice. Once they receive this, military spouses are encouraged to contact the designated MSTN liaison in their home state who will connect them with the appropriate personnel in the receiving state.

This process facilitates an information exchange, providing military spouses access to a wide array of valuable career services, including resume assistance, skills translation and important professional contacts.

Those married to military personnel often do not have significant job security, as many have to relocate to



new duty stations approximately every three years. That can create challenges to building professional careers and financial stability.

Without proper career assistance, military spouses are often left with no choice but to accept lower-paying jobs, leading to professional dissatisfaction and limited workforce participation, stated the Department of Human Resources.

“We want to go the extra mile to make sure military spouses know that Delaware is a place that values and appreciates their hard work, experience and sacrifice,” said Claire DeMatteis, secretary of the department.



photo credit: Rachel Park/ Unsplash



# Food & Dining

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## FOOD NOW: GEORGE & SONS CLOSING; PARK CAFÉ'S EMPANADA POP-UP

BY PAM GEORGE

This the diversity of Delaware's dining scene is on display right now. Read on for news about empanadas, ramen, vegan food and Italian specialties. While one beloved seafood restaurant is closing, another is still going strong. Meanwhile, there are plenty of wine and food events with summery menus.

### George & Sons

The Esterling family recently announced that George & Sons, their seafood market and restaurant at 1216 Old Lancaster Pike, will close on Sept. 3. According to the Facebook post: "We made it through COVID and survived for 13 years in a very challenging business, all because of YOU!!! We will be on a brief pause while new plans are being made, and we will miss you dearly until then."

The business rents the old building, which requires much work, said George Esterling IV. He's eager to start

promoting Rehoboth Bay oysters in northern Delaware and has already formed partnerships with oyster farmers to create a farm-to-table business. He's also involved with [The Creamery of Kennett Square](#). He said his goal is to help George Esterling III enjoy retirement on a boat.

### Lobster Special at Feby's

Speaking of seafood, [Feby's Fishery](#) in Wilmington is known for its specials and we checked out the \$29 lobster deal on Wednesday. The 1¼ lb. Maine lobster arrived partially cracked with butter, lemon and a choice of two sides. (Cole slaw and battered fries for me.) Meals come with rolls that are worth the visit alone. Take home what you don't eat there—you'll thank me later. My dining partner had the snapper special with mango glaze, which was expertly cooked.

To be sure, there is a reason Feby's is a local institution.

### More Wawa on the way?

[Wawa](#) wants to build a 5,585-square-foot convenience store with 16 gas pumps out front on Elkton Road in Newark, according to the Newark Post. If approved, the site would be the second location on Elkton Road for the convenience store giant, which is based in Wawa, PA, near Media. The other store is over the state line in Maryland. However, it is on the opposite side of the road.

### All about empanadas

Park Café in Wawaset Park will host an Empanada Pop-Up Dinner on Thursday, Aug. 24, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The three-course dinner will spotlight Michelle Rodenheiser of [Empánalgas](#). On the menu: street corn salad, choice of three beef or mushroom empanadas and guava cheesecake. The cost is \$29 per person and does not include beverages or gratuity. Reserve a seat at [HERE](#).

### Food hall news

Rebel Ramen is coming to [DE.CO](#) in downtown Wilmington on Wednesday, Aug. 23. The concept, which also features bubble tea, is from the food-and-beverage team at the [Buccini/Pollin Group](#), which has also opened [Wilma's](#), [Makers Alley](#), [I.M. Coffee](#), [Stu and Sammy's](#) and the food hall.

"While we were fearless in our commitment to adding something new to DE.CO, we were careful about the curation of our noodle bar vision," said Richard Snyder, the team's vice president, in a press release.

"In developing our bowls, we paired our original [bone] broth concept with the intent to make sure we celebrated traditional ramen while still making room for customization and a new experience every time you visit," he continued.

[READ MORE HERE](#)





## SIROCCO OFFERS VIBRANT SPANISH, ITALIAN AND GREEK FLAVORS

BY PAM GEORGE

A sirocco is a Mediterranean wind from the Sahara that can reach hurricane-level speed. In Rehoboth Beach, however, Sirocco Food & Drink is a breath of fresh air. The newly opened restaurant is in [Coastal Rehoboth Beach](#), part of the Tapestry Collection by Hilton. The hotel replaces the Sandcastle Motel, a concrete gray edifice resembling a giant prop for a “Camelot” production. In comparison, the 60-room Coastal Rehoboth Beach is a contemporary boutique hotel and along with the [Bellmoore Inn & Spa](#) and [Hotel Rehoboth](#), it meets the demand for upscale accommodations.

Unlike those two properties, however, Coastal Rehoboth Beach is two blocks from the boardwalk. It has a rooftop indoor pool, parking and the on-site restaurant off the lobby.

Although Sirocco just opened, it was hopping on a

Sunday night and not all customers were hotel guests. Rehoboth Beach always embraces a new restaurant, but this eatery’s menu is particularly appealing.

### VIBRANT FLAVORS

Given the restaurant’s name, you would expect dishes with Spanish, Italian and Greek flavors. You won’t be disappointed. Take, for instance, lemon chicken and orzo with veggies and white beans or a classic Greek salad with kalamata olives, feta, cucumber and fresh oregano.

Or opt for the caprese, a fan of local tomatoes with burrata, pine nuts, basil-infused olive oil and aged balsamic vinegar. Small plates also include antipasto and charred octopus.

For a fun take on “smash burgers,” the kitchen uses merguez lamb patties with North African spices. The two sliders are dressed with Greek feta, pickled onions and dill aioli, and a refreshing cucumber-tomato salad.

The Spanish influence is evident in a tumble of juicy shrimp and roasted garlic. The pool of olive oil is laced with guindilla chili peppers and red pepper flakes. With the grilled bread, you can sop up every spicy drop of oil.

Unfortunately, flaming saganaki, a Greek specialty, wasn’t available that night. The kefalograviera cheese used in the eye-catching dish is hard to source.

To draw attention to ourselves, we had the Nightfall Manhattan, made with Bulleit Bourbon. Using a device resembling a toy gun, the bartender created a wobbly citrus-infused bubble that adhered to the glass like a dome. Put the glass to your lips, however, and it dissolves into a pouf of smoke—a cocktail and a magic trick.

The beer list was carefully curated with two Italian-style pilsners, one of which comes from [Dewey Beer Co.](#) There are also beers from [Big Oyster Brewery](#) and [Dogfish Head Craft Brewery](#).

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photo credit: Delaware Greenways

# Government

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# CAMDEN MAYOR RESIGNS AFTER ACTIONS AT CAR WASH

BY BETSY PRICE

Camden Mayor Justin King on Tuesday pleaded guilty to two misdemeanors and no contest to a third and then resigned because of a physical confrontation at a car wash he owned. King, 41, confronted two male victims, both 19, in February at the car wash, according to a press release from the Delaware Department of Justice. He claimed they had been causing mischief there, shoved the victims and, at one point, pulled on a victim's hoodie while he was on the ground. The victims sustained minor injuries.

The Camden Police Department turned the investigation over to the state, fearing the appearance of impropriety given King's elected position, the press release said.

King pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct and pleaded no contest to offensive touching, both of which are unclassified misdemeanors. King also pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of hindering prosecution after it was discovered that he suppressed evidence with the intent to prevent, hinder or delay the lodging of a criminal charge by changing the retention time and overwriting potential video surveillance evidence.

"Nobody is above the law or beneath justice," said Attorney General Kathy Jennings in the press release. "The problem with the defendant's behavior is not just the charges themselves, but his troubling and frankly embarrassing display of aggression, irresponsibility and

disregard for the law. His decision to confront two teenagers was 'senselessly aggressive,'" she said.

"He is extremely lucky that the victims' injuries were not more severe," she said. "As if that were not bad enough, he then almost immediately stonewalled the subsequent investigation. Mr. King's actions and lack of self-control are not the behavior of a grownup, and certainly not the mayor of a town."

Under the plea, King agrees to serve one year of probation; pay a \$500 fine; abide by a no contact order with the victims; and resign his office as mayor.

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# PROPOSED GREEN ENERGY BILL COULD MEAN HIGHER POWER BILLS

BY JAREK RUTZ

A piece of proposed legislation that would give the Delaware Public Service Commission more power over the sources of energy in the First State is drawing fire from a state representative. The legislation, which popped up in a recent energy stakeholders meeting, would support Delaware's Climate Action Plan. It does not yet have a sponsor attached.

"They're pushing forward with all kinds of stuff that pushes us down the green road and it's not really green," said Rep. Rich Collins, R-Millsboro.

He didn't attend the meeting, but has been a vocal opponent to the Delaware Climate Change Solutions Act of 2023, which was signed into law Aug. 3. The proposed legislation promotes the development and acquisition of low-carbon fuel resources, such as hydrogen and renewable natural gas, by Delaware utilities. The Public Service Commission oversees utilities.

Delaware's Climate Action Plan recommends increas-

ing production of and incentivizing markets for low-carbon fuels as a state-level initiative to reduce emissions of greenhouse gasses. Under the proposed legislation, the Public Service Commission would be allowed to establish rules and procedures for utilities to voluntarily procure low-carbon fuels as an energy supply resource.

The rules that would be adopted by the commission under the legislation will permit utilities to recover the costs of acquiring low-carbon fuels and related infrastructure investments through a rate-recovery mechanism. That means costs will be passed onto customers. The utility costs must be found reasonable and in the public interest, according to the legislation.

The legislation also would mean:

- Reduction of greenhouse gas emission for Delaware's natural gas system and benefiting the public at-large through improved local and regional air quality, water quality and improved public health.

- Diversification of energy supply allows the approximately 200,000 households and businesses throughout Delaware that rely on natural gas to include low-carbon fuels in their energy supply.

- Taking a product that is negatively impacting the environment – waste – and creating a clean and reliable energy resource that is fully compatible with Delaware's current natural gas infrastructure and appliances, serving a productive role in the clean energy transition.

- Helping meet the International Energy Agency projections that by 2050 (in a scenario in which countries reach the climate goals of the Paris Agreement) the world's low-carbon fuel supply will be 35% of the energy supply mix.

"Delaware has less than a million people and the world has eight billion people," Collins said. "People act like if Delaware has electric cars or [green-energy policies], the fires won't burn in Hawaii. There is no direct, positive benefit to anybody for Delaware to sacrifice."

The Public Service Commission will retain authority to reject any proposed low-carbon fuel supply purchases and infrastructure investments it determines are not in the public interest.

Collins thinks one solution is requiring federal diplomacy to focus more attention on the negative effects China and India have on the environment.

"The U.S. has somewhere around 11% of the share of global CO2 emissions," he said.

China in particular is embracing coal mining and coal-fired plants, the opposite of what the United States is doing. Even if America's emissions are taken out, he said the world still has the other 89% to deal with.

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photo link: Delaware Museum of Nature & Science



Education

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# RED CLAY AGAIN TO SEEK \$289M FROM STATE FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Red Clay Consolidated School District will once again ask the Department of Education for \$289 million for maintenance and programs. The district has not been successful in having its request, called a certificate of necessity, filled for the past 11 years.

In its board meeting Wednesday night, Superintendent Dorrell Green recommended asking for \$289 million, and the board voted to do so. It's the same amount that has been rejected the past two years, Green pointed out. The request includes three asks: \$61,215,575 for capital improvement, \$204,947,371 for deferred maintenance and \$22,837,054 for programmatic costs.

"I implore our state to really put what our needs are as being the biggest school district in the state of Delaware,"

said board member Kecia Nesmith, "and so I'm hopeful that this year this will be approved."

The money will assist in the completion of capital projects at 29 Red Clay schools. Specifically, the money will go to:

### District Improvements by System

System Category	Sub-Total	Percent of Total
21st Century Teaching & Learning	\$ 27,334,233	9.5%
Accessibility, Health & Wellness	\$ 31,937,600	11.1%
Building Safety & Secure Entrances	\$ 9,675,907	3.3%
Exterior Enclosure	\$ 69,214,945	23.9%
HVAC, Electrical & Plumbing	\$ 127,008,473	43.9%
Interior Construction	\$ 13,369,307	4.6%
Site Improvements	\$ 10,459,535	3.6%
	<b>\$ 289,000,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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## APPO ONBOARDS NEW SAFE DE APP FOR MENTAL HEALTH HELP

BY JAREK RUTZ

An app created to stop bullying in schools has been rebranded and expanded to help prevent suicides and connect struggling students with support services. The **SAFE DE app** was introduced Wednesday at **Appoquinimink**'s Middletown High School.

Formerly known as the **STOPit app**, SAFE DE has two new sections: a crisis text line and a resources tab. The STOPit app originally came to Appo in 2019.

“STOPit does not go away, but it’s expanded and it’s not only expanded within the app, it’s now statewide,” said Tom Poehlmann, Appo’s director of safety, security and operations. “We can still report things like bullying, but now it expands into the mental health and wellness aspects.”

The three main features of SAFE DE are:

- Ask for Help, which can be used to anonymously request help from local school contacts, including anonymous two-way communication with school contacts and students.
- Crisis Text Line, which can be accessed directly from the app to text with non-local trained crisis counselors.
- Get Resources, which can be used to search community, local, state and federal resources and helplines.

A representative from the National Crisis Text Line will respond immediately 24/7 every day of the year, including holiday breaks or the summer months when students are home from school.

Student mental health increasingly became a concern during the COVID-19 pandemic, Poehlmann said. Suicide rates are rising among America’s youth, and Poehlmann pointed out suicide or suicide attempts are especially prevalent among young males.

“It’s just something that people don’t like to talk about, so it’s sort of a hidden kind of thing,” he said. “There’s a crisis line for those at risk and those going through some struggles to get help, because besides reporting bullying, it’s also important to ask for help.”

Students who are worried about friends or family members can anonymously contact support as well to get resources for them.

A group of about 20 students were in the audience to learn about the app’s rebranding, and all of their hands shot up when asked if they were well-versed or used the STOPit app.

“We want to emphasize that as you guys go forth and talk about this, and we need you to encourage people to download the app, remove STOPit and add SAFE DE, that you can talk about the added features,” Poehlmann said, “but what’s important to me is what you’re used to in the STOPit app does not go away, that is still there.”

All the students have laptops issued by the district, and each laptop has a “self service” tab that will contain the new SAFE DE app. The app is available for iPhone and Android mobile phones.

Kristine Peters, Appo’s equity, climate and wellness coordinator, said the district’s students can submit a help report for people from other districts.

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# COMPENSATION COMMITTEE: RAISE BUS DRIVER PAY TO \$25 AN HOUR

BY JAREK RUTZ

A committee created to raise wages for Delaware’s educators recommended Monday that bus drivers be paid \$25 an hour. The 15-person **Public Education Compensation Committee** voted to increase the hourly rate of bus drivers from \$22.50. The **Delaware School Bus Contractors Association** has been calling for that hike since February.

If the state adapts the suggestion, it will cost Delaware just under \$4.4 million. Because the state funds 90% of Delaware educator’s pay, local districts will pay \$484,734.78 collectively. Bus aides are not included in the recommendation. On average, they make about \$13 an hour.

Also Monday, the committee introduced an updated pay scale for the 180 information technology workers in Delaware’s public schools. They now are paid according to seemingly random salary scales, sometimes as an

educator, custodian, paraprofessional or something else. Because the state does not provide funding units for them, districts are left to decide how to fund those positions.

The proposal discussed in the meeting would create funding units for information technology workers, costing the state \$6,926,517 in fiscal year 2025 and \$12,693,483 in fiscal year 2026. It would also include a local district share of \$2,400,914 in fiscal year 2025 and \$4,450,329 in fiscal year 2026.

During the discussions, the committee did not specify the salary for an IT worker.

“\$13 million to IT professionals makes it harder to get \$13 million to teachers where we know that we have a problem,” said committee member Jonathan Starkey, the governor’s chief of staff. “It’s not at all clear to me that we can do all of this.”

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BY JAREK RUTZ

The Delaware Farm Bureau has awarded 11 recent First State high school graduates with scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$3,500. Money was given to students for their achievements and involvement in a wide array of agricultural activities.

The funds for the scholarships were raised throughout the year. The **Young Farmers & Ranchers** committee raises funds through its annual strawberry festival in May and the antique tractor pull which is traditionally held on the last day of the Delaware State Fair.

The Delaware Farm Bureau Women’s Committee also contributed to the scholarship, and raised money by running a food booth at the state fair.

This year’s winners were Olivia Daniels, Emerson Hickey, Sydney Phipps, Laurel Clark, Vanessa Gaines,

# 11 STUDENTS WIN SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FARM ACTIVITIES

Dathan Ivory, Zane Adams, Brayden Hearn, Lauren Hudson, Kaitlyn Johnson and Ruby Phillips. Here are some of their activities that helped them earn the cash:

**Olivia Daniels**—*New Castle County Farm Bureau Scholarship*. Daniels, who’s from Galena, won a \$500 scholarship from the New Castle County Farm Bureau as she studies environmental science at Bridgewater College in Virginia. She graduated from Kent County High School in 2022, and worked at Hooper, Inc. and Daniels Family Farm.

**Emerson Hickey**—*New Castle County Farm Bureau Scholarship*. Hickey, who’s from Middletown, won a \$500 scholarship from the New Castle County Farm Bureau as she heads to the University of Delaware to study marketing. She graduated from Middletown High School this year, and was active in the school’s Future Farmers of America chapter, acting as its reporter for a year and earning Greenhand and Chapter degrees. Over the last several years, Hickey has worked at Emerson Farms and Cowgirls Creamery.

**Sydney Phipps**—*New Castle County Women’s Committee Scholarship*. Phipps, who’s of Wilmington, won a \$1,000 scholarship from the New Castle County Women’s Committee for her veterinary and biomedical sciences studies at Pennsylvania State University.

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# Sports



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BY JASON WINCHELL

The University of Delaware women's soccer team accomplished something for the first time in program history last night in their opening match of the 2023 season. They defeated Syracuse 1-0 for their first win against a Power 5 conference.

Syracuse is a member of the ACC. The Blue Hens did defeat Virginia Tech back in 1994, but they were not members of the ACC yet.

It was also the first match for new coach Kelly Lawrence and what a great way to start her era in Newark with a home win. She also is the first coach in program history to win their first match.

## UD WOMEN GET FIRST POWER 5 WIN BY BEATING SYRACUSE

Rachel Speicher scored in the eighth minute off a great assist from Lea Panagiotidis and drilled the shot into the back of the net. The Blue Hens also split halves in goal as Mia Reed started and made two saves in the first half. She was credited with the win.

Kyla Burns made her Blue Hens debut in the second half and made one save in 45 minutes of play.

It was the first shutout since a 0-0 tie against Hostra on Oct. 9, 2022.

The Blue Hens will be on the road for their next match on Sunday at Liberty.

In other college women's soccer news, former Archmere Auk Emily Gioffre made her debut for the University of Cincinnati. The Bearcats lost 1-0 to nationally ranked Michigan State in East Lansing. The freshman had the hat trick to lead Archmere to the state championship in June. She played 17 minutes in the loss.



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# SALSIANUM'S ABESSINIO STADIUM QUICKLY EARNED STELLAR REP

BY JASON WINCHELL

The Delaware Live stadium tour continues to Wilmington and Abessinio Stadium, home of Salesianum School (and a few others). Abessinio is the newest venue on the list, but it has quickly earned a stellar reputation as a fun place to watch a game.

Abessinio opened to great fanfare in 2020 on the site of the former Baynard Stadium. Salesianum lost to Smyrna that night, but since then the Sals have gone 8-3 on their home turf, including a state tournament win in 2021.

The stadium also has been the site of other memorable tournament football games, including two on consecutive weekends in 2021: an overtime win for Wilmington Friends against Delmar, followed by a narrow victory for Archmere over Delaware Military Academy.

The obvious attraction at Abessinio is its newness. The turf is in great shape. The other parts of the facility—bleachers, restrooms, concessions, press boxes—are nice. For any of us who remember trying to get a snack at halftime without missing most of the third quarter, this is much appreciated.

There is a decent amount of parking available at the stadium, but when Sallies are home, if you are not in a spot early on, the best bet is parking at the school and walking over.

One may forget to take in Abessinio's facade while hurrying inside, but it's an impressive sight, particularly the statue of former Salesianum coach Dim Montero and the memorial bricks inside the front entrance.

The game experience includes the entrance of the Sals, the marching band and cheerleaders, and the Salesianum student section. They always show up no matter what the weather looks like.

The sidelines seem as busy as the bleachers since the Sals draw as much or more media attention than any other program in the state.

This year, the Sals open Aug. 31 against DMA. It will usher in the Gene Delle Donne era, as the former Salesianum quarterback takes the reins at his alma mater. The tough home schedule also includes Smyrna and Middletown.

In addition, Howard and St. Elizabeth play their home games at Abessinio. Both are perennial tournament contenders, so there's plenty of good football on tap there this season. If that's not enough, the Mid-Atlantic Pigskin Classic will bring a few more games to Abessinio Aug. 31-Sept. 2.



# APPO HIGH'S TEAMS PAW THE TURF AT JAGUAR STADIUM

BY GLENN FRAZER

The Delaware Live sports staff this summer is featuring some of the high school football venues where they have covered games. As you drive west of Middletown near the Route 301 Bypass on Friday nights in the fall, you can't miss the lights of the Appoquinimink High football stadium. One of three high schools in the Appoquinimink School District, Jaguar Stadium pulls a big crowd for its home events.

Your journey into the complex takes you past Bunker Hill Elementary to the ample parking surrounding the high school. The stadium's entrance features a brick arch topped with the mascot logo. To get to the bleachers and field, you've got to make your way through a crowded lobby area, with the always bustling grill to the left.

Once you're near the bleachers, you can't miss the jaguar statue as you gaze upon the "all-weather" surface.

The school was the district's second high school, completed in 2008. Stadium seating capacity is estimated at just over 4,000. Principal Sam Postlethwait, who played quarterback and was the punter at both Caesar Rodney High and the University of Delaware, can be seen attending most of the home games.

Jaguar Stadium was one of the few turf fields at a public school when it opened. With the new field and ample parking, the stadium was a great option for the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) to hold lots of state playoff and championship games.

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