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Brighten Up Dark Nights



Social Studies and Civics



Smyrna Wins First Volleyball State Championship

photo link: Marcia Reed 🛁

photo link: Brandywine Creek State Park







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HEADLINES



BY BETSY PRICE

The only Republican woman in Delaware's General Assembly announced her resignation Wednesday morning (Nov. 15). Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown/ Millsboro, said she was moving out of her district just over the line into another one, after serving for 14 years.

"To many, this is no surprise since I have been candid and open about the impending changes," she said in a statement. "As you may know, the 37th District has changed as a result of the recent redistricting and the

REP. RUTH BRIGGS KING RESIGNS

lines have moved three times since my first election. Each time it has been an honor to meet and serve the constituents of the district. My hope is that my successor will continue placing at the forefront of elected office: quality constituent services, protecting our Constitutional rights and promoting good governance."

It's not a retirement, she stressed during an interview Wednesday morning with Delaware LIVE.

"I've had lots of people talk to me about other opportunities or things in the future," Briggs King said, "and I've not moved on them. I've not said yes to anything. I'm taking a little bit of a break between the holiday season and we'll decide what we want to do in the future."

She said there was a bit of relief in being able to step away from the unrelenting pressure of office, especially when the General Assembly was in session.

"But there's also this concern that you have some unfinished business," she said. "I've tried to close a lot of things, but there's so many things that you're working on and just feel you couldn't resolve them."

Among those issues, she said, are helping the homeless and unsheltered, trying to get different agencies to work together on that and other issues, making sure state resources go to toward helping people deal with substance abuse and mental illness, helping Delaware's military Veterans, keeping people out of prison and instead on probation or parole programs, and trying to raise achievement levels in education and improve what's happening in classrooms.

"It's going to be difficult letting go," she said. "I've told people that you may not see me as a legislator, but I bet I will still be nagging and pushing some of these issues." A Special Election will be held to find her replacement. Under state law, the Speaker of the House must issue a Writ of Election within 10 days of the creation of a vacancy in order for that election to take place. The Department of Elections then must set the election for 30 to 35 days later. In these circumstances, that would put the election right around Christmas. By state law, the chairperson of the county committee for each political party must name a candidate to run in the Special Election that will be held to replace Rep. Briggs King.

It was open knowledge that Briggs King was building a new house and would resign as soon as she received a certificate of occupancy. Even so, her Republican colleagues said they were sorry to see her go.

House Minority Leader Mike Ramone, R-Newark/ Pike Creek, said Briggs King was always the best prepared for sessions of all the members of the Republican caucus, and possibly of every representative on the floor. "Ruth is an incredible worker," Ramone said. As members of the minorty party, a lot of the Republican role is to try to avert unintended consequences, he said.

"When you have one-party rule, having people like Ruth in there who goes over every single scratch of everything in incredible detail with a lot of knowledge is very valuable in the caucus and that's going to be missed."

READ MORE HERE

GET TO KNOW THE STATE'S EDUCATION ADVOCACY GROUPS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware pours billions of dollars into education each year, only to receive stressful news like some of the lowest standardized test scores in the country. A number of Delaware nonprofits devoted to improving education in the state want to see more impact for the state in jobs, test scores and another areas.

Some have specific focuses such as encouraging more public participation in school boards. Others have broader interests that range from classroom matters to helping grads find good jobs for life.

Here's a look at some of the most active groups; Rodel, DelawareCAN, First State Educate, Literacy Delaware and the Caesar Rodney Institute for Education Excellence. This list omits groups such as the Redding Consortium for Educational Equity and the Wilmington Learning Collaborative, both of which were created by state government to focus on specific areas.

Rodel, founded: 1999

Leadership: Paul Herdman is the president and chief executive officer.

Mission: Rodel's mission is to strengthen Delaware's public education system and workforce by connecting partners to advance and implement sustainable solutions.

Vision: An excellent and equitable public education system that supports all Delawareans to achieve success in school and life.

Employees: 13 full-time employees. The Tech Council of Delaware is an LLC under Rodel so the three staff that work there are officially Rodel staff as well.

Operating budget and funding: Core expenses last year were about \$2.4 million. Rodel raised about \$5 million from a mix of national, federal and local resources,

and about \$500,000 from Rodel's endowment. While no longer a traditional grantmaking foundation, it gave about \$3 million in subgrants and contracts to the state last year.

Immediate goals/actions: Rodel has four priorities: strengthening career pathways for students; modernizing Delaware's school funding system; improving the early care and education landscape/serving more families with deeper state investments; and ensuring Delaware has a robust, well-trained, diverse teacher workforce.

Accomplishments:

- students.
- the nation.

• Helped secure over \$300 million in federal, national and local dollars to support Delaware schools and

• Has been the backbone organization for the Vision **Coalition**, one of the longest standing public-private coalitions working to improve public education in

• Worked to build Delaware's nationally recognized career pathways effort from just 27 students in one pathway in 2014 to the system we have today with over 20 pathways and over 30,000 students.

• Worked with the Department of Education and district partners to bring the pathways work to the middle school level. Rodel has been a partner with the state and districts to support the state's "Grow Your Own" strategy when it comes to building a strong and diverse teaching force.

• Has been a leader in the coalition that has been advancing the work to ensure the state's earliest learners get the funding and support they need.

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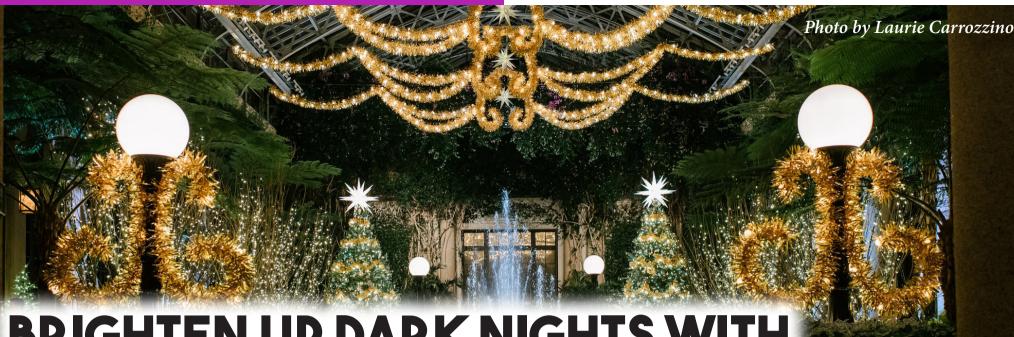


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CULTURE



BRIGHTEN UP DARK NIGHTS WITH THESE MERRY LIGHT DISPLAYS

BY BETSY PRICE

If you're looking for a little holiday magic to brighten up the dark nights of winter, look no farther than the Wilmington Riverfront, where a two-mile stretch of the Riverwalk will be lit up for the Holiday Magic at Riverbright Wilmington.

It's one of more than a dozen of holiday light displays in the region, many of them free, like Riverbright.

Most open in the next week to 10 days.

Riverbright opens Friday, Nov. 24, with an opportunity to meet Santa at Riverwalk Mini Golf from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Santa will also be there from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Dec. 7, 14 and 21.

The trail stretches from Tubman-Garrett Park to the DuPont Environmental Education Center.

Walkers also may stop by Merry Mugs at the mini golf

site to buy hot chocolate, ice cream and other sweet treats from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday and from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Here's a look at what's glowing out there, divided by in-state shows and those nearby.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS IN DELAWARE

New Castle County

Rockwood Park, 4651 Washington Street Extension, Wilmington. Its grounds will be lit up in December for people to drive through. It's a compact but delightful display and perfect for people who want to take older folks or young children for a ride that won't wear them out. Visitors also can park and walk around the grounds. Dusk to 9 p.m. nightly. Bonus: Rockwood is a short drive from the Smith family's amazing display. Free.

The **Smith family** annual display at 1900 Prior Road, Wilmington. Drive-by or walk-through. Free. This family display, easily visible from I-95, looks like a holiday lighting factory exploded over two homes and yards. Dusk to about 10 p.m. nightly.

Yuletide at Winterthur, 5105 Kennett Pike, Greenville. Indoors and outdoors. Nov 19 though Jan 8. The former du Pont estate offers a Yuletide tour that includes multiple lighted trees and their annual showpiece, the dried flower tree. Admission ranges from \$8 for children 2-11 up to \$27 for adults.

Zoo Nights and Christmas Lights, 3 Palms Zoo, 1060 VanDyke Greenspring Road, Townsend. Walk-through. Admission \$6 per person. Open 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., weather permitting, Friday and Saturday nights Dec. 1-30. Themed displays. Some animals—such as foxes—still awake. Hot chocolate and more available for purchase. Kent County

Gift of Lights, Dover Motor Speedway, Dover. Outside. Admission. The drive-through show on 1.5 miles of the Woodlands of Dover campground features more than 60 scenes and 3 million lights. It is open Thursday, Nov. 23, (Thanksgiving!) and ends Dec. 31. Through Dec. 17, the route is open Sundays through Thursdays from 5 p.m. until 9 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. From Dec. 17-31, it's open from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., weather permitting. Admission is \$35 per car and \$60 for buses and limousines. Tickets should be bought in advance here.

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WINTERTHUR'S ENCHANTED WOODS, IN WHIMSICAL GINGERBREAD

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Winterthur has moved its Enchanted Woods indoors this season as a delightfully detailed miniature form in gingerbread for Yuletide at Winterthur. The 150-pound creation features gingerbread, chocolate, fondant and icing. That's all edible.

The construction sits on a hardwood platform, edged with red ribbon, with styrofoam to create various levels. There are white lights in the Faerie Cottage and the Tulip Tree House and cloth ribbons on the maypole. That's all inedible.

All told, "it's magical and whimsical," said creator Diana Anello, head sugar artist for **Bredenbeck's Bakery** in Philadelphia. The gingerbread is on display Nov. 18-Jan. 7 in an alcove off the main entrance to the museum and early on, the enticing scent will guide people to its location. While it was being installed, a visitor asked if the ribbons on the maypole were licorice. Licorice is an unreliable ingredient, she replied. It changes color and dries so much that it could fall off.

Yuletide at Winterthur goes back to 1979 and the sixweek event now draws 25,000. The celebration features more than a dozen rooms decorated for the holidays, plus outdoor lights, a train display and a dollhouse.

The feature most loved on social media is the Christmas tree decorated with dried flowers, said Christine Heesters, director of technology and marketing. Its design varies annually. Associated activities include brunch with Santa and performances of "A Christmas Carol."

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de.gov/covidvaccine



CULTURE



BY BETSY PRICE

A Facebook post asking for help with supplies for Home of the Brave in Milford has given the Veterans transitional residence some relief, but officials there hope for more to restock their cabinets and get them through the holidays and into 2024.

The post on Delaware Free Stuff (Angels Among Us) asked for everyday housekeeping supplies, food items and side items for a Thanksgiving dinner. They include soaps and detergents, paper products, trash bags, cooking sprays, oil, eggs, milk, bread, spaghetti and other pantry staples.

The need is crucial, said Steve Horn, kitchen manager, partly because of limited government support for the nonprofit that helps Veterans transition from homeless-

VETERANS HOME'S PLEA FOR FOOD, **SUPPLIES SPARKS WELCOME AID**

ness into a more stable life with jobs and a residence. He spoke for the house because executive director Heather Travitz was out sick.

As of Friday, the house had 14 male residents, five female residents and two children, an infant and a 13-year-old, with a short waiting list for rooms.

Home of the Brave's supplies tend to go from feast to famine, said Samantha Morris, Horn's stepdaughter who posted on Delaware Free Stuff. "It's full and then it's not full," she replied to one commenter. "With 15 men and five women they go through a lot each week."

Horn said one woman from the Felton area bought \$100 of towels, washcloths and toiletries on her way to the home to donate. Some people have been looking at the list and sending items from Amazon directly to the home at 6632 Sharps Road, Milford 19963. Donations also may be dropped off there.

One big donation that came in, said Horn, is 20 turkeys from Procter & Gamble in Dover. Now, Horn said, he's hoping someone will be able to donate a chest freezer so he can freeze some of the turkeys and other donations for Christmas and New Year's dinners.

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DOGGIE DAYCARE IN MILFORD



We'll Keep Your Fur Baby Happy & Healthy!





BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Here are some memorable events to celebrates Christmas in Delaware. These events run only a day or two. There's a separate list of events that run more often.

Caroling on the Circle and the Georgetown Christmas Parade: Caroling at 6 p.m. Dec. 7, followed by the tree lighting and parade at 7. Main stage in front of the Sussex County Courthouse on the circle in downtown Georgetown. The singalong started in 1984 and is run by the county; the parade started in 1989 and is run by the Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce.

Caroling on The Green: 5:15 p.m. Dec. 6 on The Green in downtown Dover.

Christmas in Odessa: Self-guided walking tour of homes and public buildings, decorated for the holidays. Plus tea and cookies, musicians, singalong and Santa.

Basic admission \$30, with discounts for advance purchases and children. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Dec. 2, downtown Odessa.

Claymont Christmas Parade: Decorated vehicles and the decoration of the Christmas Weed. 10 a.m. Dec. 2 along Philadelphia Pike, from Maple Lane Elementary to Darley Road.

Dashing Through Downtown Dover Parade: 6:30 p.m. Dec. 16, Loockerman Street, downtown Dover.

Harrington Christmas Parade: 7 p.m. Dec. 1, down-town Harrington. Organized by the city.

Holiday House Tour of Lewes: Tour of 10 decorated homes in Lewes. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Dec. 2. A Lewes Historical Society event for 50 years. \$35.

Lewes Christmas Parade: The 91st annual event is organized by the city and Lewes Chamber of Commerce and features bands and floats. 5 p.m. Dec. 2, Lewes. Light Up the Square: Tree lighting at 6 p.m. Dec. 5 in

Light Up the Square: Tree lighting at 6 p.m. Dec. 5 in Rodney Square, 10th and Market Streets, includes singalong, performances by the 287th Army Band, Jea Street Jr., Rachel Schain and Orisha Watson. Plus appearances by Santa Claus and Rudolph, free refreshments, children's book giveaway and face painting. Pre-party starts at 4:30 at DE.CO Food Hall 111 W. 10th St., with music by Son of Sinatra. **Milton Christmas Parade:** Organized by the Milton Volunteer Fire Company. 6 p.m. Dec. 6, Milton.

Volunteer Fire Cor **Rehoboth Beach long:** Music by Car singalong at 6:30. Rehoboth Avenue. **Rehoboth Beach** organized by the R pany in downtowr at the Rehoboth Be

Rehoboth Beach Christmas Parade: 6 p.m. Dec. 4, organized by the Rehoboth Beach Volunteer Fire Company in downtown Rehoboth, with a party afterwards at the Rehoboth Beach Volunteer Fire Station Museum. **Rockwood Park and Mansion:** Holiday open house includes self-guided tours of the decorated mansion, plus Santa, crafts, entertainers, costumed characters and mounted patrol. Free admission. 5-9 p.m. Dec. 1-2. The grounds of the New Castle County park are also lit up during the season. 4651 Washington St., North

up during th Wilmington. Seaford Ch

Seaford Christmas Parade: 7 p.m. Dec. 2, with the theme "the magic of Christmas" in downtown Seaford Sponsored by the Downtown Seaford Association.

Rehoboth Beach Tree Lighting and Holiday Singalong: Music by Cape Brass ensemble at 6 p.m. Nov. 24, singalong at 6:30. Rehoboth Beach bandstand, end of Rehoboth Avenue.

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photo link: Delaware Division of Small Business



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BUSINESS



BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Rite Aid's declaration of bankruptcy in mid-October was quickly followed by the **announcement** that it was closing two stores in Delaware-Chestnut Hill Plaza near Newark and at 3209 Kirkwood Highway near Prices Corner. The only Rite Aid in Claymont closed Nov. 16, but without any announcement to customers. Rite Aid now lists 33 locations in Delaware.

The company did not respond to requests for information about the closure in Claymont or whether any other Delaware locations are scheduled to be closed.

On Take Back Claymont, a private Facebook group, posters said that the store's last day was Nov. 16. People also said that they were surprised that prescriptions filed at the Claymont Rite Aid were transferred to

Walgreens. Others said that employees told them it was contracturally or legally mandated to be transferred to the nearest pharmacy. Walgreens has a location at 1508 Philadelphia Pike.

After the bankruptcy, Rite Aid said it was closing 154 stores nationwide. Hundreds of more Rite Aid locations are likely to close, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Walgreens is also closing locations, the Take Back Claymont discussion continued. A Brandywine Hundred location at 4201 Concord Pike (near Silverside Road intersection) is permanently closed and there's a Walgreens at 2119 Concord Pike, in the Fairfax Shopping Center.

Pharmacy closures are a trend. "More than 16 percent of the independently owned rural pharmacies in the

2018," The Washington Post reported, citing a policy brief by the RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis at the University of Iowa. Drugstore chains "are closing thousands of stores, leaving gaps in communities for medicines and essentials. Researchers find pharmacy closures lead to health risks such as older adults failing to take medication," CNN wrote in October. Pharmacies and pharmacists were hit hard during the pandemic and Delaware lost all of its 24-hour pharmacies.



JOHN MOLLURA - PHOTOGRAPHY

BEAUTY PORTRAITS - HEAD SHOTS FAMILIES

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BUSINESS

BLACK FRIDAY SHOPPERS WILL FIND TANGER OUTLETS DIVERSIFYING

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Turkey dinner and pumpkin pie aren't the only Thanksgiving traditions for Sue Hall of Hummelstown, PA. Once the holiday dishes have been washed, she and four female relatives will make their annual pilgrimage to Delaware's shopping mecca, the **Tanger outlets** at Rehoboth Beach.

They will be among the hundreds to descend on the beaches with a singular mission in mind: Finding the best Black Friday deals they can find.

"I get 95 percent of my Christmas shopping done that week and it's tax free," Hall said.

The biggest draw for Hall, her daughter, niece and two sisters, though, is the variety of stores along the twomile stretch of Rehoboth Beach's Coastal Highway. This year, Hall and her fellow shoppers will find they have some new stores to explore, including some that are not outlets.

TANGER ADDITIONS

The Rehoboth Beach has added Ulta Beauty, Salt Life and Huk in the last year. Marketing Director Michele Doucette said shoppers also will find a mix of local hyperlocal retail brands at the centers, including Super Fanz, Fur Baby Pet Boutique and Coffee Rendezbrew.

The new non-outlet stores not only will appeal to a variety of niches, but also keep the space in the shopping centers occupied as outlet shopping suffers from online competition.

The additions extend beyond shopping venues. Diversifying Tanger's portfolio of outlet offerings nationwide and establishing their open-air style shopping centers as community gathering places were main objectives in Tanger's 2023 strategic plan.

"These new stores expand options for our shoppers in the popular beauty and lifestyle categories, a key priority for Tanger as we continue to elevate the retail experience and bring more diversification to the center," Doucette said.

This past spring, Tanger also added a Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham Rehoboth Beach. "The first hotel affiliate in the Tanger portfolio offers guests additional amenities to make their visit with us even more memorable," Doucette said. Jab & Flow, a boxing studio that opened in early summer, grew the shopping center operator's portfolio even more.

Michelle Rawley of Smyrna said the outlets are a place she also shares quality time with her loved ones, even when the calendar isn't heading into the holidays. "I love going with friends and family," she said. "I used

"I love going with friends and family," she said. "I used to love to take my niece back-to-school shopping when she (was younger) and would...visit from Philly."

Rawley, a realtor with Bryan Realty Group, said she also enjoys shopping before or after appointments near the beach, but has been known to make the 55-mile drive just to shop. Becoming a new mother left her with less time to do that. "I prefer in store shopping for myself so I can see and feel the clothing," she said. That's a tangible experience online shopping can't provide, she said.

The outlets also benefit her as a realtor because they are a great selling point for southern Delaware home buyers. "My clients love them," she said.

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REVISITING HEIRLOOM IN LEWES, JUST IN TIME FOR HOLIDAY SEASON

BY BETSY PRICE

When Heirloom opened in 2015, some wondered if Lewes could support a fine-dining, farm-to-table concept. The town rolls up the streets by 10 p.m., even in summer, and Rehoboth Beach had claimed culinary bragging rights.

Not only did Heirloom prove them wrong, but Meghan Lee's restaurant remains fresh and inventive. Clearly, customers haven't suffered from a seven-year itch.

Indeed, although Heirloom has good company—Lewes Oyster House, Bramble & Brine at The Buttery and Harbour at Canal Square—it remains one of the most eagerly sought reservations in town. And if you're looking for a restaurant that will impress out-of-town guests this holiday season, Heirloom checks all the boxes. **A DREAM REALIZED**

The Lewes restaurant on Savannah Road is in a white Victorian built in 1899. However, the elegant façade did not shape Lee's concept, which incorporates vintage china and botanical prints. The Chadds Ford-area native had dreamed of owning a restaurant since she was 22, after starting her career in her teens, and she'd created her business plan years before buying the house.

The University of Lynchburg graduate cut her teeth working at Sovana Bistro in Kennett Square and later

moved to Talula's Table in Philadelphia, where she was the opening manager. She also spent time in Nantucket establishments. Her heart, however, was in Lewes, where she'd summered as a child. Rehoboth was never an option for Heirloom and despite the Victorian's poor condition, she knew it was the right site. **MAKING A HOUSE A HOME**

The house at Savannah Road and Third Street was built for dentist J.B. Robinson from a catalog design, but it's hard now to imagine it as anything but Heirloom. After Lee settled on the property in December 2014, workers added a kitchen and expanded the front for restrooms. They left the Victorian woodwork-and charm—intact. The entrance hall gives guests a peek at the nest of dining rooms beyond, including the front dining room's angled fireplace. The bar is tucked into a room that opens into the foyer and a back dining room. Throughout the space, hardwood floors gleam.

In warm weather, many guests sit outside on the brick patio overlooking the Zwaanendael Museum, a view that firmly places you in the state's first town. But it was 7:45 p.m. when we arrived, and the back dining room was fine for our table of four. A SEASON OF FLAVOR

Heirloom has always switched the menu with the seasons; autumn was evident during our visit. For instance, a blushing rectangle of steak tartare (\$22), studded with cornichons and shallots, rested on a drizzle of maple gastrique. It was dressed with bacon fat-Dijon dressing and served with house-made rippled potato chips.

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photo credit: Delaware State Police





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GOVERNMENT

FOUR-YEAR GANG PROSECUTION ENDS WITH 100% CONVICTION RATE

BY BETSY PRICE

Twenty people have been convicted on charges of murder, shooting and other felonies following a fouryear prosecution of a Wilmington gang that resulted in a 100% conviction rate. The push helped reduce the number of shootings in Delaware 30% since 2020, according to a statement from the **Delaware Department of Justice**.

In essence, the press release said, the **Wilmington Police Department** and state Attorney General's office went undefeated in the efforts to convict every one of the 20 members of MGS—"M-Block Grimy Savages" and reduce the loss of life in the city. The defendants were given more than 100 years of confirmed prison time and several defendants yet to be sentenced face multiple potential life sentences.

"This is an exclamation point on a case that our team has lived and breathed for more than four years," said Attorney General Kathleen Jennings. "These gang members are responsible for unthinkable violence in our city, for losses of lives that can never be restored, and for the pain and suffering of the victims' families and every city resident who has borne the cost of gun violence."

Wilmington Police Chief Wilfredo Campos called the results "nothing short of remarkable." He said it encompassed four murders, a six-person shooting incident, six additional shooting incidents, a robbery and a number of gun offenses. "This investigation has undoubtedly saved lives and prevented shootings and other violent crime, and we hope that this serves as a strong reminder to others engaged in gun violence in our community that we will not stop until they are held accountable," he said.

The state's case against MGS began in September 2019 as an effort to address gang violence in Wilmington through a newly formed task force, which consisted of personnel from the Delaware Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, Wilmington Police Department, the ATF and the FBI. Traces on crime guns recovered in and around Wilmington helped the Task Force identify MGS as a major driver of violence in Wilmington.

The ensuing investigation identified 19 defendants—17 adults and two juveniles—involved with MGS or aligned gangs and numerous violent felonies, as well as a non-MGS member who contracted a Dover killing.

The crimes included the killings of Shiheem Durham, Naithan Grzybowski, Tommier Dendy and Eddie Green; a six-victim mass shooting at the intersection of 10th and Pine Streets in April 2019; six additional shooting cases; a robbery; and numerous gun offenses. The 20th member to be convicted was Dante Robinson, 22. He was found guilty of Murder 2nd degree, gang participation, conspiracy 1st degree, and conspiracy 2nd degree and faces 15 years to life at sentencing.

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GOVERNMENT

FIRE TRUCKS GOING TO HELP SUSSEX **COMPANY PELTED WITH ROCKS**

BY BETSY PRICE

Several fire trucks responding Nov. 13 to help the Greenwood Volunteer Fire Co. were damanged by people throwing rocks at them, the Ellendale Fire Co. said in a Facebook post.

It said two of its three Ellendale trucked were damaged, including broken windows, in the area of Market Street and the Greenwood Post Office in Greenwood. Trucks belonging to three other fire companies also were hit with rocks, the post said.

It asked anyone with information about the rock throwing to contact Greenwood Police Department at 302-349-4822, the post asked.

Commenters on the post said they were shocked and particularly saddened that violence would be aimed at first responders.

One suggested that whoever started the fire at 12655 First Street probably was throwing the rocks.

"Please don't think that all residents of Greenwood are like this," wrote Fonda Swartzentruber. "We are actually good people."





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photo link: Wilmington Friends School



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PVERNIGHT





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STATE ED BOARD APPROVES SOCIAL STUDIES CHANGES, FOCUS ON CIVICS

BY JAREK RUTZ

The state Board of Education voted in its monthly meeting Thursday night to focus more on areas such as civics, economics and geography in its social studies curriculum. Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, fifth grade students will have a social studies curriculum focused on economics and geography, while seventh graders will also learn economics as well as civics.

With a polarized political landscape and an abundance of media consumed online, state leaders have repeatedly said they want to ensure Delaware's youth are informed citizens and are digitally literate to understand how to decode real and false information.

"Civic education is the bedrock for what makes an American citizen different from the rest of the world,"

said Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover. "Civic education and understanding the rights and obligations Americans have is vital to maintaining the greatness that this country offers not just to its citizens, but to those who seek to come to America."

The new changes in curriculum are mirrored in the state-administered assessments.

ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

Students can land in one of four achievement levels on the standardized tests.

Level 1: Students show minimum understanding and evidence of an inability to apply the fundamental skills and knowledge articulated in the Delaware Content Standards.



Level 2: Students show a partial or incomplete understanding of the fundamental skills and knowledge articulated in the Delaware Content Standards. Level 3: Students show mastery and adequate understanding of the Delaware Content Standards at grade level.

Level 4: Students show mastery and thorough understanding of the Delaware Content Standards beyond what is expected at the grade level. **Read** the state standards for social studies.

School Choice is Open!



The families of 18.455 students made the charter school choice for the 23/24 School Year! Next year's choice window is open through Jan 10, 2024.

Want to know what your choices are? Or how to apply for School Choice? Check out www.DECharterNetwork.org/school-choice/



HIGH-DOSAGE TUTORING PROVING VALUABLE TO HELP KIDS CATCH UP

BY JAREK RUTZ

Tutoring often is misunderstood as someone helping a student with their homework. It's much more than that, said Dorrell Green, superintendent of Red Clay Consolidated School District. Effective tutoring involves concentrated instruction, hiring reading specialists and coaches and spending time in and out of the classroom to improve.

Red Clay's Lewis Elementary School has been experimenting with high-dosage tutoring techniques to try to address low literacy and help students combat learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks to a \$1 million grant. The money comes from the States Leading Recovery Grant from Accelerate, a national nonprofit whose focus is making effective tutoring a standard feature of the American school day.

High-dosage or high-impact tutoring, usually includes at least three sessions per week in one-to-one work or very small—two or three student—group work sessions of at least 30 minutes and is often utilized to help some of the lowest performing students.

Red Clay is not the only district to use tutoring to help students. Christina School District used some of its COVID-19 dollars to pay for 600 students to access a virtual tutoring program designed to help them improve in math and reading proficiency. The district said about 60% of those who started during the summer had moved from below grade level to at least early grade level in both language arts and math.

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MORE MYSTERY IN SUSSEX CASE INVOLVING STUDENT BREAST PHOTO

SUSSEX CENTRAL

IGH SCHOOL

BY JAREK RUTZ

It is unclear whether Bradley Layfield, the principal at Sussex Central High School, still has a job. Layfield is among those sued by a former student who claims the district officials circulated a photo of her exposed breast to other staff with a picture of Janet Jackson superimposed on her face.

His position was expected to be discussed Nov. 15 during the Indian River School Board District's monthly meeting. All discussions related to Layfield took place in executive session. The district won't comment on the outcome.

And Layfield's lawyer, Thomas S. Neuberger, said Thursday he expects to hear sometime by the end of Thursday(Nov. 16) the district's decision on Layfield. The district already had appointed an interim principal.

The board shared no updates on Layfield's employment status during the meeting, even when several people

shared their thoughts on the incident in the public comment portion of the Nov. 15th meeting.

Most of the comments were in support of Layfield. Many pointed to his years of service for Delaware's children, his commitment and passion for education, how he's the first worker in and the last worker out. Even if the lawsuit's allegations are true, one said, no one should be judged on the worst mistake they've ever made.

One community member did say that even if the allegations are not true, the trust between Layfield, the students and parents has been broken and once that happens, there's no going back.

The incident dates back to the beginning of the year when Aniya Harmon, 18, now a graduate of the school, allegedly had her breast exposed defending herself in a fight with another student.

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Youhin **BRANDY WINE BOARD SPLIT ABOUT TRANSITION TO YOUTUBE**

BY JAREK RUTZ

Some debate ensued in **Brandywine School District**'s board meeting Monday nightNov. 13 a better viewing platform for audience members is worth limiting public participation.

While the majority of school districts in Delaware have a virtual option for their monthly board meetings, most of them operate through Zoom. There are often technical difficulties and if a parent misses the meeting, they have to wait days-sometimes weeks-for the recording to be uploaded to the district page.

Some districts, though, like Red Clay and Colonial, livestream their board meetings on YouTube. Not only does this allow students to gain some media skills, but Youtube automatically saves and publishes the live feed. Instead of being a separate recording file from Zoom that the district then has to upload later, the video of the meeting is immediately available. That allows a busy parent who can't tune in to board meetings which usually run from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. or later, to watch it as soon as they have the chance rather than waiting several days to find out what happened.

"Anything we can do to bring our meetings to the public in a high quality format is to our advantage," said Ralph Ackerman. He said content sharing such as powerpoint presentations is much better on YouTube. "I would love to see the quality that YouTube can bring to our board board meetings and to bring that to our public," he said.

Monday's meeting demonstrated the problems that can occur during live streaming. The first 20 minutes or so were mute for those tuning in virtually because of audio difficulties on the Zoom meeting.

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Board member Kimberly Stock was concerned that students would not be able to stay engaged, which is a huge goal, because certain websites are blocked on their district-issued Chromebooks. Other board members confirmed that YouTube is not blocked and students could still view the meetings in school and on their laptops if the district leaves Zoom.

The board was split on whether to move to a new platform, with those opposed worrying about virtual attendees not being able to comment or speak, defeating the purpose of an open public forum. Those for the move pointed out there's usually only a few, at most, virtual comments each meeting. The majority are in person.



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EDUCATION



2024 EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PRO OF THE YEAR TO BE NAMED DEC. 5

BY JAREK RUTZ

One education support professional will be chosen Dec. 5 as the state's best out of the 19 chosen by school districts and one charter school. This is the fourth year the **Department of Education** has recognized a State Educational Support Professional of the Year.

"Educational support professionals' roles vary greatly," said Mark Holodick, secretary of education. "They provide one-on-one support to students in the classroom. They safely transport children to and from school. They keep our buildings clean and safe. They provide nutritious meals so our children have the focus and energy to learn. They keep our offices running. They support the technological needs of classrooms. And so much more." Their work is often behind the scenes, he said, and rarely do they get recognized for how important they are to the success of Delaware's schools. Support professionals include paraprofessionals, custodial staff, secretaries, nutritional staff, information technology staff, bus drivers and bus aides.

"Each of these employees and the many colleagues they represent across our state deserve our gratitude," he said.

READ MORE HERE

EDUCATION

ES. **APPO REFERENDUM DEC. 12; WOULD INCREASE TAXES \$435 YEARLY**

BY JAREK RUTZ

Appoquinimink School District residents will have the opportunity to vote for or against a tax increase via a referendum on Tuesday, Dec. 12. In its board meeting Tuesday night, Superintendent Matthew Burrows explained the revenue would be put towards a bus lot, educator recruiting and retention efforts, technology and safety initiatives. He said the referendum is divided into a capital piece and an operational piece.

FRENDILL

Just like other districts going through referendum have stated, Burrows repeated that the growth of the district has led to district expenses outpacing district revenue.

"We're over 13,000 kids, almost 2,000 employees and we have 21 school buildings," Burrows said. "We are the fastest growing school district in the state. Our growth surpasses any other school district, but with that we're

in a unique situation here in New Castle County because our property assessment values are the lowest in the county."

In the past five years, Appo has grown 17% and Burrows said the district is projected to have an increase of about 20,000 more residents over the next decade. The average property assessment value in the district is \$92,000. If the referendum is successful, the average homeowner would have their taxes increased by \$36 a month, or \$435 per year.

"A district to the north of us, which is not even 500 students greater than we are, brings in about \$90 million of local revenue, where we bring in about \$37 million in local revenue," Burrows said, "and that's who we're competing against for teachers and for resources."

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SMYRNA WINS FIRST VOLLEY BALL STATE **CHAMPIONSHIP**

BY JASON WINCHELL

No doubt, Smyrna got contributions from all six positions on the floor during the DIAA championship match on Thursday night at the Bob Carpenter Center. But the big three—Anna Richardson, Elise Carter and Eliza Schneider—were just too much for Ursuline as the Eagles captured their first state title with a decisive 3-1 win.

This was the first volleyball state championship for a program from below the canal and was the first time a Henlopen Conference team reached the final. It was also the first state championship in the sport for a traditional public school since Concord won in 1992.

"Being the first downstate team to win a state championship, it's huge not only for our girls, our program, our community, but also for all those other schools downstate that are looking at this and saying, 'Hey, if Smyrna can do it, maybe one day we can do it," Eagles coach Danny Wandless said.

Richardson and Schneider caused fits all night for the fourth-seeded Raiders, as they have done to opponents all season. Smyrna, the second seed, entered the title match with a record of 17-1. It didn't take them long to make their presence known in front of a big crowd at The Bob.

The Eagles had a 15-7 lead in the first before the Raiders scored four straight, capped by an Emelia Panunto ace. Schneider and Richardson answered, however, with consecutive bombs and after a Raiders error, Richardson sent a shot off the Ursuline block and to the floor. Brooke Berge served up three straight aces to get it to set point, and after three saves by the Raiders, Richardson went straight down to end it.

Wandless said a quick start was key. "I wanted to start fast. I wanted the girls to get on top of this team and finish the deal in the first set. That set the tone for the match." A Claire Kelly block gave Ursuline an 8-5 lead in the second, but Smyrna fought back, eventually taking a 12-

11 lead on a kill by Carter, followed by a smash by Schneider. This time, the Raiders would stick close, fighting back from five down to tie the score at 21 on another Kelly block. Richardson untied it with a blast and Schneider added her own before an attack error sent it to set point. A Raiders error ended this one.

The teams put on quite a show in the third. The score was tied 10 times by the time it reached 15-15, but the Eagles took a three-point lead and looked like they might roll on to victory. But Ursuline ran off six straight, including a pair of tape aces from C.C. DeCaro, to take a 21-18 lead. The Eagles answered with a 6-1 run to get to championship point, but they would be unsuccessful on four of them while trying to close it out. The Raiders took the set on an attack error and had new life.

But Smyrna quickly quashed any thoughts of a comeback with their performance in the fourth. Schneider and Richardson had consecutive kills to open the set and after a stuff by Kelly pulled the Raiders to within two at 9-7, the Eagles put it away. Carter was all over the place as the lead ballooned, reaching 12 points after Carter smacked down an overpass. Richardson's final kill got the Eagles to championship point, and Schneider wrapped it up by sending one into the floor.

"There were a lot of emotions," Richardson added. "I played with a lot of the starters for five, six years, so it was really bittersweet."

It was more likely sweet than bitter as a Smyrna police cruiser escorted the team bus out of the Carpenter Center back parking lot for what was certainly a loud ride back home. Delaware

"I was crying the whole time," Schneider said. "I was so happy. I didn't know what to feel other than joy."





SPORTS



BY GLENN FRAZER

The Polytech Panthers continued their historic season with a 28-6 win in the DIAA Class 1A football tournament Friday night. The school has been fielding a varsity program since the early 1990s as a member of the Henlopen Conference. This year they secured their first conference title with an all-time record of 9-1. Following the game, head coach David Eilers told us. "The team has really gone above and beyond our expectations."

The home fans barely had time to find a seat at Jeff Adams Stadium when senior Jalen Anderson took the opening kickoff 87 yards for a touchdown. Jackson Sanders kicked the extra point giving the Panthers a lead they would never relinquish. Sanders said, "I saw the ball coming to me so I waited for my blockers and I did my job and scored."

POLYTECH MAKES HISTORY WITH FIRST DIAA FOOTBALL PLAYOFF WIN

Brothers Isaac and Simon Balcerak figured prominently in the win. Isaac is the oldest and the team's quarterback. He continually scrambled out of trouble and found Simon open downfield. The two connected five times for 98 yards and a touchdown. "I know when he's going to break, what's going through his mind," is how Isaac described Simon and their ability to make plays.

Polytech grabbed a 14-0 advantage early in the second quarter after the defense forced Glasgow to punt from its own end zone. It took the Panthers just two plays to cover 10 yards as Isaac Balcerak ran in from three yards out.

The Dragons got on the board with 2:26 to play in the quarter, taking advantage of a fumble at the Panther 25. Sophomore Jamar Smith scored on a 14-yard run to make the score 14-6. However, the Balcerak brothers worked their magic as the two connected three times in the final drive of the half on pass plays covering 22, 37, and the final 10 yards for a touchdown. That momentum switch gave Polytech a 21-6 lead at the half.

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HARMON CARRIES CENTRAL TO SEMIFINALS

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Sussex Central's sophomore running back Will Harmon led the Golden Knights in the first round of the DIAA football playoffs. Harmon accounted for four touchdowns in a 28-7 victory over the Appoquinimink Jaguars to advance to the semifinals.

Harmon scored the first three touchdowns of the game to give Central a 21-0 lead at halftime. He scored his first touchdown on a three-yard run and caught a 12-yard pass from quarterback Gabe Cannon in the first quarter.

Late in the second quarter, the Knights faced a fourth and six from its 44-yard line. In punt formation, the Knights decided to do a fake punt that resulted in a direct snap to Harmon who took it for 14 yards and a first down to keep the drive alive. Harmon would eventually cap off the drive with a four-yard touchdown run.

In the third quarter, Appo was able to get on the board. The Jaguars' quarterback Blake Caccamo hit Noah Huff for a 55-yard touchdown for Appo's first and only score of the game. Harmon then scored his fourth and final touchdown of the game in the fourth quarter on a fouryard run to seal the victory for the Knights. He finished the game with 26 carries for 101 yards and three rushing touchdowns to go along with one reception for 12 yards and a receiving touchdown.

Central ended the game with 276 total rushing yards and 12 receiving yards. Makil Bell was the second leading rusher with 10 carries for 70 yards.

Caccamo led Appo, going 7-of-18 for 186 yards and a touchdown. Daniel McConomy gained 72 yards on 17 carries for the Jaguars.

Sussex Central advances to the semifinals to host Cape Henlopen who upset the Dover Senators next Friday night at 7 p.m. at the Castle. DELAWARE



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SUSSEX ACADEMY WINS FIRST EVER SOCCER STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

BY NICK HALLIDAY

It was a day to remember at Dover High School on the afternoon of Nov. 18, as Sussex Academy made a little bit of history. The Seahawks outlasted Saint Mark's, 5-4, in penalty kicks for the DIAA Division II boys' championship. It was the first team championship in school history.

No. 1 Sussex Academy trailed No. 6 Saint Mark's 1-0 for nearly all of the game. The Seahawks owned possession for most of the second half, but they were unable to penetrate the Spartans' defense and get anything on goalkeeper Ryan Betts. Finally, in the 74th minute, they got the break they needed.

A foul in the 18-yard box gave Sussex Academy a penalty kick and Andree Mendoza fired it into the left side of the net to knot the score, 1-1. Neither team could get anything into the net in the final minutes and the game headed to overtime.

Each team had one corner kick in the first overtime, but to no avail. The Spartans had the best opportunity to end it in the second overtime as a handball in the 18yard box gave them a penalty kick. Thomas Stanley stepped up to the ball and fired low to the left of Seahawks' keeper Carter Norton, but he guessed correctly and knocked the shot away. Saint Mark's got a resulting corner kick but could not capitalize.

The Spartans had a few more chances before the second overtime ended, but they could not score and the teams went to penalty kicks. The teams traded goals before Norton made the stop that would give Sussex Academy the opening it needed. The kicker, Dan Otlowski, had scored the Spartans' lone goal on a penalty kick in the 14th minute and perhaps Norton remembered where he had gone that time. He went to his right and rejected the shot.

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SALESIANUM ADVANCES TO DIAA FOOTBALL SEMIFINAL

BY JASON WINCHELL

B.J. Alleyne was not going to let something like the Smyrna defense stop him. The Salesianum senior running back, who had already scored four times against the Eagles in their DIAA Class 3A football quarterfinal, lined up in the shotgun on fourth and goal from the two with seven seconds showing on the clock.

Alleyne took the snap from center, ran behind the right side of his line and snuck the ball over the goal line, giving the top-seeded Sals a 41-40 lead over the defending champion and No. 8 seed Eagles. Smyrna tried multiple laterals on the kickoff, but one went forward, so the play—and the game—was over.

The top-seeded Sals will host a semifinal next Friday or Saturday against the fifth seed, Middletown. The Cavaliers advanced with a win Saturday against No. 4 Hodgson. The Sals defeated Middletown during the regular season.

The game turned into an entertaining shootout, a back-and-forth affair that thrilled the crowd. Smyrna took the opening kickoff and marched down, getting a five-yard run from Kahmaj Kearney. Sals quarterback Brady McBride threw a screen pass to Alleyne on their

first play from scrimmage, gaining 35 yards to the Eagles' 20. McBride threw his next two passes to Ben Anton, the second of which went for a touchdown and a 7-6 lead.

They increased the lead to 14-6 late in the first quarter on Alleyne's first score, a 33-yard burst down the right side. Smyrna answered with a plethora of offensive options, carving through the Salesianum defense to take the lead. The Eagles opened up their bag of tricks, running a double-reverse flea-flicker, ending when Tiberi hit a wide-open Kearney for a 43-yard score with 7:59 left in the half. An interception gave the Eagles possession at the Sals' 29 and it took four plays before Chrystian Carroll ran it in from 11. Both two-point conversions were good and the lead was 22-14.

all five carries in a 40-yard drive for the Sals immediately after the Eagles scored, including a 16-yard score. Smyrna finished it up, getting a touchdown run from Brandon West with 38 seconds left in the half. Salesianum took the opening kickoff after halftime and promptly tied the game on an Alleyne score. That began the seesaw. A Sals fumble later in the third gave the Eagles the ball at its 37 and Tiberi passed them down into the red zone. Finally, he found Henriquez open for the go-ahead touchdown. Smyrna missed the two-point conversion and its lead was 34-28.

A long Smyrna drive ended with a punt, giving the Sals possession at its 24 with 7:46 to go. They kept it on the ground, primarily with Alleyne, but with Jasir Gaymon and Lego also contributing. McBride added a 28-yard run. Alleyne finished with a one-yard run. There was 4:04 left. **READ MORE HERE**

The first half scoring was far from over. Alleyne had

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