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photo link: Delaware Botanic Gardens at Pepper Creek

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Homeless Rights Bill Debate



Bill to Help Buy EV Chargers



Robins OT Winner Lifts Salesianum Over St. Mary's

photo link: Delaware State Parks



# Headlines

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BY JAREK RUTZ

A bill that would permit scholastic track and field competitions to include the javelin event passed the Senate Tuesday, although some coaches are not happy with the idea. **Senate Bill 211**, sponsored by Sen. Darius Brown, D-Wilmington, forces the **Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association** (DIAA) adopt javelin as an approved event for all DIAA-sponsored track and field competitions. The bill passed along party lines, with all six “no” votes coming from Republicans.

High school track and field coaches from around the state said this week that the event can’t just be added

# BILL MAKING JAVELIN DIAA EVENT MOVES ON; SOME COACHES OBJECT

without considering the impacts to schools and their coaching staffs, not to mention the additional time now needed to train 19 different events.

Brittany Keller, a track coach of 15 years, the past 10 at **Ursuline Academy**, told Delaware LIVE she appreciates that javelin could provide another opportunity for athletes, but there is a lot to be done and considered before adding this as an event for high school students.

“Many of the logistics stem from financial and safety concerns,” she said, which was pointed out by the legislators against the bill, notably Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover.

Most schools in Delaware struggle to have enough space to safely throw discus, Keller said, and therefore cannot offer the event when they host meets.

“Javelin would require even more space and the installation of a runway surface, as athletes should not be throwing from a grass surface due to safety concerns,” she said. “They would need a large enough field, and again, many schools simply do not have the space.” The cost of a runway would be several thousand dollars, she said, plus the cost of javelins are several hundred dollars each and need to be replaced often as they get damaged from throws.

Brown cited a *Wall Street Journal* article in July 2022 that said at least 22 states within the country have adopted the javelin as a throwing event within their high school track and field programs.

The bill also explains that the tips could be rubber in order to ensure safety, but opposing legislators don’t think simply making the tip a different material wouldn’t prevent all potential injuries.

Matt Lindell, a coach of several sports including track and field at Cape Henlopen High School, told Delaware LIVE he has similar concerns to Keller.

“While I am not opposed to javelin as an event...the legislature is trying to bypass the traditional process that would review such concerns in making a final decision on adding an event,” he said. “In addition to those concerns, this is the first time that I can remember legislators attempting to mandate an event in our sport.”

Per the bill, schools do not have to participate in a javelin event, but obviously they would lose points in a competition if they have no athletes for javelin, which is an Olympic sport.

“This seems like a bit of legislative overreach to me,” Lindell said. “This was not done when we added pole vault as a girls’ event in the late 1990s.”

If there is a true demand for the event, as there was with girls pole vault in the late 1990s, he said, the process should start at the school/coach/athlete level. That would be followed by a review that goes through the normal process with the DIAA Track & Field committee making a recommendation followed by approval of the DIAA board.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



BY JACOB OWENS

President Joe Biden's frequent trips back to his home state have become routine to most Delawareans more than three years into his term, but the scores of trips have also become a drain on state coffers and the downtime of troopers. Last year, Biden returned to Delaware 30 times, or nearly three times the number of visits as those to Pennsylvania and Maryland, which ranked second with 11 trips each.

The purpose of visits have ranged from attending the dignified transfer of fallen military members at Dover Air Force Base, visiting with campaign staffers in Wilmington, announcing major policy initiatives in Bear or

# BIDEN VISITS LEFT DELAWARE POLICE WITH \$400K BILL

simply getting some rest at either his Greenville or Rehoboth Beach-area homes.

Every time the president moves within the state, however, the U.S. Secret Service requests a variety of law enforcement, emergency medical and transportation logistics support to ensure his safe and quick travel. The local agency most burdened by those movements—which numbered more than 130 in 2023—is the Delaware State Police.

Operational support for Biden's visits, including several special units and command and control elements from DSP, encompassed a total of 14,448 man hours, according to Col. Nathaniel McQueen Jr., secretary for the Delaware Department of Safety & Homeland Security that oversees the statewide police force.

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

Even prior to the president's arrival at landing spots like Delaware Air National Guard 166th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base or Gordons Pond State Park, state law enforcement are on the move to secure arrival and destination spots.

According to McQueen, the number of troopers involved in Biden's movements could number as many as 50 and include department SUVs, helicopters, bomb trucks, command posts, motorcycles, Special Operations Response Team (S.O.R.T.) vehicles and other specialty vehicles. DSP declined to disclose specific numbers of troopers assigned to the presidential detail in various

scenarios as it “could jeopardize safety and security protocols.”

Typically leading DSP's efforts is Troop 1, the barrack headquartered off Kirkwood Highway near the president's Greenville home, which is where Biden spends the majority of his time in state. Other police agencies, including the New Castle County and Wilmington police departments, have been called upon to help with presidential detail and each county provides an ambulance crew that travels with the president in case of emergency.

## FEDS COVER SOME BIDEN COSTS

Recognizing that presidential visits carry a cost to local agencies, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security approved the [Presidential Residence Protection Assistance](#) grant in 2017. The grant reimburses state and local law enforcement agencies for operational overtime costs incurred while protecting the president at home.

The Delaware Criminal Justice Council, a state clearinghouse entity that handles all federal grant applications for state law enforcement agencies, collects the necessary data and is reimbursed following the end of the Sept. 30 federal fiscal year. Over the first two fiscal years of the Biden administration, Delaware has recouped more than \$3.5 million from the [PRPA](#) fund.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



## HOMELESS RIGHTS BILL: SO HOT, DEBATE CONTINUED

BY PETER OSBORNE

After yet another long public hearing March 27 about the Homeless Bill of Rights legislation, the House Judiciary Committee recessed until April 17 with a lot of clarification to do before the bill can move forward.

First-term Rep. Sophie Phillips (D-Bear) characterized the changes made in her House Substitute No. 2 to House Bill No. 55 as “minor” and that the amendments came after discussions with different stakeholders. But she also conceded that she needs to talk to many more people before the General Assembly can pass a bill that’s been years in development.

What was clear following the two-plus hour standing-room-only hearing is that Phillips’ Band-Aids are covering a sucking chest wound of concerns about the rights of local businesses, where the homeless can park and sleep, where funding is going to come from, and

even a back-and-forth with Rep. Jeffrey Spiegelman (R-11) about changing enforcement language to “shall” over “may” to require consultation with the municipalities where complaints are coming from.

Despite only 20 minutes of public comment from a small portion of the people who signed up, it was clear that the devil is in the details before passage of a bill that purports to treat individuals experiencing homelessness to have equal opportunity to live in decent, safe, sanitary, and healthful accommodations and enjoy equality of opportunities.

Spiegelman sparred with Phillips over the possibility that people will be allowed to “sleep in lobbies” where the laws of certain municipalities go “so far beyond just protecting basic human rights that customers are scared away.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

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photo link: Delaware Ballet

# Culture

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# YOUR GUIDE TO EASTER IN DELAWARE

BY JAREK RUTZ

From a Bunny Bonanza in Lewes to egg hunts and special brunches up-and-down the First State, there's plenty to do this weekend to celebrate the day commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. While Easter is the holiest day in the Christian calendar, it's also the unofficial embrace of spring from much of the community. Here's what to expect:

## WEATHER

Beautiful days are expected throughout the weekend, with temperatures cracking a comfortable 60 degrees, according to the [National Weather Service](#). Friday had a low of 38 and a high of 54, with sunny skies on a breezy day. Saturday brought sunshine and a high of 62. A windy evening will drop down to 45. Children can enjoy their chocolate bunnies and eggs outside on Easter Sunday, with clear skies and a high of 61.

## EGG HUNTS

Perhaps the favorite part of Easter for Delaware's youngest residents: egg hunts. Click on the event name for more information and to register.

### [Dover's Egg Hunt](#)

The city of Dover's egg hunt started at 9 a.m. Saturday. Attendees gathered at Wesley's Fellowship Hall and then headed over to the Legislative Mall.

### [Eggstravaganza Easter Egg Hunt in Bridgeville](#)

Lifeway Church, at 7046 Seashore Highway in Bridgeville, had an egg hunt from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday. There were also inflatables, games and food.

### [Dewey Egg Scoop in Dewey Beach](#)

Starting at 10:45 a.m. on Saturday, search for Easter eggs in different hunts available for all age groups, including adults. The winning egg received a cash prize.

After, the Dewey Dogs Easter Parade began.

### [Auburn Valley's Egg Hunt in Hockessin](#)

Friday and Saturday, from noon to 3 p.m., Auburn Valley had an egg hunt with an Easter Bunny meet-and-greet, train rides, children's activities and more.

### [Westminster Presbyterian Church Egg Hunt](#)

Wilmington's Westminster Presbyterian Church on West 13th Street is having an egg hunt at 10:15 a.m. on Easter Sunday on the building's front lawn. The fun will take place in between worship services.

### [Scarlet Note Egg Hunt](#)

From 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Easter Sunday, Scarlet Note Church is sponsoring an egg hunt at George Read Middle School in New Castle. The event is free and there will be food and other activities for children.

## BRUNCHES

### [Kate's Bunny Brunch](#)

On Easter Sunday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Klondike Kate's on East Main Street in Newark is having a brunch with face painting, balloon animals and a visit with the Easter Bunny. Reservations are required. The first seating is from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and the second is 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Adults cost \$36.95 and children ages one to 10 cost \$21.95.

### [St. Annes' Easter Brunch](#)

From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Easter Sunday, The St. Anne's Club in Middletown will have a brunch and an egg hunt. Reservations are required, adults cost \$59.95 and children ages four to 12 cost \$22.95.

[READ MORE HERE](#)





## GREAT OAKS STUDENTS FOREGO DAY OFF TO CLEAN UP COMMUNITY

BY JAREK RUTZ

The streets of Wilmington are cleaner this weekend thanks to [Great Oaks Charter School](#).

“We decided today to help out the community a little bit by picking up the trash,” said Amir Phillips, a sophomore at the charter, who’s spending the Friday of his Spring Break giving back.

In the school’s first city cleanup, a few dozen showed up to help out, mainly those in the Great Oaks community, but some residents of Wilmington with no ties to the school also picked up a trash bag to collect litter as they walked around the city on a sunny Friday morning.

Great Oaks has a Student Activities Committee which organized the event. That group is designed to create positive activities for students and to showcase the positive aspects of the school community.

“We wanted to ensure that you know people see Great

Oaks in a positive light as we are transitioning from previous things that people think about the school,” said Principal Tamara Price. She has played an integral part in leading the school successfully through a formal state review that resulted in more than a dozen conditions the school had to meet, notably meeting minimum student enrollment requirements.

The charter is inside of the Community Education Building, which also houses a couple other schools, as well as several social service organizations. As city residents walked past the tables with free food and trash bags, several asked Price about the school and were impressed with the offerings of the Community Education Building.

Among other services, the building provides free resources like food to those in need, as well as having

several specialists in categories like housing, career, crisis support, family advocacy and more.

“We want to ensure that the community sees the greatness of our students and things that’s going on within the school,” Price said.

Friday’s three-hour cleanup gave students the opportunity to experience volunteer work and clean up the city they live in and take pride in, she said.

“What we’re doing is making a better ecosystem, you know, the plants and the trees benefit and we need them for oxygen and to survive,” Phillips said, “so it is best for all of us to help out and make the world a better place.”

The cleanup hit a little deeper to Jaron Johnson, a paraprofessional and coach at Great Oaks.

“It does mean a little something more to me because I’m from this community,” he said. “Literally this block where we’re standing at, my whole life is from Shearman Street to Ninth Street and I’m 43 years old, this has been my whole life.” It means a lot, he said, to have everybody come out and give back a little bit of their time over spring break to help beautify the community.

He also said it’s a great preview of April 20, when the entire city of Wilmington will have a community clean-up day from 9 a.m. to noon. Find more information about that [HERE](#).

All the students participating in the clean-up Friday will receive service letters, which will be helpful for their future endeavors. “We have many students participating and it’s just changing their mindset, like this is service,” Price said. “You’re taking your time to come out and do something that you don’t have to do to make our community cleaner.”





photo link: [Bethany Beach Events & Entertainment](#)

# Business

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# NEW MCDONALD'S ON CONCORD PIKE RETHINKS BUSY DRIVE-THRU

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

McDonald's wants to rebuild its **Concord Pike restaurant**, destroyed by fire in January, in a way that will reduce a drive-thru line that often backed up onto the busy highway in Talleyville. The plans will be discussed at a meeting at 6 p.m. April 11, at the **Talleyville Fire Company**.

"A **plan** is being prepared for submission that would three parcels including the current restaurant parcel and the adjacent office building parcel, using both for the restaurant and drive-thru stacking," County Council member Dee Durham wrote in her latest newsletter. "Stacking" refers to developing places for vehicles to wait in the drive-thru line.

The restaurant is operated by the family-owned Dukart Management Corp., which did not respond to requests for comment. Dukart has an office building next to the restaurant and the plan filed with New Castle County shows it being razed.

## WHAT MCDONALD'S PLANS

The plan's map shows a single entrance and exit for 2507 (the restaurant) and 2525 (the office building) Concord Pike, on the southwest corner. Drivers would circle the restaurant to place orders and circle it again to get orders. The drive-thru would start with two lanes and then merge into one nearer pickup.

The planning document says 20 spaces are required for stacking and McDonald's is planning 24. The exploratory minor land development plan calls for 20 variances. It will eventually go to the Board of Adjustment for review, Durham wrote.

The existing restaurant is 3,529 square feet and the office building is 1,811 square feet, on parcels that add up to .77 acre. The new restaurant would be 3,883 square feet and would be up to 35 feet high, the same as the old one. The number of parking spaces will remain at 24, but they'll be moved around. The plan notes a restaurant of

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its size and indoor seating should have 51 spaces.

"The restaurant, which will only be slightly more square feet than the existing restaurant, will be situated in a way the owner believes will address the longstanding drive-thru backups on Concord Pike," Durham wrote.

The Dukarts started Delaware's first McDonald's (on Newark's Main Street in 1960) and the Ronald McDonald House of Delaware.

Similar drive-thru backups have been observed at the Dunkin' on Philadelphia Pike near Claymont.



# AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILL FOR VEOLIA GOING UP 4%

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Water rates for customers of Veolia are going up on Monday, April 1. The Delaware Public Service Commission has approved a net increase of 12.67% averaged across residential, commercial and industrial customers, the company announced.

“The average residential bill will be increased by approximately 4.02%, the equivalent of 5 cents per day or \$1.59 per month,” it said. That’s much less the company proposed a year ago.

In April 2023, Veolia filed a [proposal](#) that called for the average residential water bill in New Castle County to go up \$4.51 per month. The company, which serves more than 100,000 Delawareans, also then proposed a surcharge of \$5 per month.

Water rates are complicated things. Veolia’s [2023 application](#) takes 15 pages to detail variations. It all starts

with a fixed customer charge of at least \$14.25 a month in 2023 and going up from there, depending on the size of the pipe entering the building. Then there are the rates for each 1,000 gallons used, running in 2023 at least \$4.45 for public authorities and at least \$5.18 for residences. There’s also a fire protection charge.

## RATES FOR VEOLIA CUSTOMERS IN PA

Wilmington Mayor Michael S. Purzycki earlier in March proposed a 9% increase in water/sewer rates and 6% increase in stormwater rates.

“This rate increase will cost an average household about \$5.98 more a month, assuming the use of 4,000 gallons of water,” DelawareOnline [reported](#).

A Veolia [proposal](#) to raise rates in Pennsylvania, effective near the end of April, was put on hold by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. The Pennsyl-



**“**

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vania plan would increase the company’s total annual operating revenues for water services by approximately \$15.5 million (26.4%) and increase total annual operating revenues for wastewater services by approximately \$569,000 (34.8%).

In Veolia’s Pennsylvania proposal, the average monthly bill for a residential water customer using 3,500 gallons of water per month would increase from \$49.64 to \$60.79 (22%). For Veolia wastewater customers, the average monthly bill for a residential customer would increase from a flat rate of \$56.20 to \$77.00 (37%).

Veolia serves 69,800 water customers along with 1,600 wastewater customers in 11 counties across Pennsylvania.





# HOUSE CALLS FOR STATE TO LET BANKS FINANCE CANNABIS BUSINESSES

**BY JAREK RUTZ**

A bill that would help cannabis-related businesses with financing and accounting was passed unanimously by the state House Thursday.

**House Bill 355**, sponsored by Rep. Ed Osienski, D-Newark, provides legal protections for financial institutions and other entities that provide financial or accounting services to cannabis-related businesses that are licensed or registered under Delaware law. It clarifies that banks, credit unions, armored car services and providers of accounting services are not subject to prosecution under Delaware law for providing lawful services to licensed businesses engaged in the production, distribution and sale of cannabis in Delaware. HB 355 also aims to facilitate the operation of cannabis-related businesses by helping to ensure that such businesses have access to necessary financial and accounting services.

There is no fiscal impact on the state if the bill becomes law.

“As many know, national banks and credit unions do not serve the marijuana industry because they are concerned about potential penalties and prosecutions due to the federal statutes,” Osienski said. “A local bank is better positioned to serve the marijuana industry because they are regulated by state law under which the state’s legal marijuana industry also operates.”

Rep. Jeff Spiegelman, R-Clayton, thanked Osienski.

“The need for this bill shows the disservice that has continually been done to the American people by the federal government that refuses to do what’s right by the American people when it comes to this topic,” he said.

Also in hearing, **House Bill 313**, sponsored by Rep. DeShanna Neal, D-Elsmere, ensures that all female inmates in the Delaware Department of Correction, at



level IV or V, receive annual or biennial mammogram screening as recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force.

Level IV includes work release centers, home confinement (electronic monitoring), residential drug treatment and violation of probation centers. Level V includes 24 hour incarceration in jail/prison—kail describes those offenders serving one year or less.

Both bills passed unanimously and will make their way to the Senate chamber for debate.





**BY RICH SCHWARTZMAN**

It’s been 12 years since Eric and Lee Miller retired from the [ChaddsFord Winery](#). Now, the Petrillo family of New York, the remaining founders and owners, are looking to sell. The asking price for the 5-acre property on Route 1 in Pennsylvania is \$4.5 million. The property is just over the state line from New Castle County.

If—when—it’s bought, the winery will be the second Chadds Ford area winery sale in a year. Longwood Gardens bought the Galer Estate Vineyard and Winery in September.

Chaddsford Winery’s General Manager Corey Krejcik said in a brief telephone interview the doors of the winery are not closing. It will stay open through the sale process and, hopefully, beyond.

“We have a legacy to preserve,” Krejcik said and the owners’ hope is that whoever buys it will keep it as a winery. He also said there have been some “great discussions” from possible buyers and that the Petrillos, brothers Gregory and Matthew, are selling simply to consolidate their portfolio.

# CHADDSFORD WINERY IS SEEKING A BUYER FOR 42-YEAR-OLD BUSINESS

## CHADDSFORD ‘DESTINATION’

He called the winery “a destination to experience wine in a fun environment,” and said he appreciates the loyal following the winery developed in its 42 years.

On the company’s website, Krejcik wrote, “The winery is poised for a new generation of energized ownership, whether it be a small collective of high-net-worth local and loyal oenophiles, individual investors and partners, or a hospitality-focused private equity group looking for a strong, established brand with a powerful regional presence situated on five acres of prime real estate.

“Under new ownership, we believe the future is ripe and poised for growth.”

During its 42 years, Krejcik wrote, the winery has “become a highly respected and award-winning winery, earning prestigious accolades including the Keystone Cup for Best White Wine in Pennsylvania, Best in Show—Sparkling Semillon at the Pennsylvania Farm Show and Pennsylvania Sommelier Judgement.”



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# Food & Dining

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## TASTE & SEA'S SUPERB MENU STRESSES SEAFOOD FIRST, THEN STEAK

BY PAM GEORGE

Christina “Chrissy” Villare-Talbot and her husband, John, shared the dream of owning a restaurant together. Most would agree that John has the pedigree for it.

A graduate of The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College, he’d worked at [Creed’s Seafood & Steaks](#) in King of Prussia since 2000, when he was hired as a sous chef. He later became executive chef and a partner.

Unfortunately, the couple couldn’t find the ideal location. “We didn’t want a spot at the end of a strip mall,” Chrissy noted.

They pictured an 80- to 90-seat restaurant, such as the former Blue Pear Bistro next to Dilworthtown Inn. Consequently, the couple passed on the former Pescatore’s Italian Restaurant in Glen Mills. Not only does it anchor a strip mall, but the 6,500-square-foot space has

146 seats. “It was just not our vision,” Chrissy acknowledged.

But after COVID-19, when they began looking in earnest, they viewed the location with fresh eyes. “It had so much potential,” she said. “It just works.”

And now guests can “see” for themselves. [Taste & Sea](#), located at 1810 Wilmington Pike (Route 202), will hold a grand opening April 8. However, the restaurant has been in a soft-opening phase and a recent visit demonstrated that the new establishment is off to a solid start.

### TASTE-Y TRANSFORMATION

If I’d dined at Pescatore’s, I don’t remember it. But I do recall Mr. T.’s. The popular watering hole touted its ribs, but was better known for the 1980s singles scene. After a divorce, my brother warmed more than a few

barstools in the lounge.

Even if you’ve never been to the family-owned Pescatore’s, an offshoot of Enzo’s, you can tell it was once an Italian eatery by the arches that still march across one dining room. Formerly faux-finished to resemble Roman stone, they’re now painted Aegean blue, as are the walls.

For the most part, it’s an open layout with a banquet and overflow area to the left of the entrance, which can hold up to 80 guests. The bar is in front, and the main dining room, which has an elevated seating area, is to the right. A glass-enclosed section for chef’s tasting events and parties of up to 12 is new to the mix.

### OLD FRIENDS, NEW PARTNERS

The executive chef, however, isn’t John Talbot, who was walking around the dining room in a suit and tie during my visit. It’s Charles “Charlie” Moronski.

If the name sounds familiar, you may have dined at a [SoDel Concepts](#) beach restaurant. Before joining the Taste & Sea team, he was executive chef at [Crust & Craft](#) near Midway between Lewes and Rehoboth.

Moronski and Talbot met when Moronski joined Creeds as a sous chef in 2012; he left to join SoDel in 2017. “John loved him and was upset when Charlie left to go to Delaware,” Chrissy said. “But they stayed friends. When we vacationed in Lewes, we would always meet up with Charlie and have dinner. We always knew we wanted him.”

Moronski, however, had just purchased a home in Georgetown. “I put a lot of thought into it,” he said of the move.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



photo credit: Delaware State Police

# Government

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# HEARING: NOTHING BUT LOVE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING BILLS

BY PETER OSBORNE

The words “love fest” and “legislative hearing” rarely appear together, but that was the tone during a Delaware Senate Housing & Land Use committee hearing this week on a five-bill affordable housing package submitted by Sen. Russell Huxtable (D-Lewes). Sen. Marie Pinkney, D-Bear, even said she’s never seen such minimal opposition to legislation like the housing package. It was promoted by Huxtable as essentially being focused on increasing supply by using carrots instead of sticks.

“We’re going through an unprecedented housing crisis with really long waitlists for newly available units,” Huxtable said in his opening remarks. He noted that the [2023 DSHA Housing Needs Assessment](#) indicated the state needs an additional 19,000 affordable units

and that 8% of Delawareans are homeless, living in cars, or couch surfing.”

The bills being heard Wednesday were five of a seven-bill package heralded as bipartisan legislation.

## HUXTABLE HOUSING BACKGROUND

Huxtable, who spent two decades working with local nonprofits committed to helping Delaware families find affordable housing, put the package together after a state listening tour focused on the issue.

Reaction from committee members and speakers was nearly uniformly positive.

Speakers from [Housing Alliance Delaware](#), [NeighborGood Partners](#), [Delaware Affordable Housing Coalition](#), [Home Builders Association of Delaware](#),

the [YWCA of Delaware](#), [Delaware Association of Realtors](#) and the [Delaware Department of Justice](#) offered unanimous support.

Some commenters also advocated for additional funding, even if it requires reallocation of funding from other state initiatives.

“I’m thrilled to see this thoughtful slate of bills,” said affordable-housing developer Sean Kelly of Leon N. Weiner & Associates. “We do need to cobble together resources to keep housing affordable and encourage expansion of reach to allow these subsidies to be used with other programs.”

The one hint of disagreement during the hearing surrounded the lack of fiscal notes outlining the implementation costs and impact on the state budget.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT FISCAL NOTES

Asked by Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, whether the lack of fiscal notes required a “leap of faith,” Huxtable said the formula is a complicated equation given the lack of previous funding, but he’s optimistic about revenue offsets tied to new jobs and additional investment interest by municipalities and others.

“It’s a great space and I want to help, but I’d like a general understanding of what kind of number we’re looking at,” said Buckson.

He did not get a specific answer from a state finance official regarding the transfer-tax issue beyond the situation being few and far between.

Buckson did note, however, the package “transcends party lines” and is designed to allow state agencies like DSHA to attract other resources from the federal government and elsewhere.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



# BILL TO PUMP \$100 MILLION INTO MEDICAID SEEMS SET TO ROLL

BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware hospitals have agreed to fork over a 3.58% tax on patient revenues so the state can qualify for another \$100 million more in federal Medicaid funding. The **deal** they agreed to will help expand Medicaid programs at a time when state officials have sounded alarms about the \$2 billion—and rising—cost of healthcare to the state. It's one-third of the Delaware's annual budget.

Right now, \$1 billion of that is Medicaid money, which largely aids poorer families with acute and long-term care, but also the elderly, disabled and some people with severe health problems or medical needs, regardless of their income. The arrangement will see the state send some of the new federal money back to the hospitals in direct lump-sum payments, according to the agreement cut with Sen. Sarah McBride, D-Wilmington, head of the Senate Health Committee, and Rep. Kerri Evelyn Harris, D-Dover/Magnolia, head of the House Health Committee.

**Senate Bill 13**, dubbed the Protect Medicaid Act of 2024, would mark the largest ongoing infusion of funding in Delaware's Medicaid program since the Affordable Care Act, which went into effect in 2010, McBride has said. She detailed the provisions of the bill in Wednesday's meeting of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee. Committee and public comments were enthusiastic, with the exception of some questions from Republican members.

The bill seemed destined to be passed on to the Senate, but Senate committees do not vote in public. They wait until members have signed the back of the bill and then post on the state website what the votes were. As of 5:30 p.m., those votes had not been posted.

Delaware's Medicaid program now serves 1 in 3 people in Delaware, McBride said. It pays for the care by using \$2 from the state to match \$3 from the federal government.

But the state has not been taking advantage of a federal program used by 46 other states, which required an assessment on hospitals to access more federal money. McBride said in a recent press release that 49 states have at least one **healthcare facility assessment** in place, including Delaware's on nursing homes, while 34 states and Washington, DC, have three or more provider taxes.

## MEDICAID DEAL

The agreement essentially allows the state to borrow money from the hospitals to qualify for the additional federal money, McBride said. The hospitals' money will go into a new Medicaid special fund called the Hospital Quality and Health Equity Fund that the state will use to trigger the release of the federal matching funds.

The directed funds sent back to hospitals are designed to help the hospitals better serve Medicaid patients, which organizers hope will improve the health of Delawareans. SB13 will require that the new money "isn't just utilized to maintain the status quo of the Medicaid system, but rather is felt by patients here in Delaware," McBride said. It requires that any money not sent in directed payments be used to enhance current Medicaid programs and benefits or establish new benefits within Medicaid.

"So that could be increasing reimbursement rates. It could be expanding coverage to new populations. That could be expanding coverage for new forms of care that Medicaid doesn't currently cover," McBride said.

About 10% could be used for budget smoothing, a term lawmakers use for cash that helps out when times are lean or unusual demands are made on a program.

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# BILL WOULD OK USING TAXPAYER \$\$\$ TO HELP DELAWAREANS BUY EV CHARGERS

BY JAREK RUTZ

After pushback about how Delaware will pay for it, a bill creating a rebate program to help residents buy electric vehicle charging equipment was approved unanimously in a House committee Tuesday. The lower the buyer's income, the larger the rebate would be, according to [House Bill 13](#), sponsored by Rep. Sophie Phillips, D-Christiana.

The bill did not have a financial note attached that spelled out how much the program could cost the state, a fact that Rep. Rich Collins, R-Millsboro, and Rep. Jeff Hilovsky, R-Millsboro jumped on. Fiscal notes indicate the state cost of implementing a specific law over one or more fiscal years. Andrew Slater, executive director of [Energize Delaware](#), said a state program already has the funds to issue the rebates.

“It’s funded 100%” through [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) funds, “so we already have the money for this, which is why you don’t see any fiscal note,” Phillips said. Buyers would have to apply for the rebate, which would be administered by the director of the [Sustainable Energy Utility](#) program. About 80% of charging for electric vehicles happens at home, according to the Department of Energy.

For a low-income applicant—up to 300% of the federal poverty level for household income—financial assistance would cover up to 90% of the purchase and installation costs. For all other applicants, the program could offer assistance to cover up to 50% of the costs.

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# Education

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# MANY HAPPY WITH MANDATORY SCHOOL BOARD FINANCE TRAINING BILL

BY JAREK RUTZ

School board members, who are in large part responsible for the spending decisions of millions of dollars from school districts, could soon be required to undergo financial training. **House Bill 312**, sponsored by Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton and chair of the House Education Committee, which requires school board members to undergo training in financial responsibility.

Legislators in the Senate Education Committee meeting Wednesday liked the bill, and so did those affected. Don Patton, president of the **Christina School District** Board of Education and former member of the **Wilmington Learning Collaborative**'s governing council, said he appreciates the bill's intent and believes it is a good starting point.

Patton, and other board presidents, would be tasked with informing each new member of the board of the training obligation. A school board president must also

send a letter by Jan. 15 of every year to any school board member who has not fulfilled the training obligation by Jan. 1 following that member's election or appointment.

Patton has been a big proponent of training school board members, and he thinks the bill actually doesn't go far enough.

"My ask would be taking HB 312 wider and deeper," he said.

One of the most expensive financial costs to taxpayers is education, he said, and the state wants and needs its children to receive high quality instruction in a wholesome, safe and secure learning environment.

"We need to maintain great teachers and support staff," he said, "yet we elect well-intentioned individuals to lead school boards, with very little training or a comprehensive understanding of the responsibilities required."

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# LI, GUPTA TO REPRESENT DELAWARE IN NATIONAL SCIENCE CAMP

BY JAREK RUTZ

Two First State high schoolers are on their way to the Mountaineer State to represent Delaware at the 61st National Youth Science Camp.

Kate Li, a senior at [Newark Charter School](#), and Arya Gupta, a junior at Red Clay Consolidated School District's [Charter School of Wilmington](#), will attend the camp from June 29 to July 20 in [Monongahela National Forest](#) in West Virginia.

"I look forward to making friends with delegates from all over the United States, expanding my horizons in STEAM and exploring nature," Li said. "I'm incredibly thankful for all the influential teachers and staff at Newark Charter School, my mentors on the Delaware Technology Student Association and Apollo: Youth in Medicine teams, my coworkers at Delaware Diagnostic

Labs, the Liu group at the University of Delaware Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, and the members of my robotics team, and more, for all the learning opportunities and support."

Li, a National Merit Scholarship finalist, has volunteered since 2020 for Delaware Diagnostics Lab and was a paid summer chemical engineering intern at the University of Delaware. She has held several leadership positions such as vice president and outreach director of Apollo: Youth in Medicine, state secretary and state treasurer of Delaware Technology Student Association, and Multicultural Club president. Li is a member of Business Professionals of America, Science Olympiad and HOSA, and is also a violinist.

"We are incredibly proud, though not surprised, by



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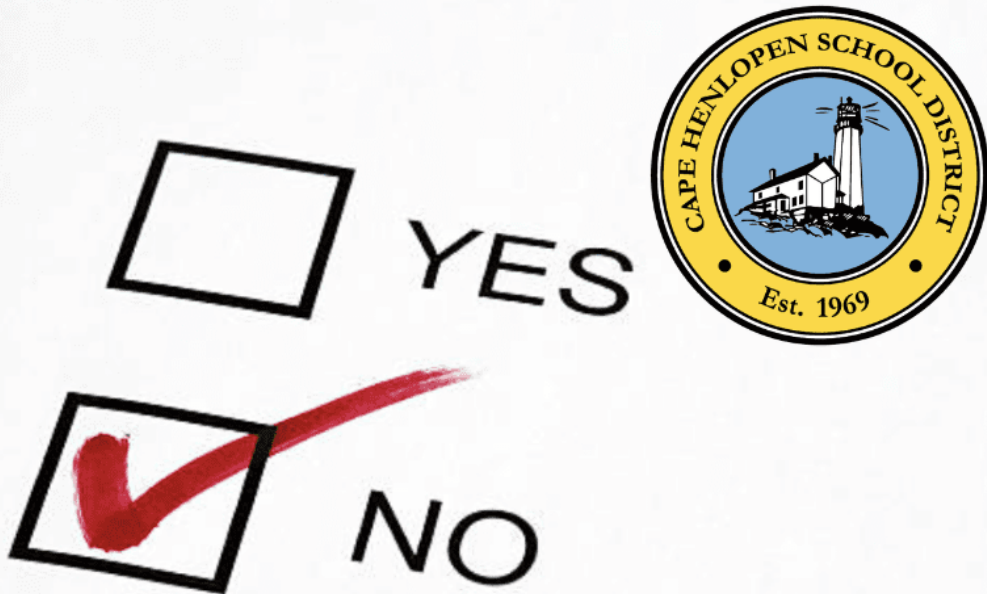
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this amazing opportunity for Kate," said Daniel Bartnik, school principal. "As a rockstar student we have full confidence that she will excel in this program."

Gupta is the co-founder of International Genetically Engineered Machine Team, which will be competing at the 2024 Grand Jamboree in Paris. She's also the co-founder of Women's Empowerment Club and a student leader in the Youth Environmental, a member of the Charter School of Wilmington Swim team and YMCA junior nationals swim team.

[READ MORE HERE](#)





# CAPE HENLOPEN REFERENDUM FAILS, UNOFFICIAL RESULTS SHOW

It also would have helped the district in its attempt to purchase land in order to accommodate the rapid population growth over the past few years.

The district is able to have a second attempt at the referendum and that date will likely be decided in the upcoming weeks.

The final vote count has yet to be published by the Department of Elections, but the district announced the unsuccessful referendum on its Facebook page.

The final vote count was 7,887 total votes: 3,613 “yes” (45.8%) and 4,274 “no” (54.2%).



BY JAREK RUTZ

*This is a developing story. Check back for updates.*

The residents of Cape Henlopen School District have voted down a referendum to raise local taxes in order to generate more local revenue for the district’s operations.

“While the result is not what we wanted, we intend to move forward with a positive outlook,” said Superintendent Bob Fulton. “Over the next few weeks our team will work together to determine what our next steps will be.”

The district was hoping to raise \$83,647,000 of additional local revenue, which would increase the average homeowner’s tax bill by \$153.75 more a year, or \$12.81 a month. The extra money would have helped the district with operational needs like personnel costs, facility costs and more.



photo credit: Mike Lang

# Sports

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# ROBINS OT WINNER LIFTS SALESIANUM OVER ST. MARY'S

BY NICK HALLIDAY

On a cold and rainy Wednesday night, the No. 24 ranked Salesianum Sals hosted the No. 21 nationally ranked St. Mary's Saints of Maryland. The two teams were ranked so close for a reason. These two teams were evenly matched and this game proved that.

The Sals and Saints were tied at halftime by a score of 4-4, then tied at the end of regulation by a score of 7-7, which then forced the game to go into overtime. After the end regulation it only took 88 seconds in overtime for the Sals to strike.

Senior Carson Robins took a pass on the left side of the net which he was one on one with the Saints goalie and fired a shot past him in the upper corner of the net which gave the Sals an 8-7 victory. After the goal, the Sals rushed the field as they knocked off their first na-

tionally ranked opponent of the season.

The official stats were unavailable after the game, but Robins led Salesianum with four goals while registering a hat trick in regulation.

Salesianum has multiple nationally ranked opponents still on its schedule. Starting Saturday, March 30, they traveled to play Chaminade (NY) who is currently ranked No. 7 in the nation. They also play Lawrenceville (NJ) who is the No. 1 ranked team, and Malvern Prep (PA) ranked at No. 8.

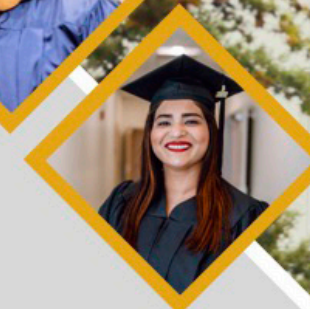
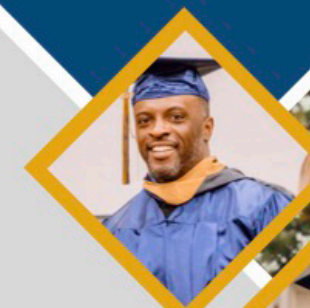
The Saints were ranked 21st by the *USA Lacrosse Magazine*. The Sals were sitting right behind them, ranked 24th in the nation. If they can go to Chaminade this weekend and pull off an upset it, could catapult the Sals up the national rankings.



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# ON THE PITCH: WEEK 1 GIRLS' SOCCER RANKINGS

BY JASON WINCHELL

The weather turned colder this week as the season kicked off, but we started the season with a bang, as we had 12 matches involving both teams being ranked in the Delaware Live top 10. Appoquinimink beat two ranked teams by the combined score of 12-0 (Padua 6-0, St. Georges Tech). Sophomore Mariana Catania had five goals and two assists, to lead the Jaguar attack and the team defense only allowed four shots total, including zero in the win over St. Georges Tech.

The top teams play some big matches this week before most of the teams will be taking seven to 10 days off for spring breaks. There are a bunch of top matches and some big conference games as the week goes on. Here are week one Delaware Live rankings after the first week of competition.

## DIVISION 1

**No. 1 Middletown** (1-0)(LW No. 1) The defending champs opened the season with a big conference win over William Penn. They hosted two ranked teams this week—No. 6 Odessa on Wednesday and No. 3 Smyrna on Thursday.

**No. 2 Appoquinimink** (2-0)(LW No. 2) The Jags beat two ranked teams by the same 6-0 score (Padua and St. Georges Tech). They hosted No. 2 Saint Mark's on Tuesday and Mount Pleasant on Wednesday.

**No. 3 Smyrna** (0-1)(LW No. 3) The Eagles lost a tough

5-3 decision to Sussex Academy last week. They hosted No. 9 Cape Henlopen on Tuesday and traveled to No. 1 Middletown on Thursday

**No. 4 Wilmington Charter** (2-1)(LW No. 6) The Force bounced back after a tough 4-1 loss to No. 4 Archmere with wins over CR and No. 8 Delcastle. They traveled to DMA on Wednesday.

**No. 5 Polytech** (1-0-1)(LW No. 5) The Panthers tied No. 6 Odessa 1-1 and beat No. 9 Delmar 2-1 last week. They hosted Dover on Tuesday and Red Lion on Wednesday.

**No. 6 Odessa** (1-0-1)(LW No. 7) The Ducks tied No. 5 Polytech 1-1 and beat Newark in their first Blue Hen Flight A match. They traveled to Odyssey Charter on Monday and No. 1 Middletown on Wednesday.

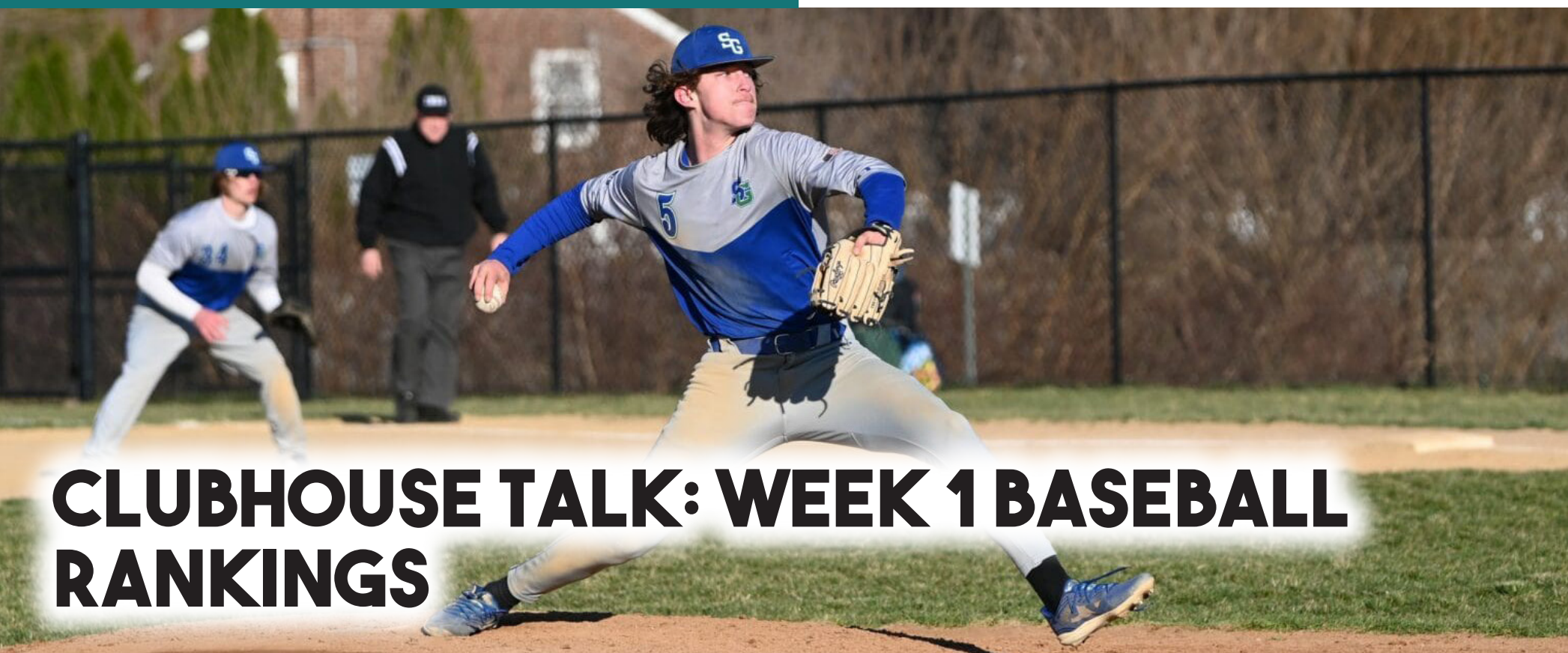
**No. 7 Padua** (0-2)(LW No. 4) The Pandas lost twice to No. 2 teams (Appoquinimink 6-0 and Saint Mark's 2-1 OT). They traveled to Sanford on Wednesday.

**No. 8 Cape Henlopen** (1-1)(LW No. 8) The Vikings lost a tough one to No. 6 Sussex Academy and beat Woodbridge. They traveled to Sussex Tech on Monday and to No. 3 Smyrna on Tuesday night.

**No. 9 Delcastle** (1-1)(LW No. 9) The Cougars won over Mount Pleasant before losing to No. 6 Wilmington Charter. They traveled to McKean on Monday.

[READ MORE HERE](#)





# CLUBHOUSE TALK: WEEK 1 BASEBALL RANKINGS

BY NICK HALLIDAY

Even though spring sports started last week the spring weather hasn't. It was cold and windy with rain over the weekend that washed out all the games. We saw some top teams face off in No. 2 Conrad who fell to St. Georges, who was unranked in the preseason. However, they have a good team and I may have missed them when I did the rankings. They have a player of the year candidate in Nate Arterbridge (Missouri State) who went 2-for-3 with three RBI and a home run in their win over Conrad.

No. 3 Cape Henlopen went 3-0 over the week with wins over Middletown, Milford and Kent Island (MD). Cape scored 40 runs in three games while only allowing nine. They are in midseason form already. No. 7 Sanford also went 3-0 in the first week of play. They defeated

Odessa, Red Lion and Mt. Pleasant. They too had the bats working scoring 34 runs over three games and only allowed 12.

Let's take a look at Week 1's top ten rankings after some real good season opening games.

**No. 1 Delaware Military Academy (DMA)** The defending state champs were idle last week. They started the season on Wednesday against St. Elizabeth. They turned right around the next day and played Conrad, a rematch from last year's state championship. Then they traveled to play Caesar Rodney on Saturday. We will see how DMA handles these games to remain at No. 1.

**No. 2 Cape Henlopen** Cape Henlopen went 3-0 over the week with wins over Middletown, Milford and Kent Island (MD). Cape scored 40 runs in three games while

only allowing nine. They have two games this week when they hosted Caesar Rodney on Tuesday then went on the road to Delmar on Thursday. Both teams won their games last week, but they will be getting Cape coming off three big wins. Let's see how the week shakes up for them.

**No. 3 Caravel** The Buccaneers defeated Odessa by a 9-0 score last week. Their only scheduled game next week is a night game as they host No. 8 Salesianum. This game will be the season opener for the Sals. It's tough territory for the Sals going to Caravel to play at night. The game will be live on our YouTube channel.

**No. 4 Sussex Central** The Golden Knights defeated Smyrna last week 9-3. They have three games lined up this week starting on Tuesday when they traveled to Polytech. They then hosted St. Vincent Pallotti (MD) on Thursday and traveled to Laurel on Friday. They aren't going to get much rest from their starters this week, so we will see how they handle this tough schedule.

**No. 5 Sussex Tech** The Ravens defeated Polytech 12-2 last week. In that game the Ravens tallied nine hits. They traveled to Dover on Tuesday then hosted Lake Forest on Thursday. Both teams are 0-1 to start the season.

**No. 6 Sanford** The Warriors went 3-0 in the first week of play. They defeated Odessa, Red Lion and Mt. Pleasant. They too had the bats working, scoring 34 runs over three games and only allowing 12. The Warriors are off this week and will resume play April 2, when they host St. Elizabeth.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

# INSIDE THE CIRCLE: WEEK 1 SOFTBALL TOP 10

BY GLENN FRAZER

Spring sports are among us. Softball is in the air. Lots of good early season matchups that are worth getting out to watch. Check out our top 10 rankings for week 1.

**#1 Caravel (0-0)** The defending state champs open the season Thursday against DMA. Coach Randy Johnson has a powerful offensive team with Haley Grygo, Zayda Rocke, Paige Richardson and Kendall Browne leading the way. In the circle is returning pitcher Kasey Xenidis.

**#2 Sussex Central (1-0)** The Golden Knights have four-year starter Madge Layfield pitching and one of the best position players in the state in Takyla Davis. John Wells' team blanked Smyrna 11-0 in its season opener.

**#3 St. Marks (3-0)** The Spartans are off to a great start with wins over Middletown, Conrad and Concord. Liv Datilio will probably handle most of the pitching duties, but coach Jon Thomas has at least three others he can call on to take some innings. The offense is led by Chloe Bedwell, Kate Lovett and Kimorah Neal.

**#4 Appo (2-0)** Coach Brian Timpson always fields a competitive team in west Middletown. He will rely heavily on returning pitcher Ayla McCathern, and the bats of Brianna Russo, Lauren Foltz and Mia Boyd. An early season 6-5 win in eight innings against Laurel featured the Jags trailing by five runs after the fourth and rallying for the victory.

**#5 Laurel (1-1)** Kylee Hill is one of the top pitchers in the state with a “nasty” changeup in her arsenal. Her battery-mate Bailey Ullman and sister Ashlyn lead the offense.

**#6 Polytech (2-0)** The Panthers are loaded up and down the lineup plus they have a solid pitcher in Mara Everton. Rachel Carey has belted three homers in the first two games, while Gabrielle Bogdon, Mackenzie Mitchell and Brianna Benton add to coach Kyle Taylor's juggernaut.

**#7 Lake Forest (2-0)** The Spartans have a good mix of power and speed plus pitcher Carah Sumpter. Chloe Revelle, Katelyn Bell and Kaitlyn Pierce triggered the scoring while Sumpter provided an early season highlight performance against Delmar by recording 17 strikeouts and hitting a grand slam.

**#8 Cape Henlopen (1-0)** Coach Mike Tkach returns the entire starting lineup from last season. Abby Marsh is solid in the circle. Hayden Hudson, Alivia Heers and Ava Calciano (UConn commit) anchor a solid offense.

**#9 Smyrna (1-1)** New head coach Nina Marcano (former coach at Middletown) takes over for Nicki Shirey who will now serve as a volunteer coach. Linda Roscoe will split time in the circle with Alexis Dennis. Roscoe is also one of the top batters on the team.

**#10 DMA (0-0)** Veteran coach Roman Allin once again will have the Seahawks in the mix. Emily Trzonkowski handles the pitching duties. The ‘hawks were scheduled to open the season against St. Elizabeth on Wednesday, March 26.

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