



Headlines	3
Culture	9
Business	12
Food & Dining	16
Government	18
Education	23
Sports	28
Stay Connected	32



House Dems Force End to Debate



Two High School Entrepreneurs
Go for \$12K

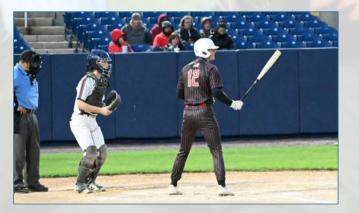


photo link: Marcia Reed

Smyrna Powers Past Caravel







HEADLINES



BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware House of Representatives Democrats on Thursday forced an end to a floor debate so they could pass their speaker's controversial bill to create a state board to oversee hospital budgets. The move came after three hours of head-scratching gamesmanship in which Republicans essentially filibustered with multiple representatives questioning aspects of the bill and Speaker of the House Valerie Longhurst's attempt to play Lady Beneficient failing because she frequently couldn't keep the scorn out of her voice.

One reason for the hurry: The House and Senate are about to take a two-week break so the Joint Finance Commission can conduct hearings on capital requests. Passing the bill now means it can move more quickly through the Senate and into law.

MOVING HOSPITAL BILL

The end started after a break, when the House came back into session at 9:30 p.m. Rep. Ronald Gray, R-Selbyville, took the floor. As he was waiting for David Bentz, a former representative who stepped down in 2022, to go to work for the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, five Democrats rose.

Acting speaker William J. Carson, R-Smyrna, asked, "Does someone have something here?"

Rep. Madinah Wilson Anton, R-Newark moved to call the question and noted there were five members standing under House Rule 48 Seven.

Despite audible comments that Gray had the floor, Carson immediately responded, "Motion has been made and seconded and is a non-debatable." He trailed off to start again, "Mr. Chief Clerk" but was interrupted by House Minority Leader Mike Ramone, R-Newark/ Pike Creek, who noted that Gray had the floor.

"It's not debatable with the five-man rule," Carson said. He started a roll call on the motion, which fell along party lines, except for Rep. Sean Lynn, D-Dover, who voted no for the motion and on the bill.

Lynn rose after the vote on the bill to say he was severely disappointed that his attempts to be heard in the last four hours had been ignored, especially because his children had been waiting in his office the entire time.

"I've been up and I've been down and I was absolutely denied the opportunity to have my voice heard on behalf of my district," he said. "Dover is significantly affected by this bill. I'm significantly disappointed in both the tenor of the bill and the way that was handled this evening. And, lastly, that we were deprived of a right to have questions asked and to have statements heard."

Lynn said he had significant questions about bond covenants and bonds that the hospitals had issued, which he thought would lead to significant pre-emption issues and had not had the opportunity to be heard on that. He threw a message bag over his shoulder as he ended his statement and walked out to the applause of Republicans.

LONGEST DEBATE?

Rep. Jeff Spiegelman, R-Claymont, noted that the hospital debate had been the longest in his 12 years in office, but it was also fascinating to get the different perspectives.

HEADLINES



BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Liquor stores that boomed during the pandemic, when so many Delawareans were sheltering at home, are now reporting declines in revenue.

"Everyone I've talked to is down" in revenue, said Edward Mulvihill, who networks a lot as president of the Delaware Small Beverage License Council and a board member of American Beverage Licensees. He's also the fourth-generation owner of Peco's Liquors in North Wilmington.

"That's more alarming because we know costs have gone up," he said.

Bill Galbraith, owner of **Tim's Liquors** in Hockessin and the Wine & Spirit Co. of Greenville, crunched some revenue numbers for DelawareLive. Sales at Tim's in the first 3½ months of 2024 are down 5% from the same period in 2023, he said, and those sales are down 10% from 2022.

"Everything costs more, but less is coming in," he said.

"I'm definitely having problems. Ours is a slow death, and I hope it revives."

Mulvihill brought up the sorry state of package stores in an April 23 House committee hearing on Senate Bill 166, which will allow Delawareans to have home delivery of wine, beer and mixed cocktails from restaurants, brewpubs and taverns. That law, if passed, would offer another reason not to patronize liquor stores, he said.

During the lockdown, the state Legislature changed Delaware's laws to allow customers to take out alcohol with food, a key measure designed to keep the state's restaurants afloat in the early part of the economy-roiling pandemic.

"The rocket fuel that was the pandemic has burned out and all of those trends have gone back to far more realistic growth (or decline) rates," said Marten Lodewijks, an executive with IWSR, which analyzes the industry.

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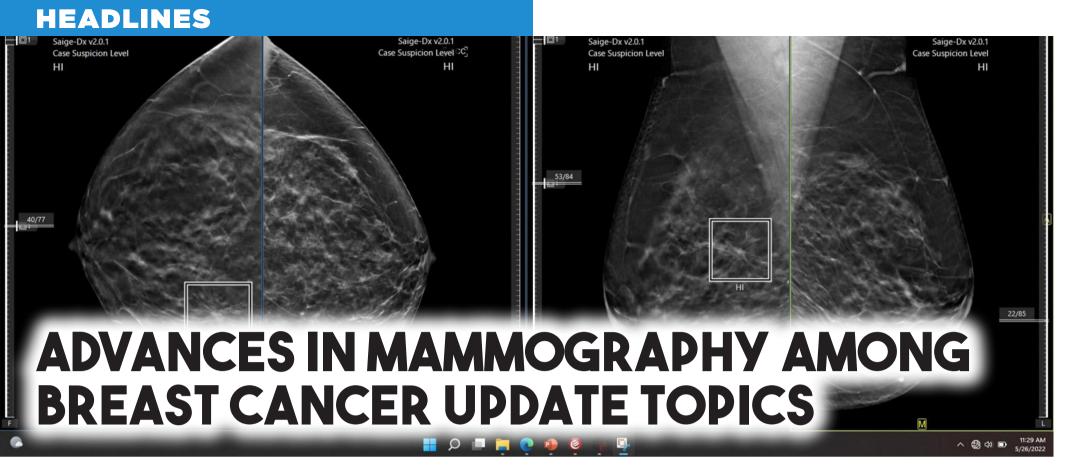
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BY BETSY PRICE

The use of artificial intelligence in screening for breast cancers and a little used technique that can efficiently and economically find cancers in women at high risk for that cancer are among the topics to be tackled during the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition's annual update in May. Dr. Jacqueline Holt, medical director of the Delaware Imaging Network, says that AI has helped radiologists find more cancers when they are smaller and more curable.

AI software trained on millions of images of breast scans is spotting and flagging subtle cancers for radiologist to review, and helping reduce the number of patient callbacks for additional imaging.

Dr. Diana Dickson-Witmer, a breast surgical oncologist with Beebe Healthcare, plans to continue spreading the word at the update about a screening technique called contrast enhanced mammography that can help find breast cancer in high-risk patients at a cost far less than the current typical MRI scan now used to look. The technique has been approved by the Federal Food and Drug Administration for 12 years, but is not routinely used simply because there's not a single billing code to use for it, she said. Contrast enhanced mammography also has the potential to expand access for screening for women who need it, she said.

What's new in mammograms and advanced breast cancer detection is one of five focus topics in the 16th annual Breast Cancer Update, which will revolve around a theme of conquering the unknown while rising above a breast cancer diagnosis. Other topics will include the differences between post mastectomy options of reconstruction or no reconstruction; hospice

and palliative care support options for patients and their loved ones; the benefits of mental health and cancer survivorship therapy programs; and alternatives available for breast reconstruction, nipple creation, and artistic expression with tattooing.

The update will take place from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 15, online and in person with a viewing party at Goldey-Beacom College in Pike Creek. It's free. To attend, register **HERE**. The update typically draws breast cancer patients and survivors, their families, physicians, nurses, students and allied health professionals.

"Our goal is to have programming that empowers our community in the fight against breast cancer," the coalition website said. "The Annual Breast Cancer Update allows us to bring nationally renowned speakers in the breast cancer field and allows us to educate the community about the innovative research, treatment and programs that are available in Delaware."

AI AND MAMMOGRAMS

Finding cancer when it's small pays off in lives saved, Holt said.

"When a breast cancer is found early, the survival is 99% in Stage 1," meaning it has not started spreading. Holt said. "Even when there's a lymph node positive or regional disease, the survival rate approaches 90%," she said. "And it's not just the survivability, but the hope is to decrease the amount of surgery, such as lumpectomies instead of mastectomies, unless chemotherapy or sometimes no chemotherapy at all is needed."

The use of artificial intelligence has risen dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic started, breast cancer specialists say.



BY BETSY PRICE

Delaware House Republicans this week condemned Rep. Eric Morrison who, among other things, said in a hearing that racketeering, extortion and bestiality were not violent crimes and that most cases of rape were statutory and not violent.

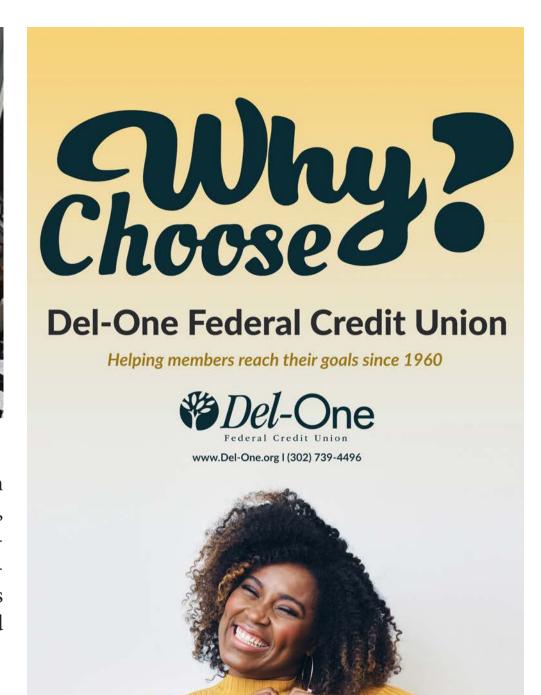
"While Rep. Morrison is factually wrong—racketeering, extortion and bestiality often involve violence our antipathy for his declaration centers on his views of sexual assault and rape," the statement from the 15member caucus said. "His belief that most sex offenders are being victimized by 'a whole lot of misconceptions' is only surpassed by his casual dismissal of the mental and physical trauma suffered by the victims of sex crimes he perceives as non-violent.

"It would be concerning for any citizen to exhibit such hubris, but for a lawmaker, it strikes us as dangerously misguided."

Morrison, D-Glasgow, made the comments during an April 17 hearing in the House Education Committee, which was considering House Bill 290. It would authorize legislation to allow convicted violent felons to qualify for Delaware's SEED Scholarship Program. Felons now are barred from accessing this taxpayer-financed scholarship.

MORRISON COMMENTS

"This bill does not change the violent felony code in any way," Morrison said during a rambling speech. "It changes the SEED Program...We have things in here, for example, like racketeering. Racketeering is certainly not a violent crime. Extortion is not a violent crime. We have bestiality listed under violent crimes. We have the general term of 'crime' listed under violent crimes.





BY JACOB OWENS

This story was originally published by Spotlight Delaware. New Castle County is taking over the operations of the Hope Center homeless shelter from a hotel company that had held the contract to manage the facility ever since it launched during the height of the COVID pandemic. The company, Hersha Hospitality Trust, is the same firm that sold the Hope Center building—then a Sheraton hotel located amid the Christina River wetlands near New Castle—to the **county** in late 2020 for nearly \$20 million.

In an email sent to council members earlier this month, Carrie Casey, the county's community service department manager, announced that the takeover of the critical social services operation would occur April 19. She wanted the council to be "aware of the change" and that she expected a "smooth transition with minimal impacts."

"The Department has been working on a plan for s everal months in the event of this occurring," Casey said in the email.

Casey did not disclose in the email the reason that county officials are taking over the facility. When asked about the reason for the change, a spokesman for County Executive Matt Meyer said simply that Hersha Hospitality in 2020 was the right partner for the Hope Center, but "is not the right partner going forward."

The spokesman, Brian Cunningham, did not elaborate on the assertion, but said the county administration "anticipates significant savings" with Hersha Hospitality no longer operating the Hope Center. Cunningham further stated that the county will contract out individual tasks at the shelter, such as staffing, trash service and maintenance.

In 2020, Meyer led the acquisition of the hotel using

the county's allocation of COVID-era federal American Rescue Plan Act funding and has touted the Hope Center's services since it opened.

HOPE CENTER HOUSING

Today, the Hope Center provides short-term housing, as well as certain medical care and transportation for unhoused people, but DART Transit buses do not stop near the facility.

The county takeover of the Hope Center is occurring just after the publication of an audit that showed that Hersha Hospitality did not properly report all money flowing into the facility and failed to charge for certain services that had been provided.

During a meeting of the New Castle County Council's Executive Committee on Tuesday, County Auditor Bob Wasserbach outlined the findings, describing in detail how one unnamed client of the Hope Center was not properly billed for 36 rooms they were contractually obligated to pay for—leading to a temporary shortfall of more than \$240,000. Ultimately that issue was corrected and the bill paid, he said.

Following his testimony, Wasserbach declined to state the name of the client, but ChristianaCare reportedly had a contract to rent 36 rooms from the Hope Center, according to a DelawareLive report from last year.

Finally, while Wasserbach said Hersha failed to follow financial reporting rules, he also noted that he was "not aware of any fraud or misuse of funds." Nevertheless, Wasserbach's testimony Tuesday sparked a string of probing inquiries from council members about management at the Hope Center.









BY NICK HALLIDAY

As we drove around the Monster Mile of the Dover Motor Speedway, we hit half the 180 mph that NASCAR drivers do. Even so, you could feel the track pull the car right, towards the wall. Speedway President Mike Tatoian countered the pull by holding the steering wheel to the left, a move that looked like an upper body workout. We were invited to ride around the track Wednesday as the Speedway built toward its race weekend.

Once the province of NASCAR-crazy fans, the Speed-way has worked hard to turn the event into an affordable family affair, with lots of entertainment beyond simply sitting in the stands and watch the cars zip around like colorful flies without wings.

"Dover really likes to keep things affordable," Tatoian said. "If you look at our ticket prices versus the rest of

the NASCAR tracks, we are on the lower end because we want to make it affordable for everyone to enjoy. Kids get in *free* on Friday and Saturday, with very affordable tickets for Sunday."

Driving the track was exciting, enlightening experience. The track goes into a 24-degree banking in the turns and 9-degree banking on the straights, which isn't apparent when you watch on TV. Then, it looks like the track is flat, but it's not at any point.

We had the luxury to get out and walk up the banking, which turned out to be difficult because the angle is so steep. I snapped a photo I think helps that angle, but unless you walk it yourself, you really won't get the true feel.

It did illustrate how incredibly good these drivers are,

going 180 miles per hour, inches away from other cars and challenging the laws of physics right here in our state capital, Dover.

Here are our Top 10 reasons to head toward Dover this weekend.

SPEEDWAY'S NASCAR EXCITEMENT

For three days (April 26-28), Dover is the national center of auto racing where America's best drivers race at almost 180 miles per hour, inches away from other cars, challenging the laws of physics in a thunderous, high-energy experience. At the end, three winning drivers and teams who combine skill, preparation, advanced technology, precision driving and a little luck, get to claim the famous Monster Trophy and join the ranks of past Dover winners such as Richard Petty, Dale Earnhardt and Iimmie Johnson.

There are three races in three days:

- General Tire 150 ARCA Menards Series. Friday, April 26, featured the General Tire 150 ARCA Menards Series race, a showcase for young drivers and a great way to introduce racing to your family. Tickets for kids 12 and under were free.
- NASCAR Xfinity Series. Saturday, April 27, is the NASCAR Xfinity Series race, where the next generation of stars raced against NASCAR veterans for 200 laps. Tickets for kids 12 and under were free.
- Würth 400 NASCAR Cup Series. Sunday, April 28, is the Würth 400 NASCAR Cup Series race, featuring the sport's best drivers for 400 laps and the ontrack centerpiece of Dover's NASCAR weekend. Tickets for kids 12 and under start at \$10.





BY BETSY PRICE

Audiences attending the Delaware Symphony Orchestra's 2024-25 season will have a say in who is chosen as its new music director. The symphony's 119th season will showcase the four finalists for the job: Mélisse Brunet, Filippo Ciabatti, Michelle DiRusso, and Taichi Fukumura. Each will conduct a classical concert and audience members will be surveyed afterward about how they thought the program went.

The season also will feature guest soloists new to the symphony and a series of performances featuring the symphony's principal musicians, formerly referred to as chamber concerts.

J.C. Barker, executive director of the symphony, said he'll be excited to see each of the candidates and soloists. "And the reason is that they're all just completely fresh, in so many ways," he said.

The pool of applicants for the music director job held for 20 years by David Amada started with 147, was whittled to 17 and then to nine.

"These four rose to the top," Barker said. "I think what's most exciting about this season is just the newness of it all. It's exciting. It's kind of like watching the Olympics. We've got some great talent coming here next season."

The season will include the symphony's traditional five Classics Series concerts, three Musicians' Series concerts including a holiday performance at the Hotel du Pont and two concerts in Sussex County.









The **University of Delaware** hopes that on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic, a brand new \$150 million building will lead to the next monumental biopharmaceutical innovation.

"It was a near miracle that a global pandemic was unleashed on the world, shut down the global economy, took millions of lives and yet the bio-industry identified, developed and delivered a life-saving, world-saving vaccine in record time, not in 10 years, but in one year," said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Delaware, at a groundbreaking event Monday.

The Securing American Biomanufacturing Research and Education (SABRE) Center will be a 70,000-square-foot facility, funded primarily by federal and state dollars. In it will be training for workers in manufacturing

biopharmaceuticals. The space allows for biopharmaceutical companies to test their innovations in an FDA-regulated environment, complementing research and development work at **NIIMBL** (National Institute for Innovation in Manufacturing Biopharmaceuticals).

Kelvin Lee, director of NIIMBL, said the amount of funds the university currently has for the project is undisclosed. But, there have been several funding pools, such as an \$8 million allocation for UD and NIIMBL for a biopharma manufacturing center in September, 2022 as part of a congressionally-directed allotment from the **National Institute of Standards and Technology** and the **Department of Health and Human Services**.

"This is the next phase in Delaware being at the cutting edge," Coons said, "not just regionally but globally of innovation in bio and pharma, manufacturing and development."

UD hopes the SABRE Center will result in manufacturing innovations in a production-relevant environment on a wide variety of cutting-edge biopharmaceuticals, such as gene therapies, mRNA vaccines and other biopharmaceuticals. The goal is to provide a collaborative space for biopharmaceuticals in order to accelerate the development of new manufacturing technologies and approaches into widespread commercial adoption.

UD President Dennis Assanis said the center will spawn thousands of new manufacturing jobs to boost the state economy.

"Groundbreakings like this are always very inspirational and full of hope and promise of new endeavors and exciting achievements to come," he said.

As a training ground for students, the new building will help develop a future workforce with relevant technical skills, hands-on training and expertise with equipment and processes that most closely mirror biopharmaceutical manufacturing facilities.

Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester, D-Delaware, said this new center boils down to two things: jobs and supply chains. Mapping and monitoring the success of the SABRE Center with those two elements will ensure that Delaware stays competitive and maintains a healthy economy, while also leading the nation in innovation.

Sen. Tom Carper, D-Delaware, said this is another example of Delaware being the "little state that could."

It is unclear when the SABRE Center is expected to open, but Assanis said the new building will be a place where brilliant ideas become realities.





A passion for financial freedom led high school senior Keon Jones to dedicate himself to entrepreneurship and a business creation. Now, he and classmate Kyle Richardson will pitch their business to entrepreneurs, business professionals and community leaders to compete for \$100,000 in prizes at the 2024 Diamond Challenge Summit. The event took place from Thursday to Saturday at the **University of Delaware**.

Jones and Richardson, both seniors, are aspiring entrepreneurs at Freire Charter School Wilmington. Their business, RichCoverage, is an affordable and effective hair-loss solution. Their product is a sort of powder that serves two purposes.

"It's a way for you to give yourself esteem or improve a self-esteem issue that you have from like hair loss or

bullying or, you know, hair receding and all that," he said, "but also just a way to style your hair and it is more convenient and efficient than other options."

"When you come up in a household that wasn't necessarily the highest income, it gives you that job to kind of make it out and make a way for yourself," Jones said, "and the way I see it is you're not going to make that million by working for somebody else—you're going to have to go out there and create your own thing."

Having ownership over a business or product and being your own boss, he said, results in that idea of financial freedom that he longs for. RichCoverage was one of the top teams at the EntreX Delaware Venture Showcase, where the team earned \$500 and punched their ticket to the Diamond Challenge Summit.

Richardson, who used to live in Jamaica as a young child, saw his father own and operate an arcade and construction business. He said seeing his father run those two businesses, while helping him work in the arcade, sparked his interest in entrepreneurship

At the summit, Richardson and Jones competed with students from across the globe at UD and hoped to cash in to win up to \$12,000 for their business. The threeday competition is the culmination of the year-long global pitch competition. Richardson and Jones are very confident in their business.

"We feel very confident," Richardson said. "I think we're going to win. There's no doubt that we're going to win. And that's it."

Jones said the summit is a great opportunity because of the diversity of people that are going to be there.

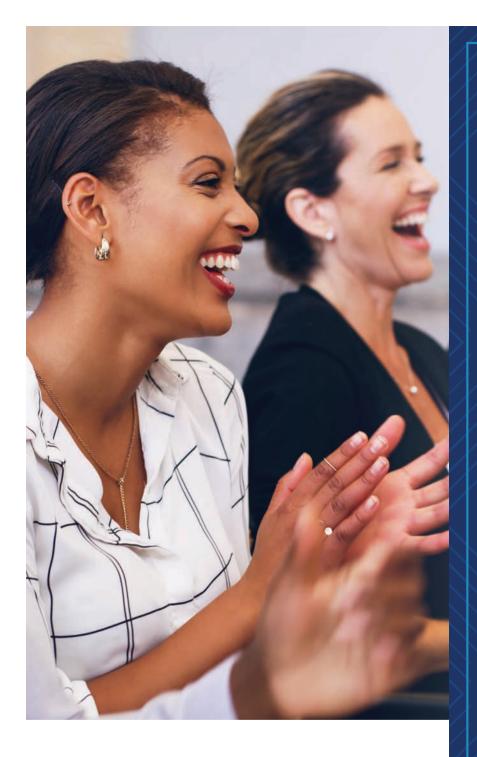
"The fact that it's just such a big stage and knowing that we were able to get to that stage is just a huge accomplishment," he said.

At the event, entrepreneurs will network and present their business ideas to a panel of business experts, entrepreneurs and community leaders.

The development of the product was pretty consistent, with a few tweaks to the ingredients they put in the powder. Richardson said it only took the two a single week to develop the product. They made it as part of their dual enrollment class with about 15 other students.

"It's not designed to be done with a huge group," said their teacher Nathan Moser. "The students are getting the high school credit for an elective, but they're also getting dual enrollment credits, UD credit, so that when they graduate high school, they're already having college credits."





Delaware

WORKFORCE TRAINING GRANT

Our Workforce Training Grant is a matching program that funds specialized training for eligible Delaware companies. This is to create and retain quality jobs, as well as, generate advancement opportunities in Delaware.

- Training programs should be related to new and innovative processes, programs, machinery or technology related upgrades.
- Max grant award is \$100k
- The Division will reimburse up to 50% eligible costs

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students must meet eligibility requirements. Course fees and books are not covered by the SEED Scholarship





FOOD & DINING



BY PAM GEORGE

If you peruse the list of upcoming Food Network programs, you might see a familiar name on the list of "Chopped" contestants. Wearing a red chef's coat, Robbie Jester of **Pizzeria Mariana** in Newark stands behind the signature basket of mystery ingredients.

Jester is one of the 16 chefs competing on "Chopped Battle Italiano," which will debut on Tuesday, May 28. Chefs Scott Conant, Alex Guarnaschelli and Gabe Bertaccini—Italian cuisine specialists—will judge the tournament.

Jester can't comment on his participation yet; contestants are under strict orders to stay mum until the network's legal department gives them the thumbs up.

However, given the photo, it's all but assured that he's in the running and based on his experience with culinary contests, he'd certainly be a contender.

JESTER EXPERIENCE

You may remember that Jester won the grand prize of \$100,000 on "Pressure Cooker," which aired in 2023 on Netflix. The cutthroat culinary battle was part "Survivor" and part "Top Chef"—the 11 contestants judged each other and there was no host. However, the highly rated show was not his first experience with reality TV and cooking competitions.

The Culinary Institute of America graduate's shrimp scampi dish beat gave him the winning edge on the Food

Network program "Beat Bobby Flay". He competed on "Guy's Grocery Games" twice. Although he lost the first time, he won the show's redemption competition.

AND YOUR TIME STARTS NOW!

If you've been living under a "Chopped" basket, the regular show format has appetizer, entrée and dessert rounds. Chefs must use the mystery ingredients for each course. However, they can add pantry items to their dishes, which must be completed in a set amount of time. There are four contestants, and one is eliminated in each round. During special tournaments, such as Battle Italiano, each episode is a heat that whittles the contestant pool to the finalists.

In 2022, Reuben Dhanawade appeared on the "Chopped" special "Desperately Seeking Sous Chef". The prize was a job offer from chefs Maneet Chauhan, Scott Conant or Chris Santos. Dhanawade did not win, but he still worked for Chauhan. He now lives in Charleston.

BITTEN BY THE BUG

The eight-episode "Pressure Cooker" was filmed in 2022 in Los Angeles, which kept Jester away from his family and businesses. After filming the show, Jester split from his business partner. It was a stressful time. But the pleasure must outweigh the pain because Jester can't seem to stay away from the camera. And for his Delaware fans, that is a good thing.









BY BETSY PRICE

A new version of the bill that would create a board to oversee state hospital budgets would pay the chairman \$40,000 a year and the six members at \$35,000 a year, a total of \$234,694 a year.

"For this analysis, average salary costs are assumed to be similar to those of other existing state boards and commissions," the fiscal impact note says.

House Substitute No. 2 for House Bill No. 350 says the annual cost of the proposed Diamond State Hospital Cost Review Board would be about \$1 million a year.

The bill, sponsored by House Speaker Valerie Longhurst, D-Bear, is set to come up today on the House floor, despite vehement opposition from hospitals. They say one clause in it could threaten their agreement to be taxed at 3.58% on net revenues so that Delaware will qualify for about \$100 million more in Medicaid money.

HOSPITAL REVIEW BOARD

The proposed board would be responsible for the re-

view and approval of annual budgets of six statewide hospital systems. It would include seven members, six appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate, and the executive director of the Delaware Healthcare Association.

The annual costs of the board are estimated at \$890,127 for 2025, assuming nine months of operations, \$942,228 for 2026 and \$946,333 for 2027. The state doesn't estimate costs beyond three years in the fiscal notes accompanying legislation. The board is expected to have an annual ongoing cost of \$500,000 for contractual support to help review the budgets, as well as two analysts whose salary and health insurance will be \$201,210.

Beyond the idea of having the government control the budgets of a nonprofit business, hospitals have warned that requirement in the bill to immediately limit hospitals to charging no more than 250% cuts into the revenues they agreed to fork over to get more federal Medicaid

money. Enacting that restriction would cause state hospitals to lose \$360 million in revenues, said Brian Frazee, executive director of the Delaware Healthcare Association. If HB 350 passes, it would cause hospital to overspend their deal by \$80 million, he said. Dropping the 250% requirement would solve the hospital's problem in the Medicaid deal, he said.

As of Thursday afternoon, the requirement remains in the bill.

House Bill 350 would create the Diamond State board under the Department of Health and Social Services. It will try to keep hospital budgets at or below increases of a state spending benchmark. Established in 2018, it was 3% to 3.8%, the amount tied to the state's gross domestic product.

The state move comes at a time when healthcare costs are chewing through Delaware's budget. About \$2 billion of its budget is allocated to healthcare costs, and the state's health insurance premiums will rise by 27% this year, requiring an injection of an additional \$39.5 million into its budget just to pay its share of those premium increases.

Longhurst has said she went after hospitals because:

- Hospitals represent 42% of all healthcare costs in Delaware:
- Hospitals never met that benchmark, except for that first year of the pandemic;
- Inpatient and outpatient costs at Delaware hospitals totaled \$3.5 billion in 2021, although hospitals tie that to patients seeking care they put off because of the pandemic;





After some healthy discussion, a bill creating a one-stop guide for both tenants and landlords is on its way to the House floor. House Bill 381, sponsored by Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton, requires the Delaware Real Estate Commission to create a comprehensive, statewide rights and responsibilities guide for landlords and tenants. The seven representatives present in the House Housing Committee all voted to release the bill from committee.

The guide will reference responsibilities that a tenant or landlord must follow, including federal, state, county and municipal requirements. It will be created with input from other housing-related organizations if needed, and the commission may amend the guide, including to update it and to add additional information that is relevant to landlords and tenants.

Debra Burgos, vice president of property management at **Evergreen Apartment Group**, said this guide is important because the landlord/tenant code has not been updated since 2019.

"So what I'm giving out to residents doesn't include the updates regarding declawing cats or right to representation or the bedbug legislation," she said. "They don't have that information in front of them which is an issue since we worked really hard to get these things passed and residents may not be aware."

Some landlords may also not be aware if they don't have this information right in front of them, she said. A lot of the information in individual town-by-town guides is redundant. Burgos noted that the city of Wilmington has a guide while New Castle County also has a guide.

"All of them have similar information, but I can tell you as a landlord when you're going through this with a resident, their eyes glaze over," she said. "So we want to make sure that the most important things are front and center and easy to read."

Rep. Stell Parker Selby, D-Milton, agreed and suggested a tweak in the bill to ensure that landlords literally highlight the most important parts of the guide. Williams, who used to hold a real estate license, said that's something she used to do and hopes all landlords do, but realizes not all do.

Brian Pomije, director of property management for **Patterson Schwartz**, said the bill will help provide clear and easy-to-understand information for both landlords and tenants.

"A balanced and well-defined guide can foster fair and transparent interactions between landlords and tenants, ultimately leading to a more harmonious landlord-tenant relationship," he said.

HB 381 would require a landlord or real estate service provider to provide the guide to prospective tenants entering into a landlord-tenant relationship. Williams pointed out that if a tenant resigns a lease five times in the same property, their landlord must provide five guides, whether information has been updated or not. The guide may be provided in electronic or paper format and real estate service providers could be disciplined for misrepresenting the availability or content of the required form. Failure to provide the guide when required is deemed an unlawful practice.

GOVERNMENT

BY BETSY PRICE

A Delaware Senate bill that will allow state residents to have home delivery of alcohol in the form of wine, beer and mixed cocktails from restaurants, brewpubs and taverns is one step closer to becoming a law, despite opposition from Delaware's liquor stores.

Senate Bill 166, sponsored by Sen. Jack Walsh, D-Wilmington, blew through the House Economic Development/Banking/Insurance & Commerce Committee Tuesday. It would allow third parties like DoorDash and Uber Eats to bring limited quantities of wine and beer—and as-yet unlimited quantities of mixed cocktails—to customers, as long as they are accompanied by an order of at least \$10 for food of some kind.

Edward Mulvihill, a fourth-generation owner of Peco's Liquor Store in North Wilmington, argued that the arrangement would hurt liquor store sales that are now experiencing historic sales declines and would facilitate underage drinking. Delaware's liquor licenses include

HOME DELIVERY OF WINE, BEER, **COCKTAILS CLEARS ANOTHER HURDLE**

one for restaurants for on-site consumption and one for retail package stores to sell products for off-site consumption, he pointed out.

"In the years since COVID, we've seen this line become more and more blurred," Mulvihill told the committee.

During the lockdown, the state Legislature changed Delaware's laws to allow customers to take out alcohol with food, a key measure designed to keep the state's restaurants afloat in the early part of the economyroiling pandemic.

While Mulvihill said he was pleased that under the bill deliveries of wine would be limited to only two bottles, he was unhappy about the unlimited number of cocktails, as was Rep. Paul Baumbach, R-Newark. Before voting for the bill, Baumbach asked Walsh to consider amending the bill by putting a limit on the number of mixed drinks that could be ordered under the law.

DOORDASH DELIVERY RULES

A DoorDash rep said that company already delivers alcohol in 32 states and its system has been working well. It hires only drivers older than 21 to deliver drinks. To order alcohol for delivery, a customer must upload a license showing they are old enough to order it.

When the alcohol is delivered, it does not have to be delivered to the person who ordered it, but must be delivered to someone with a license or ID showing they

are old enough to receive it. The other person often is the spouse or partner of the person who placed the order, the rep said. The company does not allow alcohol to be left on a doorstep, as food can be, he said. If no one answers the door, the delivery person is paid by Door-Dash to return the alcohol to the restaurant from which they picked it up, the rep said.



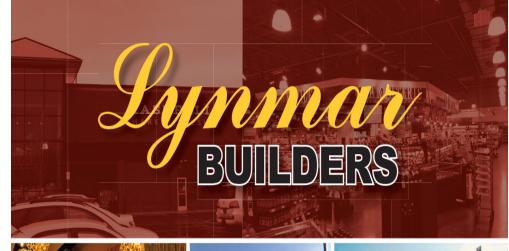


A bill aimed at cracking down on predatory practices from towing companies flew through the House Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee meeting Tuesday. House Bill 351, sponsored by Rep. Ed Osienski, D-Newark, creates the following requirements for the towing and storage of vehicles without the consent of the owner or operator:

- Photographic evidence must be taken to document the unauthorized parking of a vehicle before it can be towed.
- Tow companies and storage facilities must publicly display their rates.
- Towing and storage rates must be reasonable, with reasonableness calculated in relation to the fees imposed by the companies for consensual towing and storage or based on average rates in the county.
- A maximum total towing and storage rate of \$500 can be imposed.

- Tow companies must decouple or drop vehicles that have not been removed from parking areas if the owner returns before removal. The drop fee may not be more than 50% of the tow fee.
- Storage facilities must be open or accessible to the public from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. five days a week, and tow companies must make reasonable accommodations to redeem vehicles after-hours.
- Individuals must be allowed to retrieve at no cost personal belongings from vehicles held in storage.
- Tow companies and storage facilities must accept credit cards.

If a tow is completed in violation of the bill, the owner or operator is entitled to both reimbursement of the tow and storage fees as well as damages incurred to retrieve an illegally towed vehicle. Tow companies would be liable for property damage sustained due to a non-consensual tow or storage.

















EDUCATION



BY JAREK RUTZ

Feeding off the positive energy, flashing of cameras and fast-paced competition, Mia Rooks helped her team bring home a trophy in the third annual Life Skills Olympics. At the same time, the competition will help the 17-year-old with her transition plan of attending a four-year university to pursue a degree in social work.

"It was an exciting energy, this is my second year going but my first year participating in it last year, I went and I cheered the team on," Rooks said, "and this year, it was exciting. It's very loud, but it's a great energy and it's nice being there with them."

The junior at High Road School of Sussex County is one of a few dozen that competed in the event involving six **High Road Schools** across Maryland and Delaware.

Southern Delaware was the year's winning team composed of students from the High Road School of Sussex County in Georgetown and the High Road School of Southern Delaware in Felton.

"Our transition team all comes together and we throw our ideas for what we think would be sufficient for life skills training," said Dan Jones, transition coordinator at both the Georgetown and Felton High Roads Schools. "We went with some old competitions and then we tried to spice it up a little bit because students could get used to certain things and then it was too easy, so we want to make it a little bit challenging."





This is a developing story. Please check back for updates.

Take two—Appoquinimink School District's second stab at a referendum has passed. The district will raise about \$77.8 million in local revenue: \$11,126,000 for operating costs and \$66,663,550 for capital costs. The average homeowner will see an increase of \$435 per year on their tax bill. The influx of funds will help the district maintain its operations as well as help finance capital projects such as new building construction.

"It wouldn't have been possible without the community support and without the efforts of all the people that are in this room and people that aren't in this room," said Superintendent Matt Burrows. "It took a team effort to get this through and I'm excited to see that our community sees the need and supports our kids and staff."

APPO'S REFERENDUM SUCCESSFUL ON SECOND ATTEMPT

Appo's first attempt at referendum failed on Dec. 12, 2023 in a very close vote. Burrows also acknowledged those that voted against the referendum.

"We do have some of our community that we need do a better job of connecting with and showing the great things are happening in our schools," he said, "and that will be one of the tasks that I look to carry out as we move forward."

Leading up to the second attempt, Appo's board warned that if the referendum fails, not only will the district miss out on \$233 million in state funding, it will have to make hefty job cuts, drastically increase the amount of students in each classroom, will have to move classes to modular trailers and more.

Unofficial results via the **Delaware Department of Elections**:

Section I: 7,412 votes FOR (56.6%); 5,674 votes AGAINST (43.4%)

Approval to raise local taxes (\$0.399 per \$100 assessed value) for current operating expenses (teacher and staff compensation, safety and security, operating expenses due to growth, maintaining student devices).

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Just days after a fatal shooting of an 18-year-old woman on **Delaware State University**'s campus, the state General Assembly moved on with a bill creating felonies for people with guns in Safe School Zones.

House Bill 311, sponsored by Rep. Cyndie Romer, D-Newark, adds post-secondary colleges and universities to the Safe School Zone criminal offense. That means any person who knowingly possesses a firearm while in or on a college or university facility or campus may be charged with an additional offense outlined in Delaware Code, which is class E felony. Class E felonies result in up to five years incarceration.

SAFE SCHOOL ZONE LAW MOVES ON DAYS AFTER DSU FATAL SHOOTING

HB 311 also adds commissioned security guards to the categories of individuals who may possess a firearm while acting in their official capacity within a Safe School Zone. The others permitted to carry a gun are:

- A police officer.
- A constable employed by a school or school district who is acting in an official capacity within a Safe School Zone.
- An active-duty member of the United States Armed Forces or Delaware National Guard who is acting in an official capacity within a Safe School Zone.
- A holder of a valid license to carry concealed deadly weapons but only if the firearm is in a vehicle.
- Employees of the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families who are authorized by the Secretary of the Department to carry a firearm while acting in the employee's official capacity.
- Probation and parole officers acting within the officer's official capacity.
- A qualified retired law enforcement officer who is employed or contracted by a school or school district to assist with security or investigations and who is acting in an official capacity within a Safe School Zone.

In Wednesday's House Judiciary Committee hearing, Republicans said making this a law is unnecessary legislation since it's already in school policy. Expanding the campus law to a state law, Romer said, would allow more than just campus security and officers to get involved—it would enable county police and state police to take action.

She also noted that the state's institutions of higher education said they supported the bill.

Rep. Jeff Spiegelman, R-Clayton, had a main concern of this bill when it comes to concealed carry rights.

Many of the state's institutions of higher education have residential housing very close to the college campus and even bordering it.

"I could be walking down the streets of Dover just walking down the streets with a concealed carry on," he said, "and as soon as I hit the sidewalk out in front of DSU campus, I instantly run afoul of this law."

He then abides by the law the instant he steps off of a sidewalk owned by the university, he pointed out.

That is one of the minor aspects of the law that are wishy-washy and need to change, and Spiegelman said Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth Beach, promised to address when the "parent bill" of this law was introduced, which he did not.

The bill was released by committee and now heads to the House floor for debate.





Another night of get-to-know school board candidate forums, another missing participant. The trend of office hopefuls not showing up to public meetings continues, as just three of the four of Appoquinimink School District's school board candidates for this year's election attended Tuesday night's meeting.

In the second installment of a four-district virtual series, candidate Timothy Johns declined to participate in the session, hosted by several education and social advocacy groups like First State Action Fund, Delaware PTA, League of Women Voters, NAACP Central **Delaware** and others. Monday night, just one candidate showed for the Christina School District's forum.

All of the meetings—which aren't a dialogue, but a question and answer—ask the candidates to share their positions on education issues like student achievement,

the role of board members, support for minority students, school safety, parental engagement and other topics heavily discussed in the sphere of public education in Delaware.

Four people are vying for a single seat in Appo, which just had its referendum pass just hours after Tuesday's forum. Here are some viewpoints from the three candidates that showed:

Role of school board members

Outside of the listed job duties of a school board member, like setting policy, guiding curriculum and hiring or firing the superintendent, the three candidates expanded on what their perspective on a board member is. Candace Jusino was the first to speak and she said it's tough being a mom, it's tough being a parent, it's tough being a student.

READ MORE HERE



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SMYRNA POWERS PAST CARAVEL



BY NICK HALLIDAY

The Smyrna Eagles hosted the No. 10 Caravel Buccaneers at Frawley Stadium. That's right—the Eagles opted to play Caravel at Frawley instead of playing at home so they were the home team.

Well moving the game to Frawley paid off for Smyrna. Their bats exploded at the Minor League field, scoring eight runs in the first two innings. In the bottom of the first, James Tassone reached on a hit by pitch then was knocked in on a double by Jacob Tiberi.

In the bottom of the second inning, the Eagles sent 13 batters to the plate scoring eight runs on seven hits. Four Smyrna batters had extra base hits as Matthew Pasaro, Trevor Ridgeway and Tassone each hit doubles while the final hit came off the bat of Nolan Oakley who cleared the right field wall for a two-run home run.

The Eagles got two more runs in the bottom of the fourth inning as Oakley registered his second hit of the game on a single. He was followed by Hunter Strauss who doubled to knock Oakley in for the first run of the inning. A few batters later, Passero singled to knock in Strauss as the Eagles took an 11-0 lead over the Buccaneers.

Overshadowed by the offensive explosion was Smyrna starting pitcher Nathan Donahue who threw a gem, going five scoreless innings while only allowing two hits in the victory. Donahue was able to shut down the Buccaneers bats and solidify the win in five innings due to the mercy rule.



SPORTS

DAVIS'S HOME RUN KEYS SUSSEX CENTRAL WIN OVER CAPE

BY GLENN FRAZER

Sussex Central's Takyla "TK" Davis belted a two-run home run in the bottom of the sixth inning Tuesday that was the difference in the Golden Knights' 5-4 win over Cape Henlopen. The Vikings rallied in the top of the seventh, scoring three times and had the tying runner on base when the final out was recorded. After the game, Davis told me "I took the first strike because it wasn't my pitch. The next pitch was down the middle so I decided to swing for the fences."

With sustained winds of nearly 20 mph, both pitchers had to make adjustments. Winning pitcher Madge Layfield posted nine strikeouts, but said she struggled with her rise ball. "The wind was definitely a factor, affecting my rise ball. The pitch was jumping too much so the batters were not swinging at it."

Head coach John Wells also felt the elements had an effect on the game. "I think the wind was tough on both pitchers, probably affecting their pitcher (Abby Marsh) a little more than Madge." He went on to compliment Mike Tkach and the Vikings. "I scouted them Saturday (vs Stephen Decatur), they are a talented group of juniors and seniors that are as good as anybody. They'll be a force in the playoffs."

The Golden Knights are ranked fourth in our DelawareLive softball poll and improved to 8-2 with the victory. Freshman Lauren Myers led the offense with three hits in four at-bats, scoring a run and collecting an RBI.

The 10th ranked Vikings are now 6-3. Kenna Justice started the rally in the final inning. She doubled, followed by line-drive singles from Natalya Roundtree and Bri Windish. All three scored to make it a one-run game, but Layfield induced a groundout to end the game.





BY NICK HALLIDAY

The weather is picture perfect this week as girls' soccer is heading down the home stretch in the last full week of April. The regular season ends on May 15.

The top two teams in Division 2 met up at Saint Mark's on Wednesday as No. 2 Saint Mark's hosted No. 1 Caravel. The top-ranked Bucs have only allowed one goal in their seven matches while scoring 29 goals. The Spartans have outscored their six opponents 38-5 on the season.

There are four undefeated teams in the state this season-Middletown, Caravel, Saint Mark's and Sussex Academy. Saint Mark's host two of them this week (Caravel and Sussex Academy). Sussex Academy and Caravel also meet next week. Middletown has Wilmington Charter, Padua and Appoquinimink on their schedule in the final weeks of the season.

Here are week five DelawareLive rankings.

DIVISION 1

No. 1 Middletown (8-0)(LW No, 1) The Cavs defeated Division 2 No. 3 Archmere 8-1 last week. They had a pair of road matches this week, Newark on Wednesday and Wilmington Charter on Friday.

No. 2 Appoquinimink (6-1)(LW No. 2) The Jags beat No. 4 Wilmington Charter 1-0 last week. They hosted Christiana on Wednesday and William Penn on Friday.

No.3 Sussex Tech (6-1-1)(LW No. 5) The Ravens went 2-0 last week with wins over Smyrna and Woodbridge. They traveled to Dover on Tuesday and hosted Division 2 No. 3 Sussex Academy on Thursday.

No.4 Polytech (4-1-2)(LW No. 6) The Panthers beat No. 7 Caesar Rodney 3-2 last week. They hosted Sussex Central on Tuesday.

No. 5 Padua (3-4)(LW No. 3) The Pandas lost a pair of matches on the road in the Carolinas over the weekend. This week they hosted rival Ursuline on Wednesday.

No. 6 Caesar Rodney (5-2)(LW No. 7) The Riders lost to No. 4 Polytech 3-2 last week. They hosted Delmar on Thursday and traveled to Division 2 No. 3 Archmere on Friday.

No. 7 Odessa (5-2-1)(LW No. 8) The Ducks went 2-0 last week with wins over Milford and St. Georges Tech. They traveled to Mount Pleasant on Wednesday.

No. 8 Delcastle (6-2)(LW No. 9) The Cougars went 3-0 last week with wins over Concord, Christiana and Hodgson. They hosted William Penn on Saturday.

No. 9 Dover (5-2-1)(LW Unranked) The Senators crack the top 10 this week after going 2-0-1 last week. They hosted No. 3 Sussex Tech on Tuesday and Woodbridge on Thursday.

No. 10 Wilmington Charter (5-4)(LW No. 4) The Force went 1-2 last week with losses against No. 2 Appoquinimink 1-0 and to St. Andrew's 2-1. They hosted Newark Charter on Wednesday and No. 1 Middletown on Friday.

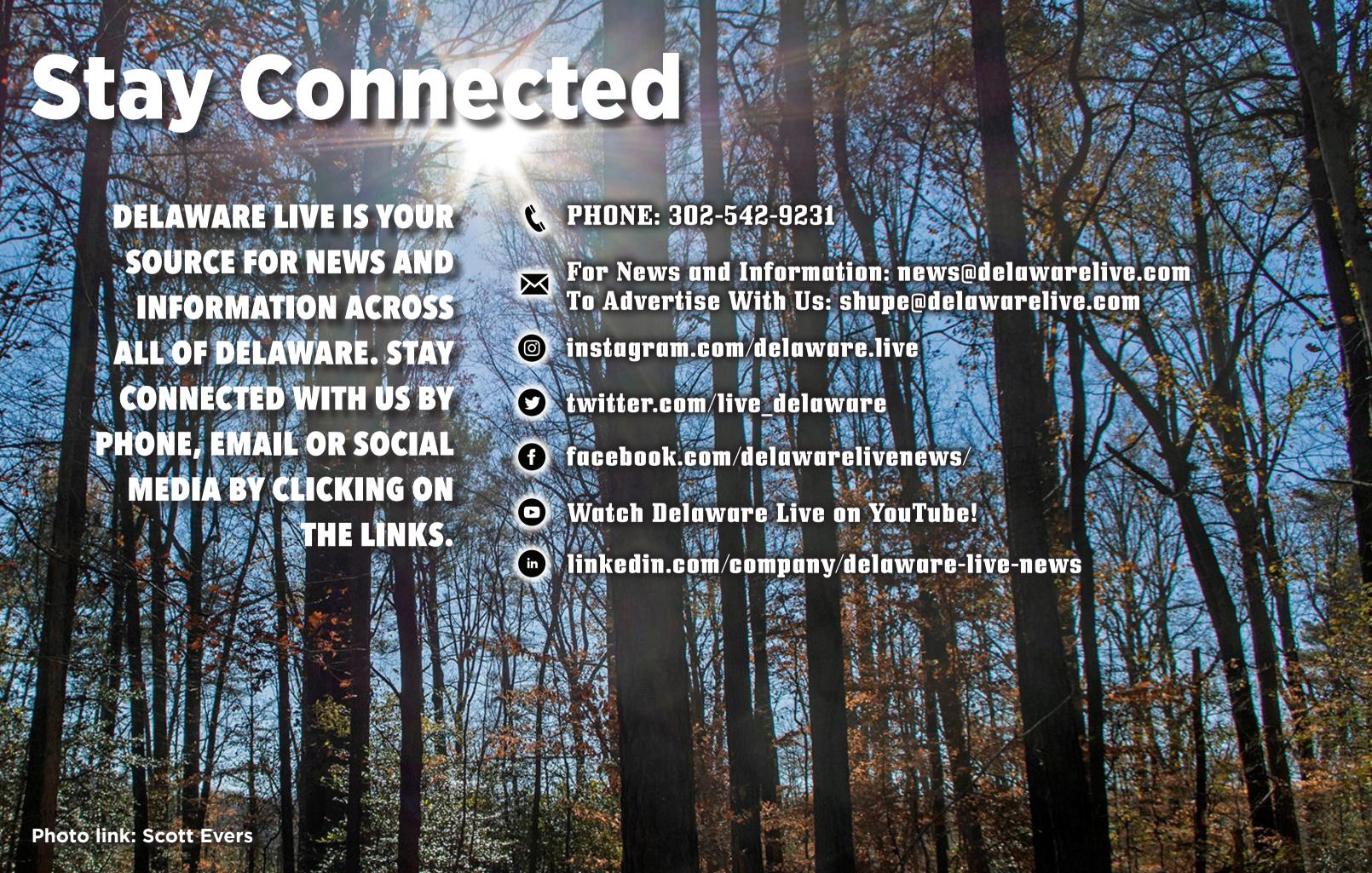
DIVISION 2

No. 1 Caravel (7-0)(LW No.1) The Bucs went 2-0 last week with wins over Wilmington Christian and Arcadia (VA). They traveled to No. 2 Saint Mark's on Wednesday and hosted Howard on Friday.

No. 2 Saint Mark's (3-0)(LW No. 2) The Spartans went 3-0 last week with wins over Delmarva Christian, Newark and St. Elizabeths. They hosted No. 1 Caravel on Wednesday and No. 4 Sussex Academy on Friday.

No. 3 Archmere (5-1)(LW No. 3) The Auks went 1-1 last week as they lost to Division No. 1 Middletown and beat St. Elizabeths. They hosted FSMA on Wednesday and Caesar Rodney on Friday.

No. 4 Sussex Academy (6-0)(LW No. 4) The Seahawks defeated Lake Forest last week. They played three ranked teams on the road this week: No. 5 Indian River on Tuesday, Division 1 No. 3 Sussex Tech on Thursday and No. 2 Saint Mark's on Friday.



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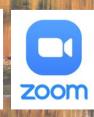


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