



Weekly Review

STAY IN THE KNOW ABOUT DELAWARE

February 16, 2025 • Issue 7



Brandywine Zoo — find out more!

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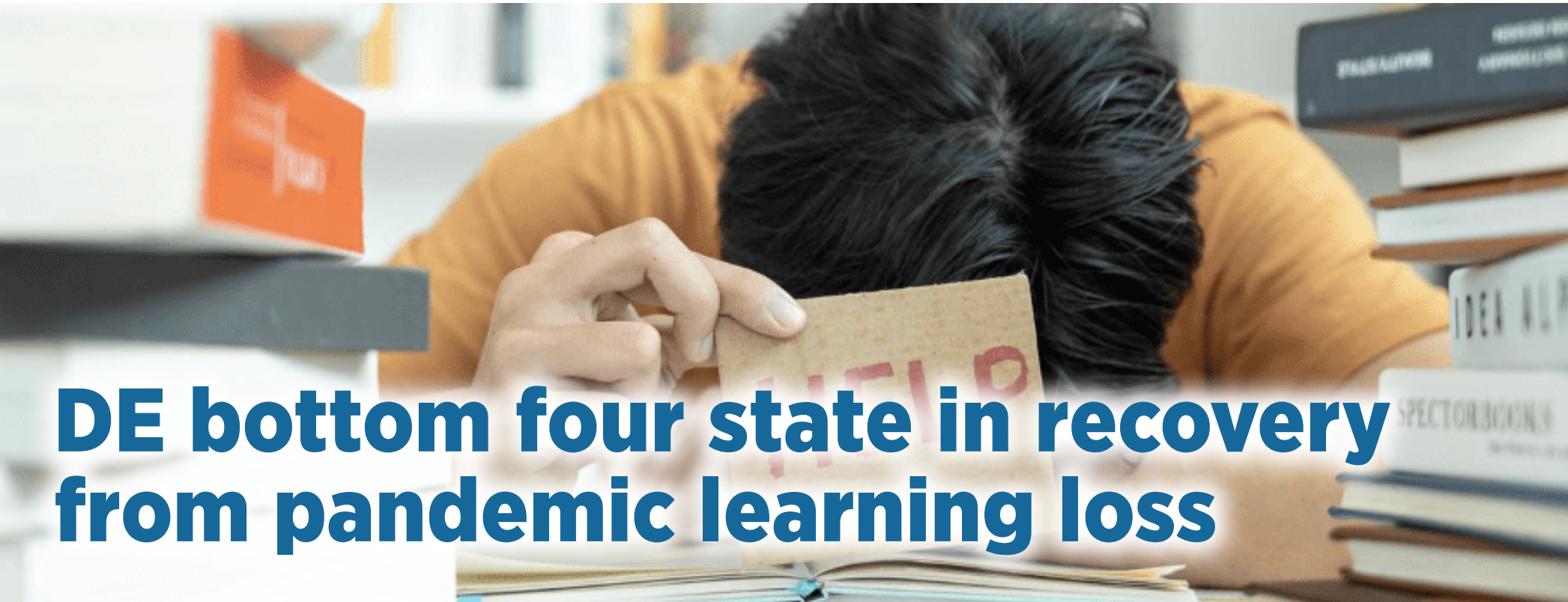
DELAWARE LIVE



Delaware LIVE is your source for news and information across all of Delaware.

The Delmar School District — find out more!





DE bottom four state in recovery from pandemic learning loss

BY JAREK RUTZ

Delaware recovered from learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic at one of the worst rates in the entire country. A new report from the [Education Recovery Scorecard](#), compiled by researchers from Harvard and Stanford universities, sheds light on how students in Delaware and across the nation are faring in their recovery from the learning disruptions caused by the pandemic.

While some districts have made progress, many continue to face significant hurdles, including chronic absenteeism and other challenges that hinder recovery efforts. The scorecard provides detailed, interactive data on both state and national recovery efforts, along with specific findings for each state, including Delaware. For the First State, the results are concerning, experts say.

“The latest Education Recovery Scorecard confirms

what we’ve been warning for years—Delaware’s students are still struggling to recover, and our current education system is failing to meet the challenge,” said Britney Mumford, executive director of [DelawareKids Can](#).

RECOVERY BY THE NUMBERS

The state ranks near the bottom of the nation in terms of recovery from pandemic-era learning losses, placing 49th in math recovery and 47th in reading recovery between 2019 and 2024. Not a single district has returned to 2019 achievement levels in math or reading.

“Despite receiving \$637 million in federal relief, students remain more than four-fifths of a grade level behind, and chronic absenteeism has surged, making recovery even harder,” Mumford said. “Yet, our legislature continues to make excuses and ignore the urgency of this crisis. The time for delays is over.”

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Schoolboard

March 7: Deadline to file to run in school board elections

BY JAREK RUTZ

First Staters hoping to get involved and make an impact in their community schools have until 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 7, to file candidacy in the May 13 school board elections. Criteria for running for a school board seat includes:

- Be a U.S. citizen and a resident of Delaware and the school district they seek to represent.
- Be at least 18 years old at the time of the election.
- Reside in the nominating district if applicable.
- Not be a paid employee of the school district, as per board regulations.
- Have no prior conviction for embezzlements.

“As a local control state, school boards play a critical role overseeing operations in their districts,” said Alison May, public information officer at the [Delaware Department of Education](#). “They hire and supervise the superintendent, who leads the educators and staff of the district. As residents of their districts’ communities,

school board members provide important direction to their district administrative teams and help their districts remain responsive to the needs of the families they serve.

Candidates must also complete a fingerprinted Delaware and national criminal background check and a Child Protection Registry check.

“Sadly, many of Delaware’s school boards place little focus on academics,” said Tanya Hettler, director of the Center for Education Policy at the [Caesar Rodney Institute](#). “This is likely because the schools and districts perform so poorly on the state and national assessments. This has to change. The most important aspect of our schools, academics, is being ignored.”

Instead of focusing primarily on sports, extracurricular activities, referendums, ideologies, and even personal arguments, boards need to insist that schools return to the basics, Hettler said.

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Bayhealth launches food drive to combat food insecurity

BY JAREK RUTZ

In an effort to tackle the growing issue of food insecurity in Delaware, **Bayhealth** has announced the launch of a month-long Food Drive in partnership with the **Food Bank of Delaware**.

The drive will begin on February 14 and run through March 14, with the goal of collecting essential non-perishable food items to support those in need across the state.

“Bayhealth has been a long-time partner in our fight against hunger in Delaware,” said Food Bank of Delaware President and CEO Cathy Kanefsky. “Last year they collected 1,300 pounds, and the food was delivered at a time when donations are traditionally down. The high cost of living has impacted so many in our community, so we are grateful for Bayhealth’s commitment to our mission. In addition to hosting food drives, they also have a regular presence in our volunteer room in Milford.”

Food insecurity affects one in eight Delawareans, and the healthcare group is calling on community members, local businesses, and organizations to join in by donating much-needed food at various locations throughout the state.

BAYHEALTH’S DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

The drop-off sites include Bayhealth’s **Kent** (Dover) and **Sussex** (Milford) campus hospitals, **Blue Hen Walk-in Medical Care** (Dover), **Smyrna Outpatient Center**, and **Total Care** (Milton).

“We are committed to supporting our community beyond the walls of our hospitals,” said Carrie Hart, Bayhealth’s community relations partnership manager. “This food drive is a great opportunity for everyone to come together and make a tangible impact on those facing hunger.”

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campaign #DoMore24DE!

March 6-7
6pm-6pm

DoMore24DE.org



Lawsuit filed against DE says state targets pro-life pregnancy centers

BY JAREK RUTZ

A federal lawsuit against the state of Delaware was filed Wednesday by attorneys representing a nonprofit pregnancy center and a network of affiliated centers.

The lawsuit challenges Delaware’s **Senate Bill 300**, which they argue unconstitutionally restricts free speech and forces the centers to convey messages against their core mission.

The lawsuit, filed by Simms Showers and **Alliance Defending Freedom** (ADF), targets the state’s law that, according to the plaintiffs, forces pro-life pregnancy centers to display misleading disclaimers regarding their services.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of the **National Institute of Family and Life Advocates** (NIFLA), a nonprofit religious network of pregnancy care centers, including A Door of Hope, a Wilmington-based center.

The plaintiffs claim the law infringes on their constitutional rights by compelling them to post disclaimers in their facilities and advertising, stating that they do not have a licensed medical provider directly overseeing their services.

“This law is unconstitutional, plain and simple,” said William R. Thetford, senior associate at Simms Showers and lead counsel in the case. “The pro-life pregnancy centers we represent offer families life-affirming care and resources during difficult times. We are asking the court to uphold their fundamental right to continue their mission without the threat of government punishment.”

Delaware’s Senate Bill 300, set to take effect in March, requires the pregnancy centers to disclose that they do not employ a licensed medical professional to oversee their services, ...

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The Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition’s Lights of Life Presents

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A night of living and giving. oh la la!



With V-Day Friday, report finds Delaware 21st luckiest state for love

BY JAREK RUTZ

As Valentine’s Day approaches, a new study reveals Delawareans are more likely to find love than other states. The study, conducted by [Legal US Poker Sites](#), ranks Delaware as 21st in the nation for “luckiest states for love,” with an index score of 38.56 out of 100.

LOVE ANALYTICS

The report analyzed a variety of factors to determine which states are most fortunate when it comes to finding love, with Delaware’s stats in parentheses:

- Amount spent on dating apps (38 cents).
- Marriage and divorce rate (5.1 per 1,000, 2.6%).
- Online searches for valentines day gifts (2,260).
- The % of people that have never been married in that state (65.88%).

- The average length of a marriage in that state (21.3 years).
- The average % of single households (23.05%).
- The % of single people in the state (50.8%).

Delaware’s ranking places it in the top half of states, signifying a relatively favorable environment for love compared to the rest of the country.

While the First State may not be first place, it still stands as one of the better states for romance according to these metrics.

With Valentine’s Day just around the corner, these rankings may provide a fun and interesting look at how different states measure up in their search for a partner.

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Friday March 14, 2025
 10 am to 2 pm
Big Oyster Brewery Milford
 6152 S Rehoboth Blvd, Milford

Tickets are \$50 each
Includes: Lunch, Swag bag, Champagne toast

Keynote Speaker
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President of Elgin, TX, Chamber Of Commerce & founder of SHE: Savvy, Healthy, Empowered!

Guest Speaker
Ashley Adams - Owner of DelMarVa Acupuncture and Wellness Center

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Six trains ran from Wilmington to Philly for Eagles parade Friday

BY JAREK RUTZ

First Staters hoping to head up to the City of Brotherly Love to celebrate the Eagles Super Bowl LIX victory had plenty of options Friday.

The **Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority** (SEPTA) geared up for the influx of up to 1 million fans heading into Philadelphia, and to accommodate the large crowd, SEPTA ran six special trains from the Wilmington Train Station, with departures starting at 5:30 a.m.

SEPTA DEPARTURE TIMES FOR EAGLES PARADE

Trains departed Wilmington at 5:30, 6:30, 7:34, 8:10, 8:29, and 9:29 a.m., heading directly to 30th Street Station in Philadelphia.

The service did not make stops in Delaware, but did in Marcus Hook and Norwood, PA, before arriving at the station, which is about a seven-block walk from the **Philadelphia Art Museum** and the main parade route at Broad and Pattison streets.

The Eagles parade kicked off at 11 a.m., with speeches scheduled at the Philadelphia Museum of Art starting at 2 p.m. overlooking the iconic Rocky Steps.

SEPTA's special service was designed to handle the high volume of parade-goers, but regular commuters who typically use regional rail from Delaware were made aware that the special trains replaced normal morning service. Passengers who planned to travel into the city not attending the parade needed to use the designated Eagles parade trains.

For those attending, SEPTA offered a one-day pass for \$10. The pass provided 10 rides across all forms of SEPTA transportation on parade day. Unused passes are valid for future use.

Additionally, SEPTA warned that regional rail fares were not available for purchase on the day of the parade, so those using the service should plan ahead.

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Bobcat Hall of Fame





Brandywine, educators strike deal after teachers hit picket lines

BY JAREK RUTZ

Brandywine School District and its educators struck a deal Monday night after a nearly year-long contract impasse. The district, which is the fifth largest in the state, agreed to raise the pay and protect the working conditions of more than a thousand public school teachers and specialists.

“This is a huge win for teachers and specialists here in the Brandywine School District and everyone in Delaware who supports public education and union labor,” said **Brandywine Education Association** President Steve Rulon, a chemistry teacher in the district for more than 20 years.

BRANDYWINE SCHOOL BOARD VOTES

The Brandywine School Board’s vote to approve a new 3-year contract with BEA on Monday came just hours after union members voted to ratify a tentative deal that

was reached during negotiations mediated by the Delaware Public Employment Relations Board.

Teachers and specialists in the Brandywine School District had been working under an expired contract since June 2024—an extension of their last three-year contract which had expired in 2023.

The two sides had not reached a deal despite a very successful referendum in 2024 that was supposed to help the district recruit and retain educators.

Brandywine’s educators started picketing outside of school hours in early December.

“Public educators in Delaware proved once again that we are willing to stand up and fight to deliver the best possible education for our students,” said Stephanie Ingram, president of the **Delaware State Education Association**.

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Council meeting recap: Black History month, community honors, and more

BY CLAUDIA ESTRADA

WILMINGTON — The Wilmington City Council convened on February 6, 2025.

Ordinance No. 25-002: Agreement for on-site engineering services at WITN-TV

On February 3, 2025, the Finance and Economic Development Committee met in person and via remote participation to review Ordinance No. 25-002. This ordinance authorizes and approves an agreement between the City of Wilmington and the Lerro Corporation for on-site engineering services at the WITN-TV station.

After careful consideration, the committee recommends that the City Council proceed with a vote on this ordinance.

Honoring Flowers by Yukie

Council Member James Spadola presented a resolution honoring Yukie Yamamoto for over 40 years of service at her flower shop, [Flowers by Yukie](#).

The Council recognized Yukie Yamamoto for over 40 years of dedicated service and congratulated her on her retirement.

“I’m privileged to present this resolution on behalf of all the members of council,” Spadola said. “It is a sense of city council to honor individuals and organizations who have demonstrated outstanding achievement and deserving of recognition and acknowledgment.”

Born in Japan, Yukie at the age of seven, started studying Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement. At the age of 21, she married and emigrated to Delaware. In 1983 she opened her first store at the Galleria Shops on Pennsylvania Avenue. In 1988 she moved to her current location, at 916 North Union Street.

Council members expressed their deep gratitude and appreciation for her lasting contributions to the community.

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Veteran Colin Howard wins big with Help on the Homefront campaign

BY JAREK RUTZ

Wilmington resident and veteran Colin Howard has pocketed \$5,000 through a program aimed at helping military families. Howard won the money through the [Help on the Homefront](#) campaign, an effort aimed at providing support and assistance to military families facing challenges. It focuses on addressing needs like housing, finances, childcare, and overall well-being on the “homefront.”

Presented by [InHouse](#), a quality cannabis brand distributed throughout the state, veterans in Delaware had the opportunity to share the story of their service in hopes of being selected as a winner to receive financial assistance to help offset costs of housing challenges or vital home improvements.

“I’m truly honored to receive this generous \$5,000 prize from Help on the Homefront,” Howard told Delaware LIVE News. “As a veteran, keeping my home safe and secure is a top priority, and this funding will go

directly toward roof repairs. I can’t thank Help on the Homefront, and everyone involved enough for their incredible support. Their dedication to veterans like me makes a real difference in our lives.”

During the month-long campaign, veterans were invited to submit their story and how they would use the winning funds if they were selected as the winner, and Howard was selected as the winner for the Delaware market. He was presented with his winner check outside of his home Monday.

“Help on the Homefront was created to recognize the many sacrifices that veterans have made on behalf of our country and offer meaningful financial relief to those facing housing-related difficulties,” said Olya Key, Brand Director for InHouse. “We hope this program can provide some support to veterans in our communities as a small way of giving back.” **DL+**

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HAGLEY MUSEUM



Saint Mark's to send duo to acclaimed American democracy conference

BY JAREK RUTZ

Saint Mark's High School in Wilmington is sending a teacher-student duo to the esteemed Young People's Continental Congress (YPCC) in the City of Brotherly Love this summer.

Barb Stefani, an educator at Saint Mark's, and Zhara Waters, a standout junior, have been selected to participate in the program, which gathers exceptional students and educators from across the nation, offers participants the opportunity to deepen their understanding of American democracy and its founding principles.

REACTION FROM SAINT MARK'S DUO

"I am thrilled to participate in the 2025 Young People's Continental Congress in Philadelphia," Stefani said. "This experience will deepen my understanding of constitutional principles and legislative processes, allowing me to bring richer discussions into my classroom. By

connecting history to current events, I hope to empower my students to think critically and engage as active citizens in our democracy."

Stefani, who teaches Economics, Government & Law, and Entrepreneurism at Saint Mark's, will join Waters this July for an immersive experience at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia.

This historic site, known as the birthplace of Pennsylvania and a crucial location in early U.S. history, will serve as the backdrop for their participation in the YPCC.

The program explores the relevance of America's founding principles through interactive discussions and engagement with historical landmarks, offering a unique opportunity for learning both inside and outside the classroom.

As part of their preparation, Stefani and Waters have



been engaging in online YPCC courses, studying topics such as the Continental Congress, law, and economic liberty. Their participation reflects their shared commitment to understanding civic responsibility and historical exploration.

For Waters, a passionate history and civics student, the experience will be particularly meaningful.

With aspirations to pursue a law degree and become an attorney after her time at Saint Mark's, Waters expressed her excitement about being chosen for the prestigious program.

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BY CLAUDIA ESTRADA

WILMINGTON — Delaware state auditor and overseer of the [Port of Wilmington](#), [Lydia York](#) announced that her office would open an investigation into the [Diamond State Port Corporation](#) (DSPC)—the state-owned entity that oversees the port facility and directs \$635 million in expansion plans.

The audit, called a performance audit, will scrutinize Port Corporation operations more thoroughly than the auditor's standard financial audit.

“The performance audit is going to look at more of their processes, and how they receive funds, have to spend funds, and how they regulate themselves,” said Lydia York.

In 1995, the state of Delaware purchased the port from the city of Wilmington and created Diamond State Port Corporation to operate the facility. The Port of Wilmington is located at the confluence of the Delaware and Christina Rivers, and is the busiest terminal on the Delaware River.

The Port of Wilmington will undergo audit by Delaware State Auditor

The port generates millions of dollars in revenue for the state each year. The port is a key economic driver for Delaware and is expected to become even more important with the construction of a [new terminal](#).

“This is a significant industrial development- adjacent to or inside the city of Wilmington.”

The audit will result in a report that contains the auditor's opinion and the assurance that the port is operating efficiently, looking into how the Port Corporation has handled hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer funds, interviews with current and former board members, and examination of the Port Corporation's stewardship of funds for the Fiscal Year 2025.

“There may be interviews, there may be inquiries,” York said. “We're just going to ask questions, and seek documentation for the reason for and the answers that began.”

The audit will examine how the Port Corporation has spent money on the Edgemoor expansion project. The Edgemoor project is a planned expansion of the Port of Wilmington to build a new port terminal at a site in Edgemoor, Delaware. The Edgemoor industrial site was purchased by the DSPC in 2017.

The project has been delayed due to financial issues, opposition from neighbors, and conflicts with permits.

“Construction is paused because they don't have the permits,” said York.

Asked if the plans were on pause for now, York said “just because you're not digging doesn't mean you're not planning, and I would expect that's what's going on now.”

According to the [Auditor of Accounts](#) office, state funds totaling nearly \$200 million were recently transferred from the Extraordinary Escheat Claims fund into the Diamond State Port Corporation for the Edgemoor expansion project.

The funds were earmarked by the former Secretary of Finance, former Director of the Office of Management Budget, and chairs of the Joint Capital Improvement Committee. The process is detailed in epilogue language of the [Bond Bills](#) of Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2024. The money was being held in an interest-bearing state special fund since June 2024.

The transfer followed the signing of a joint development agreement between the Diamond State Port Corporation and Enstructure in December.

“I think that with any large project, especially one that's funded this capacity of dollars, (the Wilmington community) is going to want to be protected and that the benefit will come to the city of Wilmington,” she said.

As far as how long the audit will take, York explained they are still in the very early stages. Now focusing on ensuring all necessary internal resources are available when the work needs to be done.

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Fire on SEPTA train sparks federal investigation

BY CLAUDIA ESTRADA

WILMINGTON — A SEPTA train headed to Wilmington from Philadelphia caught fire on Thursday, February 6, leading federal authorities to investigate what caused the fire.

No serious injuries were reported after the SEPTA car was fully engulfed in flames shortly after leaving the Crum Lynne Station.

The train, transporting around 350 people, was halted around 6 p.m., and evacuation of its six cars began.

Once passengers were safely moved to a secure area, it became evident that the lead car was on fire. About an hour after the fire, SEPTA provided shuttle buses to transport passengers to their destinations.

Federal authorities and the **National Transportation and Safety Board** (NTSB) are leading an investigation to determine the cause of the train fire. The cause of the fire is not considered to be suspicious.

Public Affairs Officer of the NTSB Keith Holloway says that the investigation into the fire is ongoing and in the early stages of an investigation.

“NTSB investigators are continuing their work examining and documenting the scene. I suspect they may be there for another few days,” Holloway said. “There is no set timeframe for on scene work.”

The investigations involve three primary areas, “the human, machine and the operating environment.”

As part of this process, investigators will gather the following information and records:

- Image recorders/event recorders (if available) from the train
- Track maintenance/inspection records
- Signal data
- Train car maintenance and inspection records
- Braking system inspection and maintenance records
- Review dispatch procedures
- 72-hour background of the crew to determine if there were any issues that could have affected the operator/engineer’s ability to safely operate the train
- Witness statements
- Electronic devices that could contain information relevant to the investigation

The NTSB does ask that witnesses to the accident or those who have surveillance video or other information that could be relevant to the investigation, contact them at witness@ntsb.gov.

“During the on-scene phase of the investigative process, the NTSB does not determine or speculate about the cause of the accident.”

A preliminary report will be available within 30 days; it can be accessed by searching the railroad investigations [pages](#).

The preliminary report will contain factual information gathered during the initial phase of the investigation. A probable cause of the crash along with any contributing factors will be detailed in the final report, which is expected in 12-24 months. **DL+**



Wilmington housing crisis: experts convene for private discussion

BY CLAUDIA ESTRADA

WILMINGTON — [Senator Elizabeth Lockman](#) organized a meeting on Monday to address Wilmington’s housing crisis, involving elected officials from various levels of government,

Senator Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman who represents the Third Senate District, held the meeting which focused on housing issues in Wilmington.

The meeting was an idea Senator Lockman had for some time.

“It really was about bidding elected officials who serve the city of Wilmington, at all the levels, city, county,

state, to come together and make sure that we have a solid sense of the scope of the issues that we’re facing,” Lockman said. The panel included:

- Matthew Heckles: Director of the Delaware State Housing Authority and former regional administrator for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- Morgan B Cephas: Pennsylvania state representative;
- Alex Horowitz: Housing policy researcher at Pew Charitable Trusts;

- Sean O’Neal: Urban planning specialist at Mead and Hunt.

“Bringing together elected officials who serve Wilmington and getting us all on the same page about what’s going on and what our options are,” she said.

The meeting aimed to unify understanding of the housing issues, including homelessness, tenant-landlord relations, and affordable housing, and to define roles and responsibilities to effectively resolve these issues.

“All of those basic elements of what it means to have a healthy housing landscape for our constituents,” she said.

Lockman expressed the need to have a strong sense of what everyone’s role and responsibilities should be.

“We’re all representing Wilmington together,” she said. “We can figure out the best ways to work together to resolve some of those issues, hopefully all of them.”

A second public event is planned to share findings and discuss opportunities and will be announced in the near future.

A HOUSING CRISIS ACROSS DELAWARE

According to the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#) (NLICH) Delaware faces a shortage of affordable rental homes for extremely low-income (ELI) households, earning 30% or less of the area median income. Many are severely cost-burdened, spending over half their income on housing, forcing them to cut back on essentials like food and healthcare and increasing their risk of eviction. **DL+**



Valentine's weekend: Craft a unique gift at Cup & Quill

BY CLAUDIA ESTRADA

NEW CASTLE — Valentine's Day is here! **The Window on Delaware Street**, a local gallery and shop, will host a special **Valentine's workshop** all weekend.

At this workshop, you can design and create a heart-felt, one-of-a-kind gift for someone special. Whether it's for a partner, friend, or family member, Cup & Quill allows you to craft something meaningful this V-day.

What you can make:

- A decorated box filled with Valentine's cookies or candies
- A candle or teacup or a selection of thoughtfully chosen tea bags
- A personalized Valentine's card or gift box with Valentine's candies

This is a rolling workshop running from 1 to 5 p.m., February 14-16. Drop in at any time, sit down, and create something special.

"We're declaring it Valentine's weekend," said founder and director John Reaves. "There's somebody special that deserves something."

This Valentine's Weekend Workshop marks the soft opening under the Cup & Quill brand, which has evolved within the past year.

Reaves expressed his want to provide a welcoming space for creativity and relaxation, combining journaling and tea into a unique experience.

Materials for crafting personalized Valentine's gifts, including tea cups, teaspoons, and tea-related items that you can customize with Valentine's Day decorations will be provided.

"There'll be materials for you to make your own personalized Valentine's card, or your own little one-of-a-kind gift, or a gift box with Valentine's candies," Reaves said.

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Limited free spays/neuters available throughout February

BY JAREK RUTZ

Some Delawareans will be able to save money and give their furry friends a snip-snip this month.

In honor of Spay and Neuter Awareness Month this February, the Delaware Division of Public Health's **Office of Animal Welfare** (OAW) is offering a special opportunity for income-eligible Delaware residents to have their pets spayed or neutered at no cost.

The initiative, known as Spay Days, also covers important vaccinations, including rabies and distemper, as well as microchipping, all aimed at ensuring pets lead healthier and safer lives.

"Spay/neuter services are essential for improving the well-being of pets and preventing unwanted litters," said Joanna Miller, deputy director of OAW. "We en-

courage eligible pet owners to take advantage of this program and show their pets some extra love this month."

The program allows qualifying pet owners to schedule appointments at participating veterinary clinics, including Humane Animal Partners, Faithful Friends Animal Society, Forgotten Cats, and Brandywine Valley SPCA.

The initiative is part of the Spay & Neuter Program, which was established by the Delaware General Assembly in 2006.

This program aims to address the issue of stray and unwanted animals by offering funding to sterilize pets in the following categories:

see page 21

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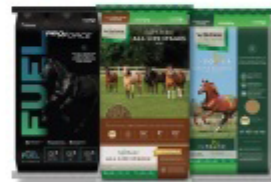
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from page 20

- Low-income Delaware pet owners
- Homeless animals taken in by shelters and rescues
- Community cats through Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return programs

MORE ON SPAY/NEUTER INITIATIVE

Through this initiative, nonprofit animal welfare organizations can also apply for grants to sterilize homeless animals, with a special emphasis on community cats.

Spaying and neutering are widely recognized as the most effective and humane methods for controlling the population of unwanted pets. The operation typically costs a few hundred dollars but can be more than a \$1,000.

Since the OAW was created in 2013, it has overseen the Spay & Neuter Program, which has made significant progress in reducing pet overpopulation.

From 2014 to June 2024, the program facilitated the sterilization of more than 40,000 animals and the vaccination of over 31,000 animals against rabies.

With appointments available on a first-come, first-served basis, pet owners are urged to act quickly to secure a spot.

For more information, including eligibility requirements and how to schedule an appointment, click

[HERE](#). **DL+**



Kent/Sussex trout season kicks off with youth-only day March 1

BY JAREK RUTZ

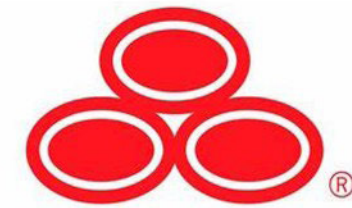
Delaware's youngest fishermen have just a couple weeks left until trout season kicks off.

The season will officially open for youth anglers under the age of 16 at 7 a.m. on Saturday, March 1, and will be followed by the regular trout season for all anglers starting a half-hour before sunrise on Sunday, March 2.

On youth opening day, fishing will be allowed from 7 a.m. to half an hour after sunset, while on subsequent days, fishing will be permitted from a half-hour before sunrise to a half-hour after sunset, unless otherwise restricted.

“The DNREC Fisheries Section saw a big increase in family fishing during the pandemic—kids who had never fished before found out they loved becoming an angler,” said John Clark, DNREC Fisheries Section administrator in the Division of Fish and Wildlife. “This year marks the third trout season youth day on ponds and streams since the state’s fishing regulations were changed – the first two youth days in 2021 and 2022 were covered under the Governor’s Emergency Declaration.”

see page 23



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Opp Volunteer and PT-Paid opportunities to serve with the Community English as a Second Language (ESL) Program are available immediately. Classes in Rehoboth, Lewes, Milford, Seaford

If interested, please send your resume or letter of interest to esl@lcosrehoboth.org

from page 22

Both Tidbury and Newton Ponds will be stocked with more than 300 pounds of 12- to 13-inch rainbow trout, with a second stocking planned for mid-March.

Trophy-sized fish weighing two pounds or more will be included in the stocking, adding an exciting attraction for anglers.

Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) announced that Tidbury Pond near Dover and Newton Pond near Greenwood will be closed to all fishing from Saturday, Feb. 15, through Friday, Feb. 28.

CLOSURES FOR TROUT STOCKING

This temporary closure will allow for stocking of the fish, prevent the accidental hooking of stocked fish, and provide time for them to adjust to their new environment ahead of the upcoming 2025 downstate trout season.

Fishermen planning to fish at either pond are reminded to comply with state regulations.

A Delaware fishing license and trout stamp are required for anglers over the age of 16, and the daily possession limit for the fish is six.

Proceeds from the sale of stamps are used to fund future stocking efforts, with additional support from the federal Sport Fish Restoration program, which is funded by anglers purchasing fishing equipment.

For more information, including how to purchase licenses and trout stamps online, click [HERE](#).

The 2025 Delaware Fishing Guide, which includes detailed regulations and requirements, is available both online and in printed form through license agents across the state.

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Photo of the Week — find out more!





New photo exhibit at Brandywine

BY RICH SCHWARTZMAN

Those who love black and white photography can get an eye-full at the Brandywine Museum of Art through May 4. The message of the exhibit may give some people pause, however. “Robert Frank & Todd Webb: Across America, 1955” has an eye on “America as Myth,” as one panel in the third-floor gallery says.

“In 1955, each from their own perspective, they started to question the mythology of American life,” said Brandywine Museum of Art Curator Amanda Burdan. “I think of this as the ‘Happy Days’ version of the United States,” she said referencing the television show of the 1970s and ‘80s that was set in the 1950s.

Webb had been a Wall Street stockbroker who lost everything when the stock market crashed in 1929 and wound up working many different jobs, she said, many of them manual labor in the wake of the crash. He eventually took up photography.

Frank and Webb knew each other, but neither knew at the time that they were both embarking on the same journey, touring the country to photograph Americana inde-



pendently of one another in 1955. Both received Guggenheim Fellowships for the project.

According to the panel, Frank, who came to the United States from Switzerland in 1947, said “America is an interesting country, but there is a lot here that I do not like and that I would never accept. I am also trying to show this in my photos.”

Webb, too, expressed disappointment “in the material prosperity and spiritual poverty” he found during his travels.

But also, as the panel says, “The truth they encountered was irreconcilable with the idealized American image from popular media. Yet, in the distance between the myth and reality, both men found fertile ground for their art.”

While Frank’s photographs were included in his book “The Americans,” Webb’s images were never seen, not even printed until recently, according to Burdan. This is the first exhibit where Webb’s images are made available for public viewing.

Burdan said the project for both was simple, travel the country and take photos of American life. The two men traveled differently. Frank drove, while Webb walked and rode bicycles across the country.

One interesting aspect of Webb’s work is that even though his photos weren’t printed until recently, he had made a deal with Life Magazine, Burdan said. He would send his film canisters to the magazine which would then make contact prints for him. A contact print is an image from multiple negatives printed on a sheet of photo paper used for analyzing and choosing negatives to be printed individually later.

The men also had different styles or approaches to the work.

“One [Webb] is more calculated, and framed and precise and intentional, while the other [Frank] is more shoot from the hip,” Burdan said.

[READ MORE](#)



Harsh words for school board

BY CHADDS FORD LIVE

Unionville-Chadds Ford School Board directors and superintendent got another earful from angry residents Monday night. A lawsuit was threatened, and the words “incompetent” and “reprehensible” were used to characterize the board’s approach to the proposed new middle school.

One resident called the board “incompetent” and another said he might file a lawsuit against the district. One person did speak out in favor of replacing the school.

The Feb. 10 work session was the last meeting before the board votes on Superintendent John Sanville’s recommendation that the district spend an estimated \$120 million to build a new middle school to replace C.F. Patton Middle School. That vote is scheduled for Feb. 18.

That vote, according to a presentation on Monday, is to determine whether or not to is a Request for Proposal for design services to replace Patton.

The focus of Sanville’s remarks was on the proposal to replace Patton. He rehashed much of the reasoning that led him to recommend a new school building, rather than renovating or simply maintaining the current building.

He said there were 14 concerns—“chronic concerns”—as he called them, that arose from a feasibility study that was conducted to determine which way to go. As he had

said before, 76.5 percent of Patton is original. Plumbing, HVAC, and electrical systems have never been upgraded since the school was built in 1972. Several renovations of the school were made around the original structure leaving 70 percent of the classrooms with no windows, which results in a lack of natural light. The school is also not ADA-compliant.

“When this school was built in 1972,” he said. “It was something the community was proud of...I had many windows.” But he added, “It was something that was almost immediately too small. It was never properly right-sized.”

While the replace option, as opposed to renovate or maintain, is the costliest, Sanville said it has a better return on investment compared to the other options. It also addresses all of the “chronic concerns.”

“The maintain option, which is the least expensive of the three, that’s still \$70 million.”

Even with the tax increase deemed necessary to replace Patton, Sanville said any tax increase would remain within the Act 1 Index, which he said is “the cost of inflation, the rate of inflation,” and that the board is already committed to keeping tax increases within the Act I limits.

“That is a promise and a commitment to the community that we are going to live within our means,” said Sanville who is retiring at the end of July. He added that the vote on Feb. 18 “has no financial or tax implication. None, none, none. That’s important for the community to know.”

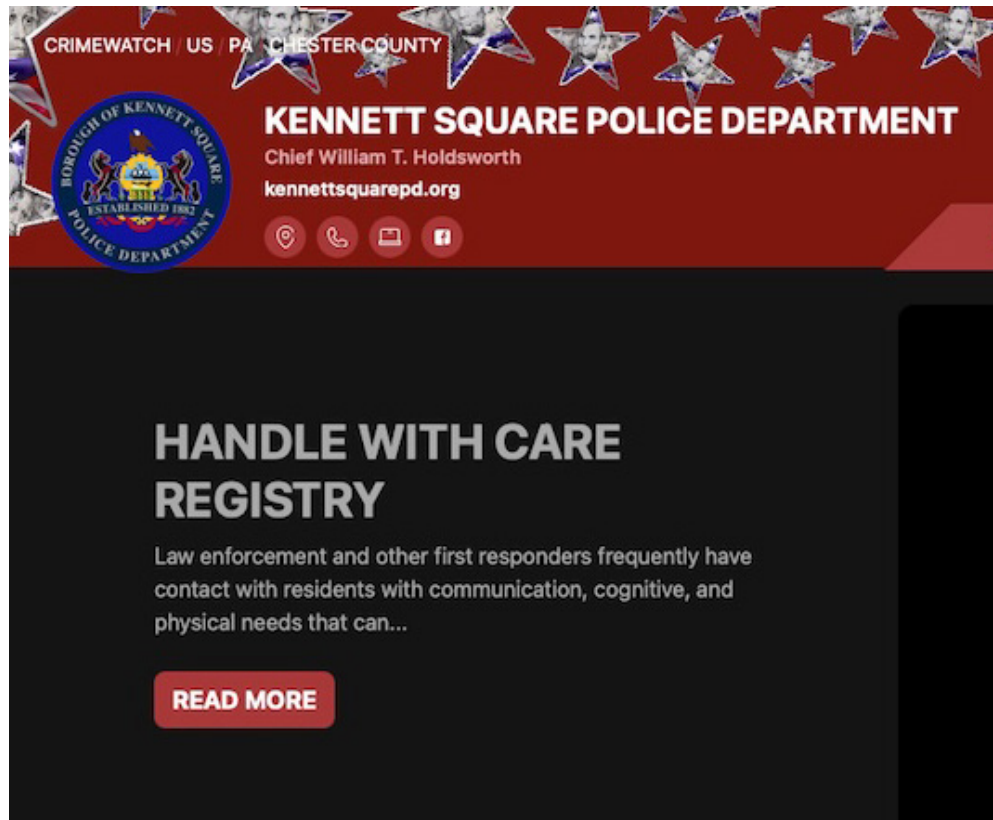
Comparing the options, Sanville said, the maintain option would cost \$67.3 million at present but would wind up \$89.1 million over 20 years. Tax increases for that would be \$19 per year for the average home. Renovation would cost \$113.1 million with a tax increase of \$40 per year and take seven years to complete the renovation. The replace option, at \$120 million, would take five years to complete and the tax increase would be \$42 per year.

And it’s that \$42 figure that has some people concerned.

Director Brian Schartz, who represents Region C which includes Chadds Ford and Pennsbury Townships, asked a basic question: “What is the real dollar cost to our community for approving this plan?”

Sanville’s response was that “it’s difficult to say,” but he repeated that there would be no tax increase beyond the Act 1 limit. He then brought Director of Finance Joe Deady into the conversation. **DL+**

[READ MORE](#)



BY RICH SCHWARTZMAN

Kennett Square Police Chief William Holdsworth thinks it's a great idea. He's talking about "Handle with Care," an initiative that arose through the Crimewatch website that the borough department embraced last fall.

The Handle with Care Registry is a way for residents to let police and other first responders be aware that a family member might need special assistance in case of emergency or some other contact with police.

"In my opinion, it's a great initiative," Holdsworth said in a recent interview. "It's a great way to bring information forward for direct knowledge of people that have some type of special need. It could be somebody that is immobile, is in a wheelchair. It could be somebody has a family member with autism."

He said some people need a different type of approach from police, a more careful approach than others, or even a swifter approach.

Borough cops handle with care

Holdsworth explained that once his department has the information, it's put into the records system and then automatically forwarded to the county so that should a call, such as a fire call, come in, police and fire responders will know in advance that there's someone who needs special assistance.

"[The Handle with Care Registry] will emphasize the importance of getting there, and finding out what's going on. Is it just a false alarm or is it truly a fire? If there's a fire, there's somebody there that needs to be evacuated."

He said the program should have a good impact on residents because there are more people than the department is aware of who have some type of special need.

In another example, he spoke of people with autism, and how each one of them is different, that there's no single approach because of the broad nature of the autism spectrum.

"So many different people have different needs when it comes to autism, depending on where on the spectrum they fall, how they respond to verbal communication, how they respond to flashing lights, how they respond to anything."

Holdsworth acknowledged that there have been incidents in other parts of the country in which an interaction between law enforcement and someone with an emotional or some other need falls apart and the person was injured or killed by a police officer simply because of the inability to understand what's going on.

"Things can deteriorate fast," he said, "and I know from real-world life experiences as a police officer how

quickly things can go wrong. So, the more that we have information-wise to base our responses on, the better we all are, the better we can serve our community," he said. "It helps us with situational awareness."

Borough officers go through various training programs on an annual basis, but they also go through some other specific training such as autism awareness.

"All the officers are trained on de-escalation tactics and techniques, but the more information they have available to them, the better they can use them."

Holdsworth said the important thing to know is that the program is there, and he wants people in the borough to sign up for it if they or a member of their household has special needs. Information is confidential, he added, but is kept within the emergency management system.

Borough residents can register for Handle with Care on the Kennett Police Department's website kennettsquarepd.org. Registering is voluntary. Currently, the program is only for municipalities that have their own police departments, Holdsworth added.

The Kennett Square Police Department also encourages residents to submit information to Smart911. Smart 911 is a free service that allows individuals and families to create a safety profile online, providing key information to Chester County's 9-1-1 Center. Safety profiles can be created at www.smart911.com.

Smart 911 is based on a person's phone number while Handle with Care is based on the person's address. **DL+**

CF board OKs stream project

BY RICH SCHWARTZMAN

Chads Ford Township supervisors Wednesday night voted to approve a stream restoration project, a traffic light study, and to guarantee a loan for the Sewer Authority.

The stream restoration project is for the Brinton Run Preserve off Oakland Road. NALT, the North American Land Trust, owns the 71-acre property but needed township approval because Chadd's Ford owns the easement.

NALT President Steven Carter said at the January workshop that the project has been on the books for about four years and involves drilling about eight borings to see how water flows in and through the soil as baseline data before the actual restoration.

Carter called into Wednesday's meeting—held via Zoom because of the weather—that NALT will be as transparent as possible throughout the process and that this is the right process to take.

Supervisors' Vice Chairman Kathleen Goodier called the project “pretty major,” adding “It seems to be a necessary one. They have a major problem with discharge on the property. They believe that with all their engineering and many studies that they've done, that it will improve the situation for them as well as for everyone downstream.”

Timotha Trigg, supervisors' chairman, referred to the project as being a “public service.”

“I think it's to all our benefit that this work gets underway, and it seems like it will be very helpful so far as stormwater maintenance,” she said.

Supervisors also approved Chadds Ford teaming with Concord Township in retaining the services of Rhythm Engineering of Kansas to study the traffic light timing along Routes 1 and 202.

Township engineer Mike Schneider said the timing and coordination of the adaptive system that determines the timing of the lights are dated and need to be adjusted.

Chadds Ford and Concord townships share four of those traffic signals. The costs involved are \$1,000 per light, and Chadds Ford will pay a total of \$4,000 for the work. Of that amount, Chadds Ford will pay \$1,000 each for the two lights for which it is responsible and split the cost for the four shared lights.

The Board of Supervisors also voted to guarantee a loan request of \$300,000 for the Sewer Authority. As reported last month, the loan would come from the Delaware Valley Regional Finance Authority to replace the Woodland Pump Station. DVREA requires the township's guarantee before lending money to a sewer authority.

Sewer Authority Chairman Mark Stookey said last month that the authority is financially stable and can pay back the 20-year note without difficulty because of the revenue it gets from tapping and user fees.



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Around Town Feb. 13

CHADDS FORD LIVE

- Returning for its 82nd year, the Brandywine Hills Point-to-Point Races will be held on Sunday, April 6, featuring pony rides, a parade of fox hounds, and steeplechase races. The event is at the Myrick Conservation Center at 1760 Unionville-Wawaset Road. Gates open at 11 and the races begin at noon.
- The Revolutionary Speaker Series by the Brandywine Battlefield Park returns with a Zoom session

- featuring Aaron McWilliams talking about Pennsylvania's Revolutionary War veterans. The session is Saturday, Feb. 22, from noon to 1 p.m. McWilliams will discuss "Finding Your Revolutionary Ancestor and Researching Pennsylvania's Revolutionary War Veterans." The cost is \$10. Get tickets [HERE](#).
- The Kennett Library is hosting a special pay-as-you-wish screening of the movie Cabrini on Sunday, Feb.

23 from 4-7 p.m. The film celebrates Frances Cabrini's legacy and her dedication to immigrant communities. After the movie, engage in a Q&A featuring a member of the cast, the producer, and local community voices. It's a chance to hear behind-the-scenes stories and explore how Frances Cabrini's work resonates with today's immigrant experiences. Go [HERE](#) to reserve your spot.

- Winterthur will open a new exhibit—Almost Unknown, The Afric-American Picture Gallery—on May 3. The exhibit is inspired by a 19th-century essay by William J. Wilson, a free Black journalist and educator, and will be on view starting May 3, 2025. Interpreted by curator and historian Jonathan Michael Square, the exhibition presents—for the first time—the gallery imagined by Wilson. Square has assembled drawings, paintings, sculptures, and objects from across the Winterthur collections to represent Wilson's gallery and Black life in the United States and across the Diaspora. The exhibition is on view from May 3 until Jan. 6, 2026.
- The Chester County History Center will present a virtual talk Early American Women in Science: Stories of Practice and Perseverance on Tuesday, March 4 from 7-8 p.m. The Zoom lecture presents case studies of women who practiced science in the early nineteenth century, including Lucy Way Sistare Say, the first woman elected to the Academy of Natural Sciences, and Almira Hart Lincoln Phelps, the author of numerous scientific textbooks on botany, chemistry, and natural philosophy (as well as one-time resident of West Chester), among others.

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