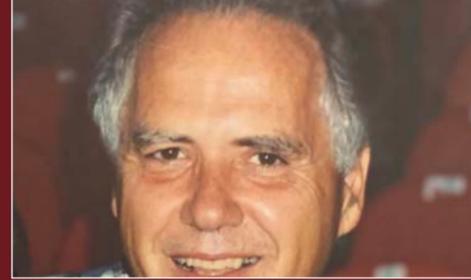


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**MARCH 1, 2022**  
**VOL. 12 · ISSUE 9**

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**PHOTO BY GERVASIO RUIZ JR.**

# HEADLINES



PHOTO BY MARCIA REED

## MASK MANDATE OPTION FOR MSD STUDENTS, STAFF

BY TERRY ROGERS

*\*UPDATE:* On Monday, Feb. 28, Gov. John Carney announced that mask mandates for schools could be lifted as of 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 1. Because Milford School District Board of Education voted to rescind the mask mandate “earlier than Mar. 31 should the governor make that determination,” Milford students are not required to wear masks effective Wednesday, March 2. Because this meeting was held prior to the governor’s decision, some of the quotes and statements may have different dates.

Effective Mar. 2\*, Milford School District students and staff will be allowed to choose whether or not they wear a mask in district buildings. After hearing overwhelming support from parents and educators to make mask-wearing an option, the board voted six to one to allow the change. This change was based on Gov. Carney’s recent change to COVID-19 protocols which allowed districts to choose whether or not mandatory masks would remain.

“On Feb. 7, the state of Delaware announced the universal indoor mask mandate would expire on Feb. 11,” Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent, said. “The state further announced that the extension of the school mask requirements until March 31 was provided to allow parents time to have their school age children vaccinated if they wish. We will need to make a district decision at the latest by March 21, which is the date of our next school board meeting. As the state will be looking to end the school mask mandate on March 31, I believe we need to strongly consider following the state’s lead, which we have followed throughout the pandemic as a district, in regard to mask wearing and provide choice for families, students and staff in regard to mask wearing in our schools beginning on April 1.”

In order to allow the public time to speak, the board agreed to postpone board discussion until after the public comment portion of the meeting. Jason Miller,

See MASK on page 4

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### MASK from page 3

president of the board, reminded speakers that they had only five minutes and that the board would be unable to respond to their comments. He also reminded everyone they were in a school building which meant masks were required. More than a dozen individuals spoke in favor of making masks optional.

“On Feb. 7, I was asked by the board president Miller to determine the MEA stance on imposing a local masking policy once the governor’s mandate expires on Mar. 31,” Kerri Stahl a teacher and president of the Milford Education Association, said. “Since we had not polled our members on this subject for quite some time, I immediately sent out a survey and on the survey was one simple question. Do you want MEA to advocate for a local masking mandate to be adopted by the MSD School Board? Within 24 hours, we received 254 responses, a higher percentage of responding members than we’ve ever had on any survey. While the results of this survey were clear, I would be remiss if I didn’t mention that there are valid concerns on both sides of the masking debate. With that being said, based on the results of our survey, the MEA union’s official stance is to ask the board to adopt a choice-based masking stance, allowing parents, students and staff to make their own decisions on whether to mask or not.”

Several parents spoke of their children’s severe anxiety and depression due to the mask mandate with one parent stating that her child was in therapy for suicide ideation.

“Personally, my daughter has experienced a multitude of negative side effects on the ongoing masks and it has

See MASK on page 5

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**MASK from page 4**

caused her severe anxiety, severe depression and exacerbated her claustrophobia,” Crystal Jackson said. “She has nightmares several nights a week where she wakes up hyperventilating and screaming that she’s choking on her mask or it is most mornings before school, she experiences panic attacks in which she begs me to not make her go to school. As a result of this she has to take several mental health days from school because I cannot bring myself to send her into school when she is in such a fragile state.”

Jackson continued that her daughter was in counseling, but that she had begun biting her nails, chewing on her hair and even cutting her hair in school. Because she was also required to wear her mask at dance, Jackson’s daughter decided she no longer wanted to be in ballet.

“My daughter has an IEP for speech, which she has had since she was three years old,” Jackson continued. “She is already self-conscious about not always being understood by her peers as to what she’s saying because of her speech impediment. And the mask muffling her voice is only making that much worse for her. My daughter received the facial covering exemption form by her doctor back in November because of her diagnosis of severe anxiety, claustrophobia and depression. The school created a 504 plan for her to accommodate her needs which includes plexiglass around her desk and the ability to sit at her desk maskless. However, any other time she is required to wear a mask and that goes against her doctor’s recommendation and she is still experiencing the negative side effects.”

**See MASK on page 6**



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## MASK from page 5

Katie Mumford pointed out that recent data showed that Delaware is among states with the lowest LSAT scores and that the CDC just announced they were changing developmental milestones for children based on social, emotional and cognitive milestones. She also pointed out that everyone had seen photos of school officials in large groups not wearing a mask.

“According to the Department of Health and Social Services, we have had two pediatric deaths since the beginning of COVID,” Jennifer Mosoti, said. “One age zero to four and one age five to 17. Not that their death can be discounted, but it shows that children are not at risk of dying. Out of 203,684 children currently residing in the state of Delaware equals a 0.00098% chance of dying from COVID. Also per the Department of Health and Social Services, 2,100 deaths out of 2,700 deaths reported were 65 Plus. I’m not discounting their deaths. It is very sad that people have lost their loved ones, but our children are not at risk. Allow the parents to decide what is best for their health, including whether or not to get the vaccine. In the last meeting, I think it was in early September, a mom mentioned that kids are not complaining about wearing a mask. Have you recently seen the YouTube video of the Nevada kids in a classroom when, over the intercom, where they were told no more masks and they were jumping for joy, yelling and screaming that they no longer had to wear this mask. It is time to adapt to the ever changing mutations COVID brings and make masks optional.”

Jamie Hill, who is also a kindergarten teacher in Milford, pointed out that early childhood education is

crucial in helping children develop cultural language and social skills, including the ability to detect emotion in the faces of others. She explained that masks create a visual barrier for those who rely on nonverbal skills such as lips, tongue placement and the way teeth are placed when speaking. Hill stated she had tried clear masks, but they did not work.

“So tonight, I’m speaking up for the child that has a speech delay that makes it impossible for teachers to understand them and gets frustrated when asked to repeat themselves several times still not to be understood,” Hill said. “For the child that requires a visual cue from their teachers and his or her mouth for making the correct letter sounds. For the child that wears glasses and has difficulty seeing because the mask constantly fogs them up or because their glasses constantly fall down. For the child that is so distracted by the mask that it makes it almost impossible to focus. For the child that has experienced trauma and is going to require intense teaching of how to properly handle anger and emotions. That child needs to see friendly faces to build positive relationships with teachers and peers. For the child that goes home to screen time and minimal conversation and only receives positive conversation with teachers and other school personnel. For the child who was trying to learn the English language for the first time without seeing the mouth of their teacher. Just for the record. I have at least one of each of those children in my classroom this year. And finally, I’m speaking up for the teacher that has felt defeated these last two years having to teach in ways that goes against

See MASK on page 7



Milford School District  
Morris Early Childhood Center  
Kindergarten Registration Information

2022-2023 School Year

March 10 (Thursday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
March 14 (Monday)	8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
March 29 (Tuesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
April 6 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
April 12 (Tuesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
May 4 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
May 19 (Thursday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
June 1 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
June 7 (Tuesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Important notes:

- Please call 422-1650 to schedule a date and time
  - Please indicate if you will need an interpreter
- Child must be 5 years old by August 31, 2022 to begin kindergarten
- You must bring your child for screening on your scheduled date and time to assist

Documents required for registration include:

- State Issued Birth Certificate (with raised seal)
- Proof of Residency (utility bill, lease agreement, mortgage papers) within the Milford School District
- Guardianship/custody information if applicable
- Immunization (shot) record
- Physical Exam
- Tuberculosis Risk Assessment or PPD results
- Lead test result

\*Please note: Any family who is interested in being considered for the 2022-2023 Spanish Immersion Program lottery will need to register on or before June 7<sup>th</sup>. Any late registrants will be added to the waiting list.

## MASK from page 6

the very grain of what he or she knows in their heart is best for students.”

Only one member of the public spoke against making the mask mandate optional.

“I’m not saying you should be mandated,” Jen Cinelli said. “But what I’m worried about is the proximity of our kids to each other staff, teachers. It’s a lot, 30 kids in a classroom in some instances, that’s too much. I think we should be looking at and working towards reducing our class sizes so that our children can have a safe education without masks on. I think that’s more important. I think that’s where we put our focus. I do want to follow what the CDC guidelines are, do want to follow what’s best for everyone. I don’t want to put anybody at risk, and I don’t want to put anybody in danger. I just think that all of this attention over this one topic is misguided, and I think it’s not helping with our failing education system at this time.”

After public comment ended, Miller asked Dr. Dickerson to read his opening statement as a reminder to the board and those in attendance. He also stated that the district’s head nurse was available should anyone have any questions about statistics. He then opened the comments up to the board.

“I said my entire stance since I’ve been a member of this board was to follow your recommendations whether I 100% agree with them or not,” Kris Thompson said. “It’s every vote I have had since I’ve started almost three years ago on this board was to follow this. The governor’s recommendations are the CDC and the Department of Health’s recommendations for the state of Delaware. I

don’t see a need vary from that. So, I’m in support of the administration’s decision and the MEA is on board this time with that decision. So, for whatever what avenue and direction or district wants to go.”

Dave Vezmar agreed, stating that the board had followed the governor’s guidelines throughout the pandemic and he saw no need to stray away from that now, commenting that he would like to be able to tell his son that April 1 he would no longer have to wear a mask.

“First, I’d like to start by thanking everyone who spoke during our public comment period,” Dr. Adam Brownstein said. “No matter what side of an issue, you may advocate, I think that having your voice heard is important. I may agree with you. I may not. But I’m going to fight for your right to say what you believe, so thank you.”

Brownstein continued, reminding everyone that just six months ago, the board debated the mask issue. Back then, the board was split in their beliefs about the relative effectiveness of masks at that time, Brownstein explained. At that time, he supported a choice-based mask option and expressed his belief that the masks being used were not effective.

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# CULTURE



Photo BY TERRY ROGERS

# BINDER FOR LIFE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO PREPARE FOR AN EMERGENCY

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If you answered "no" to any of the above questions, then this three-session seminar is for you! "Many may think this opportunity is only for older people," says interim pastor, Dianne Deming, "but reflecting upon the issues presented in this course, and the comprehensive notebook produced through the workshop will be an invaluable gift to you and your loved ones, saving you time and frustration, no matter what your age." Whether trying to remember the login info for an online account, trying to lay hands on the title to a car you want to sell or serving as executor for a loved one's estate, you will benefit from this course.

A three-session workshop entitled "Binder for Life" will be offered through the First Presbyterian Church of Milford in March. Through this series of workshops, participants will create a comprehensive notebook containing pertinent documents and information needed in an emergency (such as a rush to the hospital), or should they become incapacitated or pass away. The Binder for Life will make difficult times and everyday life less stressful, and will be a useful tool in managing one's affairs.

Guest speakers will include Bethany Geiser, owner of BG Professional Organization; Doug Root, financial planner with SmartPro Financial Delaware; and Meagan L. Sekscinski, Client Services Director with Procino, Wells & Woodland law firm. These specialists will share their expertise and answer general questions.

Two tracks of the class are offered: Wednesday afternoons at 2 p.m. (Mar. 9, 16 and 23), and Friday evenings at 7 p.m. (Mar. 11, 18 and 25). The Friday, March 11 workshop with professional organizer Bethany Geiser does double-duty as the *2nd Friday* program for the month.

The cost of the course is \$15 per notebook. Couples may wish to share a binder, in which case the course cost is \$15, even if both parties attend. If each partner wants a separate notebook, then the cost is \$30. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required. To pre-register, visit the church website at [fpcmilford.org/events](http://fpcmilford.org/events), or contact the church office for a registration form (302-422-5701 or [milpres2off@gmail.com](mailto:milpres2off@gmail.com)). This series is open to the public. Deadline for registration is Tuesday, March 1.



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# TOURISM DISCUSSION AT MILFORD CONVERSATIONS MEETING

Milford Conversations will be held on Thursday, March 3, from 8:30-9:30 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Milford. The guest speaker will be Bonnie Hall, chair of the Board of Directors for Southern Delaware Tourism. Ms. Hall will share an overview of tourism in southern Delaware, and how this industry affects the Milford area. She will also offer ideas on how this community could capitalize further on the lucrative tourism business while providing a warm welcome to out of town guests. As always, time will be allowed for Q&A with the guest speaker, as well as swapping information regarding upcoming local events.

Milford Conversations is open to all interested community leaders in and around Milford, including those representing business, civic, nonprofit, environmental, arts, education, health and government sectors. Speakers vary each month, with a wide range of subjects covered within the year. The meeting will be held in the church's fellowship hall. Entry through the back door, off of Pearl St., is recommended. For questions, please call 302-381-6620.



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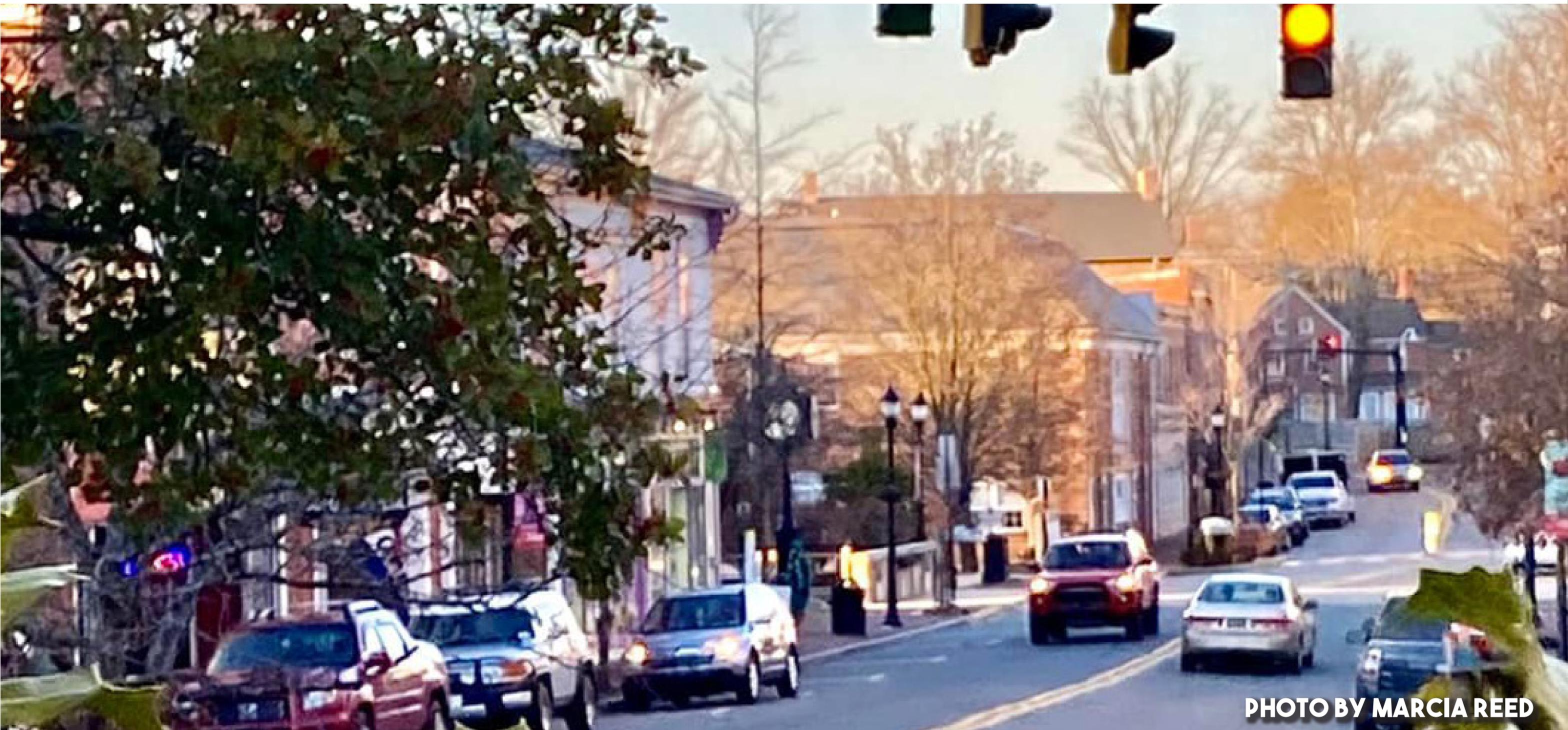


PHOTO BY MARCIA REED

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# NORMAN BARBERSHOP MOVES TO NORTH WALNUT STREET



BY TERRY ROGERS

Earlier this year, Tom Smith, owner of Norman's Deluxe Barbershop and Shave Parlor, announced that he had just signed a lease on a building located at 38 North Walnut Street. Smith was excited to announce the move as this has been the location of a barbershop for many years.

"When I first started barber school, I knew one day where I wanted to eventually end up," Smith said. "In fact, when I first started barber school, I knew that one day I wanted to own the old downtown barbershop on Walnut Street." Smith opened the doors at the new location on Jan. 10.

Smith has been a barber for five years, celebrating his anniversary in the profession in December. He opened his own location in the loft of Salon M on Causey Avenue soon after finishing school.

"I owe much thanks to Megan Cagle of Salon M for allowing me the opportunity to come in fresh out of school and take over that space in her salon," Smith said. "It has been an absolute pleasure working with Megan and the other ladies at Salon M, Barbara "Peaches" McGee and Jennifer Strickland."

Smith completed some updates in the building after taking over and installed chairs that were original to the location, thanking his friends Philip Henry Ruiz for rescuing the chairs. The shop was the location of Abe's Barbershop for more than 40 years, owned by Abe Ellison. Jim Gray, who had a chair at Abe's for 35 years and has been a barber for 65 years, still working as a barber at Razor's Edge in Milford, has many fond memories of downtown Milford, stating that some of his best memories are the families he served for generations.

"I could always walk behind someone and recognize them by the back of their head," Gray laughed. "I was no stranger to downtown Milford as my first business decision was to buy a barbershop where the current Marvel Agency now stands. I witnessed many changes through the city and discussed politics and current events with those I served. As you can imagine, I have

See **BARBER** on page 13



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also seen many types of haircuts come and go. I could cut just about any style a customer requested.” Gray also became heavily involved in the community and enjoyed the friendships he made along the way.

Gray, who remembers cutting Smith’s hair a few times, wishes him well on his new endeavor and offers him some advice.

“Always take time the time to listen to the customer’s request and always be kind,” Gray said.

Norman’s Deluxe Barbershop and Shave Parlor specializes in traditional hot towel shaves in addition to haircuts. The shop is open on Monday from 3 to 8 p.m. and Tuesday through Friday from 8 to 4 p.m. They are closed Saturday.



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# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



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# SIDEWALK STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSED

ramifications for the sidewalk gap installation and who would be financially responsible.”

Mayor Archie Campbell stated that he had gotten into a few heated discussions regarding who is responsible for installing and maintaining sidewalks, pointing out that many property owners are unaware they own the sidewalk and are responsible for them. Pierce stated that he did not want the discussion to focus on the sidewalk maintenance program, preferring to go over the strategic plan. He then discussed the various priorities his department created regarding what sidewalk gaps should be addressed initially.

“We generally tried to break it into three levels; a high priority area, a kind of a medium priority area and a low priority area because really, we shouldn’t be trying to analyze and budget and come up with an implementation strategy for very low priority sidewalks that are many years down the road from being needed for any kind of movement of our residents,” Pierce said. “But we still show them on the overall plan. But really, we tried to remove those to see something more tangible, something that we really want to focus on. So, this is where, again, we are looking into getting some feedback from council. Generally, I tried to use the high priority area that was outlined in previous pedestrian and bicycle master plan in that area that we call the town center.

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent workshop, Milford City Council discussed the sidewalk strategic plan. This plan addressed gaps in sidewalks throughout the city and will be used in conjunction with the newly adopted Bicycle Master Plan. Although council could not make any decisions in the workshop, they received detailed information on what a 10- to 20-year sidewalk plan would look like in order to create a more walkable city.

“We also wanted to determine prioritization for sidewalk installation, analyze the level of improvements needed to construct sidewalks in the desired locations,” Rob Pierce, city planner, said. Also, we reviewed all of our current capital projects for state capital projects and private development that may impact closing some of these sidewalk gaps. And then, we also wanted to cover evaluating our current CIP and how we can address the remaining gaps that are not really taken into account at this time, and then also kind of lay out the financial

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# COUNCIL CONTINUES DISCUSSION REGARDING RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLER REQUIREMENT

BY TERRY ROGERS

For the second time at a workshop, Milford City Council discussed adding an ordinance in their building code that would require sprinklers in newly constructed residences. Should Milford choose to add this to their building code, they would join Lewes and Milton who have recently done so. Newark and Delaware City have required residential sprinklers for some time.

“As most of you recall, most council members were at the last workshop related to this in early January, we held a meeting to kind of go over proposed amendments to the chapter on building construction,” Rob Pierce, city planner, said. “At that meeting, we had representative from the Delaware Sprinkler Coalition, State Fire Marshal’s Office and the Carlisle Fire Company to kind of provide a presentation related to domestic residential sprinkler systems. The presentation includes two proposed amendments that would adopt the 2018 version of the International Residential Code (IRC), the 2018 version of the International Building Code (IBC) and the 2018 version of the International Swimming Pool and Spa

code. And again, we currently operate under the 2012 version of all those ordinances.”

Councilman Jason James asked if one of the experts could provide details on the cost per square foot for sprinklers, questioning whether the added cost may put a burden on builders to create affordable housing. Paul Eichler with the Delaware Sprinkler Association stated that the average cost nationally to install residential sprinklers was \$1.35 per square foot, but that takes into consideration a wide range of factors. In a review of nine different communities, Eichler found prices that ranged from \$1.03 to \$3.50 per square foot.

“An average sized home these days, I used 2,400 square feet. That is going to add \$8,400 to the cost of the home. And then I amortized that over 30 years, and that would add \$40 a month to a mortgage payment. I used a 4% interest rate and I use a 30-year life of the loan to get that \$8,400,” Eichler said. “And just to further break that down, that’s \$1.34 a day using a 30-day, month average. And I do believe for the building environment

here in Delaware, in my conversation with contractors using \$2 to \$2.50 a square foot was more accurate. Also, I would add that I would encourage you to keep in mind the discount that may be available through your homeowner’s insurance. For example, State Farm provides at least 7% discount on your homeowners with it being sprinklered. I just paid my annual bill at \$590. If my house was sprinklered, that would knock 40 bucks off my premium. So, I’m hoping that that gives you some reference for our conversation. And again, I would I’m very comfortable suggesting that \$3.50 is high to consider for here in Delaware where we’ve got the infrastructure for tying into municipal system. Especially not only in the within the city, but as you get outside the city you can see Artesian and Tidewater continuing to come in to provide water services in the neighborhoods that are being developed.”

Councilman Dan Marabello asked how recent the figures provided by Eichler were and Duane Fox of the Delaware State Fire Marshal’s Office stated that he recently ran real-time figures for Sussex County and the \$2 to \$2.50 per square foot was accurate. He also explained that there may be other fees involved that are not included in the cost per square foot.

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# EDUCATION



# SCHOOL MASK MANDATE TO BE LIFTED TUESDAY; COURTS ON WEDNESDAY

BY BETSY PRICE

Gov. John Carney will end his school mask mandate Tuesday at 6 p.m. To be specific: Masking will not be required in kindergarten-twelfth grade schools, on school buses, or in child care facilities after that time.

Carney’s lawyers in a Chancery Court hearing about election rules made the statement in court, and a press release quickly followed.

Delaware courts also will lift the current court order requiring face masks in all court facilities as of Wednesday morning for both court staff and members of the public, a different press release said.

Both Carney and the courts are reacting to a Friday Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announcement saying it was OK to drop mask requirements as the Omicron variation of COVID-19 continues to decline.

Carney had planned to lift the school mask mandate March 31, saying that local districts needed time to decide how to handle masking.

The Delaware Department of Education and the

Division of Public Health have issued updated guidance to district and school leaders to aid response efforts following the expiration of the mask requirement.

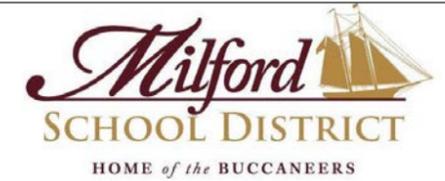
Carney and the courts also said that vaccine or testing requirements for educators, state employees and courts staff will end. Schools and education requirements will end at 11:59 p.m. Monday. Courts testing immediately.

The courts, however, reserved the right to require testing whenever an employee was exhibiting signs of COVID-19 infection. The courts also will continue to ask any person who is experiencing COVID symptoms to stay away from court facilities until their symptoms clear or they receive a negative test.

“There are a lot of reasons to be optimistic about where we’re headed,” Carney said in the press release. He noted that COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have fallen dramatically. “We are clearly moving into a new phase of this pandemic,” he said.

“Delawareans who want to continue wearing a mask—

See MASK on page 20



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## MASK from page 19

including children in our schools—should be supported and encouraged to do so, even as we move into this new phase,” he said. “We’ll also continue to encourage all eligible Delawareans to get up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations.”

When the State of Emergency is lifted Tuesday, a more narrow Public Health Emergency Order will be issued to replace a Public Health Emergency Order issued on July 12, 2021. This updated Public Health Emergency Order will allow hospitals and long-term care facilities continued flexibility to respond to cases of COVID-19.

Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz Jr. said in the court’s press release that its infectious disease medical expert, Dr. Alfred Bacon, agreed with the new federal guidance and thinks it is reasonable at this time to drop the indoor mask requirement and unvaccinated employee testing requirements, said Chief Justice Seitz Jr.

“Under the new CDC guidance, masking is no longer recommended in areas that are rated as either low and medium risk,” Seitz said in the press release. “New Castle County is rated low risk and Kent and Sussex counties are rated medium risk.”

Seitz also said people who are more comfortable continuing to wear a face mask should feel free to continue to do so.

“It is important to note that we will continue to monitor the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we will not hesitate to change course if needed to protect everyone from serious illness,” Seitz said. “Thank you for your patience as we have navigated together this unprecedented public health crisis.”



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# MILFORD ROTARY CLUB CHANGES SCHOLARSHIPS

This year the trustees of the Milford Rotary Club Educational Foundation made several scholarship changes. “We are still offering five new scholarships this year”, said Jim O’Neill, the foundations coordinator, “but the trustees changed some names, criteria and increased the amount of the scholarships.” The foundation will be offering \$12,500 in new scholarships, and \$16,500 in total. “We were able to provide these scholarships due to the generosity of the Rotary Club members and the many sponsors of the Rotary Flags for Heroes fundraiser,” he said.

This year’s scholarships are two Rotary Traditional scholarships at \$2,500 each; one Rotary Warnell scholarship at \$2,500; one Donovan Interact scholarship at \$2,500; one Rotary Service Above Self scholarship at \$2,500; and two renewals of Garbutt Family Trust scholarships at \$2,000 each.

The Traditional scholarships will be judged on the criteria of the student’s leadership, character, and citizenship, as well as academic achievement. The Warnell scholarship will include the requirement that the student is planning a career in science or mathematics.

The Donovan Interact scholarship is being funded by Rotarian Jack Donovan and is intended for a member of an Interact Club, Rotary’s high school affiliate. The Rotary Service Above Self scholarship will be awarded based on the applicant’s exceptional community service.

Renewals for two Garbutt Family Trust scholarships will be made at \$2,000 each. This four-year renewable scholarship is offered new on alternate years.

All scholarship applicants must reside in the service area of the Milford Rotary Club which includes all of the Milford School District. Graduating seniors in public, charter, parochial, or private schools or home-schooled seniors must submit their applications by April 20, 2022. Children and grandchildren of Milford Rotary Club members are not eligible.

The Warnell scholarship is named after the late Joseph Warnell, a long-term Rotarian, chemist, and former business owner. The Garbutt Family Trust scholarship is named for the late long-time Rotarian and Milford business owner Thomas Garbutt, his wife, Marie, and daughter, Gail.

Applications are now available for download at [www.milfordrotaryclub.com](http://www.milfordrotaryclub.com), Paper copies may be obtained by contacting a school guidance office or by calling James O’Neill at 302-422-3207.



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# VAPE DANGERS MAY BE ADDED TO MSD CODE OF CONDUCT

BY TERRY ROGERS

With vaping a growing concern among teenagers, Milford School District will review their Discipline Code of Conduct to add vaping as a violation. In addition, the district will increase education regarding the dangers of vaping.

“We have had one incident in our elementary school, at MCA about 13 incidents and at our high school, around 32 incidents,” Dr. Jason Peel, director of Human Resources and School Climate, said. “There were times where students had multiple incidents, so not to assume that’s how many students were involved. We’re seeing most of these incidents occur in our bathrooms.”

Peel also stated that vaping violations call for a three-day suspension, but the administration does not give that strict of a punishment for the first offense. They also meet with families and parents to discuss what the child is doing in school and confiscating the vapes. The district includes education in both seventh and 10th grade health classes about the dangers of vaping.

“They even go into the marketing of vape products and how that had evolved in its different negative effects, short- and long-term health concerns, chemicals that are harmful and that sort of thing,” Peel said. “At the high school, we do have detectors in our bathrooms. We also make it a point for administrators and support personnel to be more visible in areas in the bathroom, especially during transition times. That’s in both MCA and the high school.”

Another method for helping students understand the dangers of vaping is Purpose Prep, available through each student’s Schoology account that has a module on the negative effects. One thing the district is considering is to require any student who has been caught with a vape to complete the module in order to show them the dangers of vaping. Board member Kris Thompson asked if vape violations were recorded separately and if vapes containing illegal substances like THC were treated differently.

“Yes, we do,” Peel said. “That is one thing I failed to mention. We also have our SRO check if it’s not clear if there is THC involved in any of the products that were confiscated.” Thompson asked if there had been any instances of THC-laced vapes and Peel stated that he did not know of any. Gary Zoll, Secondary School principal, stated that he did not believe there were any students with THC vapes.

See VAPE on page 23



Dr. Dickerson also believed there were no incidents where a student had a vape that was positive for THC.

“Dr. Peel, I believe the first offense here is actually a one day and we have up to three days,” Dr. Dickerson said. “That’s for reoccurring offenses, but we also try to do a lot of education on the front side as well for those first offenses.”

Board Vice-President Rony Baltazar-Lopez pointed out that there was no statement about the dangers in the code of conduct related to vaping.

“When I was looking through the code of conduct, I could only find reference to tobacco or vaping under what the penalties are and what are the actions, of course, for disciplinary measures, but I didn’t see any, kind of like, provision or any kind of statement,” Baltazar-Lopez said. “I know there’s a statement in the code of conduct for drugs and for alcohol. We do want students in a drug and alcohol-free environment, but we don’t have anything specific on vaping. So, I kind of want you to elaborate a little bit more on your marketing skills in terms of reaching students so that they’re aware and their families about the harmful effects of vaping and tobacco.”

Peel explained that vaping fell under the area of tobacco initially which is why it was included in that section of the policy. He also pointed out that there is a drug and alcohol policy under the staff disciplinary policy while schools have long been tobacco-free zones. He felt it would not be difficult to add vaping to the policy.

“I guess at the onset, when they first came out, it was a tobacco product that was in a different format,” Peel

said. “So, we really just lumped those together. In terms of marketing, do you mean having that known throughout the change of signage and that sort of thing maybe?”

Baltzar-Lopez explained that specifying it in the code of conduct could make it clearer to students and families.

“Maybe putting flyers in the hallways or in the bathrooms, things that are simple,” Baltazar-Lopez said. “It doesn’t have to be mass communications externally, but it should be something done internally so that our students are aware.”

Dr. Dickerson explained that a review of the code of conduct was conducted each year and that staff would look over the section on drugs and alcohol to see how vaping could be incorporated with the proper language and information.



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# SECONDARY MATH CURRICULUM TO BE UPDATED AT MSD

BY TERRY ROGERS

On Tuesday, Feb. 22, Dr. Bridget Amory, director of Student Learning, presented information on math curriculum chosen by a task force during a curriculum review. The task force included teachers from various grade levels as well as administrators in response to Board Policy 6111 which requires an ongoing curriculum re-cycle process to ensure students have access to the most current curriculum materials aligned with content standards.

“During the initial start of the math review, we actually postponed the secondary by a year during the decision when we were trying to look at the K-12 spectrum, so we are actually finally in the place where we will be able to make a recommendation moving forward and then all of our math curriculum will be aligned in the K-12 and in alignment with the board policy,” Dr. Amory said. “These math negotiables have guided our process. These were non-negotiables that we established with our math taskforce throughout the district when we started the process three years ago. And, in fairness to the process, it has been delayed a little bit because of the COVID pandemic. But we have certainly been able to pick up the momentum and been able to continue on to this is just a quick snapshot of the process that has been followed during each of the academic years as we’ve gone through this process. So last year, at the very end of the year, we finally narrowed

down to two different programs. We chose Reveal math as well as enVisions math, and we agreed to pilot them in the fall of this year to be able to gain feedback from not only our staff, but also our secondary students as well.”

A slide presented by Amory showed that the math task force was inspired by the learning models included with Reveal, including Bloom’s Taxonomy and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge Guide. The ALEKS program uses artificial intelligence and open-response questions to identify what each student knows and does not know while the other components allow teachers to find the mathematician in every student using exploration methods, discourse and differentiation opportunities. The enVision Math program is for secondary schools and was built with Common Core State Standards. The program allows students to look at math in new ways and gives teachers flexible choices in resources. The teacher’s edition has supplemental work designed to help struggling students and there are components that allow students to use math concepts in real-life applications. The estimated cost for grades six through eight was \$138,536.45 while the cost for grades nine through 12 was \$126,197.34.

“The initial investment that will be involved with this would be very similar to other curriculum processes.

See **MATH** on page 25

## MATH from page 24

We would like to negotiate a six-year replacement cycle with the company so we have included estimated quotes for what it would cost for us to invest in moving forward with the selection,” Dr. Amory said. “The secondary team did decide that they would like to purchase enVision Math and that estimate is included on the presentation there. It is definitely within the realm of our anticipated budget expenses that we have been planning for. This would allow for us to have the necessary materials we would need for the next six academic years, and we hopefully not have any additional expensive additions until we complete the next curriculum review cycle.”

The new curriculum would also include professional development. Dr. Amory explained that the finalized quote would be brought to the board at the March board meeting with hopes of purchasing in the spring and having materials onsite before teachers left at the end of the school year, allowing those who wished to review the material over the summer the opportunity to do so. According to Amory, there were about eight teachers involved in the pilot program across different grade levels.

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**BY TERRY ROGERS**

Linda Bretzer grew up with a father who taught her to respect the country, her heritage and with a strong faith in God. The wife of a member of the Air Force, she traveled the world, living in Milford when he was stationed at the Dover Air Force Base. Through the Institute on the Constitution in Pasadena, Bretzer is bringing classes on the United States Constitution to Delaware and plans to offer one class at the Chapel of Rogers Funeral Home in Milford.

“These are free classes held one day each week for 12 weeks for about an hour each session,” Bretzer said. “Some of the things you will learn include whether the United States is a democracy or a republic, the original founding fathers, how many amendments there are in the Constitution, and what states were first and last to ratify the document.”

Some of the classes taught will include “An American View of Law, Liberty and Government,” “America’s Beginning: From Independence to the Constitution,” as well as “An Overview of the Constitution.” Class dates

## U.S. CONSTITUTION CLASSES TO BE OFFERED IN MILFORD

and times are constantly in progress and held in Milford, Lewes, Wilmington and Georgetown.

“One night at a Patriots for Delaware meeting, I met a vendor, Larry Mayo, soliciting information about organizations should sponsor these classes on the Constitution,” Bretzer said. “His demeanor just exploded with kindness and enthusiasm for the course, and it overflowed to me. I wanted to learn about the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence again. It wasn’t until the second time I spoke to Larry that I was overwhelmed with my interest. This was a brilliant light in a depressed, weary state our nation is in right now. He spoke the ‘magical’ word: the classes are 100 percent free. I signed up for the classes, attended, received my certificate and volunteered to teach.”

There is an online store located at [www.InstituteOn-TheConstitution.com](http://www.InstituteOn-TheConstitution.com) where anyone interested can register for classes and access the curriculum which includes a digital student handbook. There is also homeschool curriculum for teens, books, handbooks and other items available at the store. The site also offers an after school club for students who attend public high school.

For more information, contact Bretzer at [WeThePeopleForThePeople2022@gmail.com](mailto:WeThePeopleForThePeople2022@gmail.com).

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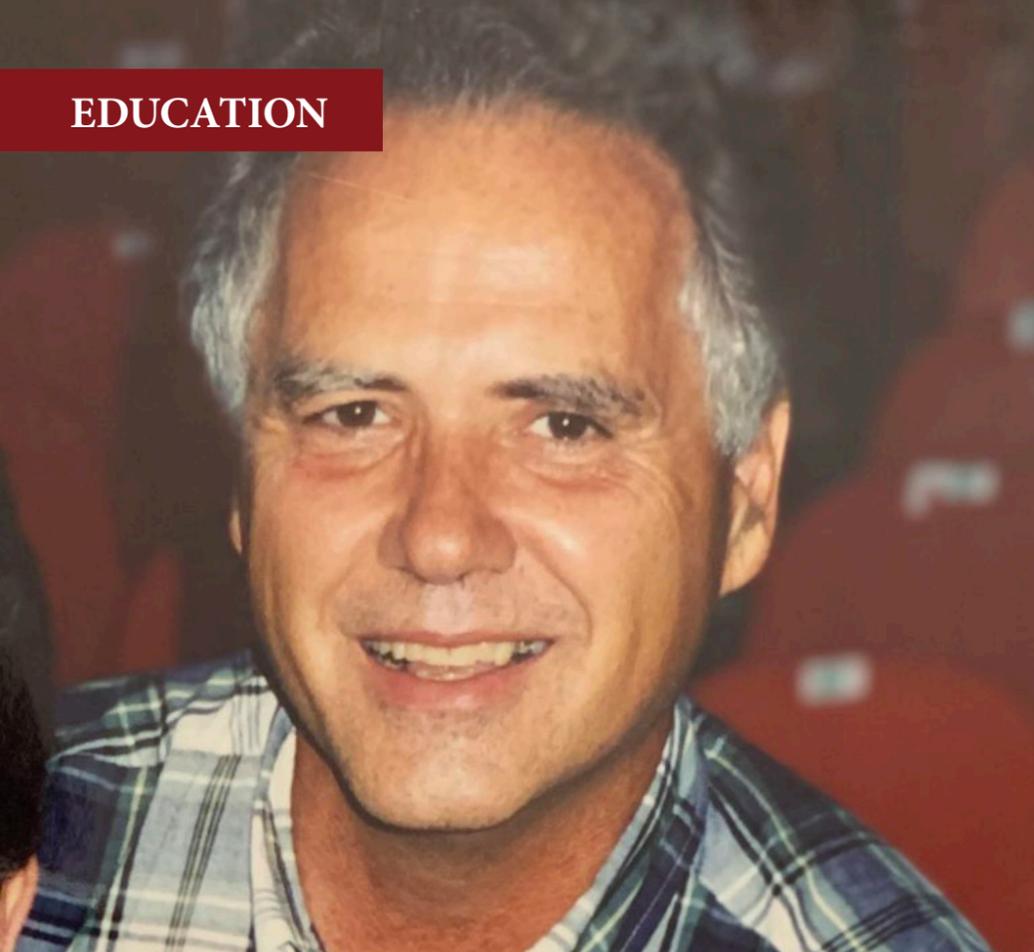
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BY TERRY ROGERS

Beloved teacher, Dr. William Evan “Bill” Warren passed away on Jan. 22. The outpouring of sympathy and remembrances from former students was overwhelming, his wife of 57 years, Joanne, and his children, Kevin, Karen and Adam, said. For this reason, the family is working with the Milford Rotary Club to create a scholarship in Bill’s honor.

“So many people reached out to us,” Joanne said. “I’ve received about 50 or so cards with very nice notes in them about what effect he had on their lives. My kids have gotten the same kind of feedback from their friends. It seemed like everyone wanted to do something. That’s why we came up with this.”

Dr. Warren was born in Milford in 1942 and attended

## FAMILY RAISING SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS TO HONOR WARREN

Milford High School where he lettered in football, baseball and track, graduating in 1960. He was the first of his family to attend college and received a Bachelor’s in English from the University of Delaware. He went on to receive a master’s from the University of Virginia and a PhD in English Literature from the Ohio State University in 1973. Dr. Warren began his teaching career at Lake Forest until 1982 when he accepted a position with Milford where he taught “gifted and talented” classes until 2000.

“He had been on the Rotary Club committee that was helping select scholarship recipients for a bunch of years,” his son, Kevin, said. “I guess he was the longest standing person on that. So, that seemed like a logical way to administer it. We didn’t want to make it too specific so that it would be hard to find recipients. We think it will be for someone who wants to go into the education field.”

Because the Milford Rotary is handling the scholarship, recipients must live in the region, but they would not necessarily have to attend Milford High School as they could attend a charter school or one of the technical schools.

“Dr. Warren was my favorite teacher,” Bliss Soucek wrote in a tribute to him. “My life was enriched by his presence in ways that I will never be able to explain. I’ll never forget when I wrote my first essay for him, and he called my parents and told them I had a gift for writing. Although I’m sad he’ll never be able to read all of the books in the world, I know he’ll easily accomplish that goal in heaven.”

His family supports Soucek’s comment, stating that he was an avid reader. Kevin wrote that his father knew he would never be able to read all the books that he wanted to read in his life, though he tried hard. Kevin commented that his father was the best read man he ever knew, by far, but he “wished for more time and more mental energy and clarity to read more.”

“I do not underestimate when I say that no person from my childhood was more important to the kind of thinker and teacher, I would become than your father who was my teacher from kindergarten straight through eighth grade. I’m so sorry for this monumental loss,” Ryan Claycomb said.

Matthew Rogers echoed those sentiments, stating that Dr. Warren had a massive impact on his education, outlook on life and drive to succeed and learn.

“I am so sorry for your family’s loss but know that his impact is still felt through the scores of students he challenged,” Jessi Matthes Mortensen said. “I know I model a lot of his teaching style in my own classroom.”

Donations toward the scholarship fund can be made by visiting <https://www.gofundme.com/f/william-doc-warren-memorial-scholarship>. Anyone who prefers mailing a check can send donations to Milford Rotary Club Educational Foundation, P.O. Box 10, Milford DE 19963. Be sure to write “Bill Warren” in the memo section of the check.



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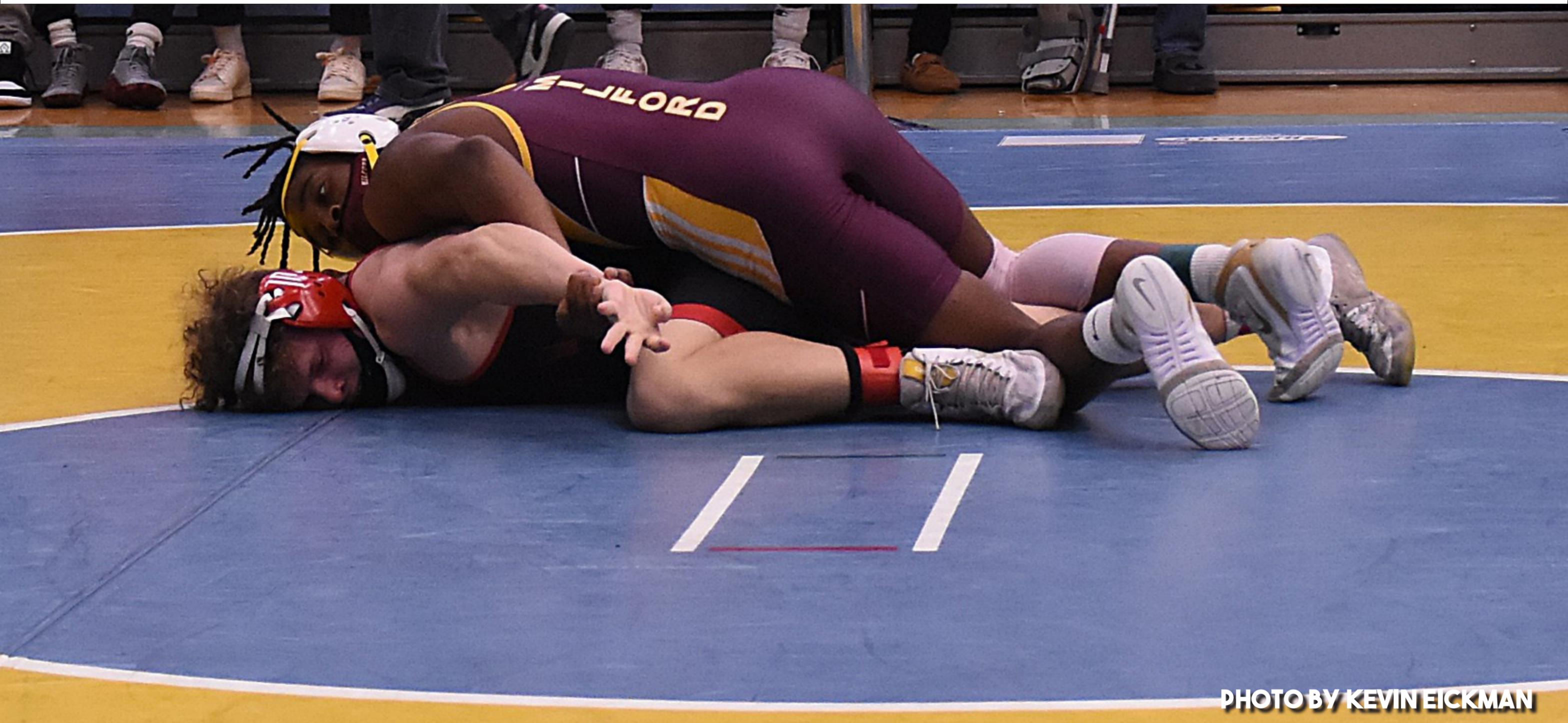


PHOTO BY KEVIN EICKMAN

# THODE WINS TITLE, FOUR OTHER BUCS MEDAL!

BY KEVIN EICKMAN

Milford senior Jack Thode was about to take the mat for his final match as a high school wrestler. It was the 132-pound title match for the Delaware Individual Wrestling Championships. While Thode already had earned two titles previously, this one was surprisingly special to him. "Once the match begins, you pretty much put everything out of your mind and that is what I did. But between matches this weekend, I had a lot of time to think about all the people who helped get me to this moment. My family, coaches, friends and so many people in the wrestling community were always there to lend a hand."

Thode would be battling Dylan Knight, who had Thode defeated by decision in last year's title match. "I know Dylan pretty well and he is a tremendous wrestler, but I have been really focused and very healthy this year - I was very confident headed into the match," Thode said. It was soon evident that Thode was not overconfident as he took a 4-0 lead in the first period, then with a workman-like effort, Thode moved in for the kill and won by pin at the 2:51 mark of the match.

Thode, who has always been a leader, actually explained that with all the injuries and adversity the squad had faced this year, it was great to have guys like Averi Copes, Aaron Briscoe and Tim O'Hara step up and take a more active role in leadership. While there was one Milford wrestler, who did not qualify for states



due to injury, Jack's sister Emily, he was grateful to have her in his corner. "Without a doubt, I think she would have been able to qualify this year, but fate wouldn't allow it. I feel horrible for her because I know how much it meant to her, and I would have loved to have her here. But I know that this will drive her even harder next year and I am really looking forward to it," Thode said.

See **THODE** on page 31



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## THODE from page 30

Speaking with Milford coach Don Parsley about Jack Thode, he was very happy for him. “Like every wrestler, he understands he has to put in the work to get results. He has been a leader on this team from the first day he stepped on the mat, I am really going to miss coaching him.” Thode plans to continue wrestling in college and study business.

In all, Milford would have four wrestlers reach the finals, with only Thode able to gain the gold. However, that does not in the slightest diminish the accomplishments of those who finish second. In all three cases, Milford wrestlers fought with enormous heart, in two cases, through physical injury which would have kept most wrestlers out of competition.

Trevor Copes (120) would fall by pin just 59 seconds into his match to four-time state champion Gabe Giampietro of Smyrna. With Trevor battling a bruised arm, it was not really a fair fight. Giampietro, who was voted the tournament’s outstanding wrestler, is probably the best wrestler in Delaware. “Nobody likes to lose; you work all year and to come up short hurts, I can’t lie to you. But as the coach told me, I lost to an absolute beast so there is nothing for me to hang my head about. The only thing I can do is come back stronger next year,” Trevor Copes said.

The best match for a Milford wrestler not to win was turned in by senior Aaron Briscoe in the 138-pound final. While he was down early to Daniel Sinclair of William Penn, 4-1. Briscoe worked his way back to 4-2, needing just a takedown to square the match for a possible overtime. Briscoe was on the attack from the

match’s midway point on, but to Sinclair’s credit, he was able to narrowly avoid two close calls to claim the victory. “I had a couple of really good chances, but he was able to escape. You really have to give Daniel credit, because there aren’t too many wrestlers who I don’t get two points on in those situations. The one thing I know is I left it all on the mat and that is all I ever ask of myself,” Briscoe said.

While Briscoe may have enjoyed the closest match, the match that turned out to be truly inspiring was turned in by junior Averì Copes at 152 pounds. Having wrestled through conferences and states in what is a fractured arm, he would fall to John Antonio of Caravel Academy, 5-1. Speaking with Averì following the award ceremony, I was amazed as he removed layer after layer of equipment and tape. I asked him how bad it hurt, and Averì was blunt. “It hurts a lot. But that wasn’t going to keep me from competing and I won’t use it as an excuse either,” he concluded.

Finishing out the medals for Milford was O’Hara, a senior, who finished out his career winning his third-place match at 160 pounds. “While I much rather would have been wrestling for a title, but you wrestle the match that you have in front of you, so that is what I did.” O’Hara would earn a 5-4 victory to cash in Milford’s fifth medal for the tournament.

Speaking with Parsley after the tournament, he was extremely proud of how his wrestlers had performed. “Listen, every wrestler is beat up this time of year. But our guys got really unlucky with the timing and the severity of the injuries. When you take a look at what

Averì did over the past two weeks, between conferences and states, you can’t help but admire him. The truth is however, all my guys showed heart, I could not be prouder of them. This has been a very trying season and in true Buccaneer fashion they refused to quit,” he said.



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