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October 17, 2023
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photo link: Carlisle Fire Company



**Opera Delaware and Benvenuto
Gala**



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photo link: [Abbott's Mill Nature Center](#)



BY TERRY ROGERS

On Nov. 17, Benvunto will be the site of the inaugural Microgala for Opera Delaware. The event, which begins with a cocktail party at 6:30 p.m., will also include a five-course catered dinner with operatic and holiday musical pairings. The event follows a successful pop-up opera at St. John the Apostle's fellowship hall on Saturday, Oct. 14.

"In opera, typically we do these big galas, we do big like blowout galas once a year. And with my team we were talking about the fact that these galas are often so big and so expensive, that they're super formal and impractical. We don't get to spend time with our people. We don't really get to interact. And they end up being kind of generic. And so, we came up with this concept of microgalas," Kerriann Otano, vice president of Entertainment with Opera Delaware, said. "A micro gala is an opportunity for us to partner with another organization and do these shorter events throughout the year. So that way we can hit the whole state. We can really represent

OPERA DELAWARE AND BENVUNTO PARTNER FOR MICROGALA EVENT

Delaware and not just be Opera Wilmington, but really be Opera Delaware and be all over. And we can highlight the amazing things going on in our state. So with the event that we're doing in Milford on Nov. 17, that is kind of what we're looking at it being an Andrea Bocelli Italian Christmas vibe."

Otano explained that Opera Delaware hopes to make the gala an annual event in Milford. They chose Benvenuto's restaurant as it is decorated beautifully for Christmas and Chef Jesus "Zeus" Gordiany is well known throughout the region as a culinary king. Performing at the event will be mezzo-soprano Anastasia Sidorova, tenor Dane Suarez, soprano Emily Margevich and pianist Aurelien Eulert. "What they are doing is preparing a five-course dinner for us that is paired with musical selections created by our artists," Otano said. "So, the artists are doing everything from the top hit arias. We're talking like Nessun Dorma. We're talking La Donna e Mobile, arias that the people recognize, but then they're also doing things like I'll be Home for Christmas and Oh, Holy Night, and that so that's sort of like Andrea Bocelli, Josh Groban, Christmas kind of event where you get a mix of holiday classics and standards. And so it's really just like a celebration of the season. And the talent that we have in this area."

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from page 3

Milford was chosen as the location for the microgala after Otano worked with Sara Bluhm, Economic Development and Community Engagement Administrator for the city of Milford as part of Leadership Delaware.

“Sara advocates for Milford the same way that I advocate for opera and throughout the year, it just kept coming up. We were motivating and inspiring each other and encouraging each other. And so, this whole idea of microgalas and Opera Delaware really being statewide, that’s come to fruition because of conversations with my Leadership Delaware cohort with people that I’ve met through Leadership Delaware, and from people who’ve been longtime upper Delaware supporters,” Otano said. “And those supporters have been bringing us to Maple Dale Country Club. We’ve had some good engagement in Dover.”

Otano explained that connections throughout the state were helping Opera Delaware grow. “But this relationship with Sarah and her mother Nina [Pletcher], really opened the door. Because we need an advocate on the ground,” Otano said. “It’s one thing for me to reach out and say that people all over the state, hey, I want to bring opera to you, and I want to collaborate but without someone to advocate and say Kerriann is really going to come through for us and we’re gonna come through for Kerriann like that’s the connection point. That only happens when people develop a connection and that’s what’s so special about Delaware and why I think microgalas are gonna be so successful.”

Lisa Johnson of Benvenuto also credits Bluhm with bringing the microgala to Milford. “Sara brought them

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in and introduced us to them. It was something that she really wanted to promote in Milford,” Johnson said. “She’s the one that brought them to us. And the reason why we wanted to do it as it is, we think a wonderful addition to the Milford community and it is also wonderful for Benvenuto to highlight it with them. It will also be our kickoff to Christmas. That week is when we decorate for the holidays, so it will be Benvenuto’s Kicking off Christmas with Opera Delaware.”

The event will include a red carpet with professional photographers who will capture the event for attendees. Otano explained that one of the most common questions she gets from those who have never been to the opera is “what am I supposed to wear?”

“Our rules for dress at this event are very simple. One of the main reasons that people will tell me they’re hesitant to come to an opera is that they don’t know what they are supposed to wear. I hear ‘I don’t have anything fancy enough.’ And my rule is this, when you go to the opera, you dress to be seen. You want to wear something that makes you feel proud,” Otano said. “We have a red carpet runway. We have professional photographers, we have a step and repeat. We do this also for our microgalas because you are the star of this night as well. I want you to shine. I want you to feel confident so for me it’s maybe a polka dot ballgown with Converse sneakers.”

Otano told a story about her own father who was attending an opera event for the first time.

“My dad is a referee in New York, and he called me before coming to the opera and said, ‘What am I supposed to wear?’ I said wear what makes you feel great. He said ‘what makes me feel great is my referee outfit,’

and I said ‘go ahead, buddy. wear it. Wear it. Wear what makes you feel good.’ Whatever you wear, it has to be something that you’re proud of,” Otano said. “It could be a prom dress. We had students from DSU come in prom dresses they didn’t get to wear during COVID. It could be an old bridesmaid’s dress you’re pulling out of the back of the closet. It could be your favorite tie dye overalls, I want you to wear the coolest item of clothing, the thing that you’re the most proud to be seen in wear that to the microgala.”


Tickets for the event are \$220 per person and include cocktail hour and five-course dinner. Guests will also receive commemorative photos from the event. Johnson explained that Chef Zeus is still putting together the menu. There will be a preview of the event on WBOC’s Delmarva Life on Oct. 25.

“Kerriann is coming down from Opera Delaware. Sara will be with her on the sofa segment,” Johnson said. “Then they’re going to sing one or two songs from our night. And then chef will be in the kitchen preparing one of the dishes he will be prepared.”


On Sunday, Nov. 18, Benvenuto will continue their Christmas kickoff with a “Merriest Sweater Contest.”

“Everybody who comes in a holiday sweater is entered into the contest,” Johnson said. “Then we give away gift cards and prizes after the judges have picked their first, seconds and thirds. Last year we called it ugly sweater night, but I don’t like ugly sweater. And when we were talking about this year, I said it’s called the merriest sweater.”

Tickets for the microgalas can be purchased from [Opera Delaware](#) and clicking on “Microgala Tickets Here.”



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DOWNTOWN DESSERT TOUR A HUGE SUCCESS

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford's Downtown Dessert Tour, held Saturday, Oct. 14, was a huge success according to the businesses that participated in the event. Dolce, My Sister's Fault, Fortunata's and Rosita's Bakery welcomed hundreds into their bakeries as people braved the rainy weather.

"How do we even begin?" My Sister's Fault posted on social media. "The Milford Downtown Dessert Tour turned out unbelievably amazing! We are extremely grateful for everyone that came out despite the rain, the long lines and for patiently waiting to be served. Your support makes this community of bakers stronger! Thanks to our employees for working late hours and giving our customers the service they deserve."

Lines stretched outside the bakeries as visitors waited to purchase delicious baked goods in order to get their dessert "passport" stamped. Once completed, the passport was entered into a drawing for prizes.

"What a day! The return of the Milford Downtown Dessert Tour on Saturday was amazing," Dolce com-

mented. "So many people turned out and waited in line. We are truly honored that people visited all four of the shops and shared the love as we try to share with each other every day! Thank you for making our day special and please continue to support the small businesses that make our city of Milford so special."

Fortunata's was also excited about the turnout for the event. "Yesterday's Downtown Sweets Tour was an amazing experience," a social media post said. "We thank Angie from My Sister's Fault for making sure everything was done. The people of Milford understood the assignment: Have a great day visiting all our bakeries and having a good time. That doesn't mean we didn't bake all fresh breads, rolls and a few sweets today. A huge thank you to all the Fortunata employees, Josephine, Leslie, Nick, Valarie, Zach and those that can't stay away (when I beg them to help, Cassandra and Jodi)."

Rosita's Bakery, located on N. Walnut Street in the former Pavlik's Sub Shop, also thanked everyone who

visited. As the newest bakery in town, they appreciated those who have become loyal customers as well as those who visited for the first time on Saturday. In addition to appreciation from the bakeries, those who participated also enjoyed the event.

"We really enjoyed your donuts," Kristi Cavanaugh Adams said of the sweets they got from Rosita's. "They were so good. I'm looking forward to trying more of your baked goods."

Several people commented that the lines were so long they did not have time to wait, but hoped this would be an annual event.

"Please, please please!" commented Emilie Baglin Crosser in response to My Sister's Fault's question about whether people would like to see the event every year. "Make it a yearly event!"

Others suggested making the event more than once a year, possibly quarterly. Others commented that the tour took them longer than expected, but it was completely worth the time.

"I started early and it only took me an hour," Rachel Workman said. "I did go back through with my friend and saw longer lines, but the food was worth the wait. Great job and I love the businesses working together."

The businesses are hoping to make this an annual event and will release more details as the next Downtown Dessert Tour is planned.

MILFORD
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CULTURE



photo link: [Downtown Milford Inc.](#)



KSI AND KAMP LENAPE HAVE SUCCESSFUL FIRST SEASON

BY TERRY ROGERS

At the beginning of 2023, Kent and Sussex Industries (KSI) took over the former Camp Lenape, located on Midstate Road in Felton. The first camp was held at the location in July after a massive effort to clean up the site.

Employees and a large group of volunteers worked to bring the camp to the level it needed in order to meet the needs of campers. This included renovations, repainting, cleaning, landscaping as well as program development, creating a new and improved “Kamp Lenape.” They began with Shawn Bowman and Andrew Billings assessing what needed to be done with the first big project the roof. Brendon Warfel Construction donated structural fortification and support work for that project.

On June 3, 56 volunteers, including State Sen. Eric Buckson, arrived at the camp to fix and paint picnic tables and benches, remove roots, edge and plant flower beds, clean the rooms and do many other tasks that needed to be done in time for the July 5 opening.

Once campers arrived, the days were filled with projects, including swimming, sports, a magic show, ceramic painting with Go Paint Ceramics, bowling at Milford Lanes plus many more activities. There were 19 children who attended the first year of the camp while Integrity Nursing made sure everyone was safe and healthy. On the final day of camp, Aug. 11, there was a catered lunch provided by Kay’s Kitchen, bouncy house and a water slide. Delmarva Popcorn provided bags of popcorn and Mike Baker brought the Shasta Shutterbug for fun photos.

Word that KSI had taken over Kamp Lenape reached the community, including Paige Howell of Paige’s Kindness Project. Paige, who created her non-profit in order to bring “kindness to everyone,” donated \$200 to the project.

“I saw KSI was taking over Camp Lenape and I wanted to know what I could do,” Howell said.

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Diagnosed with autism and medical complications, Howell began the project when barriers to work had her wanting to help others. Howell and her mother, Lillian, collect donations and supplies for multiple projects throughout Milford, touching many throughout the Milford Community. Nick Clauges of Milford's Wireless Zone applies for funds from the company every year for Howell's many projects.

In addition to Paige's Kindness Project, Gregg and Stephanie Knutsen learned of KSI's new project. Hosting the popular KSI Monster Ball each year at their farm venue, the Knutsens wanted to what they could to make this vision come to life. Because some of the campers who would use the facilities would require a quiet space at times, the Knutsens put out a call for toys and furniture for a sensory room for those children. They also decided to start a series of free line dancing lessons in order to encourage others to donate to KSI's mission.

The funds raised from the lesson participants helped purchase everything necessary for the new sensory room, which they donated in memory of their good friend, the late Ann Haggerty, who served as vice president of Mission Advancement for KSI at the time of her death.

"A good chunk of this is being funded by the generous donations that folks have been bringing when they come to the farm for the free line dance lessons," Mrs. Knutsen said.

Originally, the building located on the property of then Camp Lenape was a Union School, one of 90 schoolhouses built in the early 20th century to help resolve educational inequities related to African Amer-

ican children. From the 1890s to the 1920s, there was a movement to reform public education in underserved communities. Pierre S. duPont, who was then the president of the DuPont Company, saw that public schools in Delaware were still segregated into the 1960s.

In 1917, duPont joined the state board of education and enlisted the assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation, asking them to conduct a survey of education in the state. This survey uncovered significant deficiencies in schools designed to educate African American students. duPont spent more than \$6 million between the years of 1919 and 1940, the equivalent of more than \$120 million today, of his own money to rehabilitate schools serving children of color.

Those funds went to build and staff more than 90 schools throughout the state, including the Union School on Midstate Road in Felton, which was built in 1921 using a signature model with specific dimensions a portico and windowed walls on one side. Schools were equipped with a state-of-the-art heating system, indoor restrooms and other upgrades to historical buildings that provided education to children of color. In addition, every school was required to have at least two acres of land in order to provide outdoor physical education space.

African American students attended the Union School up until the 1960s when schools in Delaware were desegregated. The building was purchased in the 1970s by United Cerebral Palsy of Delaware and turned into Camp Lenape, offering recreational activities for children with and without disabilities.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

A promotional poster for a 'Cigar Dinner' event. The background is dark with a blurred image of a glass of whiskey with ice and a lit cigar. At the top, the word 'BENVENUTO' is written in a stylized, golden font. Below it, 'Cigar Dinner' is written in a large, elegant, golden script. Underneath, 'EVENT' is written in a smaller, golden font. The date 'OCTOBER 13, 2023' and time '5:30 P.M.' are prominently displayed in golden text. Below that, 'Special Music by Benny Rosa' is written in a smaller, golden font. The menu items 'Butlered Appetizers, Raw Oyster Bar, Seafood Buffet, Smoked Prime Rib Carving Station, and more' are listed in white text, followed by '\$128 per person'. At the bottom, 'RESERVE YOUR TABLE TODAY' and the phone number '302.265.2652' are written in white text, with the address '249 North East Front Street • Milford, DE' below it.

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Downtown Milford

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Sat, Oct 14, 2023
9:00am - 1:00pm @
Walnut Street at the
Million River

BY TERRY ROGERS

One of the items that many residents and visitors in Milford have requested is a one-stop calendar where they can find events that are happening in the town and surrounding area. Many organizations have also requested a location where they can post upcoming events where the public can easily find them. Downtown Milford Inc (DMI) announced recently that they are planning on adding this type of calendar to their revamped website.

“We finally did it!” Phillips, chairman of the Design Committee and board member for DMI, said. “Milford will now have one big community calendar for all events to help keep you organized and having fun. It’s free and easy to use.”

DMI ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The **calendar** is live now, but will be added to the revamped website currently under construction with DMI. The link will take you directly to the Calendar Page. There, you can suggest an event, subscribe to the calendar and search. If you simply want to see events in the area, you can click on the **Event Board** and save it to your phone screen for easy use.

The calendar is designed for a desktop and allows users to save specific dates to their personal or business calendar. You can also have an email reminder sent to you before the event. A button on the calendar also allows users to “suggest” events that need to be added. The Event Board is a chronological list that makes it easier to read on a smartphone.

“We have wanted to create this all-in-one calendar for a long time,” Phillips said. “It is needed now more than ever with all the “event” scams and hacking on other social media pages. Events posted here are posted by neighbors only, not a stranger asking you for venue fees via mobile payment services.”

DMI is currently working out the parameters of what will be added to the calendar. Of course, large events, such as the Dessert Walk, Milford Museum Ghost Tours, Ladybug Festival, Riverwalk Freedom Festival and more are welcomed on the calendar, but there may be some events that are not suitable. Phillips explained that this could be something like adding a Community Yard Sale would be appropriate, but an individual yard sale would not. The same is true of an event at a restaurant which would be appropriate while daily restaurant

specials would not. All events posted can easily link to its host’s website for advertising purposes.

Anyone interested in adding an event should click on “Suggest an Event” and provide the details requested. Once the event is approved, it will be added to the calendar. E-mail big19963calendar@gmail.com if you have any questions or problems in suggesting events.

“Since we are currently revamping our entire website, we felt this was the best time to finally create what people have wanted for years,” Phillips said. “This is something that could really tie our community together and bring even more people out for the fun events we hold here.”

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BUSINESS



photo link: Marcia Reed

WORKERS' COMP INSURANCE RATES FALLING, FOR 7TH YEAR IN A ROW

BY KEN MAMMARELLA

Workers' compensation insurance rates will decrease for the seventh year in a row, Insurance Commissioner Trinidad Navarro **announced** Oct. 11. Effective Dec. 1, the voluntary market is expected to decrease 7.24%, while the residual market will decrease 11.18%, he said.

Workers' compensation insurance provides coverage when an employee is hurt on the job and can provide medical coverage as well as payments for lost wages if a person is unable to work due to their injury," the announcement said. "Lower premiums don't change the amount of compensation an injured employee receives." Delaware's highest weekly workers' comp payment is \$867.52, **according** to the Social Security Administration.

In the voluntary market, companies buy the insurance on their own. "When an employer is unable to secure coverage through the voluntary market, an alternative commonly referred to as the 'assigned risk' or 'residual market' is available to the employer through" the Delaware Insurance Plan, according to the Delaware

Compensation Rating Bureau. "The DIP ensures that all employers have a means of meeting their statutory obligations under the workers compensation law."

Companies go into the residual market "due to cost, high risk or claims history," the announcement said. Final rates are expected to be announced later this fall. The insurance department tracked these recent changes in the rates:

- 2022: -19.72% residual; -14.76% voluntary
- 2021: -20.01% residual; -21.02% voluntary
- 2020: -8.8% residual; -11.56% voluntary
- 2019: -12.75% residual; -13.29% voluntary
- 2018: -7.29% residual; -10% voluntary
- 2017: -5.73% residual; -3% voluntary

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GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)

DOWNTOWN RESTROOM PURCHASE DELAYED FOR SECOND TIME

BY TERRY ROGERS

For the second time, Milford City Council voted to table options that would bring a downtown bathroom to Milford. At a previous meeting, council requested that Director of Public Works, Mike Svaby bring back additional options for the restrooms with additional stalls and larger layouts.

“I’m here tonight in follow up to a Sept. 25 council meeting where I presented an option to purchase a restroom for downtown. And there were some observations made in terms of its size, some things about the location and, and value and so forth,” Svaby said. “So, what I’d like to do is just take you through a couple of bullet points and pieces of information that went into it and then present some additional options. So, I’ve got a quick recap on public input, can talk about the buildable footprint and the rest of the models that would fit as alternatives.”

Svaby explained that when the city had interns in 2022, they held a public hearing in council chambers where they gathered information regarding where the

public would like to see restrooms added and how many stalls were enough. Councilman Brian Baer pointed out that he was at the public meeting and recalled a request for four or five stalls, although the three options only showed two per restroom. Councilman Todd Culotta asked if this was due to limited space.

“Well, there’s a buildable footprint, and in addition to having a walkable sidewalk around it, we have to address the slope necessary for ADA access. So that’s gonna take up some amount of distance,” Svaby said. “So, what I pulled from record was number of stalls, two to three were requested. The location that was most desired was straight across from the library. And in addition, there was an interest in gender neutral restrooms and those that were best, most practical use for families as a group.”


The three models presented included the Cortez, the Dakota and the Kodiak. The budget for the restroom was \$282,500 and the city has spent \$80,000 of that for

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A smiling woman with curly hair, wearing a yellow sweater, is making a heart shape with her hands.

from page 16

site design. This leaves a balance in the budget at \$202,500. The Cortez is \$153,000, the Kodiak \$182,000 and the Dakota \$186,000. Svaby then described some of the differences between the Kodiak and the Dakota.

“Now if you’ll note on the layout portion in the bottom left corner, you’ll notice that the access doors for the Kodiak are on the ends and the access door that’s on the front or depending on if we turn the restroom around. And that access door could be on the back facing the pickleball courts, but either way the access doors to the actual restrooms themselves are on the ends,” Svaby said. “The Dakota as you can see there that the access doors for the actual restrooms themselves are on all sides which if situated properly could face the street. So just anticipating family usage, something that we picked up in the public hearing. If say for instance, a parent had a couple of children or whatever and they wanted to go get a drink at the fountain and then run in and use the restrooms, the parent wouldn’t necessarily lose sight of them. If they ran around the ends on opposite ends, they could see both going indoors and they would be facing the doors right then when they came back out.”

Svaby stated that he was at the meeting for more conversation, but he felt that the Dakota with the front-facing entrances was a better option.

“It does fit the buildable space. It provides overall two stalls for women. One stall and a urinal for men. And it falls within the available budget at \$186,000. Worth noting however, is this is more like a multiple-use restroom. It’s not as much like a family unit,” Svaby

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said. “So, if a parent or two parents had a child or two, we could certainly situate a changing table in these larger restrooms, but they’re more designed for multiple use at the same time. That said these alternative models have more stalls. And if we want to go any bigger than what we have right now we’re going to have to go back and reconsider the budget and an alternative location.”

Councilman Culotta pointed out that, based on the square footage, the Dakota would cost \$500 per square foot and that did not include tying it into city services. Svaby explained that the cost did include shipping and the connections would be ready the day the bathroom was delivered, making it available for spring activities in the downtown area.

“A couple of my thoughts on it. This is definitely a step forward. Okay, appreciate that. Because now it’s technically a multi-use, multi-person restroom. To Brian’s point, to be bigger would always be a little more convenient,” Councilman Culotta said. “So, the recommendations going off South Washington, across from the library, right? Still a very good location. But who’s really going to benefit from this most often will be the Farmers Market and things right downtown. So, your second choice locations at the end of the walkway there into the parking lot or even on Walnut Street, which really would be attractive, I think are ideal.”

An artist rendering of what a public restroom would look like on South Walnut Street was very attractive, Councilman Culotta believed, and would be more centrally located for more events downtown.

“I like this Dakota. I like it for the same reasons, the safety and as a parent keeping your eye on those little

people,” Councilwoman Katrina Wilson said. “Also like the location, because it is it’s kind of positioned where yes, the Farmers Market but also the basketball courts, the pickleball courts, to children with the new playground equipment. All of that is close proximity to all of that it just makes sense for it to be the first thing it just makes sense for to be there to me, in my opinion.”

Mayor Archie Campbell agreed.

“I think you’re gonna get more uses because what Katrina said about the basketball courts, the pickleball courts, playground for the kids,” Mayor Campbell said. “So, if the parents want to come in and change to get ready for games, yeah, it’s more centrally located. And that’s good for the Farmers Market even if it is only on Saturday. I would so this was the best option.”

Councilman Jason James thanked Svaby for his hard work on the project.

“I want to thank Mike Svaby for coming back with these options because it was one of the things that I was most interested in and I think this is more economically feasible. We’re getting more stalls, which is something that I was looking at the capacity, the usability, how many people can use it at once installed, it just didn’t make sense to me,” Councilman James said. “So, I think this is a much improved solution. So, I’m gonna thank you for this presentation. And the Dakota is really nice. One thing to add about the multiple options for locations, they’re all actually in the floodplain.”

Svaby explained that all the locations suggested were in the floodplain, but that the one located across from the library would require the least amount of site work

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to raise it above the floodplain. Councilman Culotta questioned whether there had ever been a flood downtown and Svaby stated that with the last heavy rain, the city had to close Park Avenue due to flooding. Councilman Culotta commented that although Park Avenue flooded, it did not flood away from the river on South Walnut or South Washington Street.

“There’s pictures,” Councilman Fulton said. “Just walk over to the Milford Museum. They have them.”

Councilman Culotta suggested that Svaby bring back details for council on what it would cost to have the bathroom stick built rather than order a prefabricated unit, stating that after tie-ins to the city service, the cost of the unit would be about \$510 per square foot which seemed expensive.

“Mr. Culotta, that information wasn’t included in the presentation, but it was done prior to when I brought it on Sept. 25. And the findings there were, I looked at two other types of units, another type of unit, not stick built but there were two other types of prefab units,” Svaby said. “One of them was designed to be installed if you had no interest in connecting utilities as they are self-contained water systems. A self-contained septic system you pumped, and they are more per square foot than the Cortez model or any of the other models. We also learned that within a year or two of installing those things, people end up hooking up utilities to them anyway, because the activity of filling and pumping is fine but what I’m saying is we don’t want the added maintenance.”

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MILTON COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY HOLDS RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW FACILITY

BY TERRY ROGERS

On Oct. 11, Milton Community Food Pantry (MCFP) held a ribbon cutting for their new facility. The new facility will be used as a distribution center for the food pantry. The ribbon cutting was attended by U.S. Sen. Tom Carper, State Rep. Stell Parker Selby as well as city and county officials.

“Before the distribution center, clients were waiting as much as an hour and a half to receive food,” Diane Hake, Director of Communications, said. “We had 17 refrigerators and freezers stored in seven locations, 20 coolers used to transport perishable food to our distribution site and 20 volunteer labor hours each day to set up and break down our temporary sites every day.”

With the new location, Hake stated that clients were now waiting just 15 minutes, an 80 percent decrease. Food is stored in one refrigerator and one freezer at one location. There are no longer coolers needed to move food since it is already set up at the center as well as a 50

percent reduction in setup and breakdown time.

“Milton is a great place to live and work,” Sen. Carper said. “It’s also a community of neighbors. I was honored to spread the word about its newest initiative, the Milton Food Pantry, made possible thanks to generous donors and the American Rescue Plan.”

MCFP distributes fresh and non-perishable food items on the first and third Monday of each month. They turn no one away who comes to receive food and have been in business for almost 10 years. Opening in 2014, MCFP has distributed more than 752,000 meals to individuals in Kent and Sussex County. The first year they were open, they provided meals to an average of 81 individuals at each distribution and, today, are serving 316 per distribution.

“We have continued to implement a drive-through model of distribution that has proven efficient and safe for our clients and volunteers,” Hake said. “Despite food

costs rising, we have been able to purchase and provide foods to those in need.”

MCFP partners with the “Teach a Person to Fish Society” which provides chef-prepared meals and fresh produce as long as it is available as well as Delaware “Unite Us” to accept referrals. In addition, MCFP works with other Delaware based foundations and organizations, including the Milford Lions Club and Panera Bread.

Feeding America states that almost 100,000 people in Delaware face hunger each year. This includes one in seven children, one in 10 people and one in 15 senior citizens. Over the past year, MCFP has seen a 50 percent increase in the number of families needing services. MCFP does not just serve Milton as it has had clients from Lewes, Houston, Seaford, Frederica, Bridgeville, Georgetown, Ellendale, Magnolia, Dover, Bridgeville, Milford, Laurel, Felton, Harbeson, Harrington, Greenwood, Lincoln, Millsboro, Camden and Delmar.

“We still need support,” Hake said. “With on-going support, we will continue to serve those that need us. I ask that you continue to publicize our work through social media and word of mouth. We are continuing a capital campaign to help cover building costs throughout 2023-2024.”

Learn more about MCFP by visiting www.milton-pantry.org where you can also donate.



EDUCATION



photo link: [Milford High School Band](#)

MILFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNOUNCES UPCOMING EVENTS

BY TERRY ROGERS

October will be a busy month in Milford School District with three exciting events planned. In addition, students at Milford High School are putting the finishing touches on their fall play “The Epic Quest of the Damsels in Distress,”

which will be presented the weekend of Nov. 3.

“On Oct. 21, we will hold our Hispanic Heritage Celebration Community Event,” Trish Gerken, public information officer for the district, said. “This event is sponsored by the International Club and will be held at Milford High School. There will be face painting, community vendors, outdoor soccer activities and music. From 7 to 9 p.m., a dance for MHS students is also planned and the cost is \$5 per ticket.”

On Oct. 25, the 8th Annual Haunted Hallways is planned. This very popular event begins at 5:30 and ends at 7 p.m. It is designed for children 12 and under.

“Come walk the halls of Milford High School for an indoor trick-or-treat experience,” Gerken said. “This is a non-scary event, hosted by students and staff, who

hand out candy to children. We encourage children to wear costumes and bring a bag to carry their sweets.”

Top Five BBQ and Schlabach’s food trucks will be on hand during the event and State Rep. Bryan Shupe will be handing out free pumpkins as well. The line begins at the auditorium entrance and visitors are asked to park in the front high school as well as the Milford Central Academy parking lots. There will be overflow parking by the high school stadium along with the bus platform behind the school.

On Oct. 26 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., the district will hold its Annual School Choice Information Session in the conference room at the district office, located at 906 Lakeview Avenue. At this informational meeting, parents can learn more about sending their child to Milford if they live in another district.

For more information about the Hispanic Festival, email adiaz@msd.k12.de.us or rolivas@msd.k12.de.us. For more information about Haunted Hallways, call 302-422-1610 or email crozell@msd.k12.de.us. For more information about school choice, call 302-422-1600.



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DE AGRICULTURE STUDENTS, TEAMS WIN NATIONAL AWARDS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Two Delaware chapters and five individuals of the Future Farmers of America brought home national awards from Springfield, MA. They were winners at The Big E, an annual event that begins on the second Friday after Labor Day.

Delaware FFA members competed in 16 career and leadership development events as well as the Agriscience Fair. Jennae Overton from Middletown FFA in Appo won first place in the Extemporaneous Public Speaking Event. Lake Forest's team took home the gold in the

Agriculture Issues Event. Odessa's team scored first place in the Floriculture Event.

In addition to competing in the events, three Delaware FFA members participated in the regionals Stars selection process. Cole Murphy from Lake Forest was selected as the Eastern Regional Star Farmer. Faith Hewes from Smyrna was selected as the Eastern Regional Star in Agriscience and Roarie Glen-Russum, also from Smyrna, was selected as a finalist for the Eastern Regional Star in Agricultural Placement.

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Members who conducted Agriscience Fair projects were also recognized for their efforts, and Sanaa McDonald from William Penn FFA in Colonial School District was awarded the top prize.

Delaware FFA is a career and technical student organization for students pursuing careers in agriculture, food, natural resources and other related career fields.



HEALTH



photo link: [Bayhealth Medical Center](#)



BY TERRY ROGERS

As National Breast Cancer Awareness month begins, Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition wants everyone to focus on early detection in the fight against breast cancer. Statistics show that finding breast cancer early offers the best chance of survival from a disease that impacts thousands around the world. The month of October is filled with events designed to promote early detection as well as research into better treatment options and providing those diagnosed with the illness with the support they need.

According to DBCC, it is estimated that in Delaware during 2023 there will be 1,050 *new* cases of breast cancer diagnosed with 160 expected deaths because of the disease. In addition, one in eight women will be

EARLY DETECTION IS KEY TO BREAST CANCER SURVIVAL

diagnosed in her lifetime and one in 833 men as well. DBCC wants everyone to know the risk is real, making knowledge and awareness more important than ever.

“DBCC offers education and information on their website about breast health, how to get screening assistance, survivorship support programs as well as resources for those newly diagnosed,” Francesca Vogel, CEO of DBCC said. “With October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we want everyone to push the men and women in their lives to get screenings done since breast cancer is more easily treated when caught early. Although we focus on breast cancer in October, we also want awareness throughout the year.”

There are many events planned throughout October designed to support the mission of DBCC, which is to empower the community by raising awareness of breast health issues and increasing access to care through outreach, education and support services while also facilitating early detection and treatment of the disease.

The 8th Annual Car, Truck, Motorcycle and Tractor Show, planned for Oct. 21 at the Georgetown Historical Society Museum Complex at 510 South Bedford Street will feature a craft fair, swap meet, vendors, face painting and more. A corn hole tournament is planned with a four-game round robin to double elimination. Bring

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from page 25

your own partner and register from 7 to 11 a.m. with a \$15 registration fee. Music will be provided by Sticky Situation and there will be Touch-A-Truck options for children. For more information, contact Levin Clark at 302-500-1128.

Another popular event in Sussex County, Stockley Tavern's "Bags, Booze and Boobs," on Nov. 4, starting at noon. This event is centered around a corn hole tournament, but also offers a guest bartender competition, music, and a live auction.

In Kent County, one of the largest events for DBCC is the Monster Mile Walk for a Cause. This year, the event will be held on Oct. 21 at Homestead Gardens in Smyrna. It is a family fun event that includes costumes an after party and a fall festival. Register [online](#) or head over for day-of registration!

New Castle County will also be the site of DBCC events in October when the popular "DeerPark Goes Pink" occurs in Newark at DeerPark Tavern on Sunday, Oct. 22. The event includes a 5K Run/Walk and all proceeds are donated to DBCC. Although these events are designed to bring awareness to early detection and treatment options in a lighthearted way, the fact is that many men and women face a breast cancer diagnosis every day.

Dale Hurley, a 45-year breast cancer survivor, knows how important early detection is in the fight against the disease. In February 1977, Hurley was diagnosed after finding a breast lump during a self-examination while helping her parents relocate to Florida.

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SPORTS



photo link: [Milford High School Football](#)



BY TERRY ROGERS

Winter is fast approaching which has led Milford Parks and Recreation to release its Winter Sports schedule for the upcoming year. Sports run from November through March and include Youth basketball, taekwondo, wrestling, pickleball and indoor soccer. There are also pickleball and dodgeball Leagues available.

“We are excited to offer these programs to children and adults in Milford,” Brad Dennehy, director of Parks and Recreation, said. “We are especially excited for the opening of our new pickleball courts in Memorial Park which will offer even more opportunities for people to play the game.” There are currently pickleball courts near the Parks & Rec building on Franklin Street, but after overwhelming request from the public, additional

PARKS AND RECREATION WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULE

courts are under construction in Memorial Park which should be completed very soon.

Youth basketball will begin with evaluations on Dec. 16 with games beginning Jan. 2. There is a 6- and 7-year-old instructional league as well as leagues for 8-9, 10-11 and 12- through 14-years-old. The instructional league costs \$50 per player while older leagues are \$60 per player. Practice and game information can be found on the Parks and Recreation website.

Taekwondo and self defense courses are also offered this winter. They will be held in the Mispillion Elementary School gym starting Jan. 8 on Monday and Wednesdays, running until Feb. 28 from 5 to 6 p.m. Participants will receive instruction on basic blocks and strikes. Basic self-defense and awareness skills are also part of the program. However, it is important to note that martial arts focus on positive ways to empower individuals and helps them become more confident. The class is led by Derek Mola, a certified taekwondo ITF and WTF with more than 25 years experience. The cost is \$60 per person. Participants must be seven or older.

Youth wrestling begins on Nov. 9 and runs through Jan. 4 in the Milford High School Wrestling Room from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Participants must be between the ages of 5 and 12. The cost is \$60 per person.

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Indoor soccer for ages 7 through 11, begins with evaluations on Dec. 10 from 1:30 to 2:15 p.m. with the program starting Jan. 7 and running through March 3. There are leagues for ages 7-8, 9-10, 11-14 as well as a beginner program for 5- and 6-year-olds. Games are Sundays with times that vary depending on the league. The cost for the beginner program is \$25 per person while the older leagues are \$50 per person.

In addition to programs for children, Milford Parks and Recreation also offers programs for adults. An Adult Dodgeball League is in the process of being formed so those interested must add their name to a waitlist. The fee is not required until the league is officially formed and those who register must provide a teammate name. A minimum of six players is required to register a team. Team captains will be contacted for payment once the program is officially created. Individuals may sign up for the waitlist and will be contacted about teams as well as payment once the league is established. The cost for individuals is \$10 per person and teams \$60 per person. Players must be 15 years or older.

A Pickleball League has been created and will be played at the Milford Boys and Girls Club on Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. starting Jan. 8 and running through March 11. The fee is \$60 for a team and \$30 for individuals. Those who sign up as an individual will be assigned a random team for the duration of the league. Players must be 15 or older.

Because it is a league, players must sign up and list their partners during enrollment. Teams play one game per week, and this is not a USAPA sanctioned program. This means it will not operate within the same constraints. The goal of the league is to allow players at all levels to play competitively under a leaderboard system that offers success for everyone. An explanation of the leaderboard system will be sent upon signing up for the program. All participants must provide their own paddles.

In addition to the leagues, Parks and Recreation offers drop in pickleball at the Milford Boys and Girls Club starting Jan. 10 and running through Feb. 28. It is held on Wednesdays from 9 to 11 a.m. There is a six-player minimum per team and the cost is \$25 per person. This is designed for social play and courts cannot be reserved.



An adult drop-in basketball program is also available starting Jan. 10 through Feb. 28. The games are held on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. There is a \$25 one-time fee for the entire season or players can pay \$5 for a one-night drop in. The program is held at the Milford Boys and Girls Club and is open for those 20 or older.

For more information about programs offered by Milford Parks and Recreation, contact them by calling 302-422-1104 or visit its [website](#).

An advertisement for COVID-19 vaccines. It features a silhouette of a woman's head and shoulders in profile, facing left, against a light background. The text is overlaid on the image in white and bold. At the bottom, there is a URL and a QR code.

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WOODBIDGE DOWNS MILFORD 52-30 IN CLASS AA MATCHUP

BY BENNY MITCHELL

The Woodbridge community honored former assistant coach Preston Grace with a halftime tribute. Grace died January. Fans would say that the Blue Raiders honored him in both halves of the game by defeating the Milford Buccaneers 52-30 in a Class AA District 3 victory Oct. 12.

Traci Johnson scored four touchdowns and rushed for 255 yards on 32 carries to lead the Blue Raiders. “It was a team effort, shoutout to my offensive line for blocking for me to get those touchdowns tonight,” Johnson said.

Johnson scored on an 11-yard run midway through the first quarter, which was set up by a 40-yard pass from Zach Plummer to Johnson on a third and 10. Johnson then ran in the conversion to put Woodbridge up 8-0.

The Bucs drove deep into Woodbridge territory on their next possession, but the drive stalled when Milford came up a yard short on a fourth and 21 pass from John Hudson to Charles Shorts.

On the fourth play of the ensuing Woodbridge drive, Tyler Ely broke a couple of tackles then raced 50 yards for a touchdown. Johnson’s conversion run extended the Woodbridge lead to 16-0 early in the second quarter.

It took just 11 seconds for the Blue Raiders to strike again when on the ensuing kickoff Kam’Ren Johnson stripped the ball from Benjamin Guscoria as he was falling to the ground, Johnson then returned the ball 40 yards for a touchdown. Traci Johnson’s conversion run was good, giving Woodbridge a 24-0 lead.

“We had two big special teams plays tonight with Kam’Ren’s score and the kick return by Ji’Kare (Banks). We have put emphasis a couple of weeks ago about being better on special teams and it showed up tonight,” Woodbridge head coach Marvin Dooley said.

Milford answered quickly with their first score of the game after a pair of 20-yard runs by Shorts and Den’Nare Horsey, Horsey then scored on a one-yard run. The conversion attempt failed as Milford cut the Woodbridge lead to 24-6 with 10:11 left to play in the first half.

The Blue Raiders kept their foot on the gas scoring again when Ji’Kare Banks returned the ensuing kickoff 86 yards for a touchdown. The conversion failed as the Blue Raiders led 30-6.

Milford again answered quickly with a score of their own when Hudson connected with Wilderson Alexandre on a 47-yard touchdown pass. Shorts ran in the conversion to make the score 30-14. Johnson would add a five-yard touchdown run for Woodbridge just before the half giving them a 36-14 lead at halftime.

The teams would trade touchdowns in the second half. Hudson threw an eight-yard touchdown pass to Horsey and then later scored himself on a one-yard run.

Horsey was equally as impressive for the Bucs totaling 136 yards on 15 carries and scoring a pair of touchdowns. Shorts had nine carries for 68 yards. Johnson added touchdown runs of 23 yards and 48 yards giving Woodbridge the 52-30 win.

Milford dropped to 4-2 overall and 0-1 in District 3 with the loss. The Bucs will host Laurel Friday. Kickoff at 7 p.m.

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POLICE & FIRE



photo link: Vincent J. Deskiewicz Sr.

MEET THE CHIEF EVENT PLANNED AT MILFORD LIBRARY

BY TERRY ROGERS

As the new police station nears completion, Councilman Brian Baer and Councilwoman Nirmala Samaroo, both representing Ward 3, are presenting a “Meet the Chief” night at the Milford Public Library. The event will be held Oct. 25 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Lions Room of the library, located at 11 Southeast Front Street.

“Nirmala and I walked all over town this weekend, handing out flyers to this event,” Councilman Baer said at a recent council meeting. “We are hoping to have a very large turnout for this event and give the people of Milford the opportunity to talk with the chief, learn more about her and her vision, as well as provide her with feedback in what the public may want to see in the police force.”

Chief Cecilia “CC” Ashe, who began her career with Milford in February 2023, has been in law enforcement for 27 years, working in Arlington County, VA, as well as in Wilmington. She decided to apply for the position in Milford as she had owned a home in Sussex County for more than a decade and it had always been her plan to move downstate.

At the event in late October, Chief Ashe will update the community on recent changes to the police station including incorporation of evidence-based research into law enforcement and providing services that lead with empathy and compassion. At a recent board meet-

ing, Chief Ashe was praised, along with Jenna Haines, the Milford Police Department Behavioral Unit clinician, for their efforts in focusing on the mental health aspect of criminal behavior.

“We recently traveled to Raleigh-Durham (NC) to do a presentation on how a police department can start to look and move towards alternative responses to positions, which really highlighted our behavioral health unit and the successes of our unit,” Chief Ashe told council. “And so this is really good opportunity to kind of get us into the national spotlight on how do police departments look at these things. One of the things it’s really important to emphasize in a lot of these executive arenas and law enforcement, is the fact that we’re a small agency. And when you’re a small agency and you’re capable of doing these great things, you’re going to be asked a lot of times to do these presentations because small agencies can do it then it makes it a lot easier for big agencies to do it. So it does work and the work of the officers really was highlighted there. And we had great feedback.”

Mayor Archie Campbell commended the chief and Haines for their work. “I just want to give you a compliment. You know, I sit on the state opioid commission. They are actually using the chief and Jenna as examples for the state because they are doing a great job.”



Councilman Jason James, who spearheaded the creation of the Behavioral Health Unit with MPD, agreed with Mayor Campbell, also giving credit to former Chief Kenneth Brown for running with his idea for the unit.

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